

**Department of Recreation, Park & Tourism Sciences  
Texas A&M University**

**POLICY GUIDELINES ON TENURE AND PROMOTION**

**(Approved by the Dean of Faculties, April 27, 2005**

**Approved by a unanimous vote of the RPTS Tenure and Promotion Committee, June 3, 2005)**

The university's guidelines on tenure and promotion provide a generic framework. They are necessarily broad because they have to accommodate procedures that can be embraced by all disciplines and departments of the institution. The challenge for each entity within the university is to operationalize these guidelines by offering more specific criteria and benchmarks which adhere to the generic standards, but are consistent with excellence in teaching, scholarship, and service as they are defined within a specific field. Thus, this document is specifically oriented to the context of RPTS decisions relating to tenure and promotion to associate and full professor.

The RPTS faculty is eclectic both in areas of subject interest and in disciplinary focus. This means that benchmarks and criteria have to be adaptable so they respect these differences. Given this, it is not considered feasible to establish benchmarks and criteria that are fixed, immutable norms which apply to every situation. Thus, it is emphasized that the benchmarks and criteria in this document are intended to be guidelines and not norms. The document consists of two sections: (1) tenure policy, and (2) performance standard guidelines.

The Tenure and Promotion Committee consists of all members in the Department holding the rank of full professor or above, except the Department Head. The Department Head is invited to be present at all meetings of the Promotion and Tenure Committee as an observer and as a resource person to whom the Committee members can direct informational questions if they so wish, but the Head will not participate either in the discussions or in voting.

### **TENURE**

Tenure is the assurance to a faculty member who has successfully performed during an agreed upon probationary period of service that he/she may be expected to continue that service in an academic appointment unless funds are no longer available or a convincing cause for dismissal is proven through established procedures of due process.

In general, a faculty member is a full-time employee of the Texas A&M University system and the Department of Recreation, Park & Tourism Sciences who holds the rank of instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, professor or distinguished professor. Part-time or temporary members of the teaching staff such as lecturers, senior lecturers, graduate students serving as teaching assistants, postdoctoral fellows, etc. are specifically not entitled to tenure. Full-time research associates are normally considered to have term appointments and thus are not considered for tenure.

The probationary period for a tenure-track faculty member of the Department of Recreation, Park & Tourism Sciences normally shall not exceed seven years. Included within this period are years credited from full-time service in another institution of higher learning. This decision to credit service from elsewhere is made by the Department Head at the time of the initial hiring, and is

subject to approval by other senior university administrators. Faculty members who join the Department of Recreation, Park & Tourism Sciences at the rank of professor normally would become eligible for tenure after two years of satisfactory service. All faculty appointments are made on a year-to-year probationary basis until tenure is granted.

When a faculty appointment is extended to an individual in the Department of Recreation, Park & Tourism Sciences, a tenure agreement form signed by the appropriate academic officer is forwarded to the prospective faculty member, who then signs this form to indicate acceptance of the position. The form specifies the number of years of probationary service in accordance with the provisions of the policies stated above.

During the probationary period, faculty members are employed annually and subject to annual reviews. This review process requires completion of a written Annual Report by both the Department's Tenure and Promotion Committee and the Department Head. These revisions must be completed before June 15 of each year. Both the Committee and the Department Head will then notify the faculty member of his or her progress in writing. Especially close attention will be given to the review of non-tenured faculty in their first three years of probationary service by engaging them in a discussion of their review.

Since the probationary period consists of a series of one-year contracts, a decision not to reappoint an individual who is on probation can be made any time up to the year of the mandatory review. Non-reappointment is considered if performance is unsatisfactory to the point that it is unlikely the person will qualify for tenure, as neither party benefits from prolonging an unsatisfactory situation. Such a decision is made only in compelling circumstances.

A comprehensive mid-term review of a candidate's record will be undertaken between March and December towards the end of the third or the beginning of the fourth year of employment by both the Department's Tenure and Promotion Committee and the Department Head. This will be a summative evaluation of the first three years of employment. The dossier submitted by the candidate at that time should follow the university guidelines for submitting tenure and promotion dossiers. The only difference between the third year review and the submission at the beginning of the sixth year is that external reviews will not be sought and that the mid-term review package goes only to the Dean's level (it is not forwarded to the Provost, President, Chancellor or Board of Regents). A recommendation regarding the candidate's employment status is made during this review.

Towards the end of the fifth year, the candidate's dossier will be sent to a set of external reviewers who will be requested to evaluate the candidate's performance. The reviewers must all hold the rank of at least full professor. They should be from peer institutions to Texas A&M and/or be highly rated in the field; and they should have had no prior experience of working with the candidate as supervisor, mentor or co-author. Candidates will be requested to provide a set of external reviewers whom they would like to see evaluate their materials. The Tenure and Promotion Committee will select a sub-set of at least three from this list whom they will request to serve as external reviewers. At the same time, the Committee will submit a list of different, qualified reviewers to the candidate and ask if there are any on the list with whom the candidate

feels uncomfortable. After receiving this feedback, the Committee will request evaluations from an equal number of external reviewers to that selected from the candidate's list. This procedure will be used for promotion both to associate and the full professor rank.

No later than the year preceding the last year of probationary service, a formal recommendation is made both by the Department's Tenure and Promotion Committee and the Department Head regarding tenure for each candidate. This final Promotion and Tenure recommendation should be consistent with the cumulative annual evaluations. Recommendations are forwarded via College and University channels to the Board of Regents, which has the authority to confer tenure. Tenure notification will be made in writing under procedures developed by the Chancellor of the System.

In exceptional circumstances, a person considered for tenure in the mandatory year who is not successful may be reconsidered in the terminal year, at the discretion of the Department Head and with the agreement of the Dean and the Provost that reconsideration seems appropriate. The sole ground on which a Department Head may propose making such an exception to general practice is that the case has substantially changed since the mandatory consideration. The Dean of Faculties will discuss procedures should such a case arise. Reconsideration does not entail an additional terminal year.

The service of a faculty member during the probationary period may be terminated by giving notice in writing under procedures approved by the Chancellor of the System according to the following minimum periods of notice:

1. No later than March 1 of the first year of academic service.
2. No later than December 15 of the second year of academic service.
3. No later than twelve months prior to the completion of any subsequent full academic year.

## **PERFORMANCE STANDARD GUIDELINES**

### **Performance Areas Evaluated for Tenure and Promotion**

Texas A&M University aspires to become a national and international center of academic excellence. In pursuit of this goal over the past two decades, it has consistently raised the standards of performance expected from faculty. It seems likely that these rising expectations will continue in the future and that they will be reflected in performance standards for tenure and promotion.

Seven areas of performance are evaluated in RPTS for tenure and for promotion decisions at both the associate and full professor ranks, they are:

1. A high standard of scholarship
2. A high standard of teaching
3. Professional integrity and responsibility

4. Acquisition of funds from sources external to the department.
5. Establishment and effective mentoring of a cadre of graduate students
6. National/international reputation
7. Service to constituents external to the university.

The first three standards are core performance areas which must be met before tenure and promotion can be considered. They are: (i) excellence in scholarship; (ii) excellence in teaching and (iii) professional integrity and responsibility. It is unlikely that performance which does not meet expectations in any of these areas can be compensated for by a high level of performance in another area. While attainment of the expected standards in these three areas is a necessary condition, it is not in itself sufficient for an individual to be recommended for tenure and promotion. Evidence of good performance in all four of the remaining performance areas also is expected for tenure and promotion to associate professor, but it is recognized that individuals have different strengths so there are likely to be some compensatory weightings within these four areas. That is, exceptional performance in several of the latter four areas could compensate to some extent for lower performance than the expected standard in another area.

### **Benchmark Guidelines for Tenure and Promotion to Associate Professor**

The decision regarding promotion from assistant professor to associate professor is tied to the tenure decision (i.e. if an individual is deemed promotable, he/she must be qualified for tenure. Similarly, if an individual is deemed tenurable, he/she must be qualified for promotion).

1. **Scholarship.** The expectation for most faculty, is that the record will show a minimum of 12-15 papers in refereed publications by the end of their fifth year of the probationary period when documentation is submitted to initiate the tenure and promotion process. Of these a preponderance of publications should be in Tier 1 journals. It is emphasized that this quantification range is a guideline and not a norm, since it is recognized that quantity of publications is not necessarily an accurate indicator of scholarship contributions.

Given the diversity of specializations and disciplinary backgrounds of RPTS faculty, it is recognized that some will publish in interdisciplinary/cross-disciplinary journals, and in journals in other fields and disciplines. Publications recognized in those disciplines are considered to be equally as meritorious as those in the "mainline" RPTS journals. In those cases, the ranking of journals (Tier 1 etc.) will be that used by the department on the Texas A&M campus most closely associated with that discipline.

In some disciplines, (e.g. Anthropology, History) the convention is that good scholarship is published in monograph or book form in addition to the traditional research journal. In these cases, a determination will be made of the contribution's "research article equivalence." Counsel will be solicited from senior scholars in those disciplines when making that determination and in ascertaining guidelines for the quality and quantity of published scholarship expected at this career stage.

Some of the published work is likely to emanate from a dissertation. Also, the move to a new context and different culture at Texas A&M may result in a shift in research focus and some

exploration in developing a program of research. Thus, the CV at the end of the five-year period may show some diversity of topic areas. However, there should be evidence that a coherent research program is emerging by the end of the fifth year.

**2. Teaching.** A high quality of teaching is expected in the formal setting of the undergraduate and graduate classroom. Four criteria are used to measure teaching quality.

(i) *Student Evaluations.* By the end of the five-year period, the expectation is that student scores should, attain a minimum average of 4.0 (good) on the 5-point scales used to measure teaching effectiveness on the Department's evaluation form. Some faculty may have had relatively little teaching experience before being hired by Texas A&M, so their scores may be lower than 4.0 in the early years. It is expected that all faculty at the assistant professor level will take advantage of the assistance the university offers to improve their teaching performance. This assistance, and five years of experience in the classroom, are the vehicles through which low performance may be raised to meet the expected standard.

(ii) *Peer Evaluation.* Each semester, one member of the Tenure and Promotion Committee will attend a class of each non-tenured faculty member and provide him/her with a written evaluation of the performance. The written evaluation will become part of the faculty member's personnel file.

(iii) *Teaching Portfolio.* The portfolio will include the outlines, structures, and proceedings of each course taught. These materials will be sent to external reviewers with expertise in the content area to evaluate the appropriateness and relevance of what is being taught. The portfolio will not be forwarded to the Dean's office with the tenure and promotion package.

(iv) *Innovative Classroom Materials.* Creative materials that contribute to academic programs beyond the context of an individual's teaching. These may include textbooks if their quality is demonstrated to be superior to that of other available materials. An award/grant for curriculum development, student development or academic programming may be another example which extends the teaching contribution beyond the specific teaching program of the individual.

**3. Professional Integrity and Responsibility** are exemplified by showing respect for colleagues; professional conduct conducive to a collegial work environment; adhering to expected standards of academic integrity; and being a "good citizen" of the department, college, and university by serving on committees, task forces etc. Section 3 of the university's "Statement on Academic Freedom, Responsibility, Tenure and Promotion" offers an expanded, more detailed description of the expectations associated with this criterion.

**4. Acquisition of funds from sources external to the department.** The acquisition of funds is an integral part of an individual's scholarship contribution. Funds may be from competitive fellowships, grants or contracts, and should be used to support graduate students. A faculty member's transition to Texas A&M University may make it difficult to acquire external funds in

the first two years. This is a period in which networks have to be created, a research program defined, and an understanding of the state and university culture has to be nurtured. However, by the end of the fifth year, an emerging and growing record of external funds is expected. As a guideline, the expectation is 3-4 successful external funding submissions, and a record of supporting at least one graduate student a year in at least the last two probationary years. In the case of a project involving multiple principal investigators, the proportion of the project for which the candidate is responsible should be identified. It is recognized that external funding is more accessible to those working in some areas of the field than in others so metrics should be regarded as guidelines and not as norms.

**5. Establishment and effective mentoring of a cadre of graduate students.** The university's guidelines indicate that outstanding direction of graduate research, mentoring, and chairing graduate research committees are key criteria that should be used to evaluate teaching performance. Accordingly, there should be evidence that graduate students are attracted to the candidate's research program and recognize his/her mentoring talents. Thus, by the end of the fifth year, the guideline expectation is that a candidate will be chairing, or have successfully chaired, four or more graduate committees, and will be a member of two or three others.

**6. Reputation.** An emerging national reputation in an area of expertise is expected. This is likely to be exemplified by involvement in professional and stakeholder associations, beyond simply being a member of the group or presenting papers at meetings. Service on editorial boards and officer positions in such bodies is evidence of the type of involvement expected.

**7. External Service.** External service refers to responsively serving the needs of constituents external to the university. This may be exemplified by publications in popular magazines, textbooks, technical publications, or contract reports; by presentations and workshops to professional constituent or general citizen groups; or similar activities. It does not include service to a community in a citizen, rather than in a professional, role. For example, personal (as opposed to professional) involvement with political, commercial, religious, non-profit, et al institutions is not relevant to the evaluation of service performance.

### **Benchmark Guideline for Promotion to Full Professor**

Promotion from associate professor to professor when a faculty member has completed less than 7 years as an associate professor will be considered as early promotion to professor. Thus, requests to be considered for promotion to full professor initiated before completing a minimum of 6 years as associate professor would be considered as early promotion. The granting of early promotion would require outstanding credentials.

Many of the benchmarks listed in this subsection as criteria for promotion to the full professor rank are extensions of those listed in the above section as criteria for tenure and promotion to associate professor. Thus, the above section should be reviewed first in order to fully comprehend the benchmarks listed in this section.

**1. Scholarship.** The guideline expectation for most faculty is that the record will show at least 35-40 publications in refereed publications, with a preponderance of them in Tier 1 journals. In

the case of faculty members from disciplines where the convention is to publish good scholarship in other types of outlets, counsel will be solicited from senior scholars in those disciplines to ascertain guidelines for the quality and quantity of published scholarship expected for promotion to the full professor rank.

The publication record will reflect a coherent, long-term research program. It will be the manifestation of major accomplishment in enhancing the state of knowledge in a defined research area in which the candidate has earned a national/international reputation.

The candidate will be a senior author on most of the publications. This does not necessarily mean he/she will be the first author listed. Often the first author will be a graduate student, and when cross-disciplinary faculty teams are involved credits have to be shared appropriately. Senior authorship means that an individual played a central role in conceptualizing, funding, guiding, implementing, interpreting and writing-up the work.

2. **Teaching.** The high standard of teaching exemplified at the time of promotion to associate professor has been continued and is manifested by average student scores exceeding 4.0 (good) on the 5 point scales used to measure teaching effectiveness on the department's evaluation form.

3. **Professional Integrity and Responsibility** is exemplified by showing respect for colleagues and this respect being reciprocated; professional conduct conducive to a collegial work environment; adhering to expected standards of academic integrity; and being a "good citizen" of the department, college, and university by serving on committees, task forces etc.

4. **Acquisition of funds from sources external to the department.** A consistent on-going record is expected in acquiring external resources from multiple sources. These efforts should have resulted in the support of at least one graduate student a year on a consistent basis and support money to carry out research projects. The guideline expectation of total amount acquired subsequent to promotion to associate professor is that it is likely to exceed \$500,000.

5. **Establishment and effective mentoring of a cadre of graduate students.** The guideline expectation is that the candidate would have successfully chaired and seen to completion a minimum of 10-12 graduate students, with a representation of both masters and doctoral candidates. At the masters level, these students would be placed in good managerial positions, while at the doctoral level a preponderance of them would hold university professorial positions. The quality of former students' research work would be manifested in it being published in peer-reviewed research outlets.

6. **Reputation.** A national/international reputation in an area of expertise is expected. This is likely to be exemplified by being in leadership roles in professional associations; journal editorials, appointments or election to state and federal committees, and by senior faculty at other institutions holding the faculty members work in high esteem.

7. **External Service.** External service refers to responsively serving the needs of constituents external to the university. This may be exemplified by publications in popular magazines,

textbooks, technical publications, or contract reports; by presentations and workshops to professional constituent or general citizen groups; or similar activities. It does not include service to a community in a citizen, rather than in a professional, role. For example, personal (as opposed to professional) involvement with political, commercial, religious, non-profit, et al institutions is not relevant to the evaluation of service performance.

### **EXTENSION APPOINTMENTS**

Extension appointments are not tenure accruing for promotion. There are four main differences in the expectations for the seven performance areas among faculty whose primary responsibilities are associated with the Texas Cooperative Extension Service, rather than with teaching and research:

- (i) A core requirement is that there will be a strong record of service to constituents external to the university. This service should have a long-term impact on programs or clientele groups that can be readily documented and explained.
- (ii) Scholarship is likely to be more applied than theoretical. Nevertheless, it is expected that a preponderance of publications will appear in refereed outlets. It is expected that levels of external financial support will be similar to those of non-extension colleagues.
- (iii) The expectations associated with mentoring graduate students are lower.
- (iv) Educational materials which have been developed for Extension bulletins, fact-sheets, production videos, instructional manuals, handbooks, and computer software programs will be considered in the evaluation of those with a TCE appointment. The evaluation is not limited to traditional materials, but also will consider the quality and originality of thought and the integration of educational concepts that have led to demonstratable increases in awareness, changes and/or adoption.