

Women's Studies criteria for renewal, tenure, and promotion remained unchanged for more than a decade before Washington was hired, then changed twice between the time she was hired (1996) and the time she was required to apply for tenure and promotion (October 2001). The first change was made October 7, 1997; the second change was made April 26, 2001—6 months before her tenure application was due. The purpose of this timeline is to help the viewer understand the relationship between Washington's academic career at SDSU and changing departmental criteria.

Timeline for Washington's Academic Career at SDSU

1996: Washington successfully competes with over 200 applicants for a tenure-track position in SDSU's Women's Studies Department. She is the first Black tenure-track faculty member hired since the department's founding in 1970.

Timeline for Changes in Women's Studies Renewal, Tenure, Promotion (RTP) Criteria

WOMEN'S STUDIES' CRITERIA IN EFFECT AT THE TIME WASHINGTON WAS HIRED IN 1996

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CRITERIA CONSIDERED BY THE RECOMMENDING COMMITTEE:

Criteria for evaluating candidates for retention, tenure, or promotion are the three "Basic Criteria" approved by the Senate and published in the Faculty Handbook: teaching effectiveness, professional growth, and service to the university. Minimum standards must be met in all three areas. Teaching effectiveness and professional growth are considered to be roughly equivalent in importance, with teaching effectiveness somewhat more important. In no case will service outweigh either of the other two categories.

1. Teaching Effectiveness:

The committee expects candidates to maintain high academic standards in teaching.

2. Professional Growth:

At least two refereed scholarly publications since appointment to SDSU normally will be necessary for recommendation for tenure and/or promotion to associate professor. Promotion to full professor will [normally require]... three refereed articles or a scholarly book. In all cases, quality as well as quantity will be taken in consideration.

3. Service to the University and Community:

The committee shall consider such criteria as service to the department, college, university, and state committees; membership and participation in local, state, and national professional organizations; public lectures; conferences; and other community service.

1997: Washington receives her 1st renewal letter from Women’s Studies (for 3rd probationary year), crediting her with improvements in teaching and “commending” her for service. After noting that Washington has submitted one scholarly refereed article for publication, the letter instructs her, “You should work toward the goal of having a minimum of three quality refereed articles ... before your review for tenure and promotion.”

1998: Washington receives her 2nd renewal letter from Women’s Studies (for 4th probationary year). This letter acknowledges continued advancements in teaching and notes, “Student comments express appreciation of your enthusiasm, your accessibility, your diversity of teaching methods, and your command of the subject matter.” The letter also “congratulates” Washington for publishing two scholarly refereed journal articles and contributing to a policy study regarding minority girls in the juvenile justice system. The letter concludes, “Your service record is commendable.” At this point, Washington has already satisfied the “2-minimum” publications requirement in effect when she was first hired.

1999: Washington receives her 3rd renewal letter from Women’s Studies (for 5th probationary year). She has had a third scholarly refereed journal article accepted for publication and has submitted two additional ones for review. At this point, Washington has already satisfied the “3-minimum” publications requirement implemented the year after she was hired. Her renewal letter states, “[T]he Committee acknowledges that you have continued to improve class-room performance and strengthened your record of professional growth since your last review. Your service record continues to be commendable.”

CHANGES IN WOMEN’S STUDIES CRITERIA EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 7, 1997:

Substantive changes are **highlighted**, with significant deletions noted by **strike-through**.

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CRITERIA CONSIDERED BY THE RECOMMENDING COMMITTEE:

Criteria for evaluating candidates for retention, tenure, or promotion are the three basic criteria approved by the Senate and published in the Faculty Handbook: teaching effectiveness, professional growth, and service to the university. ~~Minimum standards must be met in all three areas.~~ We recognize the integral interconnections among all three. It is expected that candidates for reappointment, tenure, and promotion meet or exceed the university expectations in all three areas of academic life, with particular weight being placed upon excellence in teaching and professional growth.

1. Teaching effectiveness:

[No substantive Changes]

2. Professional Growth:

~~At least two refereed scholarly publications since appointment to SDSU normally will be necessary for recommendation for tenure and/or promotion to associate professor.... In all cases, quality as well as quantity will be taken in consideration.~~ Although no hard and fast rule exists for the number of publications required, at least three refereed scholarly publications since appointment to SDSU normally will be necessary for recommendation for tenure and/or promotion to associate professor.... In all cases, quantity is not sufficient for a recommendation for tenure and/or promotion; quality is an essential factor in the committee's deliberation.

3. Service to the University and Community:

When a candidate distinguishes himself or herself in performing such duties to the significant benefit of the University, and this performance is appropriately documented over a significant length of time, then such service for the University shall have more than the usual bearing on reappointment, tenure and promotion decision.

April-July 2000: Washington complains of a racially hostile work environment. She notifies university officials that she fears retaliation in the renewal, tenure, and promotion process. However, the Dean of the College of Arts and Letters informs her, “The members of the college and university committees are not advocates for their departments or college but rather are to provide a college or university wide review.”

November 2000: Despite the Dean’s assurances, Women’s Studies’ evaluation of Washington’s performance takes a sharp downturn in Fall 2000, even though her teaching evaluations in 3 of 5 classes taught the previous academic year are higher than the departmental average and even though she has two new scholarly refereed journal articles and one new scholarly peer-reviewed book article accepted for publication since the previous year’s review.

Washington is “reluctantly” renewed for a 6th probationary year, but she is “cautioned” that “significant areas for improvement remain.” The renewal letter notes, some students “remark that they perceive the amount of assigned reading to be excessive.” Moreover, while “innovations in the use of Blackboard software for course instruction seem to be appreciated by most students, ... some complain that they are confused by it.”

Additionally, despite the fact that Washington has far exceeded the “3-article” minimum required for tenure and promotion to associate professor (at this point she has 5 scholarly refereed journal articles and one book article accepted for publication), the Women’s Studies Department tells her:

CHANGES IN WOMEN’S STUDIES CRITERIA EFFECTIVE APRIL 26, 2001:

Substantive changes are **highlighted**, with significant deletions noted by ~~strike-through~~.

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CRITERIA CONSIDERED BY THE RECOMMENDING COMMITTEE:

[No substantive Changes]

1. Teaching effectiveness:

The committee expects candidates to maintain high academic standards in teaching, **including a pattern of consistently excellent classroom performance.**

2. Professional growth:

Candidates are expected to make ongoing scholarly contributions in the field of women's studies, **to demonstrate a coherent plan for research and publication, and to provide a record of steady growth toward establishment of a national/international scholarly reputation.** Refereed publications will be given more weight than other professional activities. Other evidence of professional growth include non-refereed publications, research or projects recently completed or in progress, grants and fellowships awarded, papers delivered at professional meetings, **pertinent travel and study leading to scholarly publications,** professional honors, recognition in the field, and other evidence of merit. **Tenure and promotion to associate professor will require evidence of scholarship that moves beyond the dissertation. ...**

Although no hard and fast rule exists for the number of publications required, at least three refereed scholarly publications since appointment to SDSU normally will be necessary for recommendation for tenure and/or promotion to associate professor. No hard and fast rule exists for the number of publications required; instead, a consistent record of refereed publications is expected. In all cases, quantity is not sufficient for a recommendation for tenure and/or promotion; quality is the essential factor in the committee's deliberation. **The primary consideration in evaluating professional growth shall be publications based upon original research and contributing to the advancement**

“We want to express our serious reservations about whether you will be able to present a scholarly profile of publications in refereed journals that meets the university’s standards in the area of professional development.” Despite repeated requests, Washington has never received a copy of the “university standards” used to judge the quality of her publications. On the contrary, she has been advised that no such “standards” exist.

November 2001: Since her last review in 2000, Washington has two new refereed book articles accepted for publication and a new journal article submitted for review. In addition, an article cluster for which Washington served as lead editor has just been published in a top tier women’s studies journal.

At this point, Washington has published or had accepted for publication a total of 8 articles—5 in scholarly refereed journals and 3 in scholarly refereed or peer-reviewed books. Moreover, her teaching evaluations for the 3-year tenure review period average 4.1 out of a possible 5 (the departmental average for the same period is 4.26). She has also received dozens of awards for teaching, mentoring, and service.

Although subjected to 3 different sets of criteria and held to far higher standards than any of the White women granted tenure and/or promotion in the past or recent history of the department, Washington has met or exceeded requirements for tenure and promotion.

Despite her strong professional record, Washington was denied tenure and terminated in May 2003.

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of knowledge in women's studies. The Department respects all methodologies currently used within the field, and ascribes to the principles stated by the National Women's Studies Association Task Force on Faculty Roles and Rewards (June 1999).

3. Service to the University and Community:

~~When a candidate distinguishes himself or herself in performing such duties to the significant benefit of the University, and this performance is appropriately documented over a significant length of time, then such service for the University shall have more than the usual bearing on reappointment, tenure and promotion decision.~~ Service to the department is expected of all faculty members.... In no case shall exceptional service substitute for excellence in teaching and professional growth. Collegiality is defined as contributing to departmental goals and working in cooperation with colleagues. Candidates are expected to contribute as colleagues to the overall mission and goals of the department.