

**Merit Award Document**  
**Department of Sociology, revised 1/6/11**

**Introduction:**

The members of the Department of Sociology believes that merit should be awarded for those professional activities that enhance the stature of the department. In terms of priority, the highest priority of professional achievements to warrant merit is scholarly achievement. Second to this is significant achievement in teaching and in service. These criteria and the priority attached to them are consistent with the department's RPT criteria. In the following sections, we outline the details of both the criteria and procedures for merit awards for members of the Department of Sociology.

**Criteria for Merit Awards:**

- 1. The highest priority for awarding merit to department faculty will be professional achievements.** These include, but are not limited to:
  - a. The publication of a book or books:**
    - i. scholarship/research monographs warrant the highest value for merit awards
    - ii. single authored monographs warrant the highest value for merit, while co-authored monographs would fall just below that
    - iii. edited books are legitimate scholarly contributions, however research monographs warrant higher value in consideration of merit awards;
    - iv. peer recognition of the monograph (such as an award or very positive reviews) enhances the value of the publication for merit.
  - b. The publication of refereed articles:**
    - i. The higher the status of the journal, the more highly valued an article should be considered in regard to consideration for merit;
    - ii. Sole authored articles in peer refereed journals and peer refereed book chapters should be give more weight with regard to merit awards than jointly authored articles;
    - iii. Senior authorship in jointly authored articles should be given more weight with regard to merit consideration
  - c. Securing one or more external grants in support of research:**
    - i. The highest value for merit consideration is external funding from federal government sources and/or by private granting agencies / foundations (e.g., Ford Foundation, the Grant Foundation, ), including the Fulbright Foundation. Second to this are state agencies , and local agencies.
    - ii. The monetary value of the award and whether one or more graduate students are supported by the award should be taken into account when recommendations for merit are considered.
  - d. The publication of a chapter or chapters in an edited book:**
  - e. Invited lectures at other universities** are highly valued in consideration for merit; they indicate recognition of one's scholarly work
  - f. Presentations at national association meetings**

2. **The second level priority for awarding merit to department faculty will be significant teaching achievements.** These include, but are not limited to:
  - a. **Teaching innovations** that enhance the undergraduate educational experience; this is beyond what would normally be expected in teaching our classes
  - b. **Supervision of undergraduate research** that results in a student's publication of research
  - c. **Significant graduate student teaching combined with mentoring** that results in a refereed publication
  - d. **Significant graduate student mentoring through the thesis and/or dissertation**
  - e. **Significant graduate student mentoring that results in the graduate student securing external funding in support of graduate education and research;** this funding would be from either external resources other than Taft or in a university-wide or college-wide competition
  
3. **Professional service that garners recognition is a second level priority for awarding merit to department faculty.** Such activities include:
  - a. **Election to regional or national association leadership positions;** election to a national position is considered more valued than election to a regional position
  - b. **Serving on an annual program planning committee for a national or regional association**
  - c. **University – level service,** which includes leadership on university-elected committees or assignments related to university concerns

**Merit Procedures:**

1. **All faculty in the department who are part of the bargaining unit (tenured, tenure track, and Field Service faculty) are eligible to submit a file for consideration for merit.**
  - a. The time-frame defining the period for achievements is defined by the AAUP/UC contract, as negotiated and currently in effect (as of September 1, 2010).
  - b. Documents to be included in the file submitted for consideration for merit are:
    - i. The faculty member's current vita, using highlighting to define achievements that the faculty member wishes to be considered in the evaluation process;
    - ii. Supporting documentation to the highlighted items; and
    - iii. A self-assessment statement, indicating the way in which the submitted material represents the criteria established by the department for merit.
  
2. **All faculty in the department who are also covered by the AAUP/UC contract have the right and responsibility to review the submitted files for consideration for merit.**
  
3. **Each faculty member shall evaluate submitted files and make recommendations for merit to the department head**
  - a. One of three levels of merit is to be recommended: Superior, Excellent, no merit
  
  - b. **Superior merit** represents exceptional achievement, as evidenced by a high level of successful professional productivity. Evidence for this would include at least three

publications in refereed journals in the period under consideration; professional recognition of one's research through an award (examples would be an ASA section award; a national association award or "named" book or paper award – the C. Wright Mills Award, for example); or a major grant coupled with a significant publications.

- c. **Excellent merit** is represented by research and publication achievements that are above the norm of expectations set by the department and combined with other achievements. Assuming 1 -2 refereed publications define the department's expectations, then medium merit would mean that at least two refereed articles were published during a calendar year and that refereed publications is not the only achievement during the specified time under consideration for merit. For teaching and service to warrant merit at the "medium" level requires that a professional organization or unit recognize the teaching innovation or service of the faculty member involved.
  - d. **No merit** is an evaluation that the file submitted does not meet the criteria for any of the above categories.
4. **The department head will decide on merit for each file submitted, taking into account recommendations by faculty.**
  5. **Grievances at the department level:**
    - a. The Department will establish a Merit Advisory Committee to resolve faculty complaints about the level of merit awarded.
      - i. The Department's RPT Committee will serve as the Merit Advisory Committee to hear and resolve complaints about merit.
      - ii. The Department's RPT Committee is elected by faculty at the last faculty meeting in the spring of the academic year. It serves for the coming academic year.
    - b. Within two weeks of faculty members' being informed of their merit award, a faculty member who is displeased with his or her merit award can request that the Merit Advisory Committee review the award decision, with the goal of resolving the faculty member's complaint.
    - c. The Merit Advisory Committee will come to a decision within two academic work weeks of the initial complaint.