College of Health Professions
Tenure Policy

Faculty members who have consistently met the criteria for Associate Professor or Professor and have a record of sustained excellence at either rank may apply for tenure. Tenure is the assurance of continuous appointment to a particular faculty rank with continuation of salary commiserate with rank, subject to the conditions stated in the *MUSC Faculty Handbook*. Tenure provides further assurance of academic freedom with the expectation that the faculty member will continue to perform according to accepted faculty standards.

One of the most important considerations for tenure is the faculty member’s long-term value to his/her Department, the College and the University. Tenure is distinct from promotion, since the evidence for and assessment of suitability for tenure must document a long term process of professional development and contributions to the College and University mission and strategic goals, and not simply be an inventory of discrete activities and accomplishments.

Central to the consideration for tenure, a faculty member must demonstrate both academic maturity and collegiality. Academic maturity includes professional judgment, wisdom, trust, citizenship in the academic community and the capacity to promote development of colleagues and students. Examples of academic maturity include: serving as a content or professional development mentor for junior faculty, assuming leadership roles on strategic college and university initiatives, representing faculty in the expression of innovative ideas or grievances, and serving as a dissertation advisor to students. Collegiality denotes respect that is openly shown toward colleagues, along with the willingness to interact cooperatively and in a positive manner with both faculty and staff. Collegiality also implies that one should refrain from unfair or judgmental criticism of colleagues’ personal and/or professional values, and even in the case of disagreement, show reasonable tolerance for the opinions of others.

The path of progress toward tenure takes place on three dimensions:

- **Contributions.** To qualify for tenure, a faculty member must build a record of sustained excellence in academic areas that are important for the maintenance and continued growth of the College, University and the faculty member’s department and division. The exact nature of these contributions will vary, depending on the evolving needs of the faculty member’s institutional units and her/his competencies. A faculty member may demonstrate sustained excellence in a combination of teaching, research, and clinical activities that extends knowledge, produces consistent scholarship, provides a record of funded research, and/or develops teaching or clinical innovations that both clearly move the faculty member’s career forward and are obviously valued by colleagues, her/his profession and the university.

- **Growth.** Evidence that a faculty member deserves tenure comes from a clear and convincing process of personal and professional growth. Health care and academia are constantly changing environments, both of which result in continually evolving imperatives in research, teaching, service and clinical care. To earn tenure, a faculty member must show that she/he has recognized and appropriately responded to these imperatives. In addition, a faculty member should demonstrate commitment to mentoring junior faculty.

- **Potential.** With the above-mentioned requirements for contributions and growth, a
faculty member must exhibit appropriate achievements and demonstrate the potential for additional (and/or higher levels of) achievement in the future to earn tenure. The faculty member should be able to show that he/she can progress beyond his/her previous “comfort zone” if necessary to ensure the continued growth and vitality of the University, College and associated academic units, and his/her profession. A faculty member should be willing to effectively assume formal and/or informal academic and professional leadership responsibilities so that the University, College and associated academic units can be maintained and further developed in their missions. The faculty member should also demonstrate that she/he is proactive in outlook and understands the need for change in response to future challenges.

In the College of Health Professions, tenure-track faculty members are expected to attain tenure within their first ten years of appointment to a tenure-track position. If a tenure-track faculty member does not successfully achieve tenured status during that period, he/she may be given a letter of non-renewal of appointment or be transferred to a non-tenure-track position as determined by the Dean in consultation with the faculty member, Division Director and/or Department Chair. A faculty member may receive one or more additional years in the tenure track if she/he is granted a leave of absence during that period due to personal or professional reasons.

The MUSC Faculty Handbook provides guidelines for tenure that cover all University faculty members. Faculty members who have attained the rank of Associate or Full Professor are eligible to apply for tenure. Each applicant must prepare a portfolio documenting and supporting his/her application for tenure. At a minimum, the portfolio must include an updated curriculum vitae and documented evidence of relevant teaching, research and clinical experience and effectiveness. Three external letters of support will also be reviewed to determine tenure. The portfolio and letters will be used to evaluate the long-term value of the faculty member to the institution. These documents are then reviewed by the College and University Tenure Committees and, when appropriate, sent to the Board of Trustees of approval. Information regarding these steps and the items to be included in a tenure portfolio can be found in the College of Health Profession’s Tenure Policy Implementation document. Prior to applying for tenure a faculty member should seek advice from senior colleagues with tenure as well as from relevant division, department and College administrators to determine if he/she is ready to successfully advance to this status.