



**SAN FRANCISCO  
STATE UNIVERSITY**

Creative Writing Department

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**SAN FRANCISCO STATE UNIVERSITY  
DEPARTMENT OF CREATIVE WRITING:  
STANDARDS for TENURE and PROMOTION  
(Adopted May 6, 2008; Revised 2009, 2016)  
Provost Approved 5/2016**

**MISSION**

The mission of the Department of Creative Writing is to make our writers attentive readers of the literatures of the world and socially aware members of society, who can use writing for self-expression, exploration of the possibilities of the medium, as well as in service of social causes and concerns. To this end, we employ well-published and well-recognized faculty to teach in our undergraduate, masters, and masters of fine arts programs, in which they guide students in the production and revision of their craft in creative non-fiction, fiction, playwriting, poetry, and literary translation. By studying elements of craft, process, vision, and revision, we prepare our students to become practicing creative writers and often teachers, professors, editors, publishers, translators, and arts organization professionals as well. We wish to instill confidence in them to remain in the field and continue their commitment and contribution to the literary arts.

**REQUIREMENTS**

The requirements and criteria for retention, tenure, and promotion set out in a series of policies adopted by the Academic Senate and approved by the President are divided into three areas: Teaching Effectiveness, 2) Professional Achievement and Growth, and 3) Contributions to Campus and Community. As required by University Policy on Retention and Tenure (Policy #F11-241), all faculty members of the Creative Writing Department who are being considered for retention, tenure, and promotion will be evaluated in each of those categories. In general, in order to merit tenure and/or promotion a candidate is required to meet a high standard of effectiveness in teaching and professional achievement and growth, as well as contributions to the campus and community. The Departmental Retention, Tenure, and Promotions Committee, along with the Chair of the Department, will consider and evaluate all of the achievements of a candidate for tenure and/or promotion according to the criteria listed below. Following university policy, “achievements in the current rank should demonstrate promise and meritorious activities comparable to the achievements and service expected of all faculty...at the rank to which the individual is to be promoted.”

The review process for tenure and promotion to associate professor shall take into account 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 are required to achieve excellence.

### **Early Tenure and Promotion:**

A faculty member may apply for tenure and promotion prior to having satisfied the time-bound service requirements set forth by the university. To be awarded early tenure and promotion, faculty must demonstrate outstanding achievements in all three categories. Compared to timely tenure and promotion, this standard is higher since the courses taught and semesters of service are fewer. Following the department criteria, the candidate must show evidence of exceptional performance in teaching effectiveness; professional achievement and growth; and service that engages the world outside SFSU and enhances the reputation of the department and university.

## **TENURE AND PROMOTION**

### **External Reviews**

The Creative Writing Department requires external reviews of a faculty member's professional achievement and growth work as part of the tenure and promotion process. Reviews, or external letters, generally are to focus only on professional work. The use of external reviews of a candidate's teaching performance and service may be utilized if relevant to the candidate's professional achievement and growth. The candidate will work in consultation with the Department Chair to identify a list of potential reviewers. The Department Chair or the Chair of the RTP Committee will send out the invitation to the external reviewers. The RTP Committee will not reveal the names of the final reviewers until their letters have been received.

Guidelines are as follows:

- Candidates may propose up to five outside reviewers. The Department Chair in consultation with the RTP Committee may add up to five additional outside reviewers. The candidate and the Chair will discuss the list of ten possible reviewers to arrive at a final list of six to eight 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. Three to six external reviews are optimal.
- 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 optimally be from CSU comparable institutions or higher, and hold a higher rank than the candidate being reviewed.
- 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
  - At least three examples from the candidate's professional work in consultation with the RTP Committee.
- The department chair in collaboration with 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.

### **Personal Statement**

The personal statement is considered an extremely valuable component of the file. The candidate should strive to generate a context within which his/her 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 creative writing 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.

### **Teaching Effectiveness**

The primary mission of San Francisco State University is teaching, and the Creative Writing Department takes the mission very seriously. To be considered for tenure or promotion, regardless of qualifications in other categories, candidates must meet the highest standard of excellence in teaching expected of faculty and required by the University, as stated in current Academic Senate policies and Faculty Affairs guidelines. Candidates will be expected to either maintain a high level of teaching effectiveness or show sustained improvement to meet that high level over the period under consideration. A decline in teaching effectiveness over the course of the probationary or review period will be treated as a serious issue in need of address. Any extenuating circumstances that may cause a temporary decline in a candidate's performance should be explained if possible.

The criteria for evaluation of teaching are ranked in the order of greatest weight:

- 1. Student evaluations.** Students will evaluate all courses each semester. These surveys are important in that they provide a large amount of student feedback. SETE averages of 1.6 and better are deemed appropriate for tenure consideration. The committee will try to ascertain significant patterns within the data and make note of them accordingly. Appropriate course content and adherence to the SLOs of the CW Department will comprise aspects of evaluation. If a course is taught more than once, comparisons will be drawn.
- 2. Peer Evaluations.** Class visitations by fellow faculty members are vital for assessing teaching effectiveness. The faculty member should have at least one review by a department member yearly to receive feedback from colleagues. In such evaluations, members of the Committee and other faculty members will review relevant syllabi and other instructional material, visit classes and provide written comments concerning the quality of teaching to the chair. Peer reviewers shall be equal to or at a higher rank than the candidate. Following the observation, the observer will, if possible, meet with the faculty member about the strengths of the class session and any feedback s/he may have had about it.
- 3. Course materials.** Syllabi, course web sites, reading lists, class projects and assignments, and examinations are used by the RTP committee as evidence of course and class organization, the level at which the course is taught, and the expectations of student learning. Syllabi should be clearly written and outline learning objectives and grading rubrics. The syllabi should reflect currency in the field regarding pedagogical practices and methods.

4. **Range and breadth of courses.** Faculty members in the Creative Writing Department are expected to teach a variety of courses to include workshop, process, craft, and special activity classes.
5. **Advising.** All probationary and tenured faculty members must be effective in advising and willing to confer with students. The Chair, working closely with advising matters in the department, shall provide the RTP committee with a brief written assessment of the candidate's effectiveness in advising.
6. **Culminating experience.** Supervision of up to six MA or MFA theses per year is expected for tenure-track and tenured faculty.
7. **Curricular innovation.** Faculty members are encouraged to develop innovative teaching methods and may present evidence in their WPAFs of novel assignments, exercises, class projects, etc. Faculty members are encouraged to share curricular innovations with colleagues.
8. **Professional development in teaching.** Faculty members are encouraged to participate in campus, local, regional, national or international workshops to enhance the teaching of creative writing.

### **Professional Achievement and Growth**

The department sees professional achievement and growth as an indispensable component of teaching excellence and expects candidates to demonstrate accomplishments in this area as a condition of retention, tenure and promotion. The candidate should demonstrate a coherent and consistent pattern of productive activity.

The department emphasizes quality more than quantity. The evidence of quality can be drawn from the following elements ranked in the order of weight. Co-authored books and articles will be evaluated on the contributions of the candidate to the work.

### **Works of creative writing including creative non-fiction, fiction, poetry, literary translation and plays produced.**

For tenure and promotion to Associate Professor, the candidate's body of work must include at least two recent full-length books and demonstrate a mastery of writerly excellence and engagement with its audience or targeted community. Depending on the nature of the work, indicators of impact might include the prominence of the publisher, awards, citations and critical acclaim.

Promotion to Professor will be based on a record of sustained achievement and evidence that the candidate is seen as an established writer in his/her area with at least three recent full-length collections. Leadership can be demonstrated in a number of ways such as being invited to give readings or performances at established academic and literary venues; evidence that the candidate's work has influenced other practitioners and academics; is being cited in other studies and publications; has significantly attracted or impacted audiences; has been recognized by peers for its high quality or innovation.

Books published or plays produced by recognized presses/theaters in the field is the most

significant achievement for tenure and promotion. Evaluation of book publication will take into account the considerable role of small-press publishing in the age of corporate downsizing and diminished support of university presses. Reviews and external evaluations should speak to the history and standing of the presses/theaters publishing or staging the work. The standing of the publishers will be evaluated by the relevance of books on their lists to important recent developments in the field, as measured by reviews, essays, and other media commentary devoted to those books, as well as awards and grants garnered by such books. Theaters will be evaluated by a similar measure that looks at the relevance and impact of previous productions on important recent developments in theater arts, as measured by reviews and other media commentary as well as grants and awards.

**Though nothing can take the place of a published book or produced play, the following materials can be regarded as valuable in addition:**

- Stories, poems, essays, translations and scenes published in literary journals.
- Literary work or commentary published on nationally significant blog sites.
- Creative entries or essays in books and anthologies.
- Edited anthologies published by major presses or curated reading series at major venues (university, book stores, museums, art centers).
- Peer-reviewed foundation, state and federal grants if funded.

### **Presentations**

- Invited presentations/readings at conferences, universities, and professional meetings and established literary festivals.
- Peer reviewed presentations of work at international, national or regional and local conferences and exhibitions.
- Participation in collaborative events at professional meetings such as dialogues, roundtables, workshops and seminars.
- Responses (panelist, etc.) at conference and exhibition sessions.

### **Other works demonstrating influence and/or innovation**

- Experimental creative projects that cross genres, involve other art forms, and might include technology.
- Unpublished manuscripts (should be evaluated by an external reviewers).
- Curricular innovation as it relates to influencing creative writing education standards.
- Grants, stipends, and other competitively awarded funding.

### **Other Achievements**

- Recognition of professional achievements in the form of awards and honors.
- Works in progress may be considered within a WPAF if letters of critical assessment accompany the work (e.g., letters from editors and external letters of evaluation). Works in progress may not be the only evidence for PAG. These letters should be from professional peers who are familiar with work and can assess its quality relative to other

comparable work that has been published or produced. The candidate should also demonstrate possible venues of publication or distribution of this work.

**Contributions to Campus and Community**

Contributions to campus and community, or service, will be evaluated on the basis of its scope and effectiveness in advancing the mission of the university or field of creative writing. Contributions to university include service to the department, the College of Liberal and Creative Arts and the University. Contributions to community include providing service and/or leadership to the profession through professional, literary, and civic organizations. Consideration will be given to the nature of the organization and the scope of responsibility. The Department does not make a distinction between local, regional and national service to the profession.

**Department Service:** Service on department committees, taking a leadership role (serving as chair or acting chair, chairing RTP or the GTA Hiring Committee, coordinating the graduate program, etc.), sponsoring student organizations.

**Campus Service:** Serving on College Committees, Serving on the Academic Senate or University-wide committees, contributing to campus interdisciplinary programs or collaborating with other departments (such as art in the Book Arts correlative), participating in faculty organizations, arranging new MFA correlatives with departments outside of CW.

**Community Service:** Participating in professional organizations, organizing conferences, workshops, and sessions at conferences, serving on editorial, organizational, or professional boards, reading manuscripts for journals or contests; judging literary contests, attending local, national, or international writing/playwriting conferences.