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New Perspective on the Criteria of Promoting Academic Supervisors at Al-Quds Open University

Mutasem Tawfiq Al-Khader

Al-Quds Open University, mkhader@qou.edu

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Appendix

Some Criteria for Promotion at Al-Quds Open Univesity (QOU), Arab American University (AAU) and An-Najah National University (NNU).

- 1- It is permissible for an assistant professor or the associate professor to request promotion to a higher rank six months before the university teacher's completion of the legal period, which is 5 years. (QOU: 2, a; AAU: 17, a; NNU: pp. 45-46)
- 2- The evaluation of researchers for promotion is stated in marks. Published books or parts of them are equated with published or accepted for publication refereed research papers as follows:
 - A- A single author of a refereed research paper is given 100 marks. (QOU: 4, a; AAU: 19, a, 1; NNU: p. 41)
 - B- At QOU (4, a) and AAU (19, a, 1) if two researchers collaborate in producing a refereed research paper, each one of them is given 50 marks, but at NNU (p. 41), the first researcher is given 80 marks and the second 60.
 - C- If three researchers participate in producing one research paper, each is given 35 marks at QOU (4, a); at AAU (19, a), 50 marks are given to the main researcher, 30 to the second and 20 to the third; at NNU (p. 41), 60 marks are given to the main researcher, 50 to the second and 40 to the third.
 - D- If more than three researchers participate in producing one research paper, at QOU (4, a) each is given 25 marks; at AAU (19, a), the first is given 50 marks, the second 30, and 10 to everyone after the second researcher; at NNU (p. 41) the first researcher is given 60 marks, the second 50, the third 40 and 30 to every researcher after the third researcher.
- 3- Translated books are given the following marks:

At QOU and AAU (19, a, 3), a single translator is given 50 marks; if two participate, each is given 25 marks, and if the number is three or more, each one is given 15 marks. At ANN (p. 43), a single translator is given 40 marks. If there are two translators, the first is given 40 and the second 30, but if three or more participate, each one is given 20 marks after the second translator.
- 4- The evaluation of the applicant's performance includes the students' evaluations at AAU (19, b) and, at NNU, the variety of courses the applicant taught (p. 44); this type of evaluation is not adopted by QOU.

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performance had little or no educational content.

Al-Quds Open University does not consider students' evaluations as part of the criteria to promote its academic supervisors, and should not, though some universities in our country do, such as the Arab American University (See Appendix, no. 4).

Recommendations

The researcher asserts that the suggestions outlined herein are a step forward because institutions of higher education in our country continue to adopt traditional evaluation methods, as is clear from the "Appendix" that contains some of their guidelines for promotion. Moreover, the researcher offers the following suggestions for alternate evaluation criteria:

(A) Some university teachers are dedicated to serving the needs of the teaching profession and society, but for some reasons they cannot write research papers. Thus, the researcher suggests that these teachers should be promoted, after the creation of special titles, to a designated category of teachers that distinguishes them from researchers, such as "associate teacher professor" instead of "associate professor."

(B) The researcher recommends university teachers participate in the process of defining scholarship and the criteria for promotion. This should not be considered an administrative issue only.

(C) It is necessary to believe that each university is a unique entity that must revise continuously evaluation and promotion guidelines so as to keep up with rapid changes in modern life. These guidelines should draw on the goals and missions the educational institution establishes for itself to meet societal needs. In this respect, Al-Quds Open University differs from traditional universities, therefore, it should have its own regulations that are in line with its goals because universities in our country are free to have their own internal laws as independent academic institutions. At the same time, these regulations must be within the framework of the general guidelines formulated by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education.

(D) It is vital that the universities' rules for promotion be flexible, thereby achieving justice and encouraging teachers to be diligent. Professor Senour (2002) is correct when she testifies in front of California State University Committee and says, "We need to make university promotion and tenure criteria more flexible" by continuously developing these criteria.

on this field of knowledge and promote the quality and quantity of their production. Unfortunately, according to the regulations of promotion at many universities, including Al-Quds Open University, a translated book by a single translator receives half the points on an evaluation scale as that of a refereed article (See Appendix, no. 3). On the other hand, some universities, such as Wayne State University (2002), consider translation "an acceptable form of scholarship" when considering a university teacher for promotion. The researcher suggests that Al-Quds Open University take an important step and equate translated books and articles, which are approved by a special committee, to refereed articles to encourage university teachers to engage in this activity, which is vital to our scientific and cultural development.

Students ' Evaluations of Their Teachers

A "heated debate concerning the merits and the shortcomings of students' evaluations of teaching continues to flourish" (Marsh 1997). Some scholars, such as Haskell (1997), Cashin (1983) and Mark (1982), consider students' evaluations of their lecturers as a criterion in promotions and evaluations. The researcher does not believe in this type of evaluation, either at traditional or distance learning universities, because many factors influence students' evaluations of their teachers. These factors, such as grading, leniency, class size, likeability of the teacher, and interest of each student in a specific course or subject, are irrelevant to the university teacher's performance. This method of evaluation has "a variety of variables hypothesized as potential biases" (Marsh 1997). Thus, "the reliability of student evaluations of teaching effectiveness is unwarranted" (Obenchain 2001, 100), and "many people think" the students' evaluations of their teachers' performances cannot be "reliable and valid" (Tang 2002). Loyola University Chicago (2002) admits in its guidelines for promotion the impossibility of making "precise measurement of a teacher's effectiveness" through the students' evaluations of their teachers. Seiler and Seiler (2002) say that despite the advantages of the students' evaluations, "there are some potential problems with" it such as the students' inadequate "skills to know how the professor should teach." To prove this stand, the Seilers (2002, 39) give an example:

An actor who knew nothing about the subject being taught posed as a professor. This "teacher" made jokes, smiled a lot and was a great communicator, received excellent student evaluations even though his

publication of poetry, short stories, or other, similar creative endeavors constitute scholarly work in some disciplines.

More interestingly, the Department of English at Loyola University Chicago (2002, 2) considers "published or unpublishable creative writing –e. g., poetry, fiction and drama– " relevant to scholarship and a criterion for promotion. The same is true at the University of Houston (2003, 1), which considers creativity as part of scholarship. Thus, in its announcement for nominations to professorship, the committee considers "creative activity " as equivalent to "scholarship."

Making Use of Modern Technology

We live in an era characterized by the prospect of radical change. The technological revolution has had a great impact on all ways and walks of life, which dictates that universities make their methods more effective in evaluating and promoting their teachers. A clear example of this technological revolution is the Internet. If utilized, it can have a great impact on the field of evaluation and promotion because the process would be internationalized. It would be a step toward the internationalization of local universities through the establishment of educational relationships with professors all over the globe. The researcher suggests that the university connect, through the Internet, with a number of professors. These professors would each evaluate a single piece of university teacher's research, which improves upon the traditional method of sending the entire collection of a teacher's production to one reviewer for evaluation. There are several benefits to this course of action. First, this process would be quicker and more efficient than the traditional method of review. Second, the precision in evaluating each single production is greater than that yielded by the traditional method. Third, evaluation via the Internet is highly objective compared with the highly subjective judgments of colleagues and administrators.

The Importance of Translation Activities in Promotion

Translation is extremely important and in demand in the Arab World to keep up with rapid changes and developments, particularly in modern applied sciences. This activity should be heavily weighed when evaluating and promoting university teachers, which would encourage them to concentrate

requirements for promotion, the member should be promoted. This method is fairer than what is recommended by the traditional method, which is collecting the works of an academic member and sending the collection to an external reviewer for evaluation. Implementation of the researcher's suggestions would eliminate time restrictions and the subjectivity of external reviewers, keeping in mind that each published article has already been refereed and approved. These measures encourage university teachers (academic supervisors) to be active scholars.

Creativity and Unique Talents

Some university teachers are talented creators in certain fields of knowledge, and this should be considered when deciding promotions, and even judged highly because of the cultural value of creative works. For example, if a university teacher is a talented playwright or technician, the teacher should be rewarded based on equation of work produced to the production of scholarly articles, which would encourage talented teachers to pursue their distinguished, creative lives. This would motivate the teachers to concentrate more on their talents, which is more valuable for the teachers and their societies and has a greater impact on knowledge than simply writing scholarly articles. Although many "departmental selection committees" would prefer talented and creative members, such as "the best novelist" and the best "artist," on staff, the productions of these individuals are, unfortunately, not counted toward promotion criteria at most universities and, amazingly, receive little attention (Sternberg, 1996). "In the mid-1990s, there was great interest at various higher education associations in assessing and rewarding" creative performance (Knox, 2001, 73) "in a number of ways and from many perspectives" (Ramsey 2002). Several American universities, such as University of Wisconsin-Madison (2005), Loyola University Chicago (2002), the University of Houston (2002) and Wayne State University (2002), consider a wide range of creative works as scholarly. This policy is clearly stated in the rules of promotion at Wayne State University (2002, 2):

For faculty members in performing creative arts, performances, exhibitions, recitals, and similar creative activities are evidence of scholarship. (These may be the exclusive methods of scholarly activity or may be in conjunction with publication, depending on the standards in the field.) Film production,

In addition to refereed journals, research published in non-refereed journals should also be evaluated because, sometimes, that research is more valuable than that found in refereed articles. New York University (2002, 2) and Loyola University Chicago (2002, 2) move a step in this direction by allowing candidates for promotion to submit "published and unpublished material" and "to provide whatever documentation may be available that would assist in assessing its scholarly value." Some scholars, such as Avital and Collopy (2001, 15), believe that the committee for promotion should "count the number of pages printed rather than simply the number of pages published" by the university teacher. It is important for the university teacher to feel free to write and be prolific because it encourages the teachers to exert their best efforts and not just to write to be judged in a refereed journal.

Also of issue with the traditional evaluation method is its view of collaboration by two or more authors when publishing a book or an article. Each participant is scored lower than a single author (See Appendix, no. 2: B, C and D). The researcher believes this is illogical and unfair because all participants put all their efforts into the writing. Thus, articles written "by more than one author should receive the same recognition as articles by a single author" (Rodgers 2002, 6).

Time restriction is a problem related to promotions in the traditional method of evaluation. Most universities require their faculty members to spend a number of years on staff before earning the right to be promoted (See Appendix, no. 1). The researcher argues this is unreasonable because research performance, evaluation and promotion should not be treated as a temporal event but rather as an ongoing dynamic process. There is no doubt that the traditional outlook toward the relationship between scholarship and time deprives an active, intelligent university teacher from the right to be promoted when all other requirements but time are fulfilled. Thus, it is logical that a university teacher has the right to be promoted when the teacher has produced the required scholarly works. Some universities use this approach, such as Texas A&M (2001, 5), which adopted new methods and policies for granting promotions: "There is neither a minimum nor maximum number of years in rank for an individual to be considered for promotion." Therefore, the researcher suggests each Academic Program, in cooperation with the coordinator of every specialization at Al-Quds Open University, keep an academic record of refereed publications. When a faculty member attains the

Developing the Traditional Method

Because each university teacher is distinguished as a member of a learned profession in an educational institution, the evaluation of university teachers is intrinsically related to scholarly productivity, which should be given a priority, though not to be underestimated in relation to the other two main branches of evaluation: teaching and service. It is an established fact that an increase in administrative and social activities divert the scholar from being primarily a researcher. Thus, "administrative duties, an increase in time spent on other institutional activities" (Avital and Collopy 2001, 12) and "the emphasis that universities have on the responsibility to contribute to the development of their communities" (Huber 2000, 4) are likely to cause a decrease in the university teacher's research performance. These unscholarly activities force the scholar to engage in social problems. Gibbons says that if a scholar "enters into arrangements with other social institutions," it weakens the scholar's research abilities (Huber 2000, 6). Therefore, a university teacher who so desires should be given an opportunity to be a pure scholar and be promoted based solely on those scholarly activities.

Another problem with the traditional method of evaluation relates to its assessment of scholarship, which is based on the frequency of publication of books and articles in journals of discipline. In the traditional method of evaluation, all refereed articles are given the same score, although they are neither parallel in quality nor have the same impact on their specific fields of knowledge. A policy based simply on the number of articles in refereed publications and presentations at refereed conferences is not adequate and is an injustice to faculty members. To correct this injustice, universities should recognize that the publication of an article in a highly competitive journal is a major accomplishment. For example, *Romanticism on the Net* is a highly competitive refereed journal that accepts one-fourth of the articles it receives for publication. It is reasonable that an article published in such a journal should be weighted more heavily than articles published in other journals, though this should not devalue the quality of other refereed journals. In this respect, National Taiwan University (2001) classifies journals into three categories with different scores: "70 points for A-level journals, 60 points for B-level journals, and 50 points for C-level journals." Dilts, Lawrence Haber and Donna Bialik (1994, 66-67) call for an assessment of "the quality of the medium in which the publication appears."

Introduction

The traditional method of assessing university teachers under consideration for promotion evaluates teaching, research and service to the university and society. This traditional approach is clearly adopted, as stated in the regulations of almost all traditional universities as well as in the declaration of the well-known and influential American Association of University Professors (AAUP, 2005, 1):

In evaluating faculty members for promotion, renewal, tenure, and other purposes American colleges and universities have customarily examined faculty performance in the three areas of teaching, scholarship, and service, with service sometimes divided further into public service and service to the college or university. While the weight given to each of these three areas varies according to the mission and evolution of the institution, the terms are themselves generally understood to describe the key functions performed by faculty members.

The traditional method, the researcher believes, suffers from a number of drawbacks. Mainly, it fails to utilize technological advancements, downplays the importance of translating books and articles into the mother tongue and overlooks the creativity of those who are highly talented. These obstacles reveal the inadequacy and insufficiency of this method. Thus, there is a need to develop and expand the scope of the evaluation methods to include other fields of knowledge to be considered for promotion. These suggestions are investigated in the research, and criteria of some universities that adopt new methods for promotion are compared with those of the traditional methods. This paper also discusses the validity of students' evaluations of university teachers, which is an important issue related to our subject. For the sake of clarity and to make this paper easily understood, it is divided into the following sections:

- 1- Developing the Traditional Method
- 2- Creativity and Unique Talents
- 3- Making Use of Modern Technology
- 4- The Importance of Translation Activities in Promotion
- 5- Students' Evaluations of Their Teachers
- 6- Recommendations

ملخص

هدفت هذه الورقة البحثية إلى محاولة تحديد مواطن القصور والضعف في المعايير المتبعة في الطريقة التقليدية لتقويم المحاضرين والأساتذة المساعدين والمشاركين في الجامعات لترقيتهم والتي تعتمد عليها جامعة القدس المفتوحة لترقية المشرفين الأكاديميين فيها. وبينت الورقة أن الطريقة التقليدية في التقويم التي تعتمد على الثلاثي المكوّن من التعليم والبحث والخدمات التي يقدمها المدرس في الجامعة فيها كثير من القصور، وإن من مواطن القصور في هذه الطريقة وبشكل أساسي عدم مراعاتها لاستخدام المشرف الأكاديمي للتكنولوجيا الحديثة في تعليمه وبحثه، وانتقاصها من أهمية الترجمة، وكذلك عدم اعتبارها للقدرات الإبداعية لأولئك الموهوبين والمتمتعين بقدرات خاصة. بسبب هذه النواقص، تأتي هذه الورقة محاولة للكشف عن إمكانيات جديدة لتقويم المدرس في الجامعة من أجل ترقيته بمعايير إضافية جديدة مثل توسعة معايير تقويمه، بالإضافة إلى تطوير وتعديل الطرق التقليدية المعروفة. وفي نهاية الورقة البحثية يوجد ملحق يحتوي على بعض المعايير المتبعة في الترقيات الأكاديمية في جامعة القدس المفتوحة والجامعة العربية الأمريكية وجامعة النجاح الوطنية.

Abstract

This research paper explores the possibilities of overcoming the pitfalls associated with the traditional criteria for evaluating, for the sake of promotion, university lecturers, assistant professors and associate professors at Al-Quds Open University. The criteria depend on the triumvirate of teaching, research and service. This paper tries to show the defects in these criteria and to find solutions for evaluating the university's teachers under consideration for promotion through new criteria, such as expanded dimensionality of evaluation and assessment, in addition to developing and modifying the well-known traditional methods. At the end of the paper, there is an "Appendix"1 that contains examples of the criteria for promotion at Al-Quds Open University, Arab American University and An-Najah National University.



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Dr. Mutasem Tawfiq Al-Khader*



* Al-Quds Open University / Tulkarm Educational Region