

Department of Geography & Environment

Guidelines for Retention, Tenure and Promotion

Approved by the Office of Faculty Affairs &
Professional Development Spring 2021

PREAMBLE

This document provides guidelines for promotion criteria applied in the Department of Geography & Environment. These guidelines are designed to clarify specific expectations for Geography and its subdisciplines while remaining consistent with SFSU [Academic Senate Retention, Tenure and Promotion Policy # S19-241](#). The Department of Geography & Environment is made up of a diverse group of academic professionals who study the processes, places, spatial patterns and consequences of human-environment interaction. Sub-disciplines range from physical and biological science approaches to social science and humanistic frameworks. We provide two undergraduate and three graduate degrees, which prepare students for advanced academic pursuits or careers as geographers, planners, geospatial careers, analysts, environmental scientists and advocates, educators and natural resource managers. The Department recognizes that the professional circumstances of each candidate are unique, including variability in opportunity, standard operations, and culture across the Department faculty. Therefore, candidates will likely take a unique pathway to meet the requirements in the three areas of evaluation, and the Department recognizes the need for flexibility in the evaluation process to accommodate this variability.

The purpose of this document is to provide context, guidance and direction to candidates who are applying for tenure or promotion at various stages of their careers and the committees who will review their profiles. The document clarifies the basic *requirements* for the three areas of evaluation: teaching effectiveness, professional achievement and growth, and service, and provides clear *expectations* to guide the candidates in demonstrating *how* they may meet these requirements.

INTRODUCTION

The Department of Geography & Environment has the overall expectation that the typical department colleague will be an excellent teacher, an active researcher, and an active participant in service and shared governance.

- Assistant Professor: The Department expects Assistant Professors to develop a teaching portfolio that demonstrates growth and innovation as a teacher. Similarly, we expect Assistant Professors to establish a successful research program. We expect less service from Assistant Professors than for faculty at a higher rank.
- Associate Professors: The Department expects Associate Professors to sustain excellence in teaching and increase contributions to departmental and other service.

Department of Geography & Environment
Approved 5/19/2021

Candidates for promotion are advised that the Department has higher research expectations for promotion to Professor than for promotion to Associate Professor.

- Professors: The Department expects full Professors to continue their achievements in Teaching, Research, and Service and show leadership in at least one of these areas. Active participation and leadership in departmental service and events is expected of Professors. The department has higher expectations for promotion to Professor than for promotion to Associate Professor and the different expectations are specified in a separate section below.

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 & Environment. Successful candidates for promotion must meet the standards of excellence normally expected of faculty in the Department of Geography & Environment. For Promotion, a candidate's activities at rank (since the most recent promotion) are relevant to promotion considerations. This means all activities at the rank of Assistant Professor apply toward promotion to Associate, regardless of the institution at which they were performed; similarly, all activities at the Associate level apply toward promotion to Professor.

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 their 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.

I. TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS

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

1. Classroom Teaching

- 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 (Academic Senate policy S19-241). We recognize the limitations and biases of surveys. In particular, it has been demonstrated that women, members of historically underrepresented groups and non-native English speakers receive poorer reviews than white male native English speakers. Consequently, the evaluation of scores and comments will acknowledge this limitation. For example, only repeated observations will be considered, and longitudinal patterns are considered to be more relevant than lateral comparisons. The candidate should prepare a summary table that includes all courses taught at SFSU using the following format:

NUMBER AND NAME OF CLASS AND SEMESTER TAUGHT	DEPT MEAN	COURSE -BASED MEAN	YOUR OVERALL MEAN	NUMBER OF EVALUATIONS	NUMBER OF ENROLLMENT
	Department/	Department/	Faculty Data	Faculty Data	Department/

2. Student Involvement in Research

Connecting and mentoring students in current research can attract students to the discipline and enhances the graduate and undergraduate educational experience. Preparing students for a thesis, professional career, or doctoral program often requires study beyond regular course offerings of the Department. Candidates who direct graduate theses, support research activities involving students and/or direct independent study can make a significant contribution to a student’s education. Evidence of active thesis and/or research project committee membership may be used. The candidate should provide a list of students a) advised as a thesis chair, and b) as a thesis committee member.

3. Curricular Improvements and Innovations. The RTP Committee may consider improvements and curricular innovations such as the development of academic programs or courses, new and effective pedagogical approaches, or instructional applications of new technologies as evidence of a candidate’s teaching effectiveness. Activities in this area may also be appropriate under professional achievement and growth or contributions to campus and community, depending on the nature of the activity.

II. 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 is expected to 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 is expected to 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 their previous promotion. The candidate is expected to 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 is expected to explain the scholarly contribution of all publications. In publications of multiple authorship, a candidate is expected to communicate clearly to the committee (a) their 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 is expected to 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). Presentations coauthored with students will be looked on favorably.

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 is expected to 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 is expected to articulate the impact of each grant on their research program. The RTP Committee may consider support of student research advisees through research grants, scholarships, and/or service awards as evidence of professional achievement and growth.

4. Pedagogical Research. The RTP Committee may consider 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.

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 is expected to 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.

III. 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 Department expects the most service from Professors, next from Associate Professors, and less from Assistant Professors. 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 is expected to 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 is expected to list all service assignments and document their contributions in committees, special advising assignments (e.g. graduate coordinator, lead program adviser), special functions, and 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.

PROMOTION FROM ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR TO PROFESSOR

Candidates for Professor are expected to continue to be an excellent teacher, an active researcher, and an active participant in service and shared governance, providing evidence of these accomplishments as outlined above. In addition, the candidate for promotion to Professor is expected to demonstrate strong leadership in at least one of these three areas. The Department recognizes that the level of contributions within each area of evaluation may vary depending on the candidate's career path, interests and strengths. Regardless, the Department expects candidates for promotion to Professor to demonstrate leadership in one or more of the areas of evaluation, i.e., teaching, professional achievement and growth, or contributions to campus and community. The Department also recognizes that these areas of leadership frequently overlap or are interconnected. In their narrative, the candidate should identify the area(s) in which they would like to be evaluated to satisfy the leadership requirement and to describe their leadership role(s).

In the area of Teaching, leadership might include, but is not limited to, curricular or pedagogical innovations and in promoting accessibility, equity and inclusivity in the learning environment, as well as impactful teaching campus-wide and beyond.

In the area of Professional achievement and growth, the candidate is expected to show evidence of leadership in ways that might include, but are not limited to, recognition of their scholarly activity by others in the field, being PI on grants or grant applications that are transformative in the candidate's field(s) or multi-dimensional/faceted, leadership in interdisciplinary collaborations, publishing books, publications in leading journals in the field, well-cited publications, evidence of innovative or new research, or significant research efforts with students, such as significant co-authoring contributions, grants that focus on funding student research or significant contributions to student research activities.

In the area of Service, leadership might include, but is not limited to, chairing department committees, active service and/or leadership roles on campus, leadership in professional activities, or public service.

The candidate's statement about leadership is expected to be clearly articulated in their narrative, as the candidate sees fit. While leadership is a key criterion for evaluating candidates for promotion to Professor, the Department wishes to emphasize the importance for the candidate to also demonstrate the ways they have fulfilled requirements for promotion as outlined in Sections I, II and III above.

CONSIDERATION FOR EARLY TENURE AND PROMOTION TO ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

In accordance with Academic Senate policy, a pre-tenure faculty member may request review for tenure in any pre-tenure year. Substantially accelerated progress in *all three areas* of evaluation is required for early tenure and promotion consideration. Should a candidate wish to be considered for early tenure and promotion from Assistant to Associate Professor, they must discuss it with their Department chair, RTP chair and RTP committee.

Approved by faculty: 5/19/2021