

Department of Geography and Environment
Guidelines for Retention, Tenure and Promotion
Approved by the Provost June 2013

[as ratified 12/12/2012]

This document provides guidelines for promotion criteria applied in the Department of Geography and Human Environmental Studies (HES). These guidelines are designed to clarify specific expectations for Geography and its subdisciplines while remaining consistent with SFSU Academic Senate Promotions Policy (policy number F06-241).

Under Retention, Tenure and Promotion Criteria, the SFSU Academic Senate Policy F06-241 states:

“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. For teaching faculty, excellence in teaching is required. For faculty whose primary assignment is other than teaching, excellence in the primary assignment is required. To merit tenure and/or promotion all candidates must meet the standard of excellence normally expected of faculty and required by the University. Effective teaching is exhibited in the classroom, research laboratory, or in the community. It is demonstrated when faculty join with students to develop knowledge and skills through classroom experiences, scholarly research, creative activities, and community service. Departments should decide the priority of non-teaching criteria.”

I. Documentation. The candidate is responsible for providing the following documentation to the department’s Retention, Tenure and Promotion Committee: (1) a current Curriculum Vitae, (2) supplementary materials (including copies of course materials and evaluations, publications and grants, evidence of professional service), and (3) an appropriate narrative of his/her activities, including an estimate of the effort involved in particular activities and the candidate’s assessment of the importance of these activities.

A candidate for tenure or promotion should submit to the RTP Committee the names of at least four potential external reviewers who can address the area of professional achievement and growth. In addition to the reviewers named by the candidate, the RTP Committee may solicit assessments from other external reviewers. Outside reviewers should not be close colleagues or collaborators with the candidate, and should be asked to state any potential conflicts of interest in doing the review. The RTP Committee will solicit input from this combined list of individuals. The RTP Committee chair (or subcommittee chair) will inform each 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. Reviewers must be given reasonable time to meet the WPAF deadline, with requests ideally sent in the spring prior to that deadline.

II. Professional Education or Equivalency. A candidate must have a PhD or an equivalent doctorate in Geography or a related field to be eligible for promotion in the Department of Geography and HES.

III. Teaching Effectiveness. The Department of Geography and HES takes the teaching mission of the University very seriously. Evidence of Teaching Effectiveness in the Department of Geography and HES may be demonstrated in various ways. Primary evidence includes:

- Course materials. These materials are required in the WPAF and must include most recent syllabus for each course. Other materials may include additional syllabi, reading lists, bibliographies, exercises, exams, and printouts of course websites.
- Peer class visitation reports. All candidates for promotion are expected to be scheduled by the RTP Committee for a minimum of 1 or more class visitations per semester, by tenured faculty of higher rank.
- Student evaluations of teaching. The university requires all faculty to be evaluated by students in each course taught. Student evaluations of teaching will be judged on a case-by-case basis. Student comments will be given more weight than scores. 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, the overall mean, and department means.

Other evidence of Teaching Effectiveness may also be used, for example active thesis and/or research project committee membership, undergraduate and graduate program advising, and curricular innovations. Research and/or presentations on pedagogy may be evaluated as evidence of either Teaching Effectiveness or Professional Achievement and Growth, at the discretion of the candidate. Professional conferences often address issues in geographic education such as appropriate course content, new teaching methods, or alternative assessment practices. The candidate should document such refereed and non-refereed presentations at conferences, and identify the nature of the specific contributions of the candidate, and provide information that indicates the impact of that presentation on the field or on the participants.

IV. 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. Book chapters and essays in edited volumes may also be similar in significance to refereed research articles. The candidate should document the significance of these publications, for example peer reviews, book reviews, or letters from editors. For some professional conferences, proceedings papers are peer reviewed; the candidate should document how the peer review process works for these conferences. 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: publications; accepted for publication (= in press); submitted for publication; 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. The candidate should explain the scholarly contribution of all publications. In publications of multiple authorship, a candidate should communicate clearly to the committee (a) her/his role in the research reported (e.g., role in supervising the research, doing fieldwork, data analysis, writing the paper, etc.), (b) the time and effort spent by the candidate, (c) which authors are students (if any), and (d) the rationale for the order of authors. Work co-authored with students will be looked on highly favorably.

2. Presentations. 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).

3. 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 all their grant proposals and the status (funded, pending, non-funded). The RTP Committee also considers funded intramural grants as evidence of active effort in developing a research program. 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 may also be appropriate under teaching effectiveness or contributions to campus and community, depending on the nature of the activity.

V. 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, special advising assignments (e.g. graduate coordinator, lead program adviser), special functions, department seminars/colloquia). Leadership roles merit additional recognition.

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. Consulting and writing grants for community organizations, e.g. environmental organizations, may fit well with a geographer's professional activities, and may bring credit to the university.