

The Alternate Route to Tenure in the CoB

Most USM faculty think that the route to tenure at the institution is paved with scholarship, service, and instruction, or as they are usually known: teaching, research, and service. The *USM Faculty Handbook* provides the following guidance regarding tenure:

Tenure Award Deliberation is the proceeding by which academic departments evaluate the professional achievements and future potential of faculty at the completion of their probationary period. Tenure award deliberation results in recommendations to academic deans for the award or denial of academic tenure. College deans, in turn, make tenure recommendations to the Provost. These recommendations may result in either the award of tenure or the denial of tenure at the discretion of the University President, based upon the recommendation of the Provost and the Vice President for Research and Economic Development. ***Tenure may only be awarded upon approval by the Board, expressed in its minutes, and receipt of written notification of an award of tenure is received from the President.***¹

Emphasis is added in the preceding passage for effect.

The following members of the CoB faculty are widely assumed to be untenured:

Name	Academic Unit	Degree Year	Year Hired at USM	Earliest Possible Tenure Year ²	Latest Possible Tenure Year ³
Anderson	ACC	2005	2005	2010-11	2011-12
Malik	ECO	2000	2005	2007-08	2011-12
Monchuk	ECO	2003	2004	2009-10	2010-11
J. Clark	FIN	1997	2003	2005-06	2009-10
Eisenberg	FIN	1987	2003	2005-06	2009-10
Salter	FIN	2001	2002	2006-07	2008-09
Carr	MGT	2001	2000	2005-06	2007-08
Daniel	MGT	1998	1996	2001-02	2004-05
Gregory	MGT	2004	2004	2009-10	2010-11
Michael	MGT	2004	2004	2006-07	2010-11
Sequeira	MGT	2004	2004	2009-10	2010-11
Yang	MGT	2001	2002	2006-07	2008-09
Zantow	MGT	2001	1999	2004-05	2007-08
Chen	MIS	1994	2001	1999-00	2007-08
Lai	MIS	2000	2004	2006-07	2010-11
Lopez	MKT	2000	2001	2005-06	2007-08
Osmonbekov	MKT	2003	2004	2008-09	2010-11

¹ *USM Faculty Handbook*, Effective January 2006, p. 90.

² Assumes that the candidate receives credit for previous service (up to a maximum of 3 years) as outlined in the *USM Faculty Handbook*.

³ Assumes the candidate receives the one-year extension to the six-year process outlined in the *USM Faculty Handbook*.

As is shown in the table above, only one CoB faculty member assumed to be presently untenured has no more time remaining on his tenure clock. Francis Daniel should have navigated the tenure process at USM between August 2001 and May 2005, depending on circumstances. Now, in July 2006, he stands – assumedly – untenured.

The section from the *USM Faculty Handbook* clearly outlines the process for notification of tenure. While the letter Daniel would have received from the President of USM is unattainable to us, any mention of Daniel receiving tenure would have had to be noted in the IHL Board minutes. Since IHL Board minutes are public record and available online at the IHL website,⁴ the answer is relatively easy to find. Exploration of the minutes of all IHL Board meetings between March 2002 (the earliest Daniel could have cleared the final USM tenure hurdle) and May 2005 fails to reveal Francis Daniel’s name in the “Award of Tenure” category. Even extending the window to May 2006, when the most recent round of tenure recipients were named, Daniel fails to appear.

One must assume, then, that Daniel does not have tenure. How, then, is his employment at USM still valid? Daniel is now an administrator in the CoB, acting as the Graduate Programs Director – overseeing the MBA and MPA programs. Perhaps there is a secret administrative track to tenure that, while failing to appear in the *USM Faculty Handbook*, is alive and well in the CoB, much like the “Letter of Agreement” for promotion that Doty authored last year. One thing is for sure. Daniel has not received tenure in the usual and customary way, and many other USM faculty members have been sent packing before their tenure clock elapsed. We are left to assume that Francis Daniel has found an alternate route to tenure, one that circumvents the usual and customary processes. This shouldn’t come as a huge surprise to those who follow the actions of the CoB administration, past and present.

UPDATE

July 31, 2006

The tenure extension situation involving Robert Rambo surfaced an interesting portion of the *USM Faculty Handbook*:

9.6.6 Deferral. At the request of a candidate and upon the advice of a candidate's department chair, college dean, and the Provost, the President may defer the tenure recommendation to the seventh (7th) year of employment or later.

Notice the last two words of the passage: “or later.” So, the tenure decision could theoretically be deferred for one year, two years, or indefinitely, depending on the “advice” of a chain of three administrators and the decision of the president. Could this be the administrative track to tenure?

Having the ability to stop the tenure clock allows approved candidates to build a vita that they otherwise could not compile in the normal six year window. Additionally, deferring the tenure decision allows approved candidates to gain seniority and power within a college, changing the complexion of their eventual tenure decision. What does it take to gain a deferment?

⁴ www.ihl.state.ms.us

Unfortunately for untenured USM faculty, the Handbook leaves broad latitude for decision making by administrators without provisions for faculty oversight and without guidance as to which circumstances qualify for a deferment and which do not.

Also unfortunate for untenured faculty is the fact that the situation surrounding Daniel's status is hidden by CoB administrators. If a special deferment has been issued, honesty and fair play dictate that other untenured faculty must be given the same opportunity to obtain a deferment. If a special deferment has not been issued, then the manner in which Daniel has evaded the tenure process should also be made available to other untenured faculty. While the revelations surrounding Rambo's tenure extension committee may have appeared to answer some questions, the CoB tenure process is murkier than ever.