Criteria for Retention, Tenure, and Promotion in the Department of Theatre Arts

PURPOSE AND PROCESS

The Department of Theatre Arts criteria for retention, tenure, and promotion establish expectations for faculty performance within the Department. The Criteria also recognize the broad range of diverse talents that make up the various collaborative artistic, technical, and scholarly categories within the practice of Theatre Arts. These categories of artistry and technical skill include areas of expertise such as Acting, Directing, Playwriting, Design, Technical Production, Management, Research, Scholarship, and Community Engagement. The Theatre Arts criteria are aligned with the broader San Francisco State University retention and tenure policies as described in Academic Senate Policy #F07-241.

These Criteria distinguish three areas of faculty performance: Teaching Effectiveness, Professional Achievement and Growth, and Service to Campus and Community. In addition, the Criteria include considerations of collegiality and of the individual's contribution to the work of the department as a whole within each of these three areas.

The primary venue for mentoring and evaluation of probationary faculty in Theatre Arts is the elected Retention, Tenure, and Promotion Committee (RTP Committee). Each probationary faculty member is charged with creating and preparing annual updates to a Working Personnel Action File (WPAF), which is the principal job performance document. The RTP Committee will conduct an annual advisory meeting with each probationary faculty member to explain and define the parameters of the WPAF. The Committee will also solicit and discuss any issues that have arisen in the preceding year regarding the faculty member's performance of the duties of the position. In addition, the RTP Committee will assign each probationary faculty an individual faculty mentor to advise and assist in the compilation of the WPAF.

Probationary faculty are encouraged to consult with the RTP Committee as a whole as well as with their individual faculty mentor to ensure that the WPAF contains relevant and appropriate documentation in each of the aforementioned categories, and to develop an effective method of organizing the file so that evaluation letters can be easily and appropriately annotated.
TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS

Classroom teaching in its diverse forms is the most important activity in which our faculty is engaged, and the quality of classroom teaching and supervision is given the utmost importance in our evaluation of the faculty's work. Evaluations by students and colleagues are considered in this area, as are innovative forms of teaching in which student learning occurs through work in theatrical productions, which are guided, mentored, and directed by faculty. Our stage productions are as central to learning as any laboratory experiment in science, or any concert recital in music. Faculty contribute to rehearsals and pre-production work in their own ways, by directing student actors in theatrical production situations, advising and supervising students in design and technical production work, helping them interpret dramatic literature and history, and coaching them in voice and acting classes. We regard our faculty's work with students on stage productions to be an essential part of their work as teachers.

In the Teaching Effectiveness section of the WPAF, the probationary faculty member will typically include documentary evidence such as lesson plans, course outlines, documentation of academic advising, statements of teaching philosophy, etc. In addition, the Department employs two assessment tools: anonymous student teaching evaluations (TEEFS) and written peer observations by faculty at or above the probationary faculty's rank (accomplished through formal classroom visitations or other observation opportunities). TEEFS (using a standard form approved by the Dean of the College and by the Department) are mandated per University policy, with full time tenure track faculty being evaluated in a minimum of two classes per semester. The statistical results ("scores") of TEEFs are tabulated with 1 being the best score and 5 being the worst. The faculty member's average score for each class taught is compared to the departmental mean. In general each probationary faculty is expected to report a score at or above the mean score. If the score is below the mean it may indicate an area of Teaching Effectiveness that needs attention or improvement. Anonymous written student comments are also solicited on the TEEF form. These remarks can be used to help the RTP Committee interpret the statistical scores. Faculty are encouraged to provide written explanations of anomalous results if they feel such explanation is warranted, and these explanations may be taken into account by the RTP Committee. Peer Evaluations are also expected by the RTP Committee and may be generally solicited by the probationary faculty member. The Committee will help to solicit peer observations by assigning this task to one more senior faculty member each semester. There is no stipulation as to the number or frequency of peer evaluations that may be included, but a minimum of one per semester is recommended. The statistical results and written comments from TEEFS and Peer Evaluations are included in the WPAF.

In addition to these teaching evaluation methods, a faculty member may demonstrate currency in the field of Theatre Arts education by participation in conferences and workshops, continuing education, certifications achieved, or additional degrees.
PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENT AND GROWTH

Curricular Innovation and Development may also be considered within the evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness in some circumstances, although the prescribed WPAF format includes these as part of the Professional Achievement and Growth category. Faculty members are expected to contribute to the enhancement of the curriculum by developing new courses or modifying existing ones where appropriate. Such activities include the creation and development of new courses or programs, the improvement or reorganization of existing courses or programs, and innovative teaching and course delivery methods. Candidates may demonstrate contributions in this area by submitting in the WPAF examples of program outlines, course proposals, syllabi, and documentation of other types of course development efforts.

The Theatre Arts faculty members are expected to be actively engaged in scholarly research and/or creative work relevant to the mission of the Department and to their specialty, and to demonstrate and document their scholarly and/or creative accomplishments as a condition of retention, tenure, and promotion. These non-teaching professional activities are extremely important in the evaluation of the probationary faculty member.

Professional achievement and growth in Theatre Arts can be accomplished in a variety of ways. Among these are scholarly research and publication, performance, creative work such as design, directing, or playwriting, technical production and managerial achievements, grant writing, workshops, presentations to professional societies, development of new areas of expertise, attainment of new professional licenses or certifications, curricular innovation, unpublished manuscripts or papers in progress, participation in clinics, workshops, presentations, master classes, panel participation, and adjudications. As a general guide, it is expected that probationary faculty will consistently accomplish noteworthy creative and/or scholarly work each year. Work that is formally or informally adjudicated or evaluated by external bodies or authorities (publishers, critics, reviewers, creative collaborators, etc.) is considered noteworthy. Works in progress and unpublished manuscripts that are destined for formal or informal adjudication or evaluation may also be considered noteworthy. Faculty are encouraged to include documentary evidence of such evaluation in the WPAF.

Individual faculty strategies for professional achievement and growth will differ according to the processes inherent in each artistic or scholarly area of expertise.

Creative works may be included in the WPAF in whatever form or forms typically are employed for documentation and evaluation in the relevant field. Such forms may include presenting the creative work itself, a reproduction or replica of the work, or a description of the work, together with whatever critical reviews and other evidence may be available.
CONTRIBUTIONS TO CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY

The Theatre Arts Department considers service, both to the governance of the Department, the College, and to the University, as well as to the greater community at the state, national, or international level, to be integral to the development of a well-rounded educator. Theatre Arts faculty members are expected to serve the Department, the College, the University, the arts community, and the community at large. These non-teaching service activities are considered to be highly important in the evaluation of the probationary faculty member.

To this end, the evaluation for retention, promotion, and tenure includes the faculty member's acceptance of service responsibilities. Among these are the performance of campus governance activities through committee work and other faculty interactions such as membership on University commissions, planning groups, or governance organizations, or participation in program assessments and reviews. Service to the Department may also take the form of planning or assisting with the Department's various events, supporting the activities of student organizations, and other such non-teaching activities.

In addition to Campus and University service, the Department encourages service to the broader community by nurturing relationships with schools or other educational or professional organizations on a local, regional, or national level. Such service might take the form of applying professional expertise, serving on boards or committees, leadership in professional societies, performing administrative functions, hosting or planning workshops or conferences, chairing panels, presenting lectures, workshops, or performances, responding to requests for information from the general public, corporations, government agencies, contributing expertise to school and community partnership programs, volunteering skills in collaboration with community non-profit organizations, and playing a role in other community-based endeavors that draw on faculty expertise.

CONCLUSION

In all of these areas -- classroom teaching, laboratory workshops and productions, writing, speaking, and directing or designing professionally, and serving the campus and community through governance and through the arts -- we measure achievement in relation to national models of excellence. If our faculty publishes in nationally recognized journals, collaborates on theatrical productions with professionals of stature, and leads students toward the same levels of excellence, we know their work has reached a high standard, and we try to indicate this in our evaluations.