

Department of Biology
San Francisco State University
Approved: 05/18/2023

Retention, Tenure, and Promotion: Guidelines and Expectations

This document details the guidelines and expectations that shall govern the process of retention, tenure, and promotion in the Department of Biology consistent with Academic Senate Policy #F22-241.

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 as described below.

The Department of Biology has the overall expectation that the typical Department colleague will achieve excellence in teaching, research, and service. We expect all members of our department to demonstrate practices of equity and inclusion in their professional lives.

Assistant Professor: The Department expects Assistant Professors to gain experience in teaching, and by their 3rd or 4th year to be first rate instructors in classes they have been teaching. Similarly, we expect Assistant Professors to establish a successful research program. Biology expects 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 vigorous productivity in their research program. The Department expects Associate Professors to have a greater record in service compared to their time at the Assistant rank.

The experience of the Department is that the above descriptions are the expectations of the typical faculty member. The Department may choose to recognize those candidates for exceptional performance in one or more category, even though they may not be fulfilling the entire spectrum of expectations set forth in this document. The department values and expects excellence in all three areas, however we also understand that the relative distribution of effort between these areas may vary over time. As such, a candidate's RTP portfolio should be considered holistically.

Evaluation of Candidates for Tenure and/or Promotion

Retention: The purpose of the annual review is to determine if candidates for retention are making sufficient progress toward tenure. If the Biology RTP Committee decides a candidate is not making adequate progress, but the situation is not sufficiently serious to recommend non-retention, the candidate shall assemble a written individualized plan that lists ways in which s/he intends to improve her/his performance (e.g., peer classroom visitations, teaching workshops, reading education materials/literature, increase efforts toward publication of research, augment submission of grant proposals, etc.). The candidate shall meet with the RTP Chair, RTP subcommittee and Department Chair to share the plan and receive feedback and suggestions. The plan must include a timeline and specific goals.

Tenure: Successful candidates for tenure must meet the standards of excellence normally expected of faculty in the Department of Biology. Tenure is based on activities performed at SF

State, and consideration for tenure generally based on that issue. In some cases, performance at other institutions may be considered based on negotiations between a candidate with experience and the University administration.

Promotion: Successful candidates for promotion must meet the standards of excellence normally expected of faculty in the Department of Biology. For Promotion, a candidate's activities at rank (since the most recent promotion) are the only activities 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 Full Professor. The Department has higher expectations for promotion to Full Professor than for promotion to Associate Professor.

Responsibilities of Candidates for Retention, Tenure or Promotion: Candidates for retention, tenure, and promotion are responsible for providing the RTP Committee with an up-to-date Working Personnel Action File (WPAF) by the closing date as determined by the university RTP calendar. The WPAF consists of a candidate's curriculum vitae and an indexed set of supplementary materials that represent the candidate's accomplishments in teaching effectiveness, professional achievement and growth, and contributions to campus and community. With the exception of student letters, all of the supporting documents found in the WPAF should be from individuals who possess sufficient expertise or seniority to perform valid evaluations of a candidate's strengths and areas of improvement. Candidates are required to include all materials that are signed by other individuals, whether colleagues or students, and provided by the RTP Committee prior to the University Calendar deadline.

Candidates for retention, tenure, and promotion should include in the WPAF self-statements (no more than 750 words) for each of the three RTP criteria that summarize the candidate's accomplishments including practices of equity and inclusion. In cases where an activity may relate to more than one area, candidates should make a selection in consultation with the RTP Committee.

When a candidate is seeking tenure or promotion the WPAF should contain at least three letters from external reviewers (not counting the candidate's thesis advisor or a close research or grant collaborators) who can assess the professional achievements and growth of the candidate. Obtaining external review letters is the responsibility of the RTP Committee. The candidate who is seeking tenure or promotion should submit to the RTP committee the names of potential external reviewers at the earliest date possible (i.e., spring or summer prior to submission of the WPAF). The RTP Committee will solicit input from these individuals. In addition to the reviewers named by the candidate, the RTP Committee will solicit assessments from other external reviewers (for example, from individuals who have cited the candidate's published works). The RTP Committee chair (or subcommittee chair) will inform each external 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. External reviewers must be given reasonable time to meet the WPAF deadline. The external reviewers should be recognized experts, as demonstrated by outstanding achievement in their discipline. External reviewers from industry or government research agencies are acceptable provided they possess the appropriate academic credentials and professional reputation.

Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness

Effective teaching is central to the Department's mission. We understand that equitable and inclusive classrooms are key to our ability to serve the needs of our diverse student population, and thus, we aspire to create classrooms that give every student an equal opportunity to thrive

and succeed. We strive to teach our students to acquire, organize and apply information in ways that demonstrate deep conceptual understanding and real-world applications. Connecting content to issues relevant to our students' communities is highly valued, but not required. We expect excellence in teaching as demonstrated by positive letters from peer evaluators and students, evidence of curricular innovation, and positive comments on the student evaluation of teaching effectiveness forms. We value teaching that fulfills core curricular needs at different levels of instruction, as well as methods of teaching outside of a traditional classroom setting.

The WPAF should include teaching materials (e.g., syllabi, sample lecture slides, a paragraph course description, and materials highlighting evidence-based curricular innovations). The WPAF should also include a table of courses taught, including the course title and level. Any team-taught courses should be so described along with the name of the co-instructor(s).

1. Classroom teaching. The RTP Committee expects candidates to be excellent classroom teachers. Evaluation of a candidate's performance in this area will be based on:

a. Peer evaluations of teaching. The RTP Committee is responsible for and will solicit faculty of a higher rank (facilitated by RTP Chair in coordination with candidate) to provide at least one letter of evaluation in every semester under review in which the candidate is teaching. This peer evaluation will be done through direct observation of a candidate's classroom teaching in accordance with the departmental bylaws.

b. Letters from students and colleagues. The RTP Committee will consider other letters, solicited or unsolicited, that address a candidate's teaching effectiveness. The RTP Committee will not consider anonymous letters (must be signed and dated).

c. Student evaluations of teaching. Students evaluate instructors each semester using a standard College of Science and Engineering online survey. The RTP Committee will review the written comments made by students on the survey and (to a lesser extent) numerical SETE scores. The candidate should prepare a summary table that includes all courses taught at SFSU, WTUs, total enrollment, number of students that submitted evaluations, and average numerical scores for question #6 (which states "Please rate the overall effectiveness of your instructor...considering their contribution to your learning"). These average SETE scores will not be compared to the Department means when evaluating candidates. The Department recognizes biases associated with such numerical scores, including team-taught courses, and takes this under consideration. In general, scores that are lower (better) than the mid-value of 2.5 on question #6 meet our expectations. In addition to the six SFSU quantitative questions, we will include three Biology specific open-ended (qualitative) questions as follows:

-What are specific examples of how this instructor best supported your learning in this course?

-What are specific recommendations you can offer for how this instructor could have made improvements to better support your learning?

-What, if anything, did this instructor do that made you feel fully included in the class?

Note that the third question reflects a core value in the Department of fostering inclusive classrooms that are safe environments for all students to learn.

2. Teaching outside the classroom. Mentoring students in research is vital for attracting students to the discipline, enhancing both the graduate and undergraduate experience. We recognize that preparing students for a thesis, professional career, or doctoral program requires

significant teaching efforts that complement the traditional classroom setting. Candidates are expected to mentor undergraduates in research (Biol 699) and contribute to our graduate program by directing graduate research (Biol 895, 897, 898) in their laboratories. This research supervision is an important component of our teaching mission that makes a significant and long-lasting contribution to a student's education. The candidate should provide a list of students they advised a) on campus in their research laboratories, b) as a thesis committee member and c) off-campus by a different primary investigator. The Department will develop methods of peer evaluation (by senior members of the RTP committee) to help support candidates in these efforts.

3. 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 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. The RTP committee will consider presentations at professional conferences or active participation in workshops related to biology education as evidence of a candidate's teaching effectiveness. In such cases the candidate should indicate the type of presentation (i.e., poster, talk), impact on the field or on the participants, and include representative materials presented. We highly value a candidate's pursuit of additional opportunities for professional development with respect to new pedagogies and tools to promote inclusivity in classrooms.

For all three areas considered above (Classroom teaching, Teaching outside the classroom, and Curricular innovation) the RTP committee will determine if a candidate meets expectations. The expectations to be met for promotion to Full professor will be to maintain (or improve) the same level of excellence in teaching (for all three areas above) that the same candidate fulfilled in their promotion to Associate. If the candidate meets all of these expectations, outlined in the three areas above before the standard SFSU deadline we will consider an early promotion (to Associate or Full). If a candidate seeks such early promotion and/or tenure they are expected to have taught a sufficient number of classroom assignments (24 WTU), including one class in the core curriculum, so that the RTP committee can evaluate if they have met the above expectations for the period under review.

Evaluation of Professional Achievement and Growth

The RTP Committee expects all candidates to engage in activities that enhance their professional achievement and growth by maintaining an active research program. We will evaluate professional achievement and growth using a combination of publications, grant funding, and the effective training of undergraduate and graduate students in research.

1. Publications. The RTP Committee considers peer-reviewed scholarly work in any area of biology, published in refereed research journals or books, as primary evidence of a candidate's professional achievement and growth. We give less weight to non-refereed publications (including technical reports, patents, commentaries, and book reviews); these should be listed separately from peer-reviewed papers in the CV. The candidate should include a pdf of each publication since their previous promotion and a list of peer-reviewed papers in the CV using the following categories: At Rank: (a) Published Papers: published papers, papers accepted for publication, or papers "*in press*" are considered equivalent, as long as the work was conducted in the same rank; (b) In Progress: papers submitted for publication and/or as pre-prints published online (e.g. biorxiv). Such completed manuscripts (not yet fully accepted) are useful for retention decisions, but are not considered in promotion or tenure decisions. Candidates should indicate whether graduate and/or undergraduate students are coauthors; we expect a subset of papers to

include student coauthors, which reflects a commitment to training students as research biologists. In publications of multiple authorship, the candidate should communicate their relative contribution clearly to the committee. Candidates who seek tenure and/or promotion should clearly organize and highlight publications that, for tenure: (a) occurred *before* and those that occurred *after* their hire at SFSU; for promotion to Associate: (b) those publications that were generated during their current rank (as an assistant professor, whether at SF State or another institution). For promotion to Full Professor (c) publications that were generated after tenure and promotion (as an associate professor; whether at SF State or another institution).

2. Presentations. The RTP Committee may also consider presentations of research as evidence of a candidate's professional achievement and growth. The candidate should clearly articulate the impact of their participation in these activities. Presentation of an invited talk at a symposium or plenary session is highly valued as are invited seminars to other departments and presentations of research papers at scientific meetings. Poster presentations at scientific meetings count but hold less weight than oral presentations. Student-led presentations co-authored by the candidate hold less weight than candidate-led presentations but are still valued due to the effort that the mentor invests in helping to prepare such presentations.

3. Grant funding. The Department expects candidates to apply for extramural funding to support their scholarship. Because grant proposals for external funding 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. External grants from private foundations hold equal weight to those of state and federal agencies. Other external grants (such as student training, DEI, faculty development and equipment grants) hold equal weight to traditional research grants. The candidate should list of all their grant proposals (including pending and rejected). The RTP Committee also values funded intramural grants, although at a lower level than extramural grants. The candidate should articulate the impact of each grant on their research program. Candidates for Full Professor should have garnered at least one significant external grant (or equivalent form of excellent professional achievement) during their time as Assistant or Associate Professor.

4. Supervision of student research. The committee recognizes the importance of mentoring undergraduate and graduate students in research, even when it does not lead to a publication. All faculty are expected to mentor students in their own research labs. Candidates should provide separate lists of all students mentored in their own labs (which holds the most weight), co-advised with other faculty, and graduate student committees on which they have served (on campus and at other institutions). We value and expect an inclusive lab culture that empowers students with diverse backgrounds to become scientific ambassadors, practitioners, and/or scholars.

For all four areas considered above (Publications, Presentations, Grant funding, and Supervision) the RTP committee will determine if a candidate meets expectations. The expectations to be met for promotion to Full Professor will be to maintain a high level of excellence in professional achievement and growth (for all four areas above). If the candidate meets all of these expectations, outlined in the four areas above before the standard SFSU deadline we will consider an early promotion (to Associate or Full).

Evaluation of Contributions to Campus and Community

We expect all candidates to contribute to the department by serving on committees, advising students, and conducting 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. In general, the department expects service commitments to increase over time, with Associate Professors taking on more service than Assistant Professors. We also recognize the hidden service that some faculty perform, and highly value any service related to DEI (including DEI professional development). We recognize that some service is assigned, but we also encourage faculty to choose service opportunities that reflect their professional interests and expertise.

1. 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, student advising, special functions, department seminars/colloquia, etc.) and document these (e.g. with letters of support) as evidence. Leadership on committees or in the department receives additional consideration. All faculty are expected to serve the department on a consistent basis, independent of rank. We expect more department service from Associate Professors and less from Assistant Professors

2. Service to the university. The RTP Committee considers activities outside the department (i.e. college and/or university) 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. Assistant Professors are encouraged to serve the college and/or university, but it is not required for tenure or promotion. Associate Professors are expected to serve the college and/or university for promotion to Full.

3. Service outside of the university. The RTP Committee expects both Assistant and Associate Professors to pursue service outside of the university, in at least one of the two categories below (profession and/or community). Exemplary service to the profession and/or community can augment service in other areas (e.g. university).

3a. Service to the profession. The RTP Committee encourages all candidates to participate in professional organizations. We consider as evidence of this activities such as: election to offices in professional organization, honors and recognition by professional societies, participation on editorial boards, organization of conferences or symposia, and reviewing manuscripts and grant proposals.

3b. Service to the community. The RTP Committee considers 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. This includes outreach to K-12 schools or other educational institutions, particularly serving students from underrepresented backgrounds.