

MEMORANDUM

TO: Philip Ethington, President of the USC Dornsife Faculty Council
FROM: Jane Junn, Professor of Political Science, USC Dornsife
DATE: 19 October 2012
RE: Analysis of data on tenure at USC Dornsife

A series of denials of tenure to minority junior faculty in the Social Sciences and Humanities in the College at the University of Southern California raised questions about whether there is a pattern and practice of discrimination in the promotion process. A recent denial prompted this analysis within the context of a grievance filed by the faculty member. This analysis presents five findings from an aggregate analysis of 106 individual cases of junior faculty in the Social Sciences and Humanities between 1998 and 2012.

Study Methodology

The University of Southern California does not make records of its tenure decisions public. In the absence of publicly-available information, systematic data on the composition of tenure-track and tenured faculty in USC College (now known as USC Dornsife) can be collected from the annual course catalogs. A database of assistant professors who were evaluated under the tenure and promotion process at USC College between 1998 and 2012 was built using the annual course catalogs. Individual faculty members listed as untenured Assistant Professors were tracked over time until they either moved to the rank of Associate Professor, or disappeared from the course catalog. Junior faculty who moved from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor can be observed with full certainty. The disposition of cases not moving from Assistant to Associate Professor at USC was determined by direct correspondence with the faculty member, report of the individual's status by tenured members of the faculty member's department, or information from other knowledgeable individuals.

Untenured Assistant Professors who left USC before experiencing the tenure process were excluded from the analysis. These cases were excluded from the analysis because these faculty were not – based on the knowledge obtained from the sources cited above – evaluated under the tenure and promotion process at USC. Instead, only those cases where there was a high degree of certainty that the candidate had entered and experienced the tenure and promotion process at USC were included. Thus the cases included in the analysis represent the universe of cases rather than a sample, and any observed differences in outcome variables between groups is a meaningful difference. The analysis presents the variation in having been awarded tenure at USC versus not being awarded tenure. The category of not being awarded tenure includes the status of having been formally denied tenure as well as not having a decision rendered on tenure despite the presence and evaluation of a dossier.

Data were collected for a total of 106 Assistant Professors at USC College between 1998 and 2012. Roughly half (N=54) were in the social sciences, and the other half (N=52) were in humanities departments. Faculty may have had dual appointments with other College

departments or with other units at USC such as the School of Cinematic Arts. In the case of appointments with other units, faculty were coded with the USC College department. For joint appointments within the College, faculty were coded on the basis of the recollection of informants regarding the department that took the lead on the tenure case. Social science departments included in the analysis are Anthropology, Economics, International Relations, Linguistics, Political Science, Psychology, and Sociology. Humanities departments included in the analysis are American Studies and Ethnicity, Art History, Classics, East Asian Languages and Culture, English, History, Philosophy, Religion, and Slavic Languages.

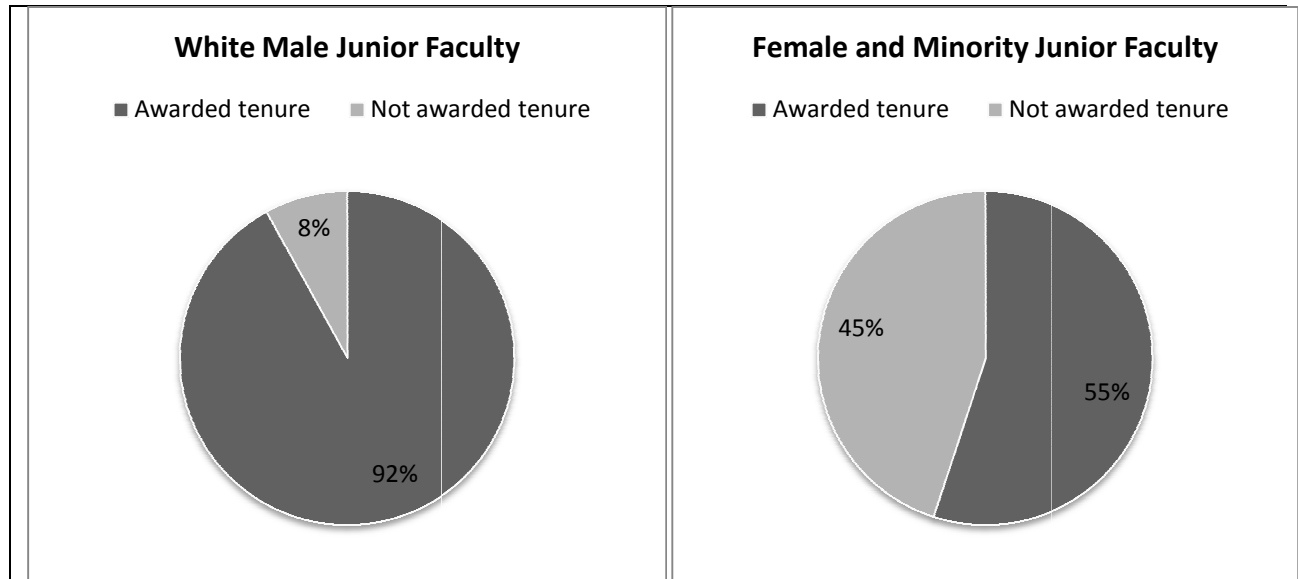
During the fourteen-year period included in this study, 67.9% of the Assistant Professors appearing in the course catalogs were observed to advance to the rank of Associate Professor at USC. Of the 106 faculty included in the database, 53.8% were male and 46.2% were female. Whites made up 60.4% of the faculty included in the database, 9.4% were African American, 23.6% were Asian American, and 6.6% were Latino/Hispanic. The largest demographic grouping by gender and race was white male junior faculty who made up 34.9% of all Assistant Professors who went through the tenure process between 1998 and 2012. The second largest group was white female junior faculty (25.5%). The remaining 39.6% were junior faculty of color (the sum of 18.9% male minority faculty and 20.7% female minority faculty).

Five findings are described below, and analysis of patterns of being awarded tenure by categories such as gender and race is accompanied by tests of statistical significance (i.e., Chi-Square). As noted above, any observed differences in the average rate of being awarded tenure is a substantively important difference because the data represent the universe of cases rather than a sample of Assistant Professors who experienced the tenure process at USC between 1998 and 2012.

1. Ninety-two percent of white male faculty were awarded tenure at USC. Over the fourteen-year period under study, 37 white male Assistant Professors (representing approximately 35% of all faculty at this rank in the social sciences and humanities) were evaluated for tenure. On the basis of information gleaned from multiple sources, only 3 white males of the 37 total were not awarded tenure at USC in the social sciences and humanities. The rate of tenure for white male junior faculty is 91.9%. Of the 3 white males who were denied tenure, 1 was awarded tenure after reconsideration and remains on the faculty in a social science department. Another white male who was denied tenure remains at USC as a “professor of the practice” in another social science department. The lone white male who was denied tenure in the humanities is no longer at USC. There is a similar pattern of high success of being awarded tenure for white male junior faculty in the social sciences (88.2%) and humanities (95%).

2. Fifty-five percent of female and minority faculty were awarded tenure at USC. In stark contrast to the 91.9% success rate among white male junior faculty, all other faculty in the social sciences and humanities observed during this period had a much more modest rate of success of 55.1%. This group includes white women, minority women, and minority men (Asian Americans, Latinos, and Blacks). The difference between the tenure success rate for white males of 91.9% compared to that of women and minority faculty of 55.1% is statistically significant at the .000 level. Figure 1 provides a visual representation of the comparison between white male junior faculty and women and minority junior faculty at USC College.

Figure 1: Comparison of Tenure Awarded: White Males v. Women and Minority Faculty

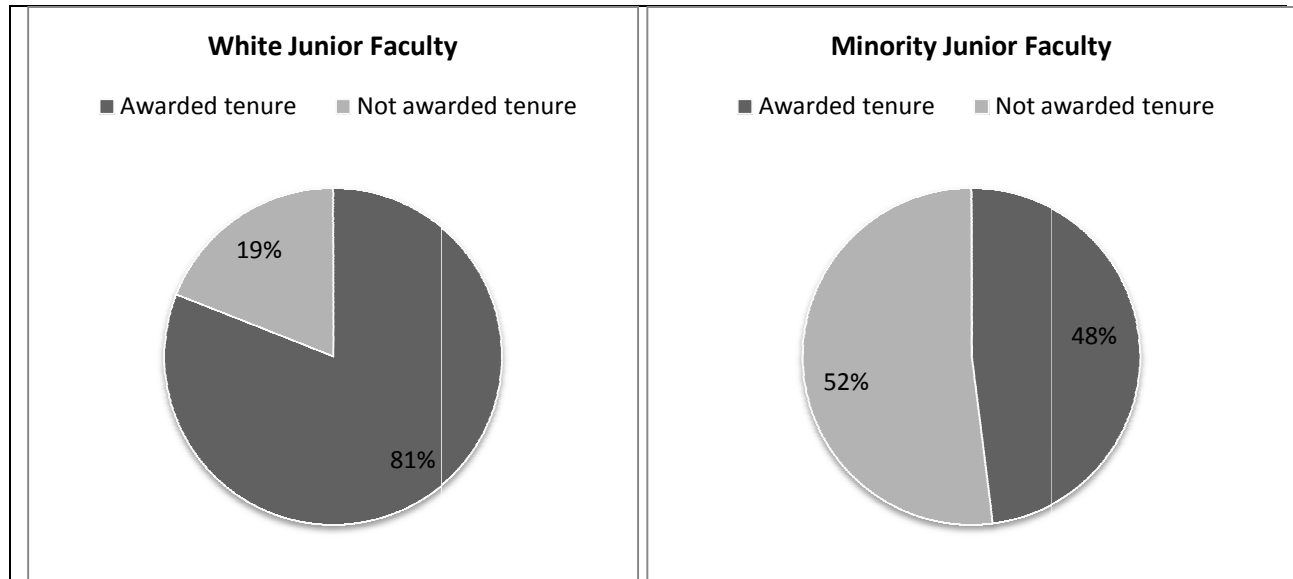


The relationship between being white and male and being awarded tenure at a substantially higher rate at USC College is consistent across the social sciences and humanities. In the social sciences, 88.2% of white male faculty were awarded tenure compared with 51.4% of female and minority junior faculty (statistically significant at .009). In the humanities, 95% of white male faculty were awarded tenure compared with 59.4% of female and minority junior faculty (statistically significant at .005).

3. White junior faculty are awarded tenure at a higher rate than minority junior faculty.

Consistent with the high degree of success of being awarded tenure among white male junior faculty, comparison of the success rates between white junior faculty at USC College and minority junior faculty shows a wide disparity. Eighty-one percent of white junior faculty (including both men and women) between 1998 and 2012 were awarded tenure, while 47.6% of minority junior faculty (including both men and women) were promoted to Associate Professor with tenure. This relationship between race and being awarded tenure at USC is statistically significant at .000. Figure 2 presents a visual representation of the comparison.

Figure 2: Comparison of Tenure Awarded: White v. Minority Junior Faculty



Patterns of significantly higher rates of tenure awarded to white junior faculty compared with minority junior faculty at USC College are consistent across the social sciences and humanities. In the social sciences, 79.3% of white junior faculty were awarded tenure while 44% of minority junior faculty were awarded tenure (statistically significant at .007). In the humanities, 82.9% of white junior faculty were awarded tenure while 52.9% of minority junior faculty were awarded tenure (statistically significant at .023). There were small differences between groups of minority faculty, with 50% of African American junior faculty being awarded tenure, 48% of Asian American junior faculty, and 42.9% of Latino/Hispanic junior faculty successful in the USC tenure process.

4. Asian American female faculty are awarded tenure at a lower rate than white female faculty. While the data are clear about the near-universal rate of USC awarding tenure to white male junior faculty (91.2%), white female faculty were awarded tenure at a lower rate of 66.7%. The success rate for Asian American female faculty, however, was even lower at 40% being awarded tenure by USC. Overall, the relationship between race/ethnicity and gender of faculty and being awarded tenure is significant at .003.

5. Data on comparative tenure rates between minority and white faculty in Social Sciences and Humanities at USC College show a different pattern from information published by USC.

The University of Southern California's Manual of the University Committee on Appointments, Promotions and Tenure specifies the following information in its 2011 publication.

UCAPT Manual (January 2011), page 1:

“1.a-2. How does UCAPT embody USC's commitment to equal opportunity?

UCAPT's recommendations are made individually on a merit basis. Analysis of the data between 2005 and 2009 shows no statistically significant difference between minority and non-minority candidates in success rate for promotion to tenure. (The success rate for minority candidates happens to be five percentage points higher.) During the same period, over a quarter of UCAPT's members were themselves minority.”

These figures are inconsistent with results of tenure cases in the Social Sciences and Humanities at USC College observed during this time period. Between 2005 and 2009, there were 42 cases, of which 26 were white scholars and 16 were minorities. White junior faculty were awarded tenure at a rate of 88.5%, while 56.3% of minority junior faculty were awarded tenure. The relationship between race and being awarded tenure during this time is statistically significant at .017.