

The RTP Committee(s) and Its Criteria for Retention, Tenure and Promotion
Department of Cinema
(Approved by the Provost November 2012)

1. Basic Principles:

The Criteria described here clarify the expectations of the Dept of Cinema in relation to the University's criteria for the determination of retention, tenure and promotion as specified in the Faculty Manual and the relevant Senate policies. The goal of these Department criteria is to ensure that there is a clear understanding of how the Department interprets and applies Retention, Tenure, and Promotion (RTP) criteria to ensure as fair and equitable a review process as possible.

The Department's overall mission is manifested in three degree programs with overlapping goals: 1) a B.A. degree which provides a high quality undergraduate education in accord with the basic tenets of a liberal arts education; 2) an M.A. in Cinema Studies which seeks to provide more advanced forms of knowledge and familiarity with methodologies relevant to the study of cinema, and 3) a terminal M.F.A. degree in Cinema Production which seeks to provide the highest level of instruction possible in the creative production of works of cinema. The combination of the study of the history, theory and criticism of the discipline along with the production of individual works of cinema, broadly defined as time-based moving image work, is at the heart of a liberal arts approach to cinema in contradistinction to vocational or conservatory training. All three programs involve an integration of study and production and continue to draw on the Department's historic role as a center for independent, innovative forms of cinema.

2. General Procedures

Retention procedures involve review of the tenure track faculty's Personnel File over an extended period of time to determine eligibility for tenure and promotion. Retention, promotion and tenure are all assessed by the same means, criteria and essentially the same procedures. (See current university and RTP policies). The RTP committee will be staffed whenever possible by tenured Departmental faculty serving staggered, three-year terms of office to ensure continuity from one year to the next.

The portion of the Personnel File used for review--the Working Personnel Action File or WPAF--is prepared by the probationary faculty member using University guidelines described in the Faculty Manual. It is returned to the faculty member at the end of each review. It is the faculty member's responsibility to collect and submit pertinent information for each review period during the period of probationary status. (See 3.E. on "Documentation" below, as well.) Student evaluation data; letters from students, staff or faculty regarding the candidate; class observations by faculty and other relevant material is also kept in the Department's Personnel File for each individual. It is the Chair of the RTP Committee's responsibility to ensure that all information from all appropriate sources is given to the faculty member and entered into the WPAF. (The faculty member is

responsible for this file.) An “original” WPAF will be forwarded up the ladder of review as specified, but the candidate is cautioned to retain primary or irreplaceable materials in his or her possession so that if the “original” file happens to be misplaced, permanent loss will not result.

Each successive review shall take account of previous reviews and build upon them. Any suggestions for improvement, recommended actions and expressions of concern in earlier reviews will be reexamined in later reviews. The reexamination should include indications of whether previous concerns have been successfully resolved or what further steps might be desirable. Similarly, the committee will look for an improving or at least stable level of teaching effectiveness as measured by the various means indicated below. A decline in teaching effectiveness over the course of the Retention period will be treated as a serious issue in need of address.

The Department of Cinema requires external reviews of a faculty member’s professional work as part of the tenure and promotion process. The RTP committee will work in consultation with candidates for tenure or promotion and with the department chair to identify a list of potential reviewers. Guidelines for the process are as follow:

- Candidates may propose up to seven outside reviewers. The RTP committee, in consultation with the department chair, may add up to seven additional outside reviewers. The RTP committee, the candidate, and the department Chair will discuss the list of fourteen possible reviewers to arrive at a final list of eight to ten potential reviewers. During this stage of the process all parties have the right to veto suggested reviewers ***while maintaining a balance between the two lists***. The RTP committee will select and rank reviewers from the final list making an effort to maintain a balance between the candidate’s list and the RTP/chair’s list.
 - Reviewers shall not have been the candidate’s graduate thesis/dissertation chair or committee member.
 - Reviewers shall not be close colleagues within SFSU.
 - Academic reviewers shall be from CSU comparable institutions or higher, and hold a higher rank than the candidate being reviewed.
 - The Department acknowledges the collaborative nature of creative work in cinema. As such, for the evaluation of creative work, the candidate, RTP committee, and department chair may identify a list of established professionals with whom the candidate may have collaborated and are able to evaluate the quality, value and uniqueness of the candidate’s creative work and contributions to the field.
 - In cases where a list includes both academic and professional reviewers, the RTP committee, the candidate, and the department chair will work collaboratively to insure a balance between both groups of reviewers.
 - Reviewers will be asked to include a description of their relationship to the candidate and state potential conflicts of interest they might have in doing the review.
 - Reviewers will be informed that candidates have access to their letters

- Candidates shall provide the RTP committee with the following materials to be sent to reviewers by June 1 before the fall semester in which the candidate's file is due:
 - Personal statement
 - Current CV
 - Three items from the candidate's professional work of her/his own choosing.
- The RTP Chair will begin the invitation process, track the process of securing the external reviews, answer questions from the reviewers, receive review letters, and place letters in the candidate's WPAF.

The RTP chair will add a biographical sketch of each outside reviewer to the WPAF.

Promotion procedures involve review of the candidate's professional career to date and therefore call for a WPAF and review that considers all relevant material. (See II below for those who opt for review under the previous set of policies listed above.) Reviews conducted for retention will be consulted during reviews for tenure and promotion to Associate Professor. The candidate's achievements in their current rank at other institutions may be taken into account at the time of review for promotion.

The self-evaluation is considered an extremely valuable component of the file. The candidate should strive to generate a context within which their achievements in each of the three major areas of evaluation can be best understood. This narrative component should not only provide a context that will help faculty and administrators who are non-specialists in cinema understand the candidate's accomplishments, but also provide a historical perspective that demonstrates the evolution or development of the candidate's teaching, professional achievement and growth, and service efforts and goals.

3. Retention, Tenure and Promotion

A. Teaching Effectiveness:

The Cinema Department regards peer assessment of teaching to be central to any judgment of a faculty member's teaching effectiveness. Peer assessment refers primarily to formal peer observations by tenured faculty, but it may also include assessments from colleagues who team teach, mentor or informally attend the candidate's classes. All evaluations, except statistical data, must be signed. Student evaluations, conducted using standardized evaluation forms, will also be considered. The Department will maintain a standard Evaluation Form. The Committee recognizes that student evaluations may be skewed by size, prior experience of the student, grades anticipated or received, and other factors. The Committee will attempt to discern significant patterns within the data and make note of them accordingly. Written comments, collected through the student evaluation process, will be assessed for general patterns as an important part of the overall body of evidence. Because they are unsigned, isolated or seemingly idiosyncratic opinions will be given slight consideration. The goal will be to detect perceptions shared by a number of students.

The department office is responsible for the coordination of administering, collecting, and maintaining student evaluations of all courses. Tenure-track faculty seeking tenure and promotion to associate professor and tenured faculty seeking promotion to full professor

should not request recommendations from students directly but may request departmental assistance for securing written statements from students for whom they served as a supervisor for independent study, internships, and graduate thesis work.

Signed, written comments will also be solicited by RTP Committee for Tenure and Promotion reviews by means of public notice. The solicitation will be for comments regarding any aspect of teaching, professional achievement and growth, and service with which the author is familiar. This will include but not be limited to past and present students.

The RTP Committee will have responsibility for scheduling and conducting peer reviews at least once a semester for each probationary faculty member. In such evaluations, members of the Committee and other senior faculty members will visit classes taught by probationary faculty and provide written comments concerning the quality of teaching. Specific areas of evaluation will be: a) the overall syllabus and the fit of a given class within that framework, including evidence of preparation for the specific class; b) knowledge of the course's subject matter, including familiarity with recent work relevant to the topic at hand; c) the quality of the interaction between faculty and students and the appropriateness of the work covered for the level of the course; d) the ability of the professor to stimulate thought or creativity, including the ability to convey unresolved questions or new possibilities; e) other evidence of teaching skills deemed relevant by the evaluator. Probationary faculty may also request peer reviews of their courses on their own initiative. All reviews should be placed in the candidate's file and a copy provided to the Chair of the RTP committee.

Probationary faculty should support their case for teaching effectiveness by submitting in their WPAF class syllabi and evidence of their role as a supervisor of independent studies, internships, M.A. theses and M.F.A. thesis films (as chair or committee member). The mentoring of more junior professors may also be treated under the category of teaching for the purposes of promotion to full professor. Mentoring and supervisory activity should be fully described and documented, especially when no class syllabus exists (internships, independent studies and thesis supervision). Contributions as an adviser (including information about the type of advice provided), information about the use or development of innovative teaching methods, class activities such as invited speakers or field trips, innovations in course delivery methods, and course proposals or other curriculum development materials may also be introduced.

Probationary faculty members are required by the department to obtain student teaching evaluations in all their classes each semester, with the exception of supervisory courses. Copies of all written student comments and numerical evaluations using the University-approved form must be submitted in the WPAF. The Department will consider numerical student evaluations in the context of peer faculty reviews and other non-numerical evidence of teaching effectiveness. The Department will maintain a record of the statistical average for all courses for every semester to be used for purposes of comparison. This will be broken down into: 1) overall average for all courses; average for courses with less than 20 students, 2) courses of 20-50 students, and 3) courses of more than 50 students. To the

extent feasible, the Department will endeavor to keep statistical information for courses of a similar nature and for courses at a similar level as well as for the same course over time to allow more precise comparisons.

In general, RTP regards an average score on student evaluation questionnaires that exceeds the Department faculty's overall average score to be evidence of excellent teaching. RTP regards an average score on student evaluation questionnaires that matches or is very close to the Department faculty's overall average score to be evidence of effective teaching. Both excellent and effective teaching meet the expectations of the Department regarding teaching performance. RTP regards an average score on student evaluation questionnaires that is significantly lower than the Department's overall average score to be possible evidence of problematic teaching that indicates a need for further review. A weak average score coupled to other signs of concern such as written comments by students or peer evaluations may prove cause for immediate concern and require the use of additional peer reviews and more concrete advice or mentoring for the candidate.

A candidate's collegiality in relation to their teaching effectiveness will be gauged by their demonstration of professional ethics and sound pedagogical principles in all their teaching activities. It will also be gauged by the extent to which they offer courses that conform to the general Departmental standards and expectations for similar courses at a given level and in a given area. This determination shall be made the RTP committee by comparison of the candidate's syllabi with previous syllabi for the same or similar courses over a period of time, utilizing the archive of syllabi in the Department office. A candidate's fit within the Department shall be gauged by how well their evolving areas of teaching expertise and interest continue to meet the needs of the Department.

B. Professional Achievement and Growth

(1) General Comments

The Department expects faculty members to develop a reasonable research or creative work agenda, understanding that, as a teaching university, SFSU does not support research to as high a degree and requires a greater teaching load than the norm for research universities. The Department nevertheless sees professional achievement and growth as indispensable components of all university level teaching and therefore expects candidates to demonstrate scholarly and/or creative accomplishment as a condition of retention, tenure and promotion.

Unpublished scholarly work and creative work not yet exhibited may be considered within a WPAF if letters of critical evaluation/assessment accompany the work. These letters should be from peers who are familiar with the work-in-progress and can assess its quality relative to other, comparable work that has been published or exhibited. Demonstrable indications of possible publication or exhibition in the near future will also be taken into account.

Playing a leadership role within some segment of the larger professional world that surrounds the Cinema Department can be considered as part of Professional Achievement and Growth rather than Contributions to Campus and Community. Leadership means holding a major office or otherwise exerting a significant influence over the direction and quality of activity conducted by or within societies, organizations, institutions, guilds, the Cinema Department, and other agencies engaged in the study, production, or exhibition of cinema. Candidates should provide written evidence of their leadership role, including testimony from others as to its significance. However, such leadership cannot be the sole basis for tenure and promotion. Customary membership and participation in such groups will be considered under the category of Contributions to Campus and Community as will all forms of participation on university based committees.

Collegiality in terms of professional achievement and growth can be gauged by the candidate's acceptance of responsibility for working effectively with colleagues to achieve department, college and university goals. It can also be gauged by the candidate's application of their professional skills and their specific form of professional knowledge to the evolution of the Department's efforts to fulfill its basic liberal arts mission. Similarly, the candidate's fit can be gauged by how well the candidate's specialized expertise continues to be vital to the department's long-term goals and mission.

(2) Scholarly Achievement and Growth

University scholarship is demonstrated by publication of peer reviewed books or articles in refereed journals (i.e., work that is reviewed by scholars at other colleges and universities who can attest to its scholarly merit), presentation of scholarly papers at professional meetings, successful grant applications, and similar activities where the faculty member's work is presented to professional colleagues and is subject to peer review and criticism. Activity as editor of a refereed journal or a peer reviewed anthology will also be considered. Curating or programming films within the candidate's field of expertise is also considered a form of professional growth. Creating or maintaining a website or comparable digital activity where the scholarly merits and value can be attested to by academic peers with an established reputation in the specific field of endeavor will also be considered. Digital forms of activity that do not receive peer evaluation should not be submitted and will not be considered. The Department does not require a specific number of publications or presentations to qualify for retention and tenure. Emphasis will be placed on the quality of the work. The department expects faculty to demonstrate a coherent pattern of productive scholarly activity.

(3) Creative Achievement and Growth

Creative work is demonstrated by the public exhibition or display of work and by its critical reception. The candidate may present evidence that their work has been subject to review and criticism comparable to peer review for publication. Such review may include scrutiny and acceptance by an editor, director or producer, jury review in a competition, invitational screenings or showings from established programmers, curators and venues; critique by respected academic peers from other institutions, by established individuals in the relevant

professional filmmaking guilds, or by critics writing for newspapers, magazines and websites that are widely regarded as significant sources of independent, critical judgment. The acceptance of work by recognized distributors or promoters for exhibition will also be considered as an important indication of creative achievement.

Given the collaborative nature of film, some creative work takes the form of a contribution to a larger overall effort but can nonetheless be assessed in the terms listed above. Curating or programming shows or exhibitions that fall within the candidate's field of expertise is also a form of professional achievement and growth.

The Department does not require a specific number of creative works to earn retention and tenure. Emphasis will be placed on the qualitative level of the work. The department expects faculty to demonstrate a coherent pattern of productive creative activity. Such activity should be documented by statements from those who can attest to the significance of the faculty member's contribution.

(4) Curriculum Development for All Faculty

Curriculum development and related research may be introduced under the category of Professional Achievement and Growth. Such activities include the creation of new courses or the significant improvement and development of existing courses, or the development of on-line course materials, computer presentations, internet, and similar course delivery methods. Probationary faculty may demonstrate contributions in this area by submitting in the WPAF examples of course proposals, syllabi, research papers or articles pertinent to the Cinema curriculum, or other examples of course development efforts including contributions to professional meetings, conferences or sessions devoted to issues of pedagogy. Such work may not replace peer reviewed scholarly or creative work entirely but may be treated as a significant element of the overall profile of a candidate.

C. Contribution to Campus and Community

Candidates can demonstrate their service to the campus and community via contributions to the department, the greater university, professional organizations or the community at local, regional, state or wider levels.

The Cinema Department considers service in a peer-related, professional setting to be the most important aspect of service since this normally requires the direct application of the faculty member's academic expertise. This criterion is primarily fulfilled by membership and participation on Department, college, and university-wide committees and by involvement in professional societies and organizations. It can also be fulfilled by activities in support of student organizations, planning or sponsoring events with educational value, or through membership on university commissions, planning groups, or governance organizations. In each case, service is demonstrated by active participation in the affairs of the group and supported by documentation from those in a position to assess its significance.

Serving as an invited reader/evaluator for book or journal manuscripts is also treated as a form of professional service, as is serving as an invited juror for film festivals. Such service should be documented in writing, with letters from publishers or festivals respectively.

Probationary faculty can also serve the broader public by making their professional expertise available to community groups, social organizations and governmental agencies that generally serve the public good. Documentation is expected in this case as well. Work done under confidentiality agreements may not be considered for Retention, Tenure or Promotion.

Collegiality in terms of service will be gauged primarily by the candidate's constructive engagement with and contribution to those Departmental activities devoted to the ongoing affairs of the department, including the development of the curriculum, with special attention to those areas in which the candidate possesses special expertise. Fit can be gauged by the degree to which the overall pattern of service by the candidate compliments the basic mission of the Department.

D. Professional Education and/or Equivalency and Experience.

As an academic unit, working within a liberal arts tradition, the Ph.D., M.F.A. or equivalency degree granted by the university at the time of hire is the accepted terminal degree for faculty members in the Cinema Department

E. Documentation.

Faculty members are expected to document their work and contributions in criteria A through D. Documentation typically includes: written peer reviews of teaching; statistical student evaluation of teaching and transcripts of anonymous written comments collected during the evaluation process; signed letters from peers, students, staff or colleagues; relevant email correspondence in printed form; copies of syllabi; copies of articles, book chapters, papers, films, videos, DVDs and other exhibited media, and evidence of other forms of presentation of scholarly or creative work; evidence of participation in organizations and committees, peer review assessments concerning the quality of creative or scholarly work, reader or curator/programmer testimony, editorial comments, published reviews, letters attesting to service contributions in the various categories of service, and signed letters from past or present students and others familiar with the candidate's work. Such documentation will be placed in the Working Personnel Action File following the guidelines defined in the Faculty Manual.