Expectations for Retention, Tenure, and Promotion

This document details the expectations for retention, tenure, and promotion in the Department of Biology consistent with Academic Senate Policy #F06-241.

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’s RTP Committee conducts an annual review of probationary faculty. The purpose of the annual review is to determine if candidates for retention are making sufficient progress toward tenure. If the 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, visiting classrooms of experienced teachers, attending education conferences, etc.). The candidate shall meet with the RTP subcommittee and department chair to share the plan and receive feedback and suggestions. The plan must include a timeline and specific goals.

Successful candidates for tenure or promotion must meet the standard of excellence normally expected of faculty. A candidate’s activities since the most recent promotion are of primary relevance to promotion considerations. The department has higher expectations for promotion to professor than for promotion to associate professor.

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.

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 summarizes 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.

A candidate for tenure or promotion should submit to the RTP Committee the names of at least three potential external reviewers who can address the area of professional achievement and growth. The RTP Committee will solicit input from these individuals. In addition to the reviewers named by the candidate, the RTP Committee may solicit assessments from other external reviewers. The RTP Committee chair (or subcommittee chair) will inform each reviewer of the closing date of the candidate's WFAP as well as the CSU policy allowing the candidate to read and respond to all letters placed in the WPAF. Reviewers must be given reasonable time to meet the WFAP deadline.

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 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 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 will review letters of evaluation from biology faculty who have observed a candidate’s classroom teaching. Candidates will be evaluated in each of their courses every semester by a tenured faculty member of higher rank than the candidate.

   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.

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 expect strong evidence of professional growth and achievement as demonstrated 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 papers published in refereed research journals or monographs as primary evidence of a candidate’s professional achievement and growth. We give less weight to publication of non-refereed papers, technical reports, and book reviews. The candidate should include a hard copy of each publication since her/his previous promotion. The candidate should prepare a list of papers by the following categories: published papers; papers accepted for publication (= in press); papers submitted for publication; papers in draft manuscript form. Manuscripts in various stages of progress (i.e., not yet fully accepted) are useful for retention decisions, but are not generally considered in promotion/tenure decisions. We especially value publications that include graduate and/or undergraduate students as 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, a 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.

The RTP Committee may also consider presentations of research at professional conferences as evidence of a candidate’s professional achievement and growth. The candidate should articulate clearly the impact of their participation at the meeting. 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).

2. **Grant funding.** The department encourages candidates to apply for extramural funding of their research. Because grant proposals for external funding of research 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. The candidate should articulate the impact of each grant on their research program.

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 professional achievement and growth provided the activities receive sufficient recognition outside the department. Activities in this area may also be 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.

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 organizations.
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.

3. 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.