

Department of Geosciences
San Francisco State University

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Expectations for Retention, Tenure, and Promotion

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

The criteria for retention, tenure, and promotion are divided into three areas: (a) teaching effectiveness and professional development in teaching, (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 Committee decides a candidate is not making sufficient progress, but the situation is not sufficiently serious to recommend non-retention, the Committee and the Chair of the Department shall meet with the candidate to devise a plan for improving the candidate's performance to the level required for progress toward tenure. 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 while in his or her current rank are of primary relevance to promotion considerations. Candidates for promotion are advised that 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 Committee with an up-to-date Working Personnel Action File (WPAF) by the closing date as determined by the University RTP Deadline Calendar. The WPAF consists of a candidate's curriculum vitae, an index of supplementary materials, and 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 a self-statement in each of the areas of teaching effectiveness, professional achievement and growth, and contributions to campus and community that summarizes the candidate's accomplishments. In cases where an activity may be considered in more than one area, candidates should make a selection in consultation with the Committee. A candidate for tenure or promotion should submit to the Committee the names of at least three potential external reviewers. In addition to the reviewers named by the candidate, the Committee may solicit assessments from other external reviewers. The WPAF should include letters from external reviewers solicited by the Committee that assess the quality of the candidate's activities.

A. Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness and Professional Development in Teaching

The Department regards teaching to be a professional activity amenable to improvement over time. Because effective teaching is central to the Department's mission, the Department expects candidates to engage in activities that enhance their professional achievement and growth as instructors and mentors and to demonstrate the effectiveness of their teaching.

The Committee will consider, but is not limited to, the criteria described below to evaluate a candidate's teaching effectiveness and efforts to improve student learning. (As examples of criteria not listed below, contributions to a wide range of the Department's curricular needs or levels of instruction, or outstanding fulfillment of a particular need, would receive favorable consideration.)

1. Classroom teaching. Candidates are expected to be excellent classroom teachers. Evaluation of a candidate's performance in this area will be based on the following:

a. Student evaluations of teaching. Students evaluate most instructors each semester using a standard College of Science and Engineering survey. The Committee will review these student evaluations, including students' written comments on the survey, for indications about the quality of a candidate's classroom teaching. To the extent that the standard survey might not adequately assess some aspect of the candidate's teaching (for example, if the candidate adopts a nontraditional or experimental pedagogical approach), the Committee may also consider information from alternative, appropriately designed student evaluations.

b. Peer evaluations of teaching. The Committee will review letters of evaluation from Department faculty who have observed a candidate's classroom teaching. Candidates will be evaluated at least once per year by a faculty member of higher rank than the candidate's.

c. Letters from students and colleagues. The Committee will consider other letters, either solicited or unsolicited, that address a candidate's teaching effectiveness. However, the Committee will not consider anonymous letters.

2. Student involvement in research. Connecting students with current research can attract students to the discipline and enhances the experience of both graduate and undergraduate students. In addition, preparing students for a thesis, professional career, or doctoral program often requires study beyond the regular course offerings of the Department. Hence, candidates who direct theses, sponsor research activities involving students, teach seminar courses about current research in the field [GEOL 590 (Seminar in Geosciences), GEOL/METR/OCN 700 (Seminar in Applied Geosciences)], or direct

independent study [GEOL 699 or 899, METR 699, or OCN 699 (Special Study)] make a significant contribution to our students' education. The Department places a high value on these types of activities.

3. Curricular innovations and professional development. The Committee may also consider curricular innovations, such as the development of original academic programs or courses, new and effective pedagogical approaches, and instructional applications of new technologies, particularly if these activities are funded by grants acquired by the candidate, as evidence of a candidate's teaching effectiveness as well as engagement in professional development in teaching.

As evidence of professional development in teaching, the Committee may also consider a candidate's activities undertaken to develop and improve pedagogical and student mentoring skills. Such activities might include, but are not limited to, attending training workshops on effective pedagogical methods or methods of assessing student learning, especially if the candidate successfully adopts those methods; participation in and contribution to communities of scholars and/or practitioners of teaching that promote effective teaching practices; engaging in action research to assess the candidate's own teaching, particularly if it leads to improvements in the candidate's teaching; co-teaching with an experienced instructor to learn pedagogical approaches new to the candidate; and maintaining a reflective journal to document the evolution of the candidates' thinking about teaching and learning.

Some activities in this area may also be evaluated under professional achievement and growth or campus and community service, depending on the nature of the activity.

4. Publications and presentations at professional conferences and workshops. Publications and professional conferences and workshops often address topics in geosciences education or science education more generally, such as innovative teaching approaches, alternative assessment practices, and revisions to curricula to address new developments in the discipline. The Committee may consider publications and presentations at professional conferences related to geosciences education as evidence of a candidate's professional development and effectiveness in teaching. Peer reviewed publications are valued particularly highly. Publications and presentations about geosciences education may also be evaluated under professional achievement and growth.

B. Evaluation of Professional Achievement and Growth

All candidates are expected to engage in activities that enhance their professional achievement and growth. However, evaluation of professional activities should be sensitive to standards appropriate to a candidate's area of expertise. For example, researchers in the geosciences could demonstrate professional achievement by publishing papers in refereed journals, while specialists in geosciences education could demonstrate professional achievement by successful grant funding of educational research. The Committee will consider, but is not limited to, the criteria described below to evaluate a candidate's professional achievement and growth.

1. Research and publications. Candidates are expected to have an active research program. The Committee considers papers published or accepted for publication in refereed research journals or monographs as primary evidence of a candidate's professional achievement and growth. Papers may be weighted according to the prestige of the publication and the candidate's contribution, as indicated by evidence such as author order and the candidate's reflective statement. Less weight is given to publication of non-refereed papers and technical reports, and to unpublished manuscripts.

The Committee may also consider presentations of current research at professional conferences as evidence of a candidate's professional achievement and growth. For example, the most important activity within this area would be as an invited speaker at a national or international symposium or conference.

2. Grant funding. The Department encourages candidates to apply for funding of their research interests. Since grant proposals for external funding of research are often very competitive and typically receive extensive outside peer review, the Committee considers successful external grant funding as strong evidence of a candidate's professional achievement and growth. Grant funding of non-research projects may be evaluated under teaching effectiveness or contributions to campus and community, depending on the nature of the project. Although weighted much less than funded proposals, unsuccessful proposals, particularly those that receive positive peer reviews, may be considered.

3. Curricular innovations. The Committee may consider curricular innovations such as the development of original academic programs or courses, new and effective pedagogical approaches, and 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 evaluated under teaching effectiveness or contributions to campus and community, depending on the nature of the activity.

C. Evaluation of Contributions to Campus and Community

All candidates are expected to contribute to the smooth functioning of the Department by serving on committees. Candidates are also expected to contribute to the functioning of the College of Science and Engineering, the University, and the profession through work on appropriate committees or other service. The Committee will consider, but is not limited to, the criteria described below to evaluate a candidate's particular contributions to campus and community.

- 1. Service to the profession.** Candidates are expected to participate in professional organizations. The Committee may consider activities such as election to offices in professional organizations, service on editorial boards, organizing workshops, conferences, and symposia, reviewing manuscripts and grant proposals, and receiving honors or other recognition from professional societies, as evidence of a candidate's service to the profession.
- 2. Service to the University.** The Committee may consider 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 community.** The 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 in this category.