



DA: January 9, 2019
TO: Deans
FR: John G. Igwebuike
Interim Provost & EVPAA
RE: Provost Guidance: Full Probationary Periods

cc: Dr. Donzell Lee, President
Dr. Valtreasa Tolliver-Cook, Chair of Faculty Senate
Dr. Donna Williams, Interim Vice Provost

This provost advisory clarifies Alcorn practice regarding the university requirement that tenure-track employees serve full probationary periods as a condition precedent to submission of the tenure and promotion applications for consideration and progressive reviews per the *Faculty Handbook*. (See: Provost Advisory dated March 9, 2015 → [here](#)).

Specifically, and for illustrative purposes only, an official offer letter that hires a tenure-track faculty member in July for a nine-month academic year is typically memorialized in an IHL-contract for the period August through May. The five-year probationary period for said new tenure-track faculty begins at the start of the faculty member's first full contract year, which, in this case, would be the August through May period. Hence, a nine-month, tenure-track faculty member hired in August 2018, during the 2018-2019 academic year, begins the probationary period during the same 2018-19 academic year. Consequently, said tenure-track faculty member—who serves the full five-year probationary period—will, in this case, be eligible to apply and be considered for tenure and promotion during the sixth full IHL contract year/**2023-24** academic year.

However, if an official offer letter states that an employee starts employment mid-year (e.g., February), such that the initial IHL contract memorializes a partial year, then the five-year probationary period starts the *next* full-contract year, or at the beginning of the next academic year. Thus, for example, a nine-month, tenure-track faculty member hired in February 2019, during the same 2018-2019 academic year, begins the probationary period during the 2019-20 academic year. As a result, said tenure-track faculty member—who subsequently serves the full five-year probationary period—will, in this case, be eligible to apply and be considered for tenure and promotion during the sixth full IHL contract year/**2024-2025** academic year.

After departmental, chair, dean, provost, University Promotion, Rank, Tenure & Leave Committee time sensitive reviews, the president must make a recommendation to the IHL Board during the sixth full contract year. Thus, the application for promotion, rank, and tenure may only be considered for initial and subsequent reviews (department → university → provost → president → IHL Board) at the beginning of the sixth full IHL contract year. Failure to earn tenure at the end of the sixth full contract year will result in a terminal contract in the seventh full contract year.

Academic unit leaders shall ensure that promotion and tenure documents meet the aforementioned requirements prior to consideration and within published deadline requirements. Deans and chairs must ensure that all similarly-situated applications are considered and reviewed with consistent and proper application of *Faculty Handbook* sections, *IHL Policies & Bylaws*, and relevant state/federal laws. Applications that do not meet the aforementioned requirements are not eligible for consideration or review and should not reach Academic Affairs. The Office of the Provost is available as a resource and will continue to review practices and policy to ensure conformity with Alcorn standards and IHL rules and bylaws. Your usual cooperation is appreciated.