



B O A R D O F T R U S T E E S



Academic Affairs Committee

Austin Peay State University

317 College Street

Clarksville, TN 37040

March 19, 2020

1:30 PM

Call to Order

Roll Call/Declaration of Quorum

Action Items

A.Consideration of Tenure Appointments

B.Petition for the Right to Appeal Negative Tenure Decision

C.Approval of the Master of Speech-Language Pathology

Adjourn

Appeal

To the APSU Board of Trustees:

The following is submitted as an appeal to the Board of Trustees pursuant to APSU Policy 1:010. My appeal is based on discriminatory and inequitable enforcement of RTP standards and criteria, particularly in this case of a faculty member of color, resulting in the negative recommendations for my bid for tenure. Due to the ten page limit for my appeal, I respectfully urge the Board to review my previous two responses and the appeal to the University RTP Board concerning the negative recommendations by the: 1) Department RTP committee and the Chair Dr. Mercy Cannon, and 2) the College RTP Committee and the CoAL Dean Barry Jones, and 3) the Provost Rex Gandy, respectively. Those submissions are hereby incorporated by reference. In my narrative below, I will refer to the tenure reports, my responses, and the evidence I have already provided in my appeal to the RTP Appeals Board. All the reports and my responses should be available in my E-dossier and my appeal (both the narrative and the email evidence) was forwarded to the RTP Appeals Board by the Vice Provost Lynne Crosby.

After a careful consideration of my argument and the supporting evidence, I request that the Board of Trustees will overturn the President's decision to deny me tenure.

Context

I joined the department of Languages and Literature at APSU in fall 2014 as assistant professor and coordinator of the first-year writing program. Since then, I have encountered a discriminatory work environment, culminating in with negative recommendations for tenure by the Department Committee and the new Chair, Dr. Mercy Cannon, in September 2019. As a foreign faculty of color, in the past five and a half years, I experienced a constant discrediting of my teaching, where the student evaluation scores of core first-year writing classes were considered to be the only measure of its effectiveness; sidelining, stereotyping, and devaluing of my scholarship

and research; and subjugation of my teaching, research, and service as merely tokens to meet the diversity needs (at the faculty level) of the department and the University. The relentless undermining of my professional capabilities and efforts by a section of senior faculty has culminated in the denial of my tenure bid. This outcome after years of hard work on my part not only raises serious doubts about my department's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, but also raises questions about Austin Peay's allegiance to the same principles.

Teaching, Scholarship, and RTP criteria: misguidance, bad faith, and lack of support

While the negative recommendations for tenure pertain to my Area 2 (regarding my scholarship and creative scholarship), I will also discuss some aspects of my teaching, service, and departmental affairs that are pertinent to my tenure denial of tenure. There are three components to my argument: 1) Until 2017, the *only* problem that was identified in my yearly department review reports and about which I was asked to focus on was the low student evaluation scores for my first-year composition courses; 2) misapplication of department RTP criteria (see the link below to department RTP criteria) which constitutes material procedural error in the decision regarding my tenure; and 3) bad faith advice by Dean Barry Jones and discriminatory conduct of Mercy Cannon, the new chair of the department, which undermined my tenure bid. I will provide a brief explanation below of each of these components.

1) Teaching (Area 1): low student evaluation scores: The department RTP reports before 2017 expressed concerns only about the low student evaluation scores of my first-year core courses. Time and again, the reports by the department RTP committees after reviewing my dossier commented that my student evaluation scores were low in the first-year writing courses, warning that I didn't meet expectations in Teaching Assignment (Area 1). This was of concern, these reports contended, because my job as the coordinator was to supervise writing in first-year writing courses. (I should also point out that the department RTP criteria, however, does not specify any

benchmark score for meeting expectations in Area 1). I was told to work on improving my student evaluation scores, so I focused on making improvements in my teaching and coordinating the writing program.

Every year, I requested the committee to judge my teaching of first-year writing courses by other indicators as well and not just by student evaluation scores (see tenure Area 1 narrative and narratives of previous years). I cited the various studies that have established student evaluations are not only an ineffective measure of teaching but are heavily biased against women and minorities. Almost every time senior colleagues looking over my dossier urged me to avoid making the argument about race and gender. My assigned mentor and other senior colleagues who informally served as my mentors expressed that they disagreed with their colleagues who disregarded the evidence of discrimination in the department, but nonetheless advised me to focus on improving my student evaluation scores. I noted that I never received a negative peer review of my teaching from my senior colleagues who came to observe my teaching every semester. Thus, the inconsistent attitude and practices of my department could not have been more conspicuous. In a puzzling paradox, my senior colleagues, on the one hand, were interested in judging my skills of managing the program and delivering professional development knowledge and skills to other instructors, but, on the other hand, were clearly not interested in my knowledge and expertise on the matter of what constitutes effective teaching in first-year composition courses. While my expertise in the area of administering the first-year writing program was grudgingly taken into consideration, it was not only completely ignored in evaluating my teaching, but student evaluations numbers were used to raise doubts about the effectiveness of my teaching. The elevation of student evaluations for retention and promotion by the department in my case became a strategy, conscious or unconscious, to undermine my other scholarly and pedagogical contributions. In my first three years, several senior faculty members pointed out to me that APSU was first and foremost a teaching university, so the

primary focus must be on teaching and not on research. This violation of departmental and University policy was a material factor in my tenure review and the ultimate decision against tenure.

2) Misapplication, unequal and uneven application of department RTP criteria: I published my article “Romancing the “Illegal” Immigrant” in the *Journal of Literature and Arts Studies* in October 2018 (and presented the publication in my 5th year e-dossier) because it is an open access journal and I wanted to make my work available and accessible to a wider audience. The broader dissemination of my work and its easy accessibility was particularly salient to me because I was examining the treatment of the tendentious topic of immigration in the popular genre of romance novel. The fee I paid was for open access to my article in recognizable databases and indexes (such as google scholar), which is clear in an email from the publisher about the fee (see APPENDIX 2 in my appeal to University RTP Board for explanation from the publisher about the fee for publishing in the open access journal). The Department’s report this year once again focused on the journal in which my article was published, even though the issue was supposedly resolved last year when I was asked to “pursue” another publication after a minority in 2018 department RTP report questioned the legitimacy of the journal and claimed it was “predatory”. The College Committee’s report also suggests that I failed to deliver any record that proves” that the article was peer reviewed. This statement is false. I clearly pointed out to the College Committee in my response that the Notice of Acceptance by the publishers (see supplementary materials in E-Dossier 2018) indicates my article underwent “blind peer review.” The confirmation email I received upon submission indicates that my article would be sent out to reviewers, and I went back and forth with the editors on the revisions I was asked to do.

Furthermore, the department RTP criteria calls for one “peer-reviewed” publication (online or in print) for tenure and promotion to associate professor (see link to department RTP criteria https://www.apsu.edu/academic-affairs/faculty/faculty_resources/LangLit-RTP-

[Criteria-Fall-2016.pdf](#)). The word “reputable” is not included in the department Area 2 criteria, but the Chair Mercy Cannon uses the university’s general RTP criteria and misapplies it to my published article (and see below regarding this issue). Indeed, in the past couple of years, there have been discussions in department meetings about the need to revise and update our department’s RTP standards and criteria to accommodate the constraints of academic publishing and regarding its rapid diversification. However, the revisions have not even been discussed in the department, let alone implemented. Therefore, the current criteria should be applied to my tenure case (see APPENDIX 1 of my appeal to the Appeals Board for the email from the Chair Cannon to the department, providing the tentative timeline of the revisions).

It is also commonly acknowledged in the department that the department RTP standards and criteria for Area 2 are not only ambiguous, but are also not always applied uniformly to all faculty members. For instance, there is no parity in terms of “peer-reviewed” publications for Creative Writing faculty, who often start their publication trajectory with publishing chapbooks of poetry, which are not peer-reviewed the same way as articles in scholarly journals. Also, books published by colleagues in non-university presses do not generally go through a peer-review process. Furthermore, there are clear exceptions to the rule of peer-reviewed publications for tenure and promotion. There is a precedent in the department of a colleague getting tenure even though his publication – a book – came out just *before* he was hired at Austin Peay; since his hiring there is no evidence of published research. Furthermore, there are full professors in the department whose publications would not qualify as peer-reviewed and others whose CVs in the areas of research and scholarship are markedly deficient, if not non-existent. Yet they teach graduate courses without going to academic conferences and without doing research and without publishing.

The discriminatory and disparate application of departmental “policy” regarding allegedly “predatory” publishing is due to the lack of clear policy about the phenomenon and differentiating

it from exploitation and downright deception. It is precisely due to this dilemma and the determination to salvage the validity and the credibility of my scholarship (not to mention all the discrepant RTP reports that I received as late as March 2019) that I requested to meet with Dean Barry Jones in order to seek clarification about the second publication I was asked to produce for my tenure bid.

Despite all the aforementioned complications, my 5th year retention (in 2018) was approved at each level - the department, the then Chair (David Guest), the College Committee, the Dean and the Provost. It is therefore inexplicable that in less than a year - in just a few months full of hard work and fulfilled promises on my part – that I am facing negative recommendations for tenure at each level.

3) Misguidance by Dean Jones and the discriminatory conduct of Chair Mercy Cannon:

There were discrepancies in last year's (2018- 2019) Dean's report and the two Department Reports as to whether my second article should be "submitted" or "published" by the time I come up for tenure review in September 2019. "Publish" is used in the Department Minority and Dean's reports, whereas the Department Recommendation and the College RTP committee mention "pursue another publication," and "look to publish an article," respectively (see Minority Report September 2019 for discrepancies). I went to the CoAL Dean Barry Jones in the spring semester of 2019, just after I received the Department Committee Reports (for 5th year review), seeking clarification about these disparities and ambiguities. I asked him if I needed to submit my published article to further external peer review to validate the quality of my scholarship. The Dean stated there was no need to get additional peer reviews, as the quality of my scholarship was, in his words, "not in question". He also mentioned that he received emails from other department peers in my field who found scholarly merit in my article. However, since the quality of the journal was in dispute, he explained, I was being asked to "pursue" another publication. I accepted his reasoning;

I also took his reassurance to be the end of any dispute about my published article. I then asked Dean Jones to clarify whether I needed to “publish” or “submit” the second article by September 2019, pointing to the discrepancies in the reports. I also indicated to him that it would be impossible for me to have another article published in less than nine months when I come up for tenure. Dean Jones agreed with me that getting another article published would be near impossible in the few months that were left before I came up for tenure. He also acknowledged that he had asked for clarification from the Committees, and as long as I showed “reasonable progress” towards publishing another article in a legitimate journal – including, for example, submission of another article by the time I come up for tenure review, I should have no concerns. In order to allay the fear I still expressed, he then also pointed out that it was extremely rare for faculty to successfully pass the 5th year review and then to be denied tenure in the 6th, and he could not think of any cases in which that had happened. If that happens, the Dean went on to claim, Austin Peay would surely face lawsuits. He then proceeded to suggest that I should only bid for tenure in September 2019 and not seek promotion until my second article is published. On my part, I then sought his assurance that “submission” of another article was sufficient. He confirmed that uploading the submitted article in the dossier and the receipt of submission from the journal would be evidence of reasonable progress. Of course, I had no reason to doubt his word. I walked out of his office and proceeded to convey the Dean’s recommendation to several of my colleagues in the department. The evidence of my conversation with Barry Jones and his recommendations is in the email exchange I had with the then chair, Dr. David Guest, who was coming to the end of his term in office and had requested me to let him know of my decision about the tenure timeline and my bid for promotion (see APPENDIX 6 of my appeal to the RTP Appeals Board for the email exchange between David Guest and me). I did exactly what Dean Jones had asked me to do by submitting a second article, “Race in the Everyday Narratives of Indian Immigrants in the U.S.,” to

another journal by the specified deadline and included the draft and the receipt of submission in the E-Dossier (see supplemental materials in dossier, September 2019).

Dean Jones has now changed his story. He claims that he no longer recalls telling me that submission of another article would show reasonable progress. Instead, he now maintains that it was publishing another article in a few months is what he remembers telling me, even though by his own earlier acknowledgment and department chair's own admission, it was a near-impossible order for me fulfill in a short time. What is material to the Board's review of my appeal is that this volte-face by the Dean is evidence of the Department's and University's failure to adhere to and apply consistent and neutral standards and criteria for tenure in general and for publication in particular. The Chair, the college and department RTP committees, the Dean, and the Provost have shown a lack of good-faith by not adhering, both in letter and in spirit, to the policy (albeit ambiguous) and the established past practices when evaluating my dossier as has been applied when granting tenure to my colleagues in the department.

In her report Chair Mercy Cannon implies that I was deliberately neglected to work on my scholarship, even though I mentioned work-in-progress in my CV included in my review dossiers. Her statement is a clear demonstration of her lack of understanding of not only the workload of teaching and administering the first-year writing program, but also of the primary research areas of sociolinguistics and discourse analysis in which I publish that require collecting linguistic data (sometimes ethnographic) and parsing it minutely to understand relations of race/ethnicity, class, and gender in the everyday interactions of immigrants and migrants. Her assertion in her report that I was being warned consistently about publishing is not accurate (see my Response to Chair's and Department's Reports, Oct. 2019). What is demonstrably true is that in the last two years there has been an undeniable improvement in the student evaluation scores of my first-year composition courses, which makes it impossible now for senior colleagues to question the effectiveness of my

teaching. Thus, the only other area of import about which my detractors (including the new Chair) could conjure doubt and skepticism when questioning my ability and competence is that of research and scholarship. This is precisely what has happened in the case of my tenure bid.

It is also worth noting here that Mercy Cannon never attended any of the bi-annual workshops and other activities I organized (as the coordinator of FY writing) since then for the instructors of first-year writing, even though she teaches ENGL 1020 regularly. Nor did Mercy Cannon, as a senior colleague then, ever inquire about my research or showed any interest in my scholarship or in finding out if I had sufficient time to pursue it the midst of my administrative responsibilities. She became the chair of the department in July 2019, and met with me a couple of times to discuss the changes that she wanted to put in place in the first-year writing program and in my responsibilities. She also urged me in the summer to attend a four-day intense workshop for writing-program administrators. It is clear from her negative recommendation for tenure that Dr. Mercy Cannon sent me to this training knowing fully well that in a less than two months she would not approve me for tenure for not meeting her expectations in Area 2 (scholarship). It is apparent from her report, her behavior, and the circumstances surrounding her takeover as the chair of the department that it would not have mattered whether I “submitted” or “published” my second article on time or not, or whether my published article represented the quality of my scholarship or not; she would not have recommended me for tenure, in any case.

In conclusion, I reiterate my hope that the Board of Trustees will consider the evidence I presented and make an objective evaluation of my dossier according to the current department tenure criteria as applied by the department in other tenure reviews. Failure to do so exposes APSU to liability for unlawful discrimination and failure to observe and apply due process. Grant of my appeal would ensure that I am subject to the same benchmark that has been used until now to grant tenure to my colleagues and peers in the department.

Sincerely,
Dr. Neeta Bhasin
December 30, 2019

Response to College Committee's and Dean's Recommendations for Tenure

To the Provost:

This is a response to the negative recommendations for tenure by the College Committee and the CoAL Dean in Area 2, pertaining to my scholarship. I will address the comments by the College Committee and the dean in Area 2, and then discuss the additional factors that need to be taken into account to comprehend why after a successful 5th year retention, approved at each level - the department, the chair, the College Committee, and the dean – I face negative recommendations for tenure at each level in my 6th year. Also, it bears pointing out that I'm restricted to a two-page response with no additional documentation, so I cannot include the evidence (such as emails) in this document, but can provide it if asked.

AREA 2: "Repeated warnings" (Dean's letter) and "reminders and frequent suggestions" about publications (College Committee Report)

The College Committee report addresses my research and scholarship area by claiming that since 2016-2017 I was given frequent reminders to ensure that I have one publication per requirements and standards of the department's criteria. The dean's letter also claims that despite "repeated warnings" I failed to meet the requirements in Area 2. These assertions are inaccurate. Firstly, my tenure dossier does include the one publication required by the department. I uploaded the peer-reviewed article, published in October 2018, in my 5th year dossier (***see 2018-2019 dossier**). However, the 5th year department reports (minority and majority) expressed doubts about the quality of the journal in which my article was published, but not the quality of my scholarship. I intend to explain this matter in more detail a bit later in this response. Secondly, the reports by the department committee, the new Chair, Dr. Mercy Cannon, and the CoAL College Committee and Dean Jones are also categorically incorrect in claiming that there were "repeated" warnings, suggestions, and concerns expressed to me regarding my Area 2. The first time I was asked to focus on publishing my scholarship is by the Department RTP Committee in its report in January 2017. Until then, the only area in which I was repeatedly found not meeting expectation by the department committee was Area 1, pertaining to my teaching effectiveness. Department Committees only considered the student evaluation scores of my first-year writing courses and deemed them to be low. There was no concern expressed or warnings given about my publication until that report, and nor were they repeated. Moreover, none of the senior colleagues who advised me every year on my review dossier expressed any concern about my scholarship, except to occasionally remind me that I would need one publication before I come up for tenure and promotion. I worked on an article in the spring and summer of 2018, which was published in October 2018, so I fully followed the recommendation of the Department RTP Committee and the counsel of my senior colleagues.

When I joined APSU in 2014, I already had 5 publications and 2 projects underway in the sense that I had begun parsing the collected data. At the time of the job offer from APSU, I tried to negotiate coming up for tenure earlier than the usual 6th year. However, I was told by the search committee that because of the heavy teaching load of 4/4, along with the administrative task of coordinating the first-year composition program (that was to begin in my second year), I would need the extra time to work on my scholarship. Indeed, my teaching of first-year composition courses was singled out for criticism from the outset, despite the positive peer reviews by senior colleagues. The department RTP reports expressed concerns only about the low student evaluation scores of my first-year core courses. Time and again, I was told to work on improving my student evaluation scores, so I directed my energy towards making improvements in my teaching and coordinating the writing program. Still, I went to conferences every year to present my scholarly work, since presenting at conferences is an indicator of an active research agenda and work in progress.

The department and chair both approved me for retention in 2017, but the College Committee that year produced a split vote. In order to understand the split vote of the College Committee, I met with Barry Jones, the then new interim dean of CoAL, who assured me that he had perused my dossier and found it to be perfectly fine. It was clear to him, he stated, that I met expectations in all three areas. He also told me that he was bewildered at the discussion he heard in the room among College Committee members, leading him to conclude it seemed "personal" and not an objective deliberation of my dossier. He also remarked on the "toxicity" in my department and the lack of regular meetings that resulted in senior faculty not having any kind of investment in junior colleagues, which, according to him, was very likely what happened to me. He then proceeded to reassure me of his approval of my retention in his letter to you, and indeed, the letter from your office confirmed my retention for the 5th year. It is remarkable that in little over a year the very same dean, though now no longer "interim," in an outright reversal of his earlier position and statements, misrepresents the facts of my case and rejects my bid for tenure.

FIRST ARTICLE: Peer-Review and the Quality of the Scholarship vs. the Quality of the Journal

I published my article "Romancing the "Illegal" Immigrant" in the *Journal of Literature and Arts Studies* because it is an open access journal and I wanted to make my work available and accessible to a wider audience. The fee I paid was for open access to my article in recognizable databases and indexes, which is clear in an email from the publisher about the fee. ***(I can provide these emails, if requested)**. The College Committee report says that "I failed to deliver any record that proves" that

the article was peer reviewed. This statement is false. I clearly pointed out to the College Committee in my response that the Notice of Acceptance by the publishers (**see supplementary materials in E-Dossier 2018**) indicates my article underwent “blind peer review,” so to the best of my knowledge, the article is peer-reviewed, and the letter from the publisher verifies that. The confirmation email I received upon submission indicates that my article would be sent out to reviewers, and I went back and forth with the editors on the revisions I was asked to do. Nonetheless, the College Committee charges me for not providing additional evidence such as proofs of revisions or page proofs. I did not provide these because revisions and page proofs are not evidence of peer review, and I was limited to a 1-2 page response without any additional documentation. So, it’s unclear how I was supposed to provide the College Committee with the evidence and examples of other colleagues having been granted tenure without any evidence of “peer-review” or “reputability” of the journals in which they published. Was I expected to provide a list of names of colleagues?

As far as Cabell’s list is concerned, I clarified in my response to the College Committee, that prior to last year’s RTP reports, I was not aware of Cabell’s list, nor is it specified in the current departmental criteria as a verifying measure of bona fide journals. However, the College Committee, following the chair’s cue, uses Cabell’s list unquestioningly, not taking into consideration that the list also has been the subject of controversy for many in academia, as it does not have a clear-cut criteria for blacklisting specific journals.

SECOND ARTICLE: Submit or Publish?

There were discrepancies in last year’s (2018- 2019) Dean’s report and the two Department Reports as to whether my second article should be submitted or published by the time I come up for tenure review in September 2019. “Publish” is used in the Department Minority and Dean’s reports, whereas the Department Recommendation and the College RTP committee mention “pursue another publication,” and “look to publish an article,” respectively (**see Minority Report September 2019 for discrepancies**). I went to the CoAL Dean Barry Jones in January 2019, just after I received the Department Committee Reports (for 5th year review), seeking clarification about the disparities and ambiguities in them. I asked him if I needed to submit my published article to further external peer review to validate the quality of my scholarship. The dean stated there was no need to get additional peer reviews, as the quality of my scholarship was not in question. He also mentioned that he received emails from other department peers in my field who found scholarly merit in my article, but since the quality of the journal was in dispute, I was being asked to pursue another publication. (I understood this resolution to be the end of the dispute about the quality of the journal I published in. Therefore, I was surprised that the new chair not only reopens the discussion in her report, but makes it the focal point). I then asked Dean Jones to clarify whether I needed to publish or submit the article by September 2019, pointing to the discrepancies in the reports. I also indicated to him that it would be impossible for me to have another article published in less than 9 months when I come up for tenure. Dean Jones’ response was that he had asked for clarification from the Committees, and that I should be able to show “reasonable progress” towards publishing another article in a legitimate journal, which would mean submitting another article by the time I come up for tenure review. The dean also suggested at that time that I should only bid for tenure in September 2019 and not seek promotion until the second article is published. I made doubly sure that the dean and I were on the same page on the matter of “submission” of another article, and once I had his confirmation (unfortunately, not in writing!), I proceeded to convey the dean’s recommendation to several of my colleagues in the department, including emailing the former chair who was coming to the end of his term in office and had requested me to let him know of my decision about the tenure timeline and my bid for promotion. ***(I can provide the emails, if needed)**. I did exactly what Dean Jones had asked me to do by submitting a second article, “Race in the Everyday Narratives of Indian Immigrants in the U.S.,” to another journal by the specified deadline and included the draft and the receipt of submission in the E-Dossier (**see supplemental materials September 2019**).

The College RTP Committee’s report does not address many of the points I raised in my response and repeats the assertions made in the Department RTP Report and the Chair’s report. For instance, it does not attend to my point that Dr. Mercy Cannon’s own report states that “Legitimate journals usually take between one and three years to go from initial submission to publication.” So, according to the Chair’s own admission, it would not have been possible for me to publish a second article in time, even if I had gone up for tenure later in the year. Why then was I asked to do so? Similarly, the breach of trust by Dean Jones is even more egregious. He flatly denied that he told me that submission of another article would show reasonable progress. He now recalls telling me to publish another article by the time of my tenure review. This volte-face by the dean has little to do with holding faculty to established standards and criteria and everything to do with treating vulnerable junior faculty as pawns in departmental politics and power dynamics.

Finally, I hope you will recommend me for tenure based on the evidence of my scholarship, judging my dossier according to the current department criteria for tenure. This would ensure that I am subject to the same benchmark that has been used until now to grant tenure to my colleagues and peers in the department.

Subject: Lang Lit updates

Date: Monday, September 9, 2019 at 1:02:25 PM Central Daylight Time

From: Cannon, Mercy

To: Atkinson, Robert W., Bhasin, Neeta, Brockman, Beatrix, Cannon, Mercy, Cervelli, Ken, Crenshaw, Linda A., DiPaolo, Osvaldo, Eichhorn, Jill, Emery, Taylor, Franks, Jill, Gargaillo, Florian, Guest, David, Honea, Katherine M., Kershner, Stephen, Kitterman, Barry, Konkobo, Christopher, Kostakis, Andrew E., Lyons, Christina L., Major, David, McWilliams, Cynthia, Puszkas, Norbert, Ruiz, Miguel, Schultz, Laura, Shea, Daniel, Sikes, Marisa, Sorenson, Karen, Spofford, Andrea, Wadia, Mickey, Major, Charla, Winters, Timothy F, Wright, Amy

Dear colleagues,

I'm trying to send weekly updates for our department. I'd be glad to share your events and news; please send me anything you like.

RTP revision:

At the provost's chairs meeting, the Provost announced that we'll be revising RTP criteria next fall, rather than this year. We should still be thinking about our criteria and have some discussion this year, but revisions will be completed in December 2020 to go into effect Fall 2021.

Office hours:

Please send Kristi & Jessica your office hours so we have them handy for students. Also, please consider keeping your door open during office hours to create a welcoming environment for students (who are often already too intimidated to stop by a professor's office). It changes the "feel" of the halls when professors are seen as inviting students into their own spaces.

Committees:

Please designate someone to take minutes during committee meetings. I'm trying to start keeping track of discussions and decisions so that we have institutional records, rather than collective memories. I'll ask for & store these minutes at the end of the semester or year.

Schedules:

I will be emailing your schedules along shortly. I did my very best to balance the needs of the programs, students, and faculty – and tried when possible to accommodate your preferences. Making the schedule was like a fascinating, complex logic puzzle, kind of fun. Changing the schedule at this point will be difficult, as the whole thing will collapse if touched, so I can only do so in the rarest of circumstances. Thanks for your patience with my first ever Lang Lit schedule.

Thank you! To everyone for the work you do. I see so many good things from my point of view – kindness to students, accommodations for their needs, excitement over your classes, fresh ideas for our programs. It's lovely.

Please feel free to stop by. I'm in my office a lot, and I'm usually interruptible. I'd be glad to see you and hear how things are going.

Kind regards,
Mercy

APPENDIX I (Contd.)

Mercy Cannon, Ph.D.

Chair and Professor of English

Department of Languages and Literature

Harned Hall 116

Austin Peay State University

Clarksville, TN 37044

931-221-7891

cannonm@apsu.edu

Thursday, November 14, 2019 at 3:16:22 PM Central Standard Time

Subject: Re: Re: To Neeta Bhasin__we got your paper

Date: Wednesday, September 26, 2018 at 8:34:15 PM Central Daylight Time

From: Journal JLAS

To: Bhasin, Neeta

Dear Neeta Bhasin ,

Thanks for your prompt reply.

We have got word version of your paper: Romancing the "Illegal" Immigrant, your paper No. is JLAS20180925-2.

We would like to point out that the authors need to pay us some publication fees to have their papers published in our journal.

The fee is US\$60.00 per page after your paper is formatted and typesetted based on our format (500-600 words per page).

As you have know, JLAS is an independent open access academic monthly journal without any sponsors or advertisements,

we have to charge author some fee for printing, distributing, and posting the journal.

Your paper will be published not only on-line (including indexed in google scholar and CNKI), but also in hard copy, and you can get both PDF version and printed copy of the journal..

Do you agree to forward your paper to be reviewed first?

Yours sincerely,

Doris

From: [Bhasin, Neeta](#)

Date: 2018-09-26 10:05

To: [Journal JLAS](#)

Subject: Re: To Neeta Bhasin__we got PDF version of your paper

Hi Doris,

Yes, I'll do it tonight as soon as I can.

Thanks,

Neeta

Dr. Neeta Bhasin

APPENDIX 3.

From: Journal JLAS <art.literature@hotmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, September 25, 2018 8:27 PM

To: Bhasin, Neeta

Subject: To Neeta Bhasin__we got PDF version of your paper

Dear Neeta Bhasin ,

Thanks for your prompt reply.

We have got pdf version of your paper: Romancing the "Illegal" Immigrant, your paper No. is JLAS20180925-2.

Could you please submit word version of your paper for reviewing?

Yours sincerely,

Doris

APPENDIX 3. (CONTD.)

To: Bhasin, Neeta

Subject: Re: Re: To Neeta Bhasin__we got your paper

Dear Neeta Bhasin,

Thanks for your prompt reply.

We will forward your paper to our reviewers, it may take several weeks for us to get the result, we will keep you informed.

Keep in touch and have a nice day.

Yours sincerely,

Doris

From: [Bhasin, Neeta](#)

Date: 2018-09-27 23:48

To: [Journal JLAS](#)

Subject: Re: Re: To Neeta Bhasin__we got your paper

Yes, please forward my paper to be peer reviewed first, Doris.

Thanks,

Neeta

Dr. Neeta Bhasin

Assistant Professor

Languages & Literature

Harned Hall 139

bhasinn@apsu.edu

931-221-7870

From: Journal JLAS <art.literature@hotmail.com>

Sent: Wednesday, September 26, 2018 8:34 PM

To: Bhasin, Neeta

Subject: Re: Re: To Neeta Bhasin__we got your paper

Thursday, November 14, 2019 at 3:14:21 PM Central Standard Time

Subject: Re: Re: To Neeta Bhasin__ Paper Acceptance Notice
Date: Sunday, October 14, 2018 at 9:09:14 PM Central Daylight Time
From: Journal JLAS
To: Bhasin, Neeta
Attachments: Paper Acceptance Notice-Neeta Bhasin.pdf, TRANSFER OF COPYRIGHT AGREEMENT-JLAS.pdf

Dear Neeta Bhasin,

Greetings from Journal of Literature and Art Studies (ISSN: 2159-5836).

We are pleased to inform you that your paper titled "Romancing the "Illegal" Immigrant" (Paper No. JLAS20180925-2) submitted for consideration for Journal of Literature and Art Studies, has been processed utilizing a two-person referee process and upon their recommendation your paper has been accepted for publication.

We would like to tell you that the publication fee is US\$60 per page, your paper has **16** pages after typesetting. The total fees will be $US\$60 \times 16 + US\60 (the postage) = US\$1,020, the publication fee is **US\$1,020**.

Please find the acceptance notice and transfer of copyright agreement in the attachment, and sign the latter to us as early as you can.

After receiving your confirmation on payment arrangement, we will arrange your paper to go into the next working step and inform you of our process later.

Your paper will be published not only on-line, but also in hard copy, and you can get both **PDF version and 2 hard copies of the full journal**.

Please kindly acknowledge receipt.

Yours sincerely,
Doris

You can choose one of the payment methods as following:

1. Paypal account: finance@davidpublishing.org

How to use Paypal to make your payment to us?

- 1) Open the website of Paypal: www.paypal.com,
- 2) Select your country;
- 3) Create an account with your email address;
- 4) Add your credit card or debit card to your paypal account;
- 5) Identify your card (optional)

Sent: Thursday, October 18, 2018 4:35 AM

To: Bhasin, Neeta

Subject: To Neeta Bhasin__paper: Romancing the "Illegal" Immigrant

Dear Dr. Neeta Bhasin ,

I am Jenny who is in charge of editing and proof reading on all the papers.

We are writing to ask you to revise your paper: Romancing the "Illegal" Immigrant
(JLAS20180925-2):

- (1) Please complete your personal information in both text and footnote in page 1.
- (2) we have revised some words marked in yellow, please double check.

Please kindly do in the attach file directly, if there are some other revisions, please point them out and mark them in other color, so that it is more convenient for us to edit.

It is highly appreciated if you could send us the revised paper within 2-5 days.

Looking forward to hearing from you soon.

Best Regards,
Jenny

APPENDIX 3. (Contd.)

Best Regards,
Jenny

From: [Bhasin, Neeta](#)

Date: 2018-10-20 16:02

To: [Journal JLAS](#)

Subject: Re: To Neeta Bhasin__paper: Romancing the 捏Illegal?Immigrant
Here's the attachment!

Dr. Neeta Bhasin
Assistant Professor
Languages & Literature
Harned Hall 139
bhasinn@apsu.edu
931-221-7870

From: Bhasin, Neeta

Sent: Saturday, October 20, 2018 3:00 AM

To: Journal JLAS

Subject: Re: To Neeta Bhasin__paper: Romancing the "Illegal" Immigrant

Hi Jenny,

I've attached the revised paper. Following are the types of revisions I made:

- 1) I've checked and changed the words you marked in yellow.
- 2) As far as my personal information is concerned, I have revised it in the footnote, but I could not find any errors in my personal information anywhere else. Perhaps I did not understand what you mean. Do you want me to add my department name under my name below the title of the paper? Does "Clarksville, Tennessee, USA" have to be included along with my university and department affiliation below the title?
- 3) Also, my additional revisions, which are mostly changed words or slightly altered sentences, are marked in pink.

Please let me know if you have any concerns.

Thanks,
Neeta

Dr. Neeta Bhasin
Assistant Professor
Languages & Literature
Harned Hall 139
bhasinn@apsu.edu
931-221-7870

From: Journal JLAS <art.literature@hotmail.com>

Thursday, November 14, 2019 at 3:09:11 PM Central Standard Time

Subject: Re: Re: To Neeta Bhasin__paper: Romancing the 捏Illegal?Immigrant
Date: Monday, October 22, 2018 at 8:32:57 PM Central Daylight Time
From: Journal JLAS
To: Bhasin, Neeta
Attachments: Romancing the "Illegal" Immigrant.pdf

Dear Dr. Neeta Bhasin,

The text in our file has no space problem, you should read the pdf version of the file as attached, please let me know if it is okay for publication.

Best Regards,
Jenny

From: [Bhasin, Neeta](#)
Date: 2018-10-23 01:55
To: [Journal JLAS](#)
Subject: Re: To Neeta Bhasin__paper: Romancing the 捏Illegal?Immigrant

Hi Jenny,

I haven't had the time to look at the revised paper carefully, but I noticed that some words are still running into the following words and don't have any space between them. Is that a typesetting problem? Let me know.

Thanks,
Neeta Bhasin

Dr. Neeta Bhasin
Assistant Professor
Coordinator, First Year Writing Program
Languages & Literature
Austin Peay State University
Harned Hall 139
bhasinn@apsu.edu
931-221-7870

From: Journal JLAS <art.literature@hotmail.com>
Reply-To: Journal JLAS <art.literature@hotmail.com>
Date: Sunday, October 21, 2018 at 8:49 PM
To: "Bhasin, Neeta" <bhasinn@apsu.edu>
Subject: Re: Re: To Neeta Bhasin__paper: Romancing the 捏Illegal?Immigrant

Dear Dr. Neeta Bhasin,

We have revised your paper, hope it could be published now.

Friday, November 15, 2019 at 4:22:12 PM Central Standard Time

Subject: [External] CFP: Romance area at PCA**Date:** Thursday, October 17, 2019 at 1:28:26 AM Central Daylight Time**From:** PCA Romance**To:** jodi.mcalister@deakin.edu.au, Heather Schell

*** This is an EXTERNAL email. Please exercise caution. DO NOT open attachments or click links from unknown senders or unexpected email - APSU IT Security. ***

Hello -

You're receiving this email because, according to the website Teach Me Tonight, you have published or presented an academic piece on romance or an adjacent topic in recent years.

We are Dr Jodi McAlister and Dr Heather Schell, and we are the Area Co-Chairs for the Romance area at the Popular Culture Association. We are writing to make sure you're aware of our CFP for the conference in Philadelphia in April next year, and to invite you to submit: <https://pcaaca.org/area/romance>.

PCA is always one of the biggest gatherings of romance scholars of the year, and next year will be no different. We're especially soliciting papers on the subject of romance and scandal for the 2020 conference, but this is not fixed: as long as a proposed paper deals with romance in some way, we're interested.

Please consider submitting an abstract before the deadline, which is November 1, 2019 (not October 1, as the CFP states). We are committed to growing this area, and to ensure that it continues to be a vibrant hub of inter-disciplinary scholarship.

Please let us know if you have any questions - and we hope to see you in Philadelphia.

Kind regards

Jodi and Heather

Thursday, November 14, 2019 at 3:04:59 PM Central Standard Time

Subject: FW: RTP comment
Date: Wednesday, September 25, 2019 at 11:02:24 AM Central Daylight Time
From: Sims, Lynn D.
To: Bhasin, Neeta
Attachments: image001.png, image002.png, image003.png, image004.png, image005.png

Hi Neeta,

Good to talk with you the other day, but sorry it was under RTP circumstances. Here's what I sent Barry after the last RTP. Take care and stay in touch. Best, Lynn

Lynn D. Sims

Associate Professor (Retired)

Austin Peay State University
College of Arts and Letters
Dept. of Languages and Literature
P.O. 4487
Clarksville, TN 37044
931-221-7339
Fax: 931-221-7219
simsl@apsu.edu
www.apsu.edu/simsl

BE A GOV!



From: Sims, Lynn D.

Sent: Monday, February 18, 2019 2:37 PM

To: Jones, Barry <jonesb@apsu.edu>

Subject: RTP comment

Hi Barry,

I probably should have emailed Friday after our meeting with you, but -----

I just wanted to let you know that I thought Neeta's article was an extremely good article. I also think it would have been accepted for publication in other journals had she submitted elsewhere.

I also feel that the Minority Report is just that – a minority of the group. The majority of us think that she should be retained and given the opportunity to succeed here.

Those are my thoughts. Best, Lynn

Lynn D. Sims

Associate Professor

Austin Peay State University
College of Arts and Letters
Dept. of Languages and Literature
P.O. 4487
Clarksville, TN 37044
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Fax: 931-221-7219
simsl@apsu.edu
www.apsu.edu/simsl

APPENDIX 6.

Friday, November 15, 2019 at 4:18:36 PM Central Standard Time

Subject: delaying RTP?

Date: Tuesday, April 30, 2019 at 2:12:09 PM Central Daylight Time

From: Guest, David

To: Bhasin, Neeta

Neeta—

It's my understanding that you can ask to have your next RTP moved from September to January. I assume that you could also ask that the tenure clock be stopped for a full year. Are you planning to ask for more time?

David

Subject: Fw: delaying RTP? (Neeta's reply to David Guest)

Date: Monday, October 28, 2019 at 10:40:14 PM Central Daylight Time

From: Bhasin, Neeta

To: bhasin.neeta@gmail.com

Dr. Neeta Bhasin
Assistant Professor
Languages & Literature
Harned Hall 139
bhasinn@apsu.edu
931-221-7870

APPENDIX G. (Contd.)

From: Bhasin, Neeta

Sent: Tuesday, April 30, 2019 4:28 PM

To: Guest, David <guestd@apsu.edu>

Subject: Re: delaying RTP?

Hi David,

I met with Barry Jones about a week ago regarding my RTP. He did mention that I may be able to postpone my tenure dossier until January. However, he also recommended that I should go up for tenure in September (as long as I can show reasonable progress (like submission perhaps) of my paper to a scholarly journal by then. Barry also suggested that I do not submit the statement of intent for promotion until the paper is accepted and published (perhaps next year). I decided to take his recommendation. I cannot afford to postpone my tenure until January, because I need to go home to India in December to visit my mother and take care of some important family matters. Sorry, I should have conveyed you this information, but I assumed that Barry might have told you and Mercy about it already. My apologies.

I'll talk to you soon.

Thanks,
Neeta

Dr. Neeta Bhasin
Assistant Professor
Languages & Literature
Harned Hall 139
bhasinn@apsu.edu
931-221-7870

From: Guest, David

Sent: Tuesday, April 30, 2019 2:12 PM

Appeal

To the Tenure and Promotion Appeals Board:

I respectfully wish to draw the attention of the Board to my previous two responses to the negative recommendations by the: 1) Department RTP committee and the chair Dr. Mercy Cannon, and 2) the College RTP Committee and the CoAL dean Barry Jones, respectively. In this appeal, I will again reiterate the arguments made in those documents, along with making available the details and the evidence (such as emails) that could not be included with the previous responses due to policy and page restrictions. The narrative below is an attempt to shed light on the inequitable enforcement of RTP standards and criteria, apathetic departmental environment, and the lack of meaningful support and clear guidance to junior faculty that have led to the negative recommendations for my bid for tenure.

Context & History

The negative recommendations for tenure pertain to my Area 2, concerning my scholarship and creative activities. However, in this narrative I will also discuss some aspects of Areas 1 and 3, pertaining to my teaching and administration of the first-year writing program and service that have a bearing on my scholarship and research. I have pointed out the intersection of the 3 Areas in my work at Austin Peay in the narratives in the review dossiers from the previous years.

The Marking of Teaching Assignment as My Problem Area

I joined APSU in fall 2014 as assistant professor and coordinator of the first-year writing program in the department of Languages and Literature. I already had 5 publications, and I had just returned from the national conference of Rhetoric Society of America (RSA) where I presented on 2 sociolinguistics projects for which I had begun parsing the data. At the time of the job offer, I tried to negotiate coming up for tenure earlier than the usual 6th year. However, I was told by the search committee that because of the heavy teaching load of 4/4, along with the administrative task of coordinating the first-year composition program (that was to begin in my second year), I would need the extra time to work on my scholarship. Indeed, my teaching of first-year composition courses was singled out for criticism from the outset, despite the positive peer reviews of my teaching by senior colleagues. Therefore, I directed all my energy towards making improvements in my teaching and coordinating.

The department RTP reports until 2017 expressed concerns only about the low student evaluation scores of my first-year core courses. Time and again, the reports by the department RTP committees after reviewing my dossier commented that my student evaluation scores were low in the first-year writing courses, warning that I didn't meet expectations in Teaching Assignment (Area 1). This was of concern, these reports contended, because my job as the coordinator was to supervise writing in first-year writing courses. (I should also point out that the department RTP criteria, however, does not specify any benchmark score for meeting expectations in Area 1). I was told to work on improving my student evaluation scores, so I focused on making improvements in my teaching and coordinating the writing program, and my research projects that were underway when I came to Austin Peay became of secondary concern.

Every year, I requested the committee to judge my teaching of first-year writing courses by other indicators as well and not just by student evaluation scores. **(See tenure Area 1 narrative and narratives of previous years)**. I cited the various studies that have established student evaluations are not only an ineffective measure of teaching but are heavily biased against women and minorities. Almost every time senior colleagues looking over my dossier urged me to avoid making the argument about race and gender, because, according to them, to many in the RTP committees the argument will sound like an “excuse” and/or talking down to committee members, especially by those who think “numbers are the only objective measure” of teaching. While disagreeing with this view of their colleagues, my assigned mentor and other senior colleagues who informally served as my mentors, nonetheless, advised me to focus on improving my student evaluation scores. At this juncture, I should point out to the Board that I never received a negative peer review of my teaching from my senior colleagues who came to observe my teaching every semester. Thus, the inconsistent attitude and practices of my department could not have been more conspicuous. Paradoxically, my senior colleagues, on the one hand, are interested in judging my skills of managing the program and delivering professional development knowledge and skills to other instructors, but, on the other, they are clearly not interested in my knowledge and expertise on the matter of what constitutes effective teaching in first-year composition courses. While my expertise in the area of administering the first-year writing program is taken into consideration, it was not only completely ignored in the area of teaching, but student evaluations numbers are used to raise doubts about the effectiveness of my teaching. The privileging of student evaluations for retention and promotion by the department in my case became a strategy, conscious or unconscious, to undermine my other scholarly and pedagogical contributions. In my first three years, several senior faculty members pointed out to me that APSU was first and foremost a teaching university, so the primary focus must be on teaching and not on research.

Impediments to my Endeavors in Research and Scholarship in the Department

Despite bearing the burden of having my department use subjective student evaluations as central in determining my academic trajectory, I still went to conferences every year to present my scholarly work, since presenting at conferences is an indicator of an active research agenda and work in progress. I presented not only in regional conferences, but also in a national conference of repute. I presented in a symposium on Discourse Analysis organized by major scholars in the field at Carnegie Mellon University, my alma Mater, who invited me to share my research on racial discourses in the narratives of immigrants. I also presented in October 2018 at APSU my work-in-progress paper, after a new CoAL Committee for promoting discussion on research and scholarship among faculty selected my abstract, which eventually became the scholarly article that I submitted as part of the extra requirement for publication after a minority in 2018 department RTP report questioned the legitimacy of the journal in which my article was published. **(I provide more details and evidence about my published and submitted articles later in the appeal).**

Chair Mercy Cannon, in her report implies that I was deliberately neglected to work on my scholarship, even though I mentioned work-in-progress in my CV that was included in my review dossier. Her statement is a clear demonstration of her lack of understanding of not only the workload of teaching and administering the first-year writing program, but also of the primary research areas of sociolinguistics and discourse analysis in which I publish

that require collecting linguistic data (sometimes ethnographic) and parsing it minutely to understand relations of race/ethnicity, class, and gender in the everyday interactions of immigrants and migrants. In all my years in the department, I don't remember more than one or two colleagues who expressed any interest in my research and understood how closely allied it is with my teaching interests. It also needs to be mentioned that several colleagues, particularly senior ones, regard my research on immigration, race and racialization, and gender and class relations less favorably, less knowledgeably, and with much disdain. As a minority faculty, my investment in these topics of research is regarded by them as a personal rather than an intellectual and academic pursuit, and therefore, seen as having little scholarly merit. It is also true that many professors who experience such biases can hardly ever provide concrete evidence of prejudice, not because the biases don't exist, but because they are almost always couched as "objective evaluations". To avoid being the target of such well-known and well-studied bias, I always shared the drafts of my papers and my conference presentations, not to mention my yearly dossier narratives, with a couple of senior colleagues in the department, who provided valuable feedback, encouraging counsel regarding my teaching, research, and service, and words of advice on how to navigate the minefield of departmental politics and low student evaluation scores in first-year composition courses. None of these senior colleagues who advised me every year on my review dossier expressed any concern about my scholarship, except to occasionally remind me that I would need one publication before I come up for tenure and promotion.

Furthermore, it is also worth noting here that the new chair Mercy Cannon, who in 2014 served on my hiring committee, never ever attended any of the bi-annual workshops and other activities I organized (as the coordinator of FY writing) since then for the instructors of first-year writing, even though she teaches ENGL 1020 regularly. Nor did Mercy Cannon, as a senior colleague then, ever ask me about my research or showed any interest in my scholarship or in finding out if I had sufficient time to pursue it the midst of my administrative responsibilities. She became the chair of the department in July 2019, and met with me a couple of times to discuss the changes that she wanted to put in place in the first-year writing program and in my responsibilities. She also asked me to consider going in the summer to the 4-day intense workshop for writing-program administrators. I agreed to do so, not only because I thought it would be useful for me, but as respect for her initiative as the new chair to invest in my administrative training to improve the writing program. It is clear from her negative recommendation for tenure that Dr. Mercy Cannon sent me to this training knowing fully well that in a less than 2 months she would not approve me for tenure for not meeting her expectations in Area 2. In fact, in her report (Chair's Report, September 2019) she dwells excessively on the point that I submitted my second article on the last day dossiers closed, rather than acknowledging that I succeeded in meeting the deadline for submitting the second article despite the rigorous 4-day workshop she urged me to attend in the summer and report on. Indeed, had I not attended the workshop or worked hard to come up with a plan to rejuvenate the FY writing program a month before, I could have probably submitted my second article a few days earlier than on the day of the deadline. In fact, it is apparent from her report and the circumstances surrounding her takeover as the chair of the department that it wouldn't have mattered whether I submitted my second article on time or not, or whether my published article represented the quality of my scholarship or not, she would not have recommended me for tenure, in any case. For her to claim in her report that I was being warned consistently about publishing is a gross misrepresentation of fact and reality ***(See my Response to Chair's and Department's**

Reports, Oct. 2019). The truth of the matter is that in the last two years there has been a shift in the university discourse (for various reasons) towards not including student evaluation scores in the faculty RTP dossiers, or, at the very least, not giving them as much weightage. Combined with this purported shift is the undeniable improvement in the student evaluation scores of my first-year composition courses, which makes it difficult now for senior colleagues to question the effectiveness of my teaching. Thus, the only other area of import about which my detractors (including the new chair, Mercy Cannon) could conjure doubt and skepticism, while questioning my ability and competence is that of research and scholarship. This is precisely what has happened in the case of my tenure bid, aided by the duplicity and malfeasance on the part of Dean Barry Jones. Next, I will explain the circumstances of the publication of my first article and the confusion about the submission of the second one in detail.

Departmental RTP Standards and Criteria on Research and Scholarship and their Unequal and Uneven Applications

The department RTP criteria calls for one “peer-reviewed” publication (online or in print) for tenure and promotion from assistant to associate professor. The word “reputable” is not included in the department Area 2 criteria, but the chair Mercy Cannon uses the university’s general RTP criteria and misapplies it to my published article. Indeed, in the past couple of years, there have been cursory discussions in meetings about the need to revise and update our department’s RTP standards and criteria to accommodate the constraints of academic publishing and also its rapid diversification. However, the revisions have not yet taken place. **(See APPENDIX 1 for the email from the chair Cannon to the department, providing the tentative timeline of the revisions.)** It is also common knowledge in the department that the department RTP standards and criteria for Area 2 are not only ambiguous, but are also not always applied uniformly to all faculty members. For instance, there is no parity in terms of “peer-reviewed” publications for Creative Writing faculty, who often start their publication trajectory with publishing chapbooks of poetry, which are not peer-reviewed the same way as articles in scholarly journals. Also, books published by colleagues in non-university presses do not generally go through a peer-review process. Similarly, there is a history of departmental subventions and paying money for publishing books and journals to foreign language faculty. It is not entirely clear who checks the reputability of those journals in which they publish or if anyone ensures that those publishing presses are not vanity presses, or even if those publications are peer-reviewed. Furthermore, there are clear exceptions to the rule of peer-reviewed publications for tenure and promotion. There is a precedent in the department of a colleague getting tenure even though his publication – a book – came out just *before* he was hired at Austin Peay, and since his hiring there is no evidence of published research. Furthermore, there are a few full professors in the department whose publications would not qualify as peer-reviewed and others whose CVs in the areas of research and scholarship are markedly deficient, if not non-existent. Yet they teach graduate courses without going to academic conferences or doing research and publishing it.

The CoAL College Committee in its report **(See College Committee Report, October 2019)** charges me for not providing the evidence and examples of other colleagues having been granted tenure without any evidence of “peer-review” or “reputability” of the journals in which they published. Was I expected to provide a list of names? If so, I respectfully decline to provide the names of my departmental colleagues in this appeal. The

onus of providing such evidence, i.e. naming names of colleagues, should not fall on a junior faculty member, particularly not in appeals to higher committees about her tenure case, and particularly not when the information can be easily accessed and verified by senior faculty and administration.

FIRST ARTICLE: Peer-Reviewed or not? & The Quality of the Scholarship vs. the Quality of the Journal

I published my article “Romancing the “Illegal” Immigrant” in the *Journal of Literature and Arts Studies* because it is an open access journal and I wanted to make my work available and accessible to a wider audience. The broader dissemination of my work and its easy accessibility was particularly salient to me because I was examining the treatment of the tendentious topic of immigration in the popular genre of romance novel. Therefore, I needed to break out of the confines of academic publishing that would have rendered my scholarship invisible and pointless to a narrow academic audience. The fee I paid was for open access to my article in recognizable databases and indexes (such as Google Scholar), which is clear in an email from the publisher about the fee (**See APPENDIX 2 for explanation from the publisher about the fee for publishing in the open access journal**). The College Committee report says that “I failed to deliver any record that proves” that the article was peer reviewed. This statement is false. I clearly pointed out to the College Committee in my response that the Notice of Acceptance by the publishers (**See supplementary materials in E-Dossier 2018**) indicates my article underwent “blind peer review,” so to the best of my knowledge, the article is peer-reviewed, and the letter from the publisher verifies that. The confirmation email I received upon submission indicates that my article would be sent out to reviewers, and I went back and forth with the editor on the revisions I was asked to do (**See APPENDIX 3 for emails with the editor regarding peer-reviews and revisions**). Furthermore, there’s some evidence that my strategy in publishing the article in an open access journal and recognizable databases is proving to be successful. I have included an email to me from two scholars who found my article on a website and invite me to present my work at the academic conference on romance fiction next year (**See APPENDIX 4**).

As far as Cabell’s list is concerned, I clarified in my response to the College Committee that prior to last year’s RTP reports, I was not aware of Cabell’s list (apparently it remains behind paywall), nor is it specified in the current departmental criteria as a verifying measure of bona fide journals. However, the College Committee, following the chair’s cue, uses Cabell’s list unquestioningly, not taking into consideration that the list also has been the subject of controversy for many in academia, as it also does not have a clear-cut criterion for blacklisting specific journals. Furthermore, if the Cabell’s list labels the journal as a predatory one, then I’m still the victim rather than an offender, as the Chair’s report (**Cannon, September 2019**) insinuates. In any case, as I understand it, part of the complication in dealing with “predatory” publishing is due to the lack of clarity about the phenomenon and differentiating it from exploitation and downright deception. It is precisely due to this dilemma and the determination to salvage the validity and the credibility of my scholarship, not to mention all the discrepant RTP reports that I received as late as March 2019 that I requested to meet with Dean Barry Jones to seek clarification about my next course of action.

SECOND ARTICLE: Discrepant RTP Reports and the Role of Dean Barry Jones

I trusted Dean Barry Jones. As I pointed out to the provost in my response to College Committee report and dean's negative recommendation, the department and the chair (Dr. David Guest then) both approved me for retention in 2017, but the College Committee that year produced a split vote. In order to understand the split vote of the College Committee, I met with Barry Jones, the then new interim dean of CoAL, who assured me that he had perused my dossier and found it to be perfectly fine. It was clear to him, he stated, that I met expectations in all three areas. He also told me that he was bewildered at the discussion he heard in the room among College Committee members, leading him to conclude it seemed "personal" and not an objective deliberation of my dossier. He also remarked on the "toxicity" in my department and the lack of regular meetings that resulted in senior faculty not having any kind of investment in junior colleagues, which, according to him, was very likely what happened to me. He then proceeded to reassure me of his approval of my retention in his letter to the provost, and indeed, to my utter relief, the letter from the provost's office confirmed my retention for the 5th year. It is remarkable that in little over a year the very same dean, though now no longer "interim," in an outright reversal of his earlier position and statements, misrepresents the facts of my case and rejects my bid for tenure. It is also noteworthy that my 5th year retention was approved at each level - the department, the chair, the College Committee, the dean and the provost. It is mind-boggling that in less than a year - in just a few months full of hard work and fulfilled promises on my part - I am facing negative recommendations for tenure at each level. How can this about-face happen without a serious breach of trust by those who are supposed to support and nurture junior faculty and protect them from the abuse of those with authority and power? I explain this below.

There were discrepancies in last year's (2018- 2019) Dean's report and the two Department reports as to whether my second article should be submitted or published by the time I come up for tenure review in September 2019. "Publish" is used in the Department Minority and Dean's reports, whereas the Department Recommendation and the College RTP committee mention "pursue another publication," and "look to publish an article," respectively (**See Minority Report September 2019 for discrepancies**). I went to the CoAL Dean Barry Jones in the spring semester of 2019, just after I received the Department Committee reports (for 5th year review), seeking clarification about the disparities and ambiguities in them. I asked him if I needed to submit my published article to further external peer review to validate the quality of my scholarship. The dean stated there was no need to get additional peer reviews, as the quality of my scholarship was not in question. He also mentioned that he received emails from other department peers in my field who found scholarly merit in my article (**See APPENDIX 5 for email from now retired Dr. Lynn Sims to Dean Jones about my published article**). However, since the quality of the journal was in dispute, he explained, I was being asked to pursue another publication. I accepted his reasoning and I also took this to be the end of the dispute about my published article. I then asked Dean Jones to clarify whether I needed to publish or submit the article by September 2019, pointing to the discrepancies in the reports. I also indicated to him that it would be impossible for me to have another article published in less than 9 months when I come up for tenure. Dean Jones agreed with me that getting another article published would be near impossible in the few months until I came up for tenure. He also maintained that he had asked for clarification from the Committees, and as long as I

showed “reasonable progress” towards publishing another article in a legitimate journal such as submission of another article by the time I come up for tenure review, I should have no concerns. In order to allay the fear I still expressed, he then also pointed out that it was extremely rare for faculty to successfully pass the 5th year review and then to be denied tenure in the 6th, and he couldn’t think of any cases where that had happened. The dean then proceeded to suggest that I should only bid for tenure in September 2019 and not seek promotion until my second article is published. On my part, I made doubly sure that the dean and I were on the same page on the matter of “submission” of another article. I confirmed with him that uploading the submitted article in the dossier and the receipt of submission from the journal would be evidence of reasonable progress. Unfortunately, I did not get this confirmation from Dean Jones in writing, largely because I had no reason to doubt his word. I walked out of his office and proceeded to convey the dean’s recommendation to several of my colleagues in the department. The evidence of my conversation with Barry Jones and his recommendations is in the email exchange I had with the then chair, Dr. David Guest, who was coming to the end of his term in office and had requested me to let him know of my decision about the tenure timeline and my bid for promotion **(See APPENDIX 6 for the email exchange between David Guest and I)**. I did exactly what Dean Jones had asked me to do by submitting a second article, “Race in the Everyday Narratives of Indian Immigrants in the U.S.,” to another journal by the specified deadline and included the draft and the receipt of submission in the E-Dossier **(See supplemental materials in dossier, September 2019)**.

Dean Jones has now backtracked on his words. He no longer recalls telling me that submission of another article would show reasonable progress. Instead, he now maintains that it was publishing another article in a few months is what he remembers telling me, even though by his own earlier acknowledgment and department chair’s own admission, it was a tall order for me to fulfill in a short time. I ask the Board to ponder what interest of mine would it serve for me to misrepresent the words and deeds of the college dean about my bid for tenure? I reiterate that this volte-face by the dean has nothing to do with holding faculty to established standards and criteria, but using them in a self-serving way as pawns in departmental politics and power dynamics. Moreover, it is the chair, the college and department RTP committees, the dean, and the provost who have shown a lack of good-faith by not adhering, either in letter or in spirit, to the established departmental criteria to evaluate my dossier with the same yardstick that is used to grant tenure to my colleagues in the department.

In conclusion, I hope the Board will consider the evidence I present in this document and make an objective evaluation of my dossier according to the current department criteria for tenure. I appeal to you to revoke the previous negative recommendations and endorse me for tenure. This would ensure that I am subject to the same benchmark that has been used until now to grant tenure to my colleagues and peers in the department, but also restore my faith in the institution’s ability and willingness to treat all faculty members fairly and without discrimination.

Sincerely,
Dr. Neeta Bhasin
November 18, 2019

Following is a summary of my activities and contributions in teaching, scholarship, and service at APSU.

AREA I: Academic Assignment

My duties and responsibilities falling under Area One comprise of a) Teaching and b) Coordinating the First-Year Writing Program. As first-year writing coordinator, I receive one course release. I taught ENGL 1010E, ENGL 2030, and LING 4070 from fall 2015 - fall 2016. The last report of the department review committee noted the discrepancy between the unfavorable evaluations by students and the approving peer reviews of my teaching. I have improved numerical ratings in student evaluations of my teaching. **1010E** was my main target for improvement. The favorable outcome in my teaching evaluations is due to the pedagogical strategies I adopted. I purposefully decided to use a two-pronged strategy; 1) to raise the critical reading, writing, and thinking skills and 2) to instill in them the learning strategies to transition effectively from a high school setting to a university one. **ENGL 2030** provides an overview of world literature that includes works from different time periods. The three peer reviewers found the high levels of participation and engagement of students in my classroom praiseworthy. By active design and hard work I elicit interest and participation from my students. **LING 4070** examines the relationship among language, culture, and identity, and explores language within a social, cultural, and political matrix of relations. This linguistics seminar only had 6 students. The course was moderately successful. Parts of the course generated interest and enthusiasm, but I also encountered major challenges in eliciting substantive and meaningful response from a few students. I am looking forward to developing new pedagogical strategies that will help me become a better teacher. As coordinator of First-Year writing, I organized workshops for instructors, implemented peer evaluations of adjunct faculty, coordinated TBR critical competencies assessment, created First-Year Writing Sandbox to allow faculty to easily store, access, and retrieve materials related to First-Year Writing. Also initiated more informal forums of "Coffee and Conversations" for writing instructors, and along with the First-Year Writing Committee, undertook review and revision of writing assignments of first-year composition courses.

AREA II: Scholarly and Creative Achievements

I presented a paper entitled "Ethos and Identity in Immigrant Narratives" at the SCMLA in fall 2015 in Nashville, Tennessee. I also presented a paper entitled "Nation, Ethnicity, and Race in Everyday Narratives of Indian Immigrants" at the NeMLA in Hartford, Connecticut in spring 2016. I'm working on publishing these papers.

AREA III: Professional Contributions and Activities

I worked on designing a Linguistics Concentration in the department and developed new course offerings for it. I helped organize the Asanbe Diversity Symposium in fall 2015. I introduced a film at the 2016 APSU World Film Festival, and judged the 2016 CEMC short story writing contest. I presented at the "Speak Up, Speak Out" Racial Equality Summit, and also joined the ongoing internationalization efforts at APSU. I'm working to recruit students for the Spain Summer Study Abroad Program in 2017 where I'm scheduled to serve as a coordinator.

Following is a summary of my activities and contributions in teaching, scholarship, and service at APSU.

AREA I: Academic Assignment

My responsibilities falling under Area 1 comprise of a) Teaching and b) Coordinating the First-Year Writing Program. As first-year writing coordinator, I receive one course release. I taught ENGL 1010E, ENGL 2030, and LING 4600/506F from spring 2017 - fall 2017. **1010E** remains my main target for improvement. It is hard to glean any insights about of my teaching from the student evaluations last semester due to insufficient data. Very few students did the evaluations. I still worked on lesson plans with the SLAs, and required of my students rigorous in-class group work, peer reviews, and mandatory conferences with me. In the fall, **ENGL 2030** had significantly high number of disciplinary and classroom misconduct problems. The frequent disruptions by a group of students vitiated the classroom environment, even though things became less turbulent later in the term. However, the two peer reviewers found high levels of participation and engagement of students in my class. In **LING 4600/506F: Discourse Analysis**, we set out to answer a variety of questions about language, about writers and speakers, and about sociocultural processes that surround discourse. Students learned to pay close and systematic attention to oral, written, or visual texts and their contexts. This seminar had 6 students and only 2 out of them were graduate students. The course was successful and it generated interest and enthusiasm among students. In spring 2018, I will teach the new service-learning course I developed. I earned a QEP (Quality Enhancement Plan) grant of \$5000 for the course. It will explore the complexity of immigration to the history of the U.S. The service-learning component of the course will impart to students how to inform practice by reflecting upon scholarly work and how to hone scholarly inquiry as a result of community engagement. The grant will support co-curricular events, including a film series and a weekend trip to Atlanta and Clarkston, GA to visit immigrant communities. As **coordinator of First-Year writing**, I organized workshops and forums for professional development of instructors, implemented peer evaluations of adjunct faculty, coordinated critical competencies assessment, helped to create new guidelines for 1010 assignments, and contributed to the departmental self-study report.

AREA II: Scholarly and Creative Achievements

I co-presented a paper with Dr. Eichhorn at the NWSA annual conference in Baltimore, Maryland in spring 2017. "Building Solidarities Across Cultures: Examining Sexual Assault Frameworks in "India's daughter" and "Audrie and Daisy" foregrounds multiple perspectives in two different cultural contexts, India and the U.S., to address the transnational dynamics of sexual assault and the legal and social-political aftermath for survivors, perpetrators, bystanders, social media commenters, and professionals. We intend to revise the paper and submit it for publication.

AREA III: Professional Contributions and Activities

I collaborated with the Center of Service-Learning to design a course on immigrant experiences. I attended QEP grant workshops and secured a competitive QEP faculty grant of \$5000 for the service-learning course. I presented in the classes of Drs. Jill Eichhorn and Jill Franks and served as a member of The Peay Read committee. I also did a reading in Sanskrit at the Medieval Language and Literature event.

AUSTIN PEAY STATE UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY TENURE AND
PROMOTION APPEALS BOARD RECOMMENDATION

EVALUATION OF FACULTY APPEAL

College: Arts & Letters

Department: Languages & Literature

Name of faculty making the appeal: Neeta Bhasin

Number of years granted toward tenure/promotion: 0

Board Vote. Please check appropriate box. Retention ☐; Tenure ☒; Promotion ☐

This evaluation is as follows:

Board Vote

1 (For – uphold appeal)
8 (Against – deny appeal)
4 (Absent)
1 (Non-Voting Dept. Rep)
1 (Non-Voting Dean)*

** The Chair of the University Tenure and Promotion Appeals Board shall be a non-voting member, a college Dean, appointed by the President. The Dean of the College of the faculty member making an appeal shall not serve as Chair of the University Tenure and Promotion Appeals Board for that appeal. In these cases, the committee members shall elect a temporary chair for that particular faculty member's appeal. [APSU Tenure P & G, p.40, issued April 27, 2018]*

Board Summary of Appeal Recommendation Use attachments as needed.

The University Tenure and Promotion Appeals Board has reviewed and deliberated about the appeal dossier of Dr. Neeta Bhasin following the Provost's recommendation to deny tenure. The Board believes that the recommendation provided by the Provost, as informed by the work of previous administrators and committees in the review process, represents an appropriate application of both the General Criteria for Evaluation of Faculty Members, as outlined in policy 1:025, and the Department of Languages and Literature's tenure criteria. Therefore, the Board does not support Dr. Bhasin's tenure appeal.

University Tenure & Promotion Appeals Board Recommendation Form 2

Date(s) of University Tenure & Promotion Appeals Board Meeting (s): 11/20/19 ;

11/25/19 ;

Date Final Evaluation Submitted: 11/26/19

UNIVERSITY TENURE AND PROMOTION APPEALS BOARD VALIDATION: Although these statements above reflect board discussion, our signatures do not indicate agreement or disagreement with the content of the above recommendation.

Signatures [Print your name clearly below your signature.]:

recused

Elaine Berg

David Denton

David Denton

Gina Garber

Gina Garber

Moniqueka Gold

Moniqueka Gold

Uma Iyer

Uma Iyer

KJ Kim

KJ Kim

Timothy Leszczak

Timothy Leszczak

Jiang Li

Jiang Li

Justin Oelgoetz

Justin Oelgoetz

Norbert Puszkar

Norbert Puszkar

Douglas Rose

Douglas Rose

Roscoe Shain

Roscoe Shain

Gregg Steinberg

Gregg Steinberg

Gary Stewart

Gary Stewart

Mickey Hepner, Chair

Mickey Hepner, Chair

I certify that I have read the University Tenure and Promotion Appeals Board recommendation. My signature does not indicate agreement or disagreement with the statements made here.

Neeha Bhargava

Signature of Faculty Member

11/26/2019

Date

Response to Department's and Chair's Reports and Recommendations for Tenure

To the CoAL Retention, Tenure, and Promotion Committee:

This is a response to the negative recommendations for tenure by the Chair and the majority of the department in Area 2, pertaining to my scholarship and creative activities. I will first address the comments by the Department Committee and the Chair in Area 2, and then briefly attend to the remarks in both reports on Areas 1 and 3.

Area 2 - RESEARCH: FIRST ARTICLE

The department RTP criteria calls for a "peer-reviewed" publication and does not use the term "reputable," which suggests a finer distinction among peer-reviewed journals, not included in the department Area 2 criteria. The Chair's Report therefore misapplies the criteria to my published article. Additionally, the reputability of the journal or the publishing press has not been a consideration or an impediment in granting tenure and promotion to my peers in the department. I published my article "Romancing the "Illegal" Immigrant" in the *Journal of Literature and Arts Studies* because it is an open access journal and I wanted to make my work available and accessible to a wider audience. The fee I paid was for open access to my article in recognizable databases and indexes, which is clear in an email from the publisher about the fee. Prior to last year's RTP reports, I was not aware of Cabell's list, nor is it specified in the current departmental criteria as a verifying measure of bona fide journals. To the best of my knowledge, the article is peer-reviewed. The confirmation email I received upon submission indicates that my article would be sent out to reviewers, and I went back and forth with the editors on the revisions I was asked to do. Furthermore, the Notice of Acceptance (see supplementary materials in E-Dossier 2018) indicates my article underwent "blind peer review." I meet the criteria for tenure in Area 2. One peer-reviewed article may be a "low standard," according to the Chair, but it is the current existing department criteria, and has been applied to tenure and promotion cases in the department.

RESEARCH: SECOND ARTICLE

There were discrepancies between last year's Dean's Report and the two Department Reports as to whether my second article should be submitted or published by the time I come up for tenure review in September 2019. "Publish" is used in the Department Minority and Dean's Reports, whereas the Department Recommendation and the College RTP committee mention "pursue another publication," and "look to publish an article," respectively (see Minority Report September 2019 for discrepancies).

I went to the CoAL Dean Barry Jones in January 2019, just after I received the Committee Reports, seeking clarification about the disparities and ambiguities in them. I asked him if I needed to submit my published article to further external peer review to validate the quality of my scholarship. The dean stated there was no need to get additional peer reviews as the quality of my scholarship was not in question. He also mentioned that he received emails from other department peers in my field who found scholarly merit in my article. I also asked Dean Jones to clarify whether I needed to publish or submit the article by September 2019, pointing to the discrepancies in the reports. I also pointed out to him that it would be impossible for me to have another article published in less than 9 months. Dean Jones' response was that he had asked for clarification from the Committees and indeed I should focus on submitting another article by the time I come up for tenure review. He also suggested at that time that I should only bid for tenure in September 2019 and not seek promotion until the second article is published.

The Committee Report fails to acknowledge my submitted article "Race in the Everyday Narratives of Indian Immigrants in the U.S." It is an odd omission particularly in light of the fact that the last Department Committee Report recommended that I "pursue another publication in a bona fide, peer-reviewed journal." I did submit a second article to another journal by the specified deadline and included the draft and the receipt of submission in the E-Dossier (see supplemental materials September 2019).

The Chair's Report claims that she did not see "a good faith effort" on my part to meet the department criteria in Area 2. I respectfully request the College Committee to note that for 4 years in my departmental RTP reports, I was told that I needed to work on Area 1 - teaching and the administrative task of coordinating first-year writing. I was informed that my student evaluation scores were low in the first-year composition courses that I was tasked with overseeing. I directed my energy towards what was then singled out as my problematic area. However, I still went to conferences every year to present my scholarly work, since presenting at conferences is an indicator of an active research agenda and work in progress. I presented not only in regional conferences, but also in National Women's Studies Association (NWSA), which is a national conference of repute. I presented in a symposium on Discourse Analysis organized by major scholars in the field. I also presented in October 2018 at APSU my work-in-progress paper, after a new CoAL Committee for promoting discussion on

research and scholarship among faculty selected my abstract, which eventually became the scholarly article that the Department Committee Report omits to mention. Moreover, the Chair's report implies that I have been remiss not to report and document in the dossier my every scholarly undertaking and its development, but the department criteria does not require faculty to submit a record of drafts, submissions, rejections of works in progress.

The Chair's Report also mentions that I "failed" to submit my second article until the day dossiers closed. I want to respectfully submit to the College Committee that I did not fail but succeeded in meeting the deadline for submitting the second article. The deadline was that it should be in the tenure dossier and it was - both the draft and the receipt of submission. It is unclear why the date of submission is relevant, if the deadline was met, as it has been. The Chair's Report also says that I did not indicate in my dossier the change in my tenure timeline. I am not aware of any instructions from Academic Affairs or any other source that I had to mention the change in my dossier. In any case, I had talked to the Dean and my statement of intent clearly indicates that I was submitting my tenure dossier.

Finally, there is more evidence that the Chair did not adhere, both in letter and in spirit, to departmental criteria to evaluate my scholarship. In her Report she mentions: "Legitimate journals usually take between one and three years to go from initial submission to publication." So, according to the Chair's own admission, it would not have been possible for me to publish a second article in time, even if I had gone up for tenure later in the year. The lack of good-faith effort is not on my part, but on part of the department and the Chair in evaluating my dossier with the same yardstick that is used to grant tenure to my colleagues in the department.

Area 1 - TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS

My Peer Evaluations for all courses, including ENGL 1010, 1010E, and 1020, have been consistently positive, judging my classroom teaching to be motivating and effective, and comment favorably on the high levels of student participation and engagement. The previous concerns about my teaching were only about student evaluations in first-year core composition courses. Every year in my Area 1 narratives, I provided explanations about why student evaluation scores of only first-year courses would not be an effective measure of my teaching, as they are deeply influenced by perceptions of my race and gender. Still, I also made changes to my teaching practices and strategies and improved my student evaluation scores. Even if the scores are taken as an indicator, there has been a clear upward trend. Last year, my average student evaluation scores were 5.13 in ENGL 1010E and 5.11 in ENGL 1010. The Committee Report itself notes "improvement in recent student evaluations for many courses" and "consistently positive peer reviews." Therefore, it is hard to understand what other evidence I needed to provide about my teaching and why the majority of the department could not reach "a clear consensus."

The Chair's Report concludes that I meet expectations in Area 1, but also states: "Earlier RTP reviews have expressed concern over her ability to work effectively with our diverse student population." This phrase suggests that I have problems with underrepresented students specifically. However, there is no suggestion of any such concern in prior Committee Reports. The focus of my pedagogy is precisely our diverse and under-served student population, as is indicated by my teaching philosophy and the courses I teach. Lacking any context and evidence, this particular insertion serves only to cast a pernicious shadow on the effectiveness of my teaching.

Area 3 - SERVICE

The Chair's Report concludes that I meet expectations for Area 3 but notes that "There is little in the way of service to the profession, but the recent review of an article for the journal *Transformations* is a step in the right direction." The RTP criteria for Area 3 states: "Whether it is service to one's discipline, the local community or to the larger society, evaluations of the services provided by the candidate ought to be included in the E-Dossier." The criteria does not indicate the need for service to campus, community, *and* discipline. Still, there's evidence of all three in my dossier. It is unclear why the Chair singles out service to the profession in her report.

In conclusion, I hope the CoAL College Committee will recommend me for tenure based on the evidence of my scholarship, judging my dossier according to the established department criteria for tenure. This would ensure that I am subject to the same benchmark that has been used until now to grant tenure to my colleagues and peers in the department.

Sincerely,



Dr. Neeta Bhasin

October 1, 2019

AUSTIN PEAY STATE UNIVERSITY

CHAIR'S REPORT: FACULTY PERFORMANCE REVIEW

(By Chair/Director/Coordinator)

Select **only one option** as appropriate:

RETENTION	Recommend Retention	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not Recommend Retention	<input type="checkbox"/>
TENURE	Recommend Tenure	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not Recommend Tenure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
PROMOTION	Recommend Promotion	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not Recommend Promotion	<input type="checkbox"/>

The department chair shall provide information about the faculty member and evaluate the faculty member's performance in each of the indicated areas. The Performance Review document should be forwarded to the college dean on the occasion of any personnel action, e.g., retention, tenure, merit salary adjustment, or promotion.

Name: Neeta Bhasin Date: September 25, 2019Department: Languages and Literature Rank: Assistant ProfessorHighest Degree Held: PhD Years of service at APSU: 6Date of Last Promotion: N/A Years Granted Toward Tenure: 0**A. Effectiveness in Academic Assignment** Use attachments as needed.

Dr. Bhasin's teaching focuses primarily on composition, which reflects her area of expertise in rhetoric and composition. She has taught ENGL 1010E (our enhanced course that supports students who have not met the ACT score for 1010), ENGL 1010, and ENGL 1020. Dr. Bhasin also teaches World Literature and has taught courses in linguistics and literature. Earlier RTP reviews have expressed concern over her ability to work effectively with our diverse student population, but Dr. Bhasin has addressed these concerns by making changes to her teaching methods, course assignments, and policies. Dr. Bhasin's classes are organized appropriately and in accordance with departmental expectations. Her ENGL 1010, for example, has three well-structured units (Narrative, Argument, Rhetorical Analysis) that align with the student learning outcomes for the course. The reflection essays at the end of the course are an effective way to help students develop a sense of growth and progress as writers.

Dr. Bhasin has been the coordinator for First Year Writing and has done an effective job. She has organized workshops for all instructors of composition, convened the FYW committee meetings, and coordinated the observations of adjuncts. She attended the 2019 summer workshop run by the Writing Professionals Association in order to develop a plan for researching and revising our First Year Writing program.

Dr. Bhasin meets expectations for Area 1.

B. Scholarly and Creative Accomplishments Use attachments as needed.

From the Languages and Literature departmental RTP criteria: *For consideration for tenure, the department requires at least one refereed or peer-reviewed publication for tenure for Assistant Professors. In exceptional cases, tenure may be granted without this publication if the tenure applicant offers clear evidence that she/he has done all the necessary work for publication in a timely manner, but that circumstances beyond the faculty member's control (such as delays to publication caused by the publishers or journal editors) have delayed the publication of a scholarly or creative work which has been accepted for publication and whose publication is imminent.*

Dr. Bhasin's only article, "Romancing the 'Illegal' Immigrant," is not published in a reputable journal. While it claims to be peer reviewed, *The Journal of Literature of Art Studies* has been blacklisted by Cabell's, a database that tracks illegitimate, predatory, and vanity presses. Its scope is so wide that it cannot adhere to the norms of expert peer review. It invites submissions in the fields of "aesthetics, literature studies, feminism, poetics, modernism, realism, didacticism, classicism, skepticism, euro-skepticism, religions skepticism, moral skepticism, religious mysticism, ancient myth, mythology, moral education, action art, musicology, art history and theory, painting and calligraphy art, artistic designs, arts & sports education, arts technology, music pedagogy, performing arts, drama and aesthetics, film and television, opera and drama, animation, sculpture, ceramics, arts and crafts, Photography [*sic*, original caps], culture study, folklore, fine art, environmental art, theatre and dance, anthropology, caricatures, as well as narratology in the field."

The journal charges \$60 per page to publish articles, and it publishes approximately 15-20 articles every month, which is far from the norm in humanities journals and indicates a focus on quantity for profit. It has a turnaround time of four weeks from submission to publication, which is incompatible with reputable peer review and editing practices. The journal's letter of acceptance for Dr. Bhasin's article is dated October 15, and the article appears in the journal's October issue; such a rapid turnaround is a hallmark of illegitimate journals because it signals a lack of appropriate editorial oversight. Legitimate journals usually take between one and three years to go from initial submission to publication. Even though the department reports noted these problems in the last review cycle, the current dossier does not provide a record of reader reports, revisions, page proofs, or any other indicators of the peer review process for this journal.

Our criteria clearly indicate that the quality of the journal/press is a key consideration for acceptable publications. Furthermore, APSU Policy 1:025, in the section "Criteria to be Considered in Tenure Recommendations," section B, asks for work that has "undergone appropriate peer review. Research publications in refereed journals or media of similar quality are considered reliable indicators of research/scholarly ability." Likewise, in APSU's Tenure Procedures and Guidelines under "Criteria to be considered in Tenure Recommendations," it states: "Faculty are reminded that only materials that have been accepted for publication by a reputable journal or recognized press in the author's area of expertise should be included as 'publications' in the dossier" (pg. 49).

In January 2019, the department's majority report pointed to the departmental criteria for quality publications, and stated, "the committee therefore strongly encourages Dr. Bhasin to pursue another publication in a bona-fide, peer refereed journal, which meets the departmental criteria, during the next review period." The minority report stated, "Several members of the committee agree that publication in a predatory journal is not acceptable." The department chair also encouraged Dr. Bhasin to "make every effort to have an additional referred print publication before the next review." The chair felt confident that she could

do so because she has stated that she has a book manuscript and two articles in progress. The college committee also asked her to "look to publishing an article in a more reputable journal."

After these reports, the college dean met with the department to explain we might not be aware that Dr. Bhasin had received notice in April 2018 that the new tenure timeline instituted by Academic Affairs would mean that she would go up for tenure in September 2019 rather than January 2020. Indeed, Dr. Bhasin did not include in the dossier any mention of this change. The department noted in that meeting that our criteria allows for "exceptional cases" and could accommodate "circumstances beyond the faculty member's control" when scholarly work had been "accepted for publication and whose publication is imminent." The college dean subsequently wrote his report and asked Dr. Bhasin to "submit an article and have it accepted by [her] tenure review."

Even after receiving criticism from the departmental reports and urgent counsel from reports at every level to pursue publication in a reputable journal, Dr. Bhasin failed to submit another article for publication until the day that the dossiers were closed, September 6. The essay, "Race in the Everyday Narratives of Indian Immigrants in the U.S.," seems to come out of her dissertation, which was completed in 2007, and a version of the paper was presented as far back as 2016, so it is unclear why she would wait until hours before the dossier closed to submit.

Over the course of Dr. Bhasin's years here, she has claimed in every dossier that she had works in progress, yet there is no record of drafts, submissions, rejections, revise and resubmit decisions, revisions and resubmissions. RTP reports from 2016 onward repeatedly urged Dr. Bhasin to submit work for publication. I do not see a good-faith effort to meet the low standards of publication (one peer-reviewed article) required by our departmental criteria for tenure. I do not believe that Dr. Bhasin has met the department's criteria for Area 2; therefore, I cannot recommend her for tenure.

C. Professional Contributions and Activities Use attachments as needed.

Dr. Bhasin has a record of service to the department and university. She has served on such committees and task forces as the Internationalization Task Force, the Peay Read Committee, hiring committees for the CoAL dean position and for our linguistics position, the Asanbe Diversity committee, the World Literature committee, and the department's annual faculty evaluations committee. Dr. Bhasin has given presentations to the campus community through APSU events such as the Vagina Monologues, the Pilgrimage through Medieval Language and Literature, the World Film Festival, and the Racial Equality Summit. She has pursued internal grants through the Learning Opportunities Center. The level of departmental and university service is appropriate and appreciated. There is little in the way of service to the profession, but the recent review of an article for the journal *Transformations* is a step in the right direction.

Dr. Bhasin meets expectations for Area 3.



Chair's Signature

9/27/19

Date

Mercy Cannon

Chair's printed name

Chair's Report Faculty Performance Review Form 4

I certify that I have read the chair's report. My signing does not necessarily indicate agreement or disagreement with statements made here.

Neeta Bhargava

Faculty Member's Signature

09/27/2019

Date

AUSTIN PEAY STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE COMMITTEE
RETENTION AND TENURE RECOMMENDATION

EVALUATION OF FACULTY CANDIDATE

College: Arts and Letters

Department: Language and Literature

Name of faculty candidate: Dr. Neeta Bhasin

Years granted toward tenure: 0

Committee Vote. Please check appropriate box. ☐ Retention ☒ Tenure

This evaluation, written on behalf of the committee, for the files of the committee and for forwarding, by a member of the committee voting with the majority, is as follows:

Committee Vote

0 (For)

6 (Against)

0 (Absent)

1 (Non-Voting Dept. Rep)

A. Effectiveness in Academic Assignment Use attachments as needed.

Dr. Bhasin serves as the First-year Writing Program Coordinator and receives a course release for the duties related to this assignment. She has been very effective in this role establishing a successful adjunct evaluation process and workshops for adjuncts in the important first-year general education core classes. As with any general education course that students are required to take, evaluations may fluctuate. In the most recent student evaluations, Dr. Bhasin had between 34.8 percent to 44 percent participation in her three classes with an average score of 4.11. During her time at Austin Peay, Dr. Bhasin's peer reviews have been positive. The current peer review for tenure consideration was conducted in an English 1010 course. The reviewer commented on the "clear focus" and "organized" nature of her class. In addition, the peer reviewer stated, "I found myself wanting to participate in the lively discussion." The review also mentioned Dr. Bhasin was extremely articulate and sincere in her enthusiasm. Further, the reviewer said, "I did not observe any issues that merit concern."

Based on the information provided in the dossier, the department report, and the chair's report, this committee finds that Dr. Bhasin meets the requirements for tenure in Area I.

B. Scholarly and Creative Accomplishments Use attachments as needed.

In the area of scholarly and creative accomplishments, concerns have been raised since the 2016-2017 dossier submission regarding publication as part of the tenure process for the Department of Languages and Literature. While various department, chair, and dean's reports have complimented Dr. Bhasin on her presentations at local, state, and national conferences, there have been reminders and frequent suggestions urging Dr. Bhasin to ensure she has one publication per the requirements and standards of the department's RTP policy in her dossier by the tenure year. Faculty have online access to department criteria for a complete review and understanding of the requirements for retention, tenure, and promotion.

In 2016-2017 the department report encouraged Dr. Bhasin's stated plans to pursue publications for papers she presented at conferences. The chair's report in this same year mentioned Dr. Bhasin was "currently working to expand the papers for submission possible publication in print." When the college committee released their report for this year, they stated, "By the next review, the college committee would like to see a more detailed timeline for the publication of these works" in reference to the papers from presentations. Dr. Bhasin said she was revising for publication submission. In addition, the dean reiterated, "While you have been presenting at conferences, be sure to submit work for publication to meet the published department criteria." A detailed timeline for submission of the works under revision was not submitted in the next dossier. Further, a publication was not submitted in the next dossier.

Dr. Bhasin was reminded again in the 2017-2018 review process of the importance and requirement of one published article based on the documented criteria by the tenure year. In this review period, the department committee expressed the importance of this requirement when they stated, "The committee strongly urges her, rather than attending conferences, to focus on projects that can result in publication during the next review cycle. The committee reminds Dr. Bhasin that the department requires a scholarly publication for the attainment of tenure." The department chair echoed this need to complete this requirement with, "It is important to note that refereed print publication is required for tenure and promotion." The chair continues with discussion that has been shared in previous reports – the implied work on "three articles and a book manuscript being revised for submission. I encourage her to continue in these efforts." Although the department and chair approved retention for Dr. Bhasin in this review, the college committee was split in voting with their report expressing further concerns about the lack of a clear timeline or plan for publication. The college committee reports stated, "The time for establishing a scholarly publication in order to receive tenure approaches." Dr. Bhasin was "strongly encouraged to complete revisions and focus on scholarly publications" and "strongly urged to produce an actual publication in the next review cycle." The dean concurred and said, "I advise you to leave no room to doubt your abilities in your next dossier," and "As your tenure application approaches, please focus your energy on publication."

In October of 2018, Dr. Bhasin submitted "Romancing the Illegal Immigrant" and it was published in the *Journal of Literature and Art Studies* in October 2018. The *Journal of Literature and Art Studies* is part of David Publishing as documented in Dr. Bhasin's supplemental material. While the department or subsequent reports do not question Dr. Bhasin's scholarly ability, they do question the legitimacy of the journal and publishing company that accepted her article. It is considered a "predatory" journal. Per the department RTP criteria, "candidates must provide clear evidence of the quality of work (5:060.IV.B). It is especially important that candidates help reviewers gauge the quality of publications (e.g., university versus vanity press, refereed versus non-refereed print or online publication,

acceptance rates such as those provided by the *MLA Directory of Periodicals*)." Since members of the department deemed this an unsatisfactory publication, they suggested she pursue another publication within the next review period. The report also mentioned that information about the quality of a journal is readily available on the internet. There is information about David Publishing available on the internet. The chair concurred with the department and said that, "I encourage Dr. Bhasin to have an additional refereed print publication before the next review" and mentioned again, the "two articles and a book manuscript being revised for submission." The college committee and dean also mentioned the importance of additional submission in a reputable journal that met the criteria for tenure in the department. In fact, the dean strongly encouraged Dr. Bhasin to not only submit, but to have the article accepted by the next review cycle.

The review period for this cycle was moved from January of 2020 to September of 2019. This provided less time for Dr. Bhasin to incorporate feedback from the previous review period. However, as indicated from the information provided in this section, the importance of and counsel for Dr. Bhasin to submit a publication that met the criteria of the department had been encouraged and reminded for several review cycles.

For the current tenure review period, the majority of the department did not feel that Dr. Bhasin had met the standards outlined in their criteria or that she addressed recorded concerns. The majority stated that "awarding tenure to Dr. Bhasin would require ignoring the departmental criteria."

The chair's report delivered a very detailed explanation of the criteria for the required publication based on department RTP documents and reasons why the publication under scrutiny provided a vote against retention and tenure. In summary, the *Journal of Literature and Art Studies* has been blacklisted by a reputable database (Cabells Scholarly Analytics, an online source for journal information, and evaluation metrics): the journal charges \$60 per page to publish articles focusing on quantity for profit, it has a suspiciously rapid turnaround rate where Dr. Bhasin's article was accepted and published in two weeks, and Dr. Bhasin failed to deliver any record that proves it was a peer reviewed process to include reader reports, revisions, or page proofs. Further, the chair shared a passage from APSU's Tenure Procedures and Guidelines from page 49 that discusses the requirement of a reputable journal in the author's area of expertise for inclusion in the dossier. The chair mentioned the dean's statement that Dr. Bhasin should submit a new article and have it accepted by this tenure review.

On September 6, 2019, the day dossiers were due, Dr. Bhasin submitted "Race in the Everyday Narratives of Indian Immigrants in the U.S." to the journal of *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. A submission date on the day dossiers were due did not leave Dr. Bhasin the time to hear if the article was accepted. In her narrative, Dr. Bhasin states that she continues work on "Ethos and Identity in Immigrant Narrative" for submission to *Discourse and Communication* in 2020.

Due to the vote against tenure from the department and chair, Dr. Bhasin was given the opportunity to provide a response to the reports for the college committee. In her response, Dr. Bhasin mentions several times that there are others in the department who have been granted tenure and promotion without regard to the reputability of the journal or publishing press and that it was not an "impediment in granting tenure and promotion." Dr. Bhasin does not provide the college committee with specific examples to support the repeated statements that a precedent of this activity regarding publications has occurred. Without specific examples of instances where this has occurred, they cannot be validated.

In her response, Dr. Bhasin also mentioned the dean said she should only seek tenure and not promotion until the second article is published. She mentioned the dean told her to submit, but his report also mentioned the article should be accepted. The college committee believes that submission earlier than the dossier deadline could have provided Dr. Bhasin more time to receive an acceptance letter from the journal. Several articles and book monographs have been mentioned in numerous earlier dossiers. With works in progress for years, the consensus is there may have been time to prepare an article for submission earlier.

Dr. Bhasin mentions her focus on improving the areas of concern in regard to academic assignment (Area I) feedback from reviews for four years. The college committee would remind Dr. Bhasin as indicated in the information shared in this review that she was also repeatedly made aware of the need to publish per department criteria.

Based on the dossier information and the Department of Languages and Literature tenure criteria, the committee finds that Dr. Bhasin does not meet expectations for Area II.

C. **Professional Contributions and Activities** Use attachments as needed.

In the area of professional contributions and activities, Dr. Bhasin has made significant and important contributions. The Department of Languages and Literature reports note she has been involved in issues of diversity within her department as well as the university and community. She served the department of Languages and Literature during recruitment efforts at AP Day, provided guest lectures for colleagues, served on the Asanbe Diversity committee, the World Literature Committee, and on search committees for faculty. Her service to the university includes the Internationalization Task Force, guest lecturing in other departments, leading workshops for the APSU World Film Festival, and contributing to the Quality Enhancement Plan and Global Learning Opportunities. Further, Dr. Bhasin judged an MLK Day of Service Essay Contest and the Clarksville Electric Membership Corporation (CEMC) Short Story Writing contest. She is a reviewer for the academic journal *Transformations: A Journal of Inclusive Scholarship and Pedagogy*.

With regard to professional contributions and activities, the committee finds that Dr. Bhasin meets the requirements for retention and tenure in Area III.

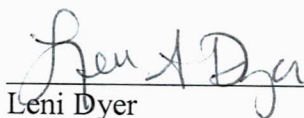
Date of Committee Meeting: October 8, 2019

Date Evaluation Submitted: October 15, 2019

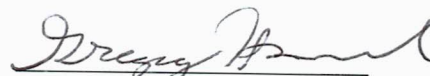
College Committee Retention and Tenure Recommendation Form 5

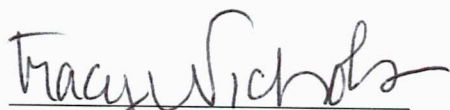
COLLEGE COMMITTEE VALIDATION: We certify that we have read the report. Although these statements reflect committee discussion, our signatures do not indicate agreement or disagreement with the above recommendation.

Signatures [**Print your name clearly below your signature.**]:



Leni Dyer

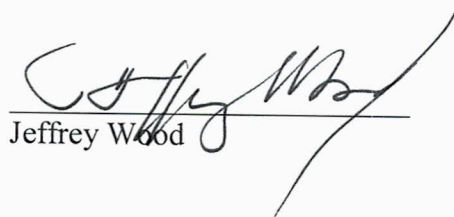

Jill Eichhorn


Gregory Hammond



Tracy Nichols

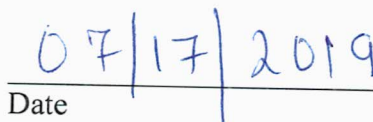

David von Palko


Dixie Webb


Jeffrey Wood

I certify that I have read the college committee's retention and tenure recommendation report. My signature does not indicate agreement or disagreement with the statements made here.


Signature of Faculty Member


Date

AUSTIN PEAY STATE UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT RETENTION AND TENURE
RECOMMENDATION

Name: Neeta Bhasin College: College of Arts and Letters
 Department: Languages and Literature Date: September 13, 2019
 Date of original probationary appointment: September 1, 2014 Years granted toward tenure: 0
 Number of years of probationary service at APSU including present year: 6

Department Evaluation: Please submit information and evaluation in each of the categories listed. Attach appropriate supporting documents as part of the e-dossier.

Education

1. Highest degree held: Ph.D. From: Carnegie Mellon University
 Date granted: 2007
2. If appropriate terminal degree is not held, indicate status of degree work in progress.
 Anticipated completion date: _____ Degree: _____ Institution: _____

A. Effectiveness in Academic Assignment Use attachments as needed.

In addition to teaching, part of Dr. Bhasin's assignment in Area 1 is to coordinate the First-Year Writing Program, for which she receives a course release. The departmental committee notes Dr. Bhasin's efforts in coordinating this program, including the success of the adjunct evaluation process and workshops. She has taught sections of ENGL 1010, 1020, and 2330, as well as two upper-level linguistics courses and a service-learning course called "Exploring Immigrant Experiences and Narratives." Many members of the committee continue to have concerns about the effectiveness of Dr. Bhasin's teaching. Of particular concern is the quality of her instruction in ENGL 1010 and 1020 over the years, given Dr. Bhasin's oversight of our first-year writing courses. Nonetheless, the committee notes improvement in some recent student evaluations for many courses, as well as consistently positive peer reviews. The departmental committee did not reach clear consensus on whether Dr. Bhasin meets expectations in Area 1.

B. Scholarly and Creative Accomplishments Use attachments as needed.

The committee notes that since joining the APSU faculty in 2014, Dr. Bhasin has delivered an invited talk at Carnegie-Mellon (2018) and presented or co-presented at four regional conferences. Departmental criteria states: "For consideration for tenure, the department requires at least one refereed or peer-reviewed publication for tenure." Additionally, the criteria requires that "clear evidence of the quality of work shall be a part of every evaluation." A majority of the committee feels that Dr. Bhasin has not met this requirement. Although Dr. Bhasin lists a publication entitled "Romancing the 'Illegal' Immigrant," ample evidence suggests that the journal in which it appears is a predatory journal which does not meet the standards outlined in departmental criteria. Departmental concerns regarding this publication were recorded in last year's review, and the majority of the committee feels that awarding tenure to Dr. Bhasin would require ignoring the departmental criteria for such an action. Accordingly, the committee finds that Dr. Bhasin has failed to meet the criteria for tenure in Area 2.

C. Professional Contributions and Activities Use attachments as needed.

Dr. Bhasin has participated in a wide variety of activities in this area, including department and campus-wide functions; these include participation in AP Day, the Peay Read committee, search committees, essay contests, and class visits. Additionally, Dr. Bhasin is a reviewer for the journal Transformations: A Journal of Inclusive Scholarship and Pedagogy, published by Penn State University. The departmental committee agrees that Dr. Bhasin meets expectations in Area 3.

Department Recommendation: Please check one of the following:

____ 1. Recommend probationary status be continued.

X 2. Recommend retention for one more year at the end of which time employment be terminated. (use only for 3rd year and beyond)

Spring 2020 Spring 2021
(Date of termination) -DPS

____ 3. Recommend faculty member not be retained for next year.
(Use only for 1st and 2nd year)

(Date of termination)

____ 4. Recommend retention and the awarding of tenure beginning _____.

____ 5. Other (Recommendations with qualifications, such as completion of degree) Please explain in attachment.

Department Committee Validation: We certify that we have read the department retention and tenure report. Although these statements reflect committee discussion, our signatures do not indicate agreement or disagreement with the above evaluation and recommendation.

Signatures [Print your name clearly below your signature.]:

R. W. Atkinson Wes Atkinson

Ken Cervelli Ken Cervelli

Linda Crenshaw Linda Crenshaw

Ozzie Di Paolo Harrison Ozzie Di Paolo Harrison

Jill Eichhorn Jill Eichhorn

M. Taylor Emery M. Taylor Emery

David Guest David Guest

Katherine Honea Katherine Honea

Barry Kitterman Barry Kitterman

David Major David Major

Cynthia McWilliams Cynthia McWilliams

N. Puskar Norbert Puskar

Miguel Ruiz Miguel Ruiz

Laura Schultz Laura Schultz

Daniel Shea Daniel Shea

Marisa Sikes Marisa Sikes

Karen Sorenson Karen Sorenson

Andrea Spofford Andrea Spofford

Mickey Wadia Mickey Wadia

Charla White-Major Charla White-Major

Tim Winters Tim Winters

Amy Wright Amy Wright

I certify that I have read the department retention and tenure recommendation report. My signature does not indicate agreement or disagreement with the statements made here.

Signature of Faculty Member:

Neeta Bhesia

Date:

09/24/2019

Department Retention/Tenure Committee Voting Record

For: 10 (ten)

Against: 12
(twelve)

Absent: 0

Non-Voting Department Member(s):

Minority Report?
Check one box.

No

☐

Yes

☒

Committee Chair's Name (Print):

DANIEL P. SHEA

Committee Chair's Signature:



AUSTIN PEAY STATE UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT COMMITTEE RETENTION AND TENURE MINORITY REPORT

Name: Neeta Bhasin College: College of Arts and LettersDepartment: Languages and Literature Date: September 13, 2019Date of original probationary appointment: September 1, 2014 Years granted toward tenure: 0Number of years of probationary service at APSU including present year: 6

Minority Evaluation: Please submit information and evaluation in each of the categories listed. Attach appropriate supporting documents as part of the e-dossier.

Education

1. Highest degree held: PhD From: Carnegie Mellon University
Date Granted: 2007

2. If appropriate terminal degree is not held, indicate status of degree work in progress.

Anticipated completion date: _____ Degree: _____

Institution: _____

A. Effectiveness in Academic Assignment Use attachments as needed.

Dr. Bhasin's assignment in Area 1 includes both teaching in and coordinating the First-Year Writing (FYW) Program, as well as teaching upper-level undergraduate and graduate courses. As coordinator, she has successfully organized or overseen workshops for FYW faculty, peer evaluations of contingent faculty, standard assignments and SLO's. She has taught: ENGL 1010, 1010E, 1020, 2330, and 4600; as well as LING 4600/506F. Dr. Bhasin incorporates her research into her classroom. Numerous faculty peer evaluations, some involving multiple visits, consistently deemed Dr. Bhasin an engaging, effective, well-organized, and dynamic instructor, doing "very good work in our classes." Dr. Bhasin has also secured two competitive APSU QEP grants, which she implemented by developing and delivering an HIP service-learning class that: 1) partnered with the Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee and Rights Coalition, in Nashville, 2) included a migrant film series on campus; and 3) traveled to Atlanta to meet immigrant communities and entrepreneurs. Although one committee member did note concern regarding student evaluations in one ENGL 2330 section last semester, many others noted her response to the committee's reports in previous years, leading to the upward trend of all student evaluations, including dramatic increases in her area of expertise, meeting the goal of the previous retention recommendation. Some committee members noted the gender, race, and ethnicity biases of student evaluations. Dr. Bhasin has ten advisees. Those voting in the minority and likely others find that she satisfies the requirements of tenure in Area 1.

B. Scholarly and Creative Accomplishments Use attachments as needed.

Dr. Bhasin has presented at four reputable national or regional conferences and one APSU Lecture Series since the beginning of her contract and was an invited speaker at a symposium on discourse analysis at Carnegie Mellon University. Dr. Bhasin has submitted one article, "Race in the Everyday Narratives of Indian Immigrants to the U.S.," to *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, a peer-reviewed online and print journal, where it is currently under review. Dr. Bhasin has published one scholarly article in the *Journal of Literature and Art Studies*, 8.10. Most committee members do not consider this to meet departmental criteria, as it has been characterized as "predatory" by *Cabell's Journal Directories*. Regarding this journal, the department's minority report from last year, dated 22 Jan. 2019, states, "Dr. Bhasin has one more year in which to publish an article in a bona fide, peer-reviewed journal"; while the department recommendation states, "the committee therefore strongly encourages Dr. Bhasin to pursue another publication in a bona fide, peer-refereed journal, which meets the departmental criteria, during the next review period"; the college retention committee report "recognizes the scholarly value of her work" and "encourage(s) her to look to publishing an article in a more reputable journal"; and the Dean's Notice of Renewal states, "your

department's RTP committee did not take into account the fact that your final dossier for tenure is due in September 2019 when they strongly encouraged you to publish before said review. Understanding the time constraints, I strongly encourage you to submit an article and have it accepted by your tenure review." Given the controversy of the publication, the discrepancies between these reports, the article under submission (a process that generally takes several months), and Dr. Bhasin's other scholarly accomplishments, committee members voting in favor of tenure found that Dr. Bhasin satisfies the requirements of tenure in Area 2.

C. Professional Contributions and Activities Use attachments as needed.

Dr. Bhasin has made significant and important contributions to the department, the college, the university, and the wider community since the beginning of her contract, particularly in issues involving diversity. She has represented the department to recruit students at AP Day; participated in internationalization efforts through the Internationalization Task Force; judged an MLK Day of Service Essay Contest and the CEMC Short Story Writing Contest; visited many of her colleagues' classrooms as a guest lecturer across departments; introduced and led workshops on a film for the APSU World Film Festival; presented and participated in the "Speak Up, Speak Out" Racial Equality Summit; and other activities. She also contributed to the 2018 TBR audit. Dr. Bhasin has contributed extensively to the QEP and GLO (Global Learning Opportunities). Within the department, she has chaired the First-Year Writing committee throughout her appointment at APSU. At various times, she has also served on the Asanbe Diversity committee, the World Literature committee, the Library committee, the Bulletins committee, and the Student Learning Outcomes committee. Dr. Bhasin has served on a search committee for both faculty and Dean. Dr. Bhasin is also a reviewer for the academic journal *Transformations: A Journal of Inclusive Scholarship and Pedagogy*. The committee finds that Dr. Bhasin satisfies the requirements of tenure in Area 3.

Minority Recommendation: Please check one of the following:

____ 1. Recommend probationary status be continued.

____ 2. Recommend retention for one more year at the end of
which time employment be terminated.
(use only for 3rd year and beyond)

(Date of termination)

____ 3. Recommend faculty member not be retained for next year.
(use only for 1st and 2nd year)

(Date of termination)

☒ 4. Recommend retention and the awarding of tenure
beginning AUG. 2020 (DPS)

____ 5. Other (Recommendations with qualifications, such as
completion of degree). Please explain in attachment.

DEPARTMENT COMMITTEE VALIDATION: We certify that we have read the minority report. Although these statements reflect committee discussion, our signatures do not indicate agreement or disagreement with the above evaluation and recommendation.

Signatures [Please print your name clearly below your signature.]:

R. W. Atkinson Wes Atkinson

Ken Cervelli Ken Cervelli

Linda Crenshaw Linda Crenshaw

Ozzi DiPaolo-Harrison Ozzi DiPaolo-Harrison

Jill Eichhorn Jill Eichhorn

M. Taylor Emery M. Taylor Emery

David Guest David Guest

Katherine Honea Katherine Honea

Barry Kitterman Barry Kitterman

David L. Major David Major

Cynthia McWilliams Cynthia McWilliams

N. Puszkas Norbert Puszkas

Miguel Ruiz Miguel Ruiz

Laura Schultz Laura Schultz

Dan Shea Dan Shea

Marissa Sikes Marissa Sikes

Karen Sorenson Karen Sorenson

Andrea Spofford Andrea Spofford

Mickey Wadia Mickey Wadia

Charla White-Major Charla White-Major

Tim Winters Tim Winters

Amy Wright Amy Wright

I certify that I have read the department retention and tenure minority report form. My signature does not indicate agreement or disagreement with the statements made here.

Signature of Faculty Member: Neeta Bhasin

Date: 09/24/2019

Dept. Retention/Tenure Committee Voting Record

For: 10

Against: 12

Absent: 0

Non-Voting Department Member(s):

Minority Report?
Check one box.

No

☐

Yes

☒

Committee Chair's Name (Print):

DANIEL P. SHEA

Committee Chair's Signature:



November 11, 2019

Dr. Neeta Bhasin
Department of Languages and Literature
P.O. Box 4487
Austin Peay State University

Dear Dr. Bhasin

After reviewing your submitted materials and the recommendations of the various administrators and committees, I am not recommending you to President White for tenure.

Sincerely,



Rex F. Gandy
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

copy: Mercy Cannon, Chair
Barry Jones, Dean
Alisa White, President

In the fall of 2014, my first semester at Austin Peay State University, I have been active in teaching, scholarship, and service. Following is a summary of my activities and contributions:

AREA I: Academic Assignment

During the fall semester of 2014, I taught two sections of ENGL 1010 (English Composition 1) and two sections of ENGL 1020 (English Composition 2). In both, I aimed at introducing students to practices of critical reading and the conventions of written academic discourse. Students in these writing intensive courses learned to how to use rhetorical strategies to persuade readers of the validity of their own perspectives. In-class activities in both courses included readings, discussions, peer workshops, and short presentations by students. All major writing assignments required drafts before the final submission. Prior to all major writing assignments, students were provided with handouts with guidelines and instructions. These pedagogical practices were undertaken so that students could learn to be reflective and strategic with their own composing processes, particularly with planning, writing, diagnosing problems within their own work and finally with revising their own texts. I also proposed a two-week course on Black British literature for the Cooperative Center for Study Abroad (CCSA), which has been approved for the winter session of 2015-2016. Finally, I started working with Professor Lynn Sims to design a course on world Englishes, and together with Professor Katherine Honea, I proposed a course in Linguistics as a comprehensive introduction to the study of language and social identities.

AREA II: Scholarly and Creative Achievements

My scholarly and creative work explores the role of language in the construction and elaboration of identity. Specifically, my scholarly focus is on immigrant and migrant communities, and my rhetorical approach investigates the communicative strategies and resources people use to construct, negotiate, and legitimize identities. I am currently working on collating my dissertation thesis as a manuscript form for a monograph. I am also revising two papers for publication. One paper examines the overlap of ethos and identity in immigrant narratives and the other puts forth a new theoretical and methodological framework for studying identity. Furthermore, my proposal for a paper entitled, "The Beautiful, the Exotic, and the Undocumented: Romancing the 'Illegal' Immigrant" has been accepted for presentation at the Tennessee Philological Association (TPA) Conference in Henderson, Tennessee in February 2015.

AREA III: Professional Contributions and Activities

I prepared and planned to assume my responsibilities in 2015 as the coordinator of the First Year Writing Program and as a team member of the Freshman English Committee. I volunteered at the fall AP Day, advertising the Department of Languages and Literature. I also volunteered for International Night 2014; participated in a forum organized by the Internationalization Task force on internationalizing APSU; and completed the fall new faculty orientation meetings.

NEETA BHASIN
Summary of Areas I, II, and III

In the spring of 2014, my second semester at Austin Peay State University, I have been active in teaching, scholarship, and service. Following is a summary of my activities and contributions:

AREA I: Academic Assignment

During the spring semester of 2015, I taught two sections of ENGL 1020 (English Composition 2) and one section of ENGL 1010E (English Composition 1- Enhanced). I also taught ENGL 1010 in summer session I. Since I get reassigned time, I only teach three courses a semester. I began teaching the 1010E course in the spring with considerable trepidation. I had never taught developmental English before. I was determined to revise and refine my teaching and communicative practices. These modifications were vitally important to undertake, primarily because I was going to teach students who, for various reasons, were underprepared for college-level writing. As my student evaluations of 1010E indicate, the course was successful and well received by the majority of students. I attribute this favorable outcome to a variety of pedagogical and communicative strategies that I adopted for the enhanced course. Long periods of university closure due to inclement weather in the spring adversely affected my ENGL 1020 classes. The two 1020 courses never did regain their equilibrium in the second half of the semester. **ENGL 1010** course that I offered in the summer was a compressed yet accelerated version of the regular ENGL 1010 course. Students who took ENGL 1010 in the summer seemed to enjoy it much more than students who took my classes in fall 2014. I had proposed a new course in Linguistics last fall that was accepted this spring. The course **LING 4070: Language, Culture, and Identity** aims to introduce students to a variety of sociolinguistic concepts that are useful in studying language and identities, particularly gendered identities. LING 4070 is cross-listed with the Women's and Gender Studies program. I expect to teach this course in the near future.

AREA II: Scholarly and Creative Achievements

My scholarly and creative work explores the role of language in the construction and elaboration of identity. On February 27 of this year, I presented a paper entitled, "The Beautiful, the Exotic, and the Undocumented: Romancing the 'Illegal' Immigrant" at the Tennessee Philological Association (TPA) Conference in Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tennessee. Furthermore, my proposal for a paper entitled, "Ethos and Identity in Immigrant Narratives" has been accepted for presentation at the annual conference of South Central Modern Languages Association. I will present the paper at the conference in Nashville, Tennessee on November 2, 2015.

AREA III: Professional Contributions and Activities

I assumed my responsibilities as the coordinator of the First Year Writing Program and as a member of the Freshman English Committee in the spring of 2015. I organized the first workshop of the academic year for the instructors of first year English courses. I supervised the TBR critical competencies assessment for ENGL 1020. To strengthen my professional development, I attended the Co-Requisite Writing and Reading Academy organized by the Tennessee Board of Regents. I led a *Govs Trail to Success* on "Thriving in the Global Village." I served as a reader for the MLK Day of Service essay contest and I participated in the Medieval Language Event. I visited Professor Jill Eichhorn's *The Vagina Monologues* class for a discussion on sexuality and intersectionality. I performed a dramatic reading of Eve Ensler's *The Vagina Monologues*. I volunteered for packing food for Feed My Starving Children (FMSC) on MLK Jr. Day of Service.

Following is a summary of my activities and contributions in teaching, scholarship, and service at APSU.

AREA I: Academic Assignment

My responsibilities falling under Area 1 comprise of a) Teaching, b) Coordinating the First-Year Writing Program, and c) Advising. As first-year writing coordinator, I receive one course release. I taught 2 sections of ENGL 2330 and ENGL 4600 in spring 2018 and three core courses - two ENGL 1010s and one 1010E in the fall. **ENGL 1010E & 1010:** As per the recommendation of the RTP committee, I improved the numerical scores of my Composition 1 courses. 1010E had the highest general evaluation score (of 5.13) and the other 2 1010 courses also scored above 3. This improvement is due to the changes I made in my teaching practices. Rigorous in-class group work and peer collaborations helped with students' writing assignments. I also stressed the need for meeting with instructors for extra help. In the enhanced section of 1010 diligent group and peer work helped students to learn and write better. In 1010E, I also worked closely on lesson plans with the SLA assigned to my section. Both peer reviewers found my classroom teaching in 1010 to be structured and effective, and positively remark on the high levels of student participation. I have included reflection papers from my 1010 and 1010E courses in the dossier. More than student course evaluation numbers, these reflections demonstrate what students learned and the evidence of that learning in the assignments included in the final portfolio. Most students also show a more realistic and honest assessment of their own labor, learning, and challenges. **ENGL 4600 (SL):** I got the QEP Keys to the World grant of \$5000 to develop the course. This course explored the centrality of immigration to the history of the US and sought to deepen awareness of the varied origins of immigrants in this country. The service-learning component of the course imparted to students how to inform their practice by reflecting upon scholarly work and how to hone their scholarly inquiry as a result of their community engagement. Students worked with community partners, organized a film series on immigration, and went on a trip to Atlanta. **ENGL 2330:** In spring 2018, both sections of ENGL 2330 went well. My average student evaluation scores for ENGL 2330 are above 4. **Advising:** I served as the academic advisor of six students and helped them to determine what courses they need to graduate. As **Coordinator of First-Year writing**, I organized a successful workshop in the fall for professional development of instructors, implemented peer evaluations of adjunct faculty, helped to create new guidelines for 1010 assignments.

AREA II: Scholarly and Creative Achievements

My paper "Romancing the "Illegal" Immigrant" was published in the October 2018 issue of *JLAS*. I participated in a symposium on Discourse Analysis and gave a talk at the CoAL Faculty Lecture Series on race and ethnicity in the everyday narratives of Indian Immigrants.

AREA III: Professional Contributions and Activities

I attended QEP grant workshops and secured a competitive (GLO) faculty grant of \$7500 for a course on immigrant literature with a study abroad component. I presented in the classes of Profs. Jill Eichhorn and David Major. I also did a reading in Sanskrit at the Medieval Language and Literature event. I serve as faculty-at-large on the search committee for the Dean of CoAL. I also serve on a departmental search committee and I'm a member of the World Literature, Library, and Bulletins committees as well.

AREA I: Academic Assignment

My responsibilities falling under Area 1 are a) Teaching, b) Coordinating the First-Year Writing Program, and c) Advising. As first-year writing coordinator, I receive one course release.

Teaching

My teaching assignments in the past 5 years have included all of the English core courses (ENGL 1010: Composition 1, ENGL 1010E: Enhanced Composition 1, ENGL 1020: Composition 2, and ENGL 2030/2330: Topics in World Literature). I have also taught upper division undergraduate courses in my areas of specialization of sociolinguistics and immigrant narratives (LING 4070: Language, Culture, and Identity, LING 4600/506F: Discourse Analysis, and ENGL 4600 SL: Exploring Immigrant Experiences & Narratives). Two of the upper division courses I taught were electives in the linguistics concentration (LING 4600/506F was open to both undergraduates and graduates in Linguistics) and the ENGL 4600 was a “Special Topics” Service-Learning course.

I) First-Year Writing Courses (ENGL 1010 E, ENGL 1010, and ENGL 1020)

First-Year writing courses, particularly ENGL 1010 and ENGL 1010E, have always been the focus of my efforts to better my teaching. When RTP committee expressed its concern regarding my low student evaluation scores, I acted upon its recommendations and modified my pedagogical practices to improve my teaching performance in the general education core courses. In the fall of 2018, I received my highest general teaching evaluation scores of 5.13 in ENGL 1010E, and in the spring of 2019, my general student evaluation score in ENGL 1010 was 5.11. All peer reviewers found my classroom teaching of Composition 1 to be structured, motivating, goal-oriented, and effective. I taught ENGL 1020 for four semesters, from Fall 2014 to Spring 2016. My average student evaluation ratings for ENGL 1020 ranged from 3.3 to 4.3.

2) ENGL 2330 (formerly, 2030): Traditions in World Literature

I have taught ENGL 2330 on a regular basis since 2016. This course provides an overview of world literature, and students in my course get introduced to Middle Eastern, European, Latin American, and African literary traditions in comparative perspective. My average student evaluation scores for ENGL 2330 have been typically above 4.

3) LING 4070: Language, Culture, and Identity

LING 4070 introduced students to a variety of sociolinguistic concepts that are useful in studying language and identities, particularly gendered identities. The average student rating I received for this course was 4.5.

4) LING 4600/506F: Discourse Analysis

Students in this course learned to pay close and systematic attention to particular texts (oral, written, or visual) and their contexts. They also read analyses by others and practiced analyses of their own, using as data texts such as billboards, websites, text messages, novels, movie scripts, political speeches, and lectures.

5) ENGL 4600: Exploring Immigrant Experiences and Narratives (Service-Learning)

This course explored the centrality of immigration to the history of the U.S. Students in this course worked with the community partner organization, Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition (TIRRC) based in Nashville. They also organized a “Crossing Borders” film series

and also went on a weekend trip to Atlanta, Georgia to visit immigrant communities and entrepreneurial initiatives of refugees, and the Center for Civil and Human Rights.

Advising

I have served as the academic advisor to ten students since 2016.

Coordinating First-Year Writing Program

As the coordinator, my primary task is to manage and systematize all aspects of the department's first-year composition program. I also chair the First-Year Writing Committee. I organized professional development Workshops for Instructors of First-Year Writing Courses; implemented Peer Evaluations of Adjunct and Temporary Faculty; reviewed assignments for first-year writing courses; and enriched the sandbox for first-year writing resources. In 2019, I hope to undertake a major redesign of the key components of the First-Year Writing Program, such as assessment, professional development, and student learning outcomes.

AREA II: Scholarly and Creative Achievements

In 2018, after a blind peer review process, my paper "Romancing the Illegal Immigrant" was published in the October issue of *Journal of Literature and Art Studies, USA*. *JLAS* is a monthly professional academic journal, covering research topics such as literature, art studies, aesthetics, feminism, and narratology, and is published monthly in print and online. In September 2019, I submitted my paper "Race in the Everyday Narratives of Indian Immigrants in the U.S" to the journal of *Ethnic and Racial Studies (ERS)* for publication. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* is a peer-reviewed online and print journal by Taylor and Francis Online. I participated in a symposium on Discourse Analysis at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, and gave a talk at the CoAL Faculty Lecture Series on race and ethnicity in the everyday narratives of Indian Immigrants. I presented papers at NWSA (2017), NeMLA (2016), SCMLA (2015), and TPA (2015) conferences.

AREA III: Professional Contributions and Activities

In service to campus and department, I volunteered for AP day; participated in internationalizing efforts; served on the Peay Read committee; presented on race, medieval languages and foreign films; visited classes of departmental colleagues to discuss my areas of specialization; and judged an essay writing contest for MLK day. I also served on various department committees, including one search committee. I also served as faculty-at-large on the search committee for the Dean of CoAL from fall 2018 to spring 2019. I attended QEP grant workshops and secured competitive faculty grants of \$5000 & \$7500 to develop courses on immigrant literature and immigrant experiences. I also participated in a workshop for writing program administrators, organized by the Council for Writing Program Administrators (CWPA). In service to discipline, I began serving as a reviewer in spring 2019 for the journal *Transformations: A Journal of Inclusive Scholarship and Pedagogy*, published by Penn State University Press.