

COLLEGE OF SCIENCE PROMOTION AND TENURE POLICY

Unanimously approved by the Department Chairs of the College of Science, July 6, 2004.

Tenure and Promotions

Tenuring a professor at the University of Texas at Arlington represents a long-term commitment between the University and a faculty member. The commitment is two-sided with the University providing a “permanent” (under Board of Regents rules) position on one side and the faculty member providing his/her services to the University as an “enlightened employee” on the other side. Through tenure both the University and the faculty members enter into a series of responsibilities to each other. Before recommending faculty members for tenure, individuals and committee members should bear in mind two important considerations:

- 1) The decision to tenure a faculty member is a prediction, a prediction that the person given tenure will in every way live up to the standards for teaching and creative work that will occur in the future of the University, and a prediction that, even though many changes will occur, the person will be equal to them and will carry the University forward.
- 2) Tenure and promotion decisions should not be based on the standards of the past. If the University is to advance, the standards for tenure and promotion at all levels must also continually advance. The body of tenured faculty must face this responsibility directly by, for instance, carrying out a periodic review of standards. The tenure decisions of today affect the University for generations.
- 3) Departments are encouraged to establish a mentoring process for Assistant Professors to assist in their progress towards tenure. It is particularly recommended that each Assistant Professor be given an annual review and a comprehensive review of progress after three tenure earning years at UTA.

Annual Reviews for Assistant Professors will consist of an explicit written summary of the candidate’s progress towards promotion and tenure along with a recommendation by vote and the vote count of the tenured faculty of the unit for renewal, non-renewal, denial of tenure or promotion. The third-year review will be used as a major tool in determining whether the candidate should proceed to completion of the tenure process. Tenure track faculty members are strongly encouraged to take full advantage of mentoring, reviews, and workshops at departmental and College levels.

These are the minimum criteria for all departments in the College of Science. Additional requirements (but not lesser) may be imposed by individual departments and should be clearly communicated to the candidates.

Promotion to Associate Professor with Tenure and Tenure for an Associate Professor

The granting of tenure at the assistant professor level is no longer an option in the College. The granting of tenure to an incumbent* faculty member should involve the following considerations

of the faculty member's credentials as a minimum:

1) Teaching -- The candidate should demonstrate a clear-cut ability to teach at the University level, exhibiting standards that are considered within the professional range. In making an assessment of the teaching, peer and chairman evaluations should be made by visitations to the candidate's classroom. Student evaluation, through various instruments and letters, will also provide data to be used in this assessment. Other valid assessment techniques may also be involved in order that this important judgment be given its full measure of consideration. A judgment of professional competency in teaching is an absolute minimum for tenure consideration. To put this judgment in its simplest form, a candidate must be judged a professionally competent teacher in order to be considered for tenure.

2) Research and creative work – A clear-cut demonstration of nationally recognized, scholarly work (publications in quality refereed journals) and the potential for active and long-term scholarship in the candidate's discipline is also an expected minimum for tenure. Satisfying this requirement will usually include a demonstration of the candidate's ability to acquire the external support and resources needed to sustain a long term program of independent research. In making decisions on this matter letters regarding the importance of published work and the potential for future support and development must be sought from recognized scholars in the candidate's field. A minimum of three letters from scholars not academically associated with, nor suggested by, the candidate will be required, in addition to at least three letters from a list of reviewers nominated by the candidate. Normally, the department chairman will secure these letters and all letters received will become part of the candidate's dossier.

3) Departmental and University activities – The candidate must demonstrate the ability and willingness to contribute to the programs of the department and University and to interact with his/her colleagues in a positive manner.

The granting of tenure to an incoming person either as an associate professor or professor should have an equally careful examination of the candidate's credentials.

Promotion to Full Professor

A professorship is the highest academic rank in our University and should not be granted without careful study of the individual's record. The major difference to be demonstrated between an associate professor and professor candidate is the clear-cut attainment of recognized status in the community of scholars in his/her discipline from the national, and international point of view. A scholar not only speaks the language of the discipline but contributes in a creative way to the development of the discipline and by virtue of these contributions will come to be known in the community of scholars.

When such a person is considered for promotion, letters from the community of scholars which demonstrate his/her level of contribution and acceptance in the community should be solicited by the department chairman. In general, the solicitation of letters should not be from persons having academic ties to the candidate (candidate's major professor, former graduate school colleagues, former and present colleagues, etc.). A minimum of three letters from scholars not academically associated with, nor suggested by, the candidate will be required, in addition to at least three letters from a list of reviewers nominated by the candidate.

It is, of course, expected that a candidate for professor will have made, and will continue to make, significant contributions to the affairs and programs of the department as well as continue a high quality teaching program. However, these are normal expectations for all faculty members and are not the prime reasons for promotion. It is primarily through the products of his/her scholarship and/or creativity that a candidate should be judged.

See note under Promotion to Associate Professor regarding incoming professors.

Exceptional Cases

Occasionally an individual may gain an extraordinary status in the community of scholars through a spectacular and innovative teaching program, which may involve the creation of new teaching techniques, courses, texts, workbooks, or lab manuals. Such rare individuals may be promoted on this latter basis. Publication in quality refereed journals and appropriate external support will also be considered. Outside letters solicited by the department chairman would provide part of the basis for judgment of such cases.