Policy Statement on Retention, Promotion and Tenure

School of Computing
University of Utah

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1 Background

This document describes the policies and procedures used by the School of Computing relating to retention, promotion, and tenure of tenure track faculty during their probationary period at the University of Utah. It also covers policies and procedures relating to promotion of tenured faculty. University policy as defined in the Policies and Procedures Manual (P&PM) and the College of Engineering policy also apply.

2 Criteria for Retention, Promotion and Tenure

2.1 Areas

Faculty being considered for retention, promotion and/or tenure will be evaluated in the areas of research and scholarship, teaching, and service. A candidate's performance in each area will be assessed based upon the quality and impact, as well as the number, of accomplishments.

2.1.1 Research and Scholarship

Tenure or advancement in rank requires that the candidate contribute significantly and distinctly to the development and dissemination of new knowledge through research and publication of research results. The following will be considered in evaluating a candidate's research and scholarship according to accepted publishing patterns in the candidate's own research area:

- publication of original research papers in refereed technical journals and conference proceedings;

- the prestige of the journals and conferences and the quality, as well as number of publications will be considered;

- publication of research monographs, book chapters, and book reviews;

- presentations at conferences, workshops, colloquia or seminars. Keynote, plenary and invited talks will be noted;

- the ability to attract external funding sufficient to support an effective research program on a continuing basis; and

- patents issued and software licensed or otherwise distributed.

For tenure and promotion, external letters of evaluation from recognized authorities in the candidate's area will play a major role in helping assess the quality and impact of the candidate's research and scholarship, and his/her overall professional reputation.

2.1.2 Teaching

All regular faculty members are expected to be accomplished teachers at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Quality teaching requires depth of pertinent knowledge, ability to inspire student interest in the subject, logical organization and presentation of the material, and fair and appropriate assessment of student performance. High quality student thesis and dissertation advising is essential.

Classroom teaching effectiveness is documented through:

- peer and student evaluations;

- development of new courses, improvement of existing courses, and introduction of innovative teaching techniques;

- the variety and nature of courses taught;

- advising of undergraduate student projects;

- publication of textbooks or other teaching materials; and

- teaching awards.

Research-related teaching contributions are evaluated based upon:

- the quality and impact of research undertaken by the candidate's students;

- the number of graduate students advised;

- the quality and number of publications authored jointly by the candidate and student advisees; and

- evidence of student mentoring outside of formal thesis and dissertation advising roles.

Other evidence of teaching contributions to be considered include external funding for curriculum development, and general impact of the faculty member's work on educational issues.

2.1.3 Professional Service

Candidates for tenure or advancement in rank are expected to have contributed significantly to departmental, college and/or university affairs through involvement in faculty governance, committee service, and other assignments. Participation is also expected in professional service beyond the university, such as involvement in professional society activities, editorial boards, conference committees, advisory committees, and reviewing of proposals and publications. Community and government service activities will also be considered. In addition to the list of service assignments, the candidate's effectiveness, leadership and reliability in these roles is expected.

2.2 Evaluation Criteria

The School of Computing is committed to excellence in each of the areas of evaluation. Reviews should consider the sum of all contributions a candidate has made in teaching, research and service. To be recommended for promotion or tenure, a candidate should be an outstanding scholar, with substantial contributions in each of these areas.

Retention is recommended for a tenure-eligible faculty member when there is a reasonable probability that tenure will be granted at the end of the probationary period. A faculty member will be retained when s/he is performing well, is making substantial progress, or despite concerns, has a reasonable possibility of meeting the requirements for promotion and tenure. In order to be tenured or promoted, the candidate will need to address the concerns, deficiencies and suggestions for improvement noted in the informal and formal reviews. The candidate should discuss progress on these points with the School Director and the RPT Chair each year during the probationary period.

Promotion to Associate Professor requires an individual to have: demonstrated substantial achievement and impact in research and scholarship; demonstrated teaching effectiveness; and performed an appropriate amount of quality service both within the University and in the individual's professional community.

Promotion to Professor requires candidates to have made major creative contributions to their areas of research and to have had significant impact on their discipline as verified through their national and international reputations. Promotion to Professor should include evidence of a demonstrated ability to sustain contributions to the field and to the School of Computing. High quality teaching and service within the School of Computing and professional community are required.

Tenure is awarded only to individuals who have demonstrated substantial achievement and future promise. To be tenured, a candidate must have established a vigorous research program; be seen by external reviewers as a leading scholar among his/her peers; be an outstanding teacher; be a responsible faculty member whose conduct has a positive influence on students and colleagues, and demonstrate a high likelihood of sustaining contributions. While it is desirable for faculty members being tenured to have graduated a Ph.D. student, evaluation should focus on a demonstrated competence to mentor and supervise Ph.D. students

sufficient to indicate the candidate's ability to consistently produce Ph.D. graduates. The award of tenure carries an obligation of continued superior performance on the part of the candidate, for which the University in turn offers a stable environment in which to pursue excellence in teaching, research and service.

3 RPT Procedures

RPT reviews can be either formal or informal. At the level of the School of Computing, an informal review contains every aspect of a formal review except that external letters and SAC reports are not requested. The report of an informal review is placed in the permanent RPT file of the candidate and sent to the Dean of the College of Engineering.

Unless modified by officially designated credit for prior service elsewhere, the probationary period for those appointed at the rank of assistant professor is six years and is five years for those appointed at the ranks of associate professor or professor. All probationary faculty must receive a formal tenure review by the final year of their probationary period. In addition, all probationary faculty must receive a formal mid-probationary retention review in their third year of probationary service.

Additional formal retention reviews will be performed following a majority vote of the RPT Committee. Subject to the restrictions imposed by PPM, a candidate may request in writing an early formal promotion and tenure review based on extraordinary progress. An early formal promotion and tenure review must be supported by both the Director of the School and RPT Chair and a majority vote of the RPT Committee to proceed. The request or vote must occur prior to the deadline for formal review requests set by the College of Engineering (this date is customarily sometime in the spring semester preceding the academic year in which the formal review is to be conducted). If the request for promotion and tenure is more than one year earlier than the normal probationary period, it must also be approved by the dean and the senior vice president for academic affairs.

Formal promotion reviews for tenured Associate Professors will be done following a written request of the candidate, assuming that request is submitted prior to the deadline for formal review requests set by the College of Engineering.

All probationary faculty will be reviewed informally in each year they are not reviewed formally.

3.1 RPT File

It is the responsibility of each faculty member subject to either formal or informal review to ensure that his or her file contains the necessary, current, and complete documentation required for the review. As a minimum for both formal and informal reviews, this includes the material listed in the College of Engineering Instructions for RPT Submissions.

- The following materials should be compiled and furnished by the candidate for the RPT file (see the College instructions for details on content).

  Curriculum Vita (updated and complete)

  Research/Scholarship Data Formal cases will include a signed copy of the OSP funding report. A research statement describing the candidate's research vision and goals should be included.

  Service Data This should include information on participation and contributions to conference committees, school of computing, college and university committees, review panels, editorial duties, and other service roles accomplished.

  Publications Faculty undergoing formal review should include copies of selected publications representing their most important work.

- The following materials will be compiled and put into the RPT file by the School of Computing under the direction of the SoC Director:

  Teaching Data: This should include information from the past three years for retention cases, and information for the entire probationary period for tenure cases. **For promotion to Professor, teaching data since the previous promotion (or appointment if hired as Associate Professor) should be included. If that promotion or appointment was more than five years earlier, teaching data should be included for at least the most recent five years.**

  Peer Teaching Reviews: The RPT subcommittee assigned to the candidate will prepare peer teaching reviews for the file.

  SAC Reviews: For formal RPT files the SoC Director will inform the SACs (UGSAC (Undergraduate Student Advisory Committee) and GradSAC (Graduate Student Advisory Committee)) of their responsibility to produce a report for the review, the guidelines for that report, and the timetable for that report's completion. The SoC Director will ensure that the SAC reports, if produced according to the timetable, are included in the file.

  External Letters: External letters of evaluation will be included in formal reviews. The candidate will be asked to provide the names of four suggested reviewers. Letters will be requested by the Director of the School from all four of the candidate's suggestions. The RPT committee will provide names of four or five additional persons from whom letters will also be requested. The Director may request letters from additional external reviewers as well. The file will include a sheet that identifies who suggested each of the names of the external reviewers: the candidate, the RPT committee, or the Director. It should also contain brief biographical information on each letter writer, sufficient to provide an indication of the prominence of the letter writer. The names of the additional reviewers and the biographical information are not given to the candidate. The file for formal reviews must include a minimum of six substantive letters from evaluators

outside the University. At least three of these letters must come from individuals not suggested by the candidate.

In those cases where the candidate has waived his or her rights to access to these letters, reasonable efforts should be taken by the School of Computing to protect the identity of those solicited for letters as well as the contents of any response. See the University Policy and Procedures Manual, PPM 9-5.1 section D.9 for specifics on the form to waive or not waive the candidate's right to see the external letters of evaluation. A signed copy of this form is a required element of the RPT file.

Unsolicited Letters from Interested Parties: Parties interested in the RPT case (former students, colleagues, coworkers, etc.) may send unsolicited letters to be included in the candidate's RPT file. These letters are included in the open portion of the candidate's file.

All RPT Reports from Prior Years: Copies of each of the candidate's informal and formal RPT committee reports from prior years, along with candidate responses to those reports, if any. **For promotion to Professor, the file shall include the candidate's vita at the time of the previous promotion (or at appointment if hired as Associate Professor), and all reports and recommendations from tenured faculty reviews.**

Summary report of RPT Advisory Committee: The summary report lists members present at the review and is signed by all those committee members. The report summarizes the substance of the discussion at the RPT meeting and describes the findings and recommendations of the RPT Advisory Committee. For mid-probationary and informal reviews, the report should summarize comments from members of the RPT Advisory Committee concerning areas requiring improvement. If necessary, majority and minority summaries may appear in the report; however, the language of the report should not contain any references to other specific and identifiable RPT cases. If disagreements regarding the report cannot be resolved, dissenting members of the School RPT Advisory Committee will be allowed to add their own statements to the file. The original document is placed in the file and a copy is sent to the candidate.

School Director's Response: The response from the Director of the School must state objective reasons for the decision and should also be a stand-alone document that can be understood without reference to the candidate's file. Again, the candidate should be informed clearly of areas where performance needs improvement. The original document is placed in the file and a copy is sent to the candidate.

3.2 RPT Logistics

RPT actions proceed according to the following logistics:

- The School RPT Committee consists of all regular faculty in the School eligible to vote on RPT issues as specified in PPM.

- A school RPT chair is selected from the members of the School's RPT Committee by vote of the **regular** faculty. In accordance with Policies and Procedures, all **regular** faculty members at the rank of professor, associate professor, assistant professor, and instructor shall be entitled to vote. The RPT chair must be tenured and cannot be the Director of the School. The selection of the School's RPT Chair will be done early enough in the Spring semester prior to formal RPT actions in the following academic year so that subcommittees for formal reviews may be formed in time to perform Spring Semester peer teaching evaluations.

- The School RPT Chair forms a subcommittee for each candidate being reviewed. Subcommittees will consist of at least two faculty members for informal reviews and at least three faculty members for formal reviews. Subcommittee members must be members of the School's RPT Committee and eligible to vote on the case, as specified in this document and PPM 9-5.1 section A.3.a.

  For formal reviews, the responsibilities of the subcommittee are:

    – Nominate external evaluators for consideration by the full RPT Committee.

    – Conduct and report on peer teaching evaluations in both Spring and Fall semesters. All relevant peer teaching reports must be entered into the candidate's file at least one week in advance of the first meeting of the RPT Committee to consider the case, and should be made available to the candidate for potential **written** comment by the candidate.

    – Prepare a summary of the candidate's publications and other research and scholarship accomplishments, along with a qualitative assessment of the journals and conference proceedings in which the publications appeared. This summary should be produced in consultation with the candidate, entered into the candidate's file at least one week in advance of the first meeting of the RPT Committee to consider the case, and should be made available to the candidate for potential comment by the candidate.

  For informal reviews, the responsibilities of the subcommittee are the same as for formal reviews, except that no external letters of evaluation are involved.

- Voting in RPT meetings shall always be by open ballot. Absentee voting is permitted according to the University Policy and Procedures Manual PPM 9-5.1 section E.4.

- Remote attendance at RPT meetings will be allowed by phone, video conference, or other remote conferencing technology if there is a majority agreement from the RPT committee members physically present at the RPT meeting.

- A secretary of each meeting shall be designated by the chairperson of the department RPT advisory committee and shall take notes of the discussion to provide the basis for developing a summary. Within one week after completion of deliberations on a candidate, the secretary shall prepare a draft of the RPT Committee Report, which summarizes the substance of the discussion and provides the findings and recommendations of the department advisory committee. This report should be made available to the members of the RPT committee, after which there will be a five day review period in which the committee members can review the report and suggest changes.

- For formal reviews the RPT process proceeds according to the College of Engineering RPT calendar. Each year the College prepares a calendar listing deadline dates for formal RPT actions. The School RPT chair will schedule School RPT actions, including the School's fall RPT meeting during the time frame specified in the College calendar.

- For informal reviews, the School RPT chair should specify in advance a schedule that is patterned after the College of Engineering calendar for formal RPT actions, except that the latest date for final completion of the process should be the last day of classes in the Fall semester.