

Promotion and Tenure Review Procedures

1. Timing

Faculty can apply for promotion and tenure within a time line determined by campus policies. For Assistant Professors the review is mandatory during the 6th year of continuous service in the tenure-earning position. Earlier reviews are possible but are often subject to special scrutiny by the College and Campus committees. Associate Professors may apply after serving at least five years at the rank of Associate Professor. Application for promotion to the rank of Full Professors is often done following the advice of the Chair, who may call for an internal review of the case. However, campus rules allow an Associate Professor to apply for promotion regardless of the Chair's advice.

2. Promotion and Tenure Committee

A Promotion and Tenure Committee is appointed by the department Chair (after consultation with the department's Executive Committee) for each faculty member who is to be reviewed for promotion that year. Each committee will consist of 3-5 faculty, all of whom are at or above the rank to which the candidate would be promoted, at least two of whom are relatively close to the candidate's areas of specialization. For candidates holding joint appointments in other units, at least one of the committee members will hold an appointment in that other unit. Each such committee may be asked to review more than one candidate.

The first phase of the process of reviewing a faculty member for potential promotion involves soliciting information about the candidate's scholarship, teaching, and service and about the impact and recognition of that candidate's contributions in the three areas. The first source here is the candidate's own report (the Tenure and Promotion packet).

Concurrent with the appointment of the Promotion and Tenure Committee, the Chair will solicit letters from external referees (see Appendix for a draft of the letter soliciting such reviews). The candidate will, in consultation with the Chair and other faculty, provide a list of potential referees and document their records. These referees must meet the criteria set by the university, and their names will be forwarded to the Dean for approval. The Chair will advise candidates that, although USF rules provide candidates the right to examine all letters of reference, the candidate also may explicitly waive the right to read the letters of reference. The department recommends that these rights be waived because the promise of confidentiality increases the reliability and validity of the letters. The candidate may choose to reject this advice and retain the right to read the letters. Either decision will be communicated to the outside referees.

The candidate, with the aid of the Coordinator of Academic Services and the Area Director, must prepare the application folder as required by University procedures. It is important for the candidate to devote special attention to the narrative sections that outline the nature of the candidate's scholarly contribution and the contributions made to

our instructional program.

All members of the Promotion and Tenure Committee are expected to review the candidate's application and all of the published work. Members of each committee are expected to become as familiar as possible with the details of the candidate's past work and with ongoing and contemplated research.

When the committee has reviewed the candidate's record of published work, of teaching competence, of service contribution, and of impact and recognition, it should consider whether the candidate meets the departmental standards for promotion and tenure as recorded in the Department's Policies and Procedures manual. If the answer is either yes, or no, the committee must prepare a report to that effect, including full documentation of the evidence in each of the categories which led to that conclusion. If the answer is no, then it is useful for the promotion committee to indicate in its report whether their judgment is a "*no, not yet, but probably in the near future the candidate will be promotable*", or whether it is "*no, not now and unless things change very dramatically the candidate will probably not be promoted in the future either.*" That decision, even if it is the less favorable, will not preclude future reviews by the same or other Promotion and Tenure Committees unless this is the faculty member's sixth year and a termination decision is needed. However, it will provide information and guidance to the Executive Committee and to future Promotion and Tenure Committees as well as to the candidate.

3. Chair

The department Chair will review the candidate's application, the outside letters, and the Promotion and Tenure Committee's report in making a recommendation regarding promotion and tenure. The Chair may consult the Executive Committee and Faculty regarding their opinions of the committee's review process and any specific issues that may arise as the applicant is reviewed by the faculty, the college, and the university. These consultations will be used by the Chair in preparing his, or her, recommendation regarding the candidate's promotion.

4. Faculty

Tenured faculty at or above the rank to which the candidate seeks promotion will review the candidate's application, the external letters, and the Promotion and Tenure Committee's report and recommendation. A meeting will be held at which those tenured faculty members have the opportunity to discuss the application materials. The votes of the faculty regarding promotion and tenure will be taken at a separate meeting or by mail ballot and will become part of the materials forward to the College.

Appendix

Sample Letter for Requesting External Evaluations

Requests for letters of reference from colleagues external to USF will be accompanied by a copy of the candidate's full vita and copies of representative reprints and preprints. They will also include a copy of the department's current Promotion and Tenure Criteria. Here is a sample of the kind of letter used to solicit these letters.

Dear _____:

Our _____ department is considering the promotion of our colleague, Assistant/Associate Professor _____ to the rank of Associate/Full Professor. The promotion process involves a series of procedures designed to assure full and fair consideration of each candidate. As a regular part of this promotion/review procedure we ask several prominent scholars who are knowledgeable in the relevant areas of scholarship to write letters evaluating the candidate's scholarly contribution. I am writing to ask you to evaluate the accomplishments of Assistant/Associate Professor X.

(This paragraph is for use only for _____ Assistant to Associate)

Our criteria require that faculty who are promoted to the rank of Associate Professor (which, for us, is coupled with tenure) will have established a record of excellence in their chosen area of scholarship and will show clear signs of becoming leaders in their area of research. We would appreciate your evaluation of the extent to which Professor _____ has satisfied these criteria. Please note that we have found such evaluative comments to be considerably more helpful than are direct comments on the promotability of the candidate. Given the tremendous variation in local mores, such comments as "In our institution this record may (or may not) have been sufficient..." tend to cloud the discussion.

In the hope that you will agree to do so, I am enclosing a curriculum vita as well as several of _____ 's publications. I have also included our department's Promotion and Tenure Criteria document. We would appreciate your frank and candid evaluation of this record. We are particularly interested in your assessment of the degree to which he/she is reaching a position of true leadership in his/her chosen field of endeavor. Your evaluation of _____ 's contribution and the impact he/she has had on his/her colleagues and of the creativity and originality displayed by his/her research would be invaluable. [???The Dean of our College requests that you provide, in addition to your own comments about this case, the names of two or three other authorities who might be consulted about it.]

If you can, please comment about _____ 's abilities as a teacher and a colleague.

We tend to give letters of recommendation considerable weight in evaluating our colleagues' records. These letters become part of the information base upon which the Promotion and Tenure Committee, the faculty, and later the department Chair make their decisions.

Sincerely,

Although the policies of the University of South Florida allow candidates to review the letters of reference, our department allows candidates to waive this right, and Prof. _____ has indeed done so. Only the committees and administrative officers directly responsible for the decision of concern here will have access to your letter [Alternative language: The policies of the University of South Florida allow candidates to review the letters of reference.]

We realize that you are busy and that we are burdening you with an additional chore, but I am sure you are aware of the importance of your letter to this department's deliberations and to Dr. _____'s future.

The _____ campus is on an "early" calendar. I would appreciate, therefore, if you could reply as soon as possible so that your letter can be available to the Promotion and Tenure Committee in August [accurate?].

Thank you in advance for your help.