

# Sophia Richards

## Science and Technology Studies

Sophia Richards, having earned her Ph.D. in Science and Technology Studies from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, joined a prestigious research university after spending six years doing development work with the Carnegie Foundation. Her research described how changing electronic technologies affected the formation of world markets; her particular specialization concerned electronic bank interfaces in southeastern Asian economies. By the time she joined the university, she had established a body of research (in terms of quantity and quality) equivalent to that of an associate professor, so her initial university appointment was made at that level, but she was a decade older than the typical beginning associate professor.

Richards earned tenure in her second year at the university, as she continued her previous high rate of productivity measured by cited papers and funding. In her first four years, the number of her papers, their citations, and the amount of funding she received were among the highest in her college. She typically taught the introductory course in Asian area studies, an upper division undergraduate course in Asian microeconomics, and a graduate course on science, technology, and developing nations. Students flocked to her courses and provided her universally excellent teaching scores.

In her fifth year, Richards was awarded funding from the Rockefeller Foundation to establish a lecture series and to support some fellowships in southeast Asian economics for graduate students to collaborate with her on research. She also designated some funds to buy her out from some undergraduate teaching. Connected with the Rockefeller project, Richards established a website to publish research on technological breakthroughs in international economies, and proceeded to develop it into the only electronic journal in the field. Although all of her previous work appeared in print journals, she began to publish most of her papers through the website as of her fifth year at the university.

In her sixth year, Richards built on her development success with Rockefeller by securing a substantial endowment from alumnus Gregory Chan, who had never before donated to the institution. Chan was impressed with her scholarship, her coordination of the Rockefeller lecture series, and her energy and diligence in expanding the curriculum in international studies of science and technology. He designated the endowment for a distinguished chair for a scholar in technologies of markets to be named at some near future date.

During that same year, Richards became more involved with the web journal, publishing two-thirds of her papers electronically on her own web journal. Richards came up for promotion to full professor based on her new work — 20 articles on the website and 10 additional papers in scholarly print journals, the Rockefeller grant, and having fostered the endowment. It is widely understood that such a promotion is necessary for her to be eligible for the Chan chair. There are rumors among faculty in her college that some sort of deal has been made with Chan that Richards should be awarded the Chan chair.

Although Richards' record was generally regarded as within the acceptable range for a promotion to full professor, several concerns were raised by members of the promotion committee regarding whether she has relied too closely on her Carnegie contacts in receiving the Rockefeller funds, whether her scholarship has recently slipped in that much of it appeared on the website the Rockefeller project sponsors. Some faculty express concerns whether those papers are properly reviewed in the context of an electronic journal that she edits, and whether she has tried to leverage the system in recruiting a large donation for a chair that seems designed for her. How would you consider such concerns in the context of evaluating whether Richards ought to be promoted to full professor?