Guidelines for Promotion to Full Professor

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The following guidelines are provided to assist faculty seeking promotion to full professor and their promotion committees. These guidelines are based on past experiences here within the College of Science. In the event that statements presented in this document are in conflict with the University Faculty Code, the Code clearly has precedence and the error in interpretation lies with the Dean. Please forward any comments or suggestions for changes to the Dean’s Office.

1. Criteria for promotion to full professor (Code sec 405.2.4)
   ...
promotion to the rank of professor shall require an established outstanding reputation for excellence in teaching, research...(and service) according to the role statement. Excellence is measured by national standards for professors within the professional peer group.

Dean’s Comments:

Promotion to the rank of professor is often viewed as meaning the establishment of a national or international reputation in research, based on peer-reviewed publications and external funding, with little or no regard given to teaching. This interpretation with respect to teaching is unacceptable and promotion documentation must include demonstration of outstanding performance in the major components of the role statement, which typically includes both research and teaching.

Documentation of teaching, research, and service should focus on performance in the post-tenure years.

There is no required or specified time interval between the ranks of associate professor and professor. Typically faculty are considered for promotion after serving approximately four to five years in rank, but it is neither required nor expected.

Review for promotion to professor will satisfy the 5-year requirement for post-tenure review.

2. Promotion Advisory Committee (Code sec 405.6.2.2)
   - deadline for committee approval is Feb 15 of Spring Semester prior to consideration
   - must include one external member
   - must be done in consultation with the candidate
   - have candidate co-sign memo to dean establishing committee, indicating consent

Dean’s Comments:

This should be a premeditated decision, not one made in haste in August. The Dean’s office reserves the right to defer consideration of cases for promotion to full professor in the fall that were not properly assessed by an approved promotion committee in the previous spring.

Making a decision in February to forward a candidate for promotion in the fall may not allow sufficient
time to accrue peer reviews of teaching. It might be better to think of a year-long preparation, allowing sufficient time for peer visits to classes over at least three semesters. Note that these visits need not be done exclusively by promotion committee members.

3. Procedures specific to the promotion process (Code sec 405.8)
   - Sept 15 deadline for solicitation of external peer reviews
   - A minimum of four letters is required with half coming from the candidate's list.

Dean's Comments:

Prior contact with external reviewers is encouraged to ensure that 1) they are willing to do the review and 2) the review can be completed on time. Do not solicit in a "shot-gun" fashion, hoping that at least four reviews are returned.

The letters of solicitation and the candidate's documentation should be sent by the dept head.

Documentation sent to external reviewers might include a copy of the candidate's role statement, as it will place their research productivity in context.

The department head must document in the promotion binder why each reviewer was selected. This should be a brief statement about the reviewer and their particular expertise. It should not be a multi-page resume or vita.

Avoid selecting co-authors, advisors, and/or mentors as peer reviewers; their objectivity will be questioned. If you absolutely must use these types of reviewers, it must be thoroughly documented why they were selected.

External reviewers should not be asked to judge whether a candidate should be promoted. They should be asked to evaluate the candidate's research record, their contributions to the discipline, their stature or level of recognition in the profession, the quality of their work, etc.

Include a copy of the solicitation letter in the promotion binder.

When department heads and committees write summary letters, there is a tendency to include the names of prestigious reviewers within the text. Remember that copies of letters from the promotion committee, the department head, and the dean must eventually be given to the candidate but the names of reviewers are to remain confidential.

4. Assessment of Teaching

Teaching is a component of every faculty member's role statement and the candidate should prepare documentation with emphasis on post-tenure teaching performance. The challenge here is that evaluation of teaching tends to be more subjective than the evaluation of research. Listed below are comments and observations resulting from review of P&T binders during the last three years.

Items to include in teaching documentation:

- Statement of teaching philosophy (1 to 2 pages) to get some insight into what the candidate is trying to
achieve in the classroom.

- List of all post-tenure teaching assignments, by semester and year, including current year.

- Course evaluation table
  
a. Check to see that required information is complete (dates, courses, scores, # of respondents, dept and college comparisons)

b. Provide an explanation (by dept head and/or candidate) for low or anomalous scores on student/course evaluations

c. Provide copies of the actual printouts of each course evaluation because it presents better data for evaluating the course and instructor. This information is very useful when evaluations are average or below average.

d. Student written comments or solicited letters from students are often poorly written, unsigned, and obviously subjective - don't over do it.

- Peer evaluations of teaching
  
a. Samples of peer evaluation forms have been distributed previously (typically forms should include date, time, course, enrollment, location, environment (set up of room, type of seats, geometry, hot/cold? is it well ventilated or stuffy, etc.), teaching aids used, student response and interactions, other observations relating to use of technology, rapport, etc.) Make it constructive! Put observations in memo format copied to instructor.

b. The dept head should visit at least one course once a year and other faculty should visit annually too. Although it would be desirable for peer reviews to be completed by committee members, promotion committees are seldom set up sufficiently in advance for that to occur. Departments might consider having other faculty with strengths in teaching make classroom visits. Peer-review of teaching does not have rank restrictions, i.e. other associate professors may certainly make valid observations of teaching and mentor colleagues.

- Provide course outlines for those courses taught on a regular basis.
  
a. Provide a representative outline for each course, not all outlines for all courses.

b. Attributes of a good outline:
   - course number and title, prerequisites, meeting times
   - instructor, with office hours, email address, office location, etc.
   - course objectives (not the same as course contents, i.e. “We will cover chapters 3 through 22 in the book.”)
   - web address if appropriate
   - grading criteria (exams, quizzes, exercises, projects, papers, home works, etc. and %’s for each)
   - text title, author, and publisher; required? recommended?
   - make-up policy for exams, labs, assignments, etc.
   - lecture schedule showing all class meetings, topic or chapter assignments, exam dates, holidays,
and date and time of final exam.
- ADA statement for students with disabilities
- if there is a course fee, indicate how much is collected at registration and what it is used for
- other class or departmental policies, such as academic integrity, special field trips (other)

- Use of technology in the classroom
  a. Is course web-assisted? Any specialized computer software used?
  b. Comment on any innovative teaching strategies or techniques utilized.

5. Research

- Student engagement in research
  Faculty research should demonstrate an appropriate level of student engagement in support of the department's graduate programs.

Student engagement represents an obvious overlap between teaching and research, thus it may be appropriate to provide information about student mentoring, research, and related productivity in both the teaching and research sections of the promotion binder.

a. Indicate undergraduates, graduate students (indicate degree level if still in the program and degrees completed if still in the program and degrees completed), and postdocs involved in research (provide dates).

b. Note any unique accomplishments of these students (placement on graduation, contributions to your research, co-authorship, etc.)

- Publication Lists
  a. Is authorship listed as published? ["Brown, Charlie (with co-authors Lucy, Linus, and Snoopy)" doesn't cut it.]
  b. Is the year of publication given?
  c. Is the page range given rather than numbers of pages?
  d. Are student co-authors noted?
  e. For presentations at professional meetings, is there an abstract citation? Otherwise give dates, organization, location of meeting, note student co-authors.

- External Funding
  In most departments, faculty are expected to generate sufficient external funding to support their research program, including graduate students and/or undergraduate research assistants. In listing external funding, indicate project title, funding agency, amount funded, and duration of funding (start and end dates).
6. Service

- For post-tenure service on campus (committee assignments, P&T committees), provide start and end dates (years if long term, months if short term) rather than "I was a member ... for many years (or several years ago...)"

- When listing post-tenure service on thesis committees, indicate student's name, department, degree, and dates.

- Service is very broadly interpreted. Include community outreach activities only if they pertain to the discipline.

- Professional service includes reviewing manuscripts and grant proposals, but also chairing sessions at professional meetings, chairing symposia, serving as an officer or editor, etc.

- Avoid overdoing documentation or redundant documentation. Remember that as the binder goes up the line, most reviewers will rely more on evaluation letters from the previous level than on the primary data.

7. Other

It is far easier to defend accomplishments when they are well-documented than it is to defend a poorly formatted document with incomplete or missing data.