

Department of Biology
San Francisco State University
Approved by Provost 2012

Retention, Tenure, and Promotion: Guidelines and Expectations

This document details the guidelines and expectations that shall govern the process of retention, tenure, and promotion in the Department of Biology consistent with Academic Senate Policy #S09-241.

The criteria for retention, tenure, and promotion are divided into three areas: (a) teaching effectiveness, (b) professional achievement and growth, and (c) contributions to campus and community. Candidates for retention, tenure, and promotion shall be evaluated on all criteria as described below.

The Department of Biology has the overall expectation that the typical Department colleague will be an excellent teacher, an active researcher, and an active participant in service and shared governance.

Assistant Professor: The Department expects Assistant Professors to gain experience in teaching, and by their 3rd or 4th year to be first rate instructors in classes they have been teaching. Similarly, we expect Assistant Professors to establish a successful research program. Biology expects less service from Assistant Professors than for faculty at a higher rank.

Associate Professors: The Department expects Associate Professors to sustain excellence in teaching and vigorous productivity in their research program. The Department expects Associate Professors to have a greater record in Service compared to their time at the Assistant rank.

Full Professors: The Department expects Full Professors to continue their achievements in Teaching, Research, and Service.

The experience of the Department is that the above descriptions are the expectations of the typical faculty member. We also recognize that Associate and Full Professors may focus on one or another of the categories through time. The Department may choose to reward those candidates for exceptional performance in one or more category, even though they may not be fulfilling the entire spectrum of expectations set forth in this document.

Evaluation of Candidates for Tenure and/or Promotion

Retention: The purpose of the annual review is to determine if candidates for retention are making sufficient progress toward tenure. If the Biology RTP Committee decides a candidate is not making adequate progress, but the situation is not sufficiently serious to recommend non-retention, the candidate shall assemble a written individualized plan that lists ways in which s/he intends to improve her/his performance (e.g., peer classroom visitations, teaching workshops, reading education materials/literature, increase efforts toward publication of research, augment submission of grant proposals, etc.). The candidate shall meet with the RTP Chair, RTP subcommittee and Department Chair to share the plan and receive feedback and suggestions. The plan must include a timeline and specific goals.

Tenure: Successful candidates for tenure must meet the standards of excellence normally expected of faculty in the Department of Biology. Tenure is based on activities performed at SF State, and consideration for tenure generally based on that issue. In some cases, performance at other

institutions may be considered based on negotiations between a candidate with experience and the University administration.

Promotion: Successful candidates for promotion must meet the standards of excellence normally expected of faculty in the Department of Biology. For Promotion, a candidate's activities at rank (since the most recent promotion) are the only activities relevant to promotion considerations. This means all activities at the rank of Assistant Professor apply toward promotion to Associate, regardless of the institution at which they were performed; similarly, all activities at the Associate level apply toward promotion to Full Professor. The department has higher expectations for promotion to Full Professor than for promotion to Associate Professor.

Responsibilities of Candidates for Retention, Tenure or Promotion: Candidates for retention, tenure, and promotion are responsible for providing the RTP Committee with an up-to-date Working Personnel Action File (WPAF) by the closing date as determined by the university RTP calendar. The WPAF consists of a candidate's curriculum vitae and an indexed set of supplementary materials that represent the candidate's accomplishments in teaching effectiveness, professional achievement and growth, and contributions to campus and community. With the exception of student letters, all of the supporting documents found in the WPAF should be from individuals who possess sufficient expertise or seniority to perform valid evaluations of a candidate's strengths and areas of improvement. Candidates are required to include all materials that are signed by other individuals, whether colleagues or students, and provided by the RTP Committee prior to the University Calendar deadline.

Candidates for retention, tenure, and promotion should include in the WPAF self-statements (no more than 750 words) for each of the three RTP criteria that summarize the candidate's accomplishments. In cases where an activity may relate to more than one area, candidates should make a selection in consultation with the RTP Committee.

When a candidate is seeking tenure or promotion the WPAF should contain at least three letters from external reviewers (not counting the candidate's thesis advisor or a close research or grant collaborators) who can assess the professional achievements and growth of the candidate. Obtaining external review letters is the responsibility of the RTP Committee. The candidate who is seeking tenure or promotion should submit to the RTP committee the names of potential external reviewers at the earliest date possible (i.e., spring or summer prior to submission of the WPAF). The RTP Committee will solicit input from these individuals. In addition to the reviewers named by the candidate, the RTP Committee will solicit assessments from other external reviewers (for example, from individuals who have cited the candidate's published works). The RTP Committee chair (or subcommittee chair) will inform each external reviewer of the closing date of the candidate's WPAF as well as the CSU policy allowing the candidate to read and respond to all letters placed in the WPAF. External reviewers must be given reasonable time to meet the WPAF deadline. The external reviewers should be recognized experts, as demonstrated by outstanding achievement in their discipline. External reviewers from industry or government research agencies are acceptable provided they possess the appropriate academic credentials and professional reputation.

Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness

Effective teaching is central to the Department's mission. We expect excellence in teaching as demonstrated by evidence of curricular innovation, appropriate teaching effectiveness evaluation scores, and positive letters from peer evaluators and students. We also value teaching outside the classroom as well as teaching across a wide range of curricular needs or at different levels of instruction. The Department will base teaching effectiveness on improvement in both student and peer evaluations over the time period being considered.

The WPAF should include sample teaching materials (e.g., syllabi, sample powerpoint lectures, a paragraph course description, novel course materials that indicate the contribution to the curriculum). The WPAF should also include a list of courses taught, including the course content or level.

1. Classroom teaching. The RTP Committee expects candidates to be excellent classroom teachers. Evaluation of a candidate's performance in this area will be based on:

a. Student evaluations of teaching. Students evaluate instructors each semester using a standard College of Science and Engineering survey. The Candidate is responsible for ensuring that student evaluations are conducted in all courses each semester. The RTP Committee will review numerical student evaluation scores and any written comments made by students on the survey. The candidate should prepare a summary table that includes all courses taught at SFSU, enrollment, number of students that submitted evaluations, and the corresponding numerical scores for question #6 and the overall mean.

b. Peer evaluations of teaching. The RTP Committee is responsible for and will solicit faculty to provide review letters of evaluation who have observed a candidate's classroom teaching. Candidates will be evaluated in each of their courses every semester by senior members of the Departmental RTP committee.

c. Letters from students and colleagues. The RTP Committee will consider other letters, solicited or unsolicited, that address a candidate's teaching effectiveness. The RTP Committee will not consider anonymous letters.

2. Teaching outside the classroom. Connecting students with current research is vital for attracting students to the discipline and enhances both the graduate and undergraduate experience. Additionally, preparing students for a thesis, professional career, or doctoral program often requires study beyond regular course offerings of the department. Candidates who direct M.S. theses, sponsor non-thesis research, or direct independent study [Biology 699, 897] make a significant contribution to a student's education. The candidate should provide a list of students s/he advised a) on campus in their research laboratories, b) off-campus by a different primary investigator, and c) as a thesis committee member, in each case indicating the time/effort involved.

3. Curricular innovations. The RTP Committee may consider curricular innovations such as the development of original academic programs or courses, new and effective pedagogical approaches, or instructional applications of new technologies as evidence of a candidate's teaching effectiveness. Activities in this area may also be appropriate under professional achievement and growth or contributions to campus and community, depending on the nature of the activity.

4. Participation at professional conferences. Professional conferences often address issues in biology education such as appropriate course content, new teaching methods, or alternative assessment practices. The RTP Committee may consider presentations at professional conferences or active participation in workshops related to biology education as evidence of a candidate's teaching effectiveness. The candidate should make a list of refereed and non-refereed presentations at conferences. The candidate should also indicate the person who delivered the presentation, and the type of presentation (i.e., poster, talk), as well as any information that indicates the impact of that presentation on the field or on the participants, and include representative materials (e.g., mini-version of the poster or powerpoint presentation) presented. In general, this will rank lower than improvement in the classroom on campus.

Evaluation of Professional Achievement and Growth

The RTP Committee expects all candidates to engage in activities that enhance their professional achievement and growth and to maintain an active research program. We will evaluate professional growth and achievement by publications and/or scholarly writings appropriate to the individual's area of endeavor, significant grant funding, and effective training of students in research.

1. Publications. The RTP Committee considers refereed papers (published in research journals), books, book chapters or monographs as primary evidence of a candidate's professional achievement and growth. We give less weight to publication of non-refereed publications (such as papers, technical reports, and book reviews). It is recommended that non-refereed publications should be placed in "Professional Development", see below. The candidate should include a hard copy of each publication since her/his previous promotion. The candidate should prepare a list of peer reviewed papers by the following categories: At Rank: (a) Published Papers: published papers, papers accepted for publication, or papers "*in press*" are considered equivalent, as long as the work was conducted in the same rank; (b) In Progress: papers submitted for publication; papers in draft manuscript form. Manuscripts in various stages of progress (i.e., submitted for publication, but not yet fully accepted) are useful for retention decisions, but are not considered in promotion/tenure decisions. Candidates should indicate whether graduate and/or undergraduate students are coauthors, as this demonstrates the candidate's commitment to training students as research biologists. We give strong consideration to the impact of the publication in its field, which should be explained briefly by the candidate. In publications of multiple authorship, the candidate should communicate clearly to the committee (a) her/his role in the research reported, (b) the time and effort spent by the candidate (e.g., role in supervising the research, doing benchwork or fieldwork, data analysis, writing the paper, etc.), (c) which authors are students (if any), and d) the rationale for the order of authors. Student authors should also be indicated in the publication list in the candidate's CV.

Candidates who seek tenure and/or promotion should clearly organize and highlight publications that, for tenure: (a) occurred *before* and those that occurred *after* their hire at SFSU; for promotion to Associate: (b) those publications that were generated during their current rank (as an assistant professor, whether at SF State or another institution). For promotion to Full Professor (c) publications that were generated after tenure and promotion (as an associate professor; whether at SF State or another institution).

2. Professional Development. The RTP Committee may also consider presentations of research at professional conferences or non-refereed publications (and citation information) as evidence of a candidate's professional achievement and growth. The candidate should clearly articulate the impact of their participation in these activities. With regard to presentations, the most important activity within this area is the presentation of an invited talk at a symposium or plenary session; second in importance is the presentation of research papers at an annual meeting of a research society within the candidate's field; third in importance is the presentation of papers at local colloquia or invited seminars to other departments (on- or off-campus).

3. Grant funding. The department encourages candidates to apply for extramural funding to support their scholarship. Because grant proposals for external funding are often very competitive and typically receive extensive outside peer review, the RTP Committee considers successful external grant funding as strong evidence of a candidate's professional achievement and growth. The candidate should list of all their grant proposals. The RTP Committee also values funded intramural grants, although at a lower level than extramural grants. Intramural grants are considered for retention and are only favorable for tenure or promotion if they lead to an extramural grant or publication. The candidate should articulate the impact of each grant on their research program.

4. Curricular innovations. The RTP Committee may consider curricular innovations such as the development of original academic programs or courses, new and effective pedagogical approaches, or instructional applications of new technologies as evidence of a candidate's professional achievement and growth provided the activities receive sufficient recognition outside the department. Activities in this area are usually more appropriate under teaching effectiveness or contributions to campus and community, depending on the nature of the activity.

Evaluation of Contributions to Campus and Community

We expect all candidates to contribute to the department by serving on committees, advising students, and other activities critical to normal department operation. The RTP Committee will consider, but is not limited to, the criteria described below to evaluate a candidate's particular contributions to campus and community. For all service activities, the candidate should include a statement or table that indicates the time and effort expended in each service activity. In general, the Department expects the most service from Full Professors, next from Associate Professors, and less from Assistant Professors.

- 1. Service to the profession.** The RTP Committee expects candidates to participate in professional organizations. We consider as evidence activities such as election to offices in professional organization, honors and recognition by professional societies, participation on editorial boards, organization of conferences or symposia, and reviewing manuscripts and grant proposals.
- 2. Service to the university.** The RTP Committee considers activities such as administrative assignments, faculty governance, committee work, special advising assignments, program development, sponsorship of student organizations, or direction of non-instructional projects as evidence of a candidate's service to the University.
- 3. Service to the department.** The RTP Committee considers department service to be a regular and important part of faculty duties. The candidate should list all service assignments (e.g., committees, student advising, special functions, department seminars/colloquia, etc.). Leadership on committees or in the department receives additional consideration.
- 4.. Service to the community.** The RTP Committee may consider activities in which candidates use their professional expertise to enhance the relations between the community at large and the university or profession as evidence of a candidate's service to the community, particularly outreach to K-12 schools or other educational institutions.

Approved by vote of the faculty members of Biology, April 24, 2012