

**TOWARD PROMOTION AND TENURE:
GUIDELINES FOR ASSESSING THE ACHIEVEMENT OF A
PRESERVATION EDUCATOR**

A

Report

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A. Historic Preservation: A Definition of the Field

Historic preservation is a very broad term used to describe the activities which promote the protection and continued use of the built environment. The scale of problems considered within this field may be large (e.g., a plan for preserving an agricultural region, an island, or a city), or it may be small (e.g., the disassembly, storage, and reuse of an architectural detail). Defined broadly, the field draws on a range of disciplines within the traditional divisions of the university: anthropology, archaeology, architectural history, architecture, art conservation, business, cultural geography, economics, environmental studies, folk life, heritage conservation, history, landscape architecture, law, personnel management, planning, political science, public administration, real estate, sociology, and tax accounting.

B. Historic Preservation Programs at the Undergraduate and Graduate Levels

Where academic programs in historic preservation have been developed, they have been, of necessity, interdisciplinary, and because of the variety of influences on their development, they have been diverse in their content and focus. Some programs attempt to synthesize most, if not all, of the contributing disciplines leading to an undergraduate major or a graduate degree in historic preservation per se. Other programs are based in one of the disciplines, from which vantage point the others may be considered. Whether the graduates are thus "preservation generalists" or "preservation specialists," they may make important contributions to the field. Some graduate programs may be completed in three semesters, although two years has become commonplace at the master's level. The requirements also vary, including the number of required courses and the character of internships which differ, to some extent depending upon the expectations of the college, school, or department(s) in which the program is administered. Some programs are also involved with community-based projects, and hold short courses or training sessions lasting from one day to several weeks.

C. The Academic and Professional Backgrounds of Preservation Educators

Given the wide variety of emphases among academic programs in historic preservation, it is not surprising to find that the many of those who are teaching preservation hold degrees in one or more related disciplines. The terminal degrees which preservation educators commonly hold include both doctorates and masters in American studies, anthropology, architectural history, architecture, art history, building science, city and regional planning, economics, folk life, historic preservation, history, human ecology, landscape architecture, law, museum studies, and public administration. It is useful to note that the doctoral degrees are largely held in academic disciplines, while the master's degrees come from fields which are applied or professional in nature.

D. Problems in the Assessment of Preservation Achievement

A candidate for promotion and tenure at any university is judged by standards such as "excellence in performing the responsibilities of the position" and "unusual promise for continued achievement." The definitions of "excellence" and "unusual promise" have been spelled out in intricate detail in institutional and departmental policies for promotion and tenure, which focus on the normal trilogy: teaching, research (or, in the case of design faculty, other creative accomplishments), and public service. The difficulty for preservation educators is that

some departmental guidelines for promotion and tenure are so narrowly constructed that much of their legitimate activity is not considered relevant for determining excellence. The interdisciplinary structure of the preservation program, with its blend of research and public service, encourages practitioners to work outside of a single discipline, and indeed, outside of the university. Hence, it may be difficult for senior faculty in any given department to evaluate the performance of individuals whose achievements differ so markedly from their own. A few preservation educators, already well along on the promotion and tenure "ladder," have advanced by first having met traditional academic or professional criteria. Their achievements in historic preservation have been considered after having satisfied the usual requirements. However, some junior faculty who have specialized in preservation from the start of their careers, and associate professors who have educated themselves in a new field, have experienced difficulty when coming up for contract renewal, promotion and/or tenure. The purpose of this policy statement is to recommend and encourage realistic standards of judgment to supplement the basic guidelines that senior faculty and administrators may use to evaluate preservation educators in the departmental, collegiate, and university contexts.

E. The Traditional and Non-traditional Roles

There is a direct relationship between whether the preservation educator is expected to teach preservation specialists or preservation generalists, and the criteria which should be used in the promotion and tenure process. If historic preservation is an integral part of a traditional graduate degree program, which leads to a M.Arch., M.L.A., M.R.P., or M.A. in history, etc., or if historic preservation is developed as a subspecialty, within one of these traditional disciplines, the review process usually is governed to some degree by the normal standards of the department. In such cases a professor will likely teach one or more courses in the traditional academic or professional fields and one or more classes in historic preservation, while publishing and/or practicing in his/her specialties. It would be appropriate, for example, for a landscape architect who is teaching design and history, publishing articles on the need for sensitive environmental impact statements, and working on a cultural landscape restoration project, to be judged by standards applied to the other professionals in his/her department. In this sense, professional schools provide the most sympathetic "home" for a preservation program, because they have developed criteria which recognize the value of the practice of a specialty. On the other hand, individuals who have met the standards for promotion and/or tenure in a professional school may have difficulty when they are compared with academics at the university level.

Problems are more likely to arise in academic departments, where research is equated only with the publication of books and articles in scholarly journals, and where professional practice is lumped under public service, along with presentations to local civic organizations. Likewise, in the area of teaching, the direction of theses and dissertations would be recognized, but the development of interdisciplinary courses or the supervision of internships would be less easily discerned as fulfilling the requirements of academic excellence.

If historic preservation is considered a separate field, and a curriculum is established that is largely independent of the department(s) administering the program, the review process for promotion and tenure should take into account the added demands on the participating faculty. In such cases, historic preservation educators should be evaluated both as practitioners, concerned with skills and techniques (i.e., in documentation, interpretation, law, materials conservation, community service, etc.), and as academics, providing sound scholarly guidance

(i.e., in the history of the built environment, history and theory of preservation, etc.). The contributions of preservation educators to scholarship must be recognized in the unpublished but nonetheless significant reports prepared in their role as consultants. While the criteria for evaluation may be slightly different, they should be in no sense less demanding. It is expected that those teaching in historic preservation will be as energetic and productive as their colleagues at the same level.

F. The Evaluation Process

Each department or program should have formal procedures for evaluating faculty on an annual basis so that there is a clear understanding of what is being required of those responsible for historic preservation education. To begin with, there should be a mentoring program to orient the junior faculty to the institutional and departmental reappointment, promotion and tenure policies. In addition, there should be an opportunity in the annual evaluations for faculty to work out with departmental administrators a set of realistic expectations of progress in professional development. It is important, for example, to discuss what latitude, if any, the department is likely to allow fieldwork or community service in lieu of published research. The significance of external funding should be discussed because the amount of outside support may provide insight into the candidate's research ability and reflect the judgment of outside peer groups which evaluate such proposals. Goals for teaching effectiveness, both in course development and student direction, must also be refined. Faculty should set attainable goals and administrators should understand the variety of ways excellence can be demonstrated by preservation educators. For junior faculty on tenure track appointments, some time near the end of the typical first six years of "probation," there will be the opportunity to document their accomplishments in teaching, research and service for departmental and college committees or senior faculty who will make recommendations for promotion and tenure. For those tenured at the associate rank, continued advancement to the status of professor will also be judged by departmental and college committees of senior faculty. It is most important that both the candidates and the evaluation committees are working with agreed upon performance guidelines and professional expectations.

G. The Assessment of a Preservation Educator's Achievement

Each university has its own guidelines and procedures for reappointment, promotion, and tenure. The importance of establishing a close working relationship with other members of the department which sponsors the historic preservation program cannot be overemphasized. While it is true that there have been cases in which a department has recommended that a promotion be granted and/or confirmed and a negative decision was made at an upper level, in the majority of instances a clear positive vote among one's colleagues is the most important note of approval.

Assuming this supportive attitude exists, what then are the characteristics that mark a preservation educator? Are there any special qualities to be looked for? What are the marks of excellence in teaching, research and service in this area?

Teaching

The evidence presented on behalf of the faculty member's teaching capability will be much the same in historic preservation as in other traditional disciplines. Because course materials in preservation are by no means standardized, however, there should be evidence of advancing a curriculum by the development of new and/or improved course work. Clarity of purpose and organization should be evident in a wide range of teaching situations: whether in the classroom,

the laboratory, the design studio, or in the field. The preservation educator should be able to address effectively the public as well as a group of scholars. A record of the collaborative projects conducted with students should also be presented.

Research

The evidence introduced in the area of research and scholarship will be somewhat broader in historic preservation than in many of the traditional disciplines. In addition to the usual array of books, articles, reviews, and papers delivered, proof of professional activity should be noted in resumes of completed work. Competitions, executed projects, government reports, preservation plans, in house organizational studies, exhibits, community outreach programs, and television appearances or films for which substantial preparation was necessary all should be considered as part of the record. It is expected that a preservation educator will practice what he/she teaches; these materials demonstrate that performance.

Public Service

The evidence presented under the heading of public service should be one of the strongest aspects of a candidate's performance. Usually this is fulfilled by work for academic or professional societies and, more especially, by committee work at the department, college or university level. The preservation educator is more likely to present evidence of service beyond the immediate academic community, often including public lectures, presentations, conference planning and tours, as well as participation in or consultation to governmental bodies. It is here that the administrative skills of the individual will be demonstrated and the effectiveness of his/her communication with the general public will be shown.

Other Considerations

Lastly, some attention might be given to the professor's entrepreneurial talents. In addition to teaching, researching, and writing, becoming involved with projects, and serving the needs of the public, the need to raise money repeatedly surfaces. Although this should not be considered a requirement for promotion or tenure, it should be recognized that most historic preservation programs depend on outside grants and gifts for their success. Visiting lecturers and a host of activities require support that is unlikely unless a faculty member takes the time to pursue alternative sources of funding, which may not be granted to the university, but may go to a community in need of design assistance, or to a nonprofit organization in need of a report which a preservation student will be hired to do. The effort is made pro bono by the faculty member, who is concerned with placing students and alumni of the program and thus strengthening ties with professionals in the field.

H. Conclusion

The role of the preservation educator is based not only upon the particular assignment which he/she is given, but also upon the nature of the field itself. Such an educator is thus neither solely an academic nor a professional, and must not be judged by the standards of either group alone. In the area of teaching, it is necessary to acknowledge the diverse and evolving nature of the discipline and to look for evidence of new course content and offerings. Evaluation of the research accomplishments of a preservation educator will require the consideration of material which is broader in form and content than in many traditional disciplines. Finally, a significant amount of the candidate's efforts should be seen under the heading of service to the academic community and beyond. It is hoped that, by clarifying these areas of evaluation beforehand, difficulties and injustices may be avoided.

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