POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR AWARDING MERIT, TENURE, AND PROMOTION

Introduction

This document sets forth the policy and procedures for recognizing faculty achievement according to the distinctions of merit, tenure, and promotion. These are not separate and unrelated distinctions. Faculty who earn tenure and promotion do so by establishing a consistent annual record of meritorious achievement. It is in this sense that tenure and promotion are culminations of year-to-year productivity.

This document is designed to supplement university policies and procedures (Tenure, 7.29; Post-Tenure Review, 7.22; Academic Appointments and Titles, 7.2; Academic Promotion, 7.4) with clear and concise standards for the fields encompassed within the mass communication department. The department will also adhere to college policies that outline the procedures for tenure and promotion.

University policy stipulates that the evaluation categories for faculty are teaching, research/creative scholarship, and service. Accordingly, faculty performance for purposes of merit, tenure, and promotion will consist of a review of work in these three areas.

Teaching

Effective teaching is of central importance in evaluating faculty performance. The first requirement for merit, tenure, or promotion is a consistent record of quality teaching.

Intellectual, Scholarly, Research, Creative Activity

Faculty activity in this category enhances both teaching and the knowledge base in one's professional field. As such, candidates for merit, tenure, and promotion must present evidence of scholarly and/or creative activity that is externally peer reviewed per the department's definition of peer review.
The department’s definition of external peer review includes the following: “Formal peer-review within the Department of Mass Communication requires having both traditional and creative scholarship externally evaluated through refereed publications and refereed media production competitions. One’s scholarly work must be subjected to scrutiny by other scholars in the mass communication discipline through a formal process by external evaluators. In addition to receiving external validation in a refereed setting, there must be a chance that the external peer reviewed work has a chance of not being accepted.”

Service

Faculty are expected to contribute service to professional organizations and university, college, department, and program committees. Service to community, civic, or other organizations or agencies not related to the academic programs in the department is commendable but will be given little weight in evaluations or recommendations.

The following sections discuss the three areas in which candidates must demonstrate their abilities and the reviewing faculty committees and administrators will consider

Teaching: In addition to evaluating the faculty member’s self-description of teaching accomplishments, the following will be evaluated:

A. Regularly administered evaluations completed by students
B. Examination of course syllabi by senior faculty and departmental chair.
C. Documentation of teaching related accomplishments such as course development, external student recognitions for course projects, student successes beyond the classroom, etc.
D. Evidence that he/she is current in the discipline and in his/her areas of instruction. Evidence of currency can be provided via the following as appropriate to the individual’s area of emphasis
   ▪ a list of juried exhibitions, performances, publications, etc.
   ▪ invitations to perform, lead, direct, discuss, present, on teaching panels, forums, on-line contributions, etc. that address the major issues and directions of the discipline
   ▪ attendance at conferences, regular reading of professional journals, attending events related to the discipline, etc. may also indicate currency.
   ▪ Preparation of updated course materials
E. First-hand knowledge of teaching effectiveness may also be considered if provided by the chair or by faculty who teach students in subsequent upper level courses where the candidate had the same students in lower level preparatory courses. Student evaluations conducted at the conclusion of each semester will also be considered.
Scholarship/Research/Creative Endeavors: Documentation in this area must show a record of consistent contributions with consideration for the faculty member’s other assignments and responsibilities (workload). In addition to evaluating the faculty member’s self-description of scholarly/creative accomplishments, the following will be evaluated:

A. This category consists of scholarly research which achieves external validation through refereed publications such as:
   - articles in peer-reviewed journals
   - contributions to edited anthologies
   - book-length publications in fields relevant to the faculty member’s discipline.
B. Other externally peer reviewed achievements in fields relevant to the faculty member’s discipline also demonstrate validation, including but not limited to:
   - presentations at professional conferences
   - book reviews for academic journals
   - encyclopedia entries for edited scholarly reference works
   - for some disciplines, however, this category may include other forms of externally peer reviewed creative works and activities in fields relevant to the faculty member's discipline, including but not limited to
     - media productions
     - video editing
     - newswriting
     - tutorial design
     - voice over narration or other talent work
     - scriptwriting

Service: Contributions in this area should be balanced among department, college, university, profession and, if applicable, the community. In addition to evaluating the faculty member’s self-description of accomplishments, the following will be evaluated:

A. Active committee membership at the departmental, college and university levels is part of the minimum standard.
B. There should also be documentation of continuing contributions to the professional community.
C. Reviewing work for academic journals or presses (e.g., service on editorial review boards of journals and/or reviewing book manuscripts for publishers).
D. Exceptional contributions are expected for promotion to the upper ranks. This would include visible roles such as work on search committees, accreditation committees, Faculty Senate membership, College Council, university-level committees, etc. and offices in state or national professional organizations or service awards from those organizations.
E. Works communicated to fellow scholars, educators, and practitioners through publication or presentation in the academic or public community, where they enhance the public image of SFA by demonstrating the skill and professionalism of SFA experts. Thus, works may include but are not limited to:

- presentations,
- productions,
- exhibitions,
- workshops,
- selection for on-air broadcast or other forms of transmission, inclusion in CD, DVD, or online releases

F. Action research for programmatic development and pedagogical research for substantially new courses should also be considered within this category once the programs and courses have been validated by colleagues and administrators at the faculty member's institution.

**Standards for Tenure and Promotion**

Tenure is awarded to eligible faculty who have demonstrated, during the probationary appointment period, a potential to consistently make significant contributions in all of the evaluation categories: to produce research/creative accomplishments, teach effectively, and provide service to the academic and general communities. SFASU's tenure policy 7.29 is controlling and the department chair should ensure that each tenure track faculty member is familiar with this policy. The policies herein are designed to reflect circumstances in the fields encompassed within the program. Records of candidates will vary due to the range of disciplines within the department but they should demonstrate continuing contributions to effective teaching, service and scholarly/creative contributions and demonstrate development of recognized and respected specializations. In an effort to maintain high levels of fairness, equity and reason in reviewing faculty in the mass communication department, the following requirements and procedures shall be considered in conjunction with the promotion and tenure processes as set by the University.

The tenured faculty and department chair will make a positive recommendation for Tenure and/or promotion only under the following conditions:

**For Tenure:** For a candidate to be deemed acceptable, that person must have demonstrated via the previous listings, a superior record in teaching (at least A, B, C & D above), have a portfolio of at least 4 items completed during the probationary period from A & 4 items completed during the probationary period from B under the scholarship/research/creative section above and excellent contributions in the A & B sections under service.

**For promotion to Assistant Professor:** Completion of a terminal degree in mass communication and demonstrated capability to produce research/creative accomplishments, teach effectively, and provide service to the academic and general communities.
For promotion to Associate Professor: In addition to excellence in teaching, the candidate will achieve at least five instances of scholarly/creative events listed in B, including at least three articles or chapters, or a single book-length publication, as described above and demonstrating recognition in the area of specialty by peers beyond the department and campus. Service must include contributions matching A, B and C.

For promotion to Professor: In addition to teaching excellence in all categories (A, B, C, D & E), it is expected that those members of the program will have either 4 scholarship endeavors from A or a blended portfolio that includes at least 3 traditional forms of external refereed publications (A) as described in the previous paragraph, in addition to at least 4 instances of creative activities (B), with at least one consisting of a substantial contribution to completed text-based, audio, or video production selected for academic or public transmission, presentation, or release with a positive national reputation in the discipline. This must also adhere to the definition of peer reviewed as adopted by the department’s faculty.

STANDARDS FOR MERIT
DEPARTMENT OF MASS COMMUNICATION

I. Merit Procedures

A. A Department representative will be elected/appointed to oversee Merit procedures in the first faculty meeting of each Fall semester.
   a. Responsibilities include:
      i. Organizing the merit submission process
      ii. Reminding faculty of deadlines
      iii. Ensuring deadlines are met
      iv. Facilitating faculty peer evaluation of merit packets

B. Merit packets must be submitted to the department merit representative at least 2 full weeks before the end of the Fall semester (e.g. before Thanksgiving break)

C. Merit packets will be available for evaluation for a minimum of 2 full weeks (until the end of the Fall semester).

D. Merit consideration will be made conducted through peer review of packets comprised of the following:
   a. Faculty Activity Report (Digital Measures)
   b. ALL Student evaluations (Printed out in full) for the review period
   c. ALL Class syllabi for review period
   d. May include any specific assignment print-outs helpful in elucidating teaching technique or effectiveness. These print-outs should be limited in size to facilitate efficient review.

E. Evaluation of merit packets is based on the following assumptions: Peer evaluation will be conducted through a survey that will be available via a department computer. The
department computer will feature a link to the online Peer Review survey. This survey should be filled out for each faculty member up for review.

II. Merit Explanation

All full-time faculty members must submit an annual report in the Fall semester of each academic year. Faculty members are responsible for submitting the merit documents in a timely manner. Failure to submit an application for merit by the deadline will result in the faculty member being denied consideration for any merit rewards.

A faculty review panel composed of all eligible faculty who apply for merit shall review and rate submitted material, excluding their own. Each member of the review panel shall complete a rating form for each applicant.

The ratings of the faculty review panel will be submitted to the chair who will compute total points from the weighted averages of faculty ratings. The merit category in which the candidate received the highest score will be weighted by an extra ten percent in the final calculation. The candidates will then be ranked according to these total points. The chair will review both the Annual Reports and the rankings derived from the review panel. If the chair adjusts the ranking derived from faculty ratings, an explanation will be attached to the final report to the dean. Both the ranking and the summarized faculty ratings will be available for inspection by all merit eligible faculty.

Appeals of the final ranking must be made within seven days after the merit rankings are published. The first level of appeal will be to the faculty review panel, which will function as a committee of the whole with an elected chair. The appellant will indicate what merit rank is sought and may appear before the committee if he or she desires.

The appeals committee will submit a written report of the committee's decision on the appeal explaining the basis of the decision. If the committee's decision is unsatisfactory to the faculty member, he or she may appeal to the department chair with a written explanation of the basis of the appeal. Further steps in the appeal process are outlined in the University’s policies (7.6 Administrative Evaluation of Faculty Performance and Consideration for Merit Pay).

Merit is awarded by dividing the total merit points into the merit pool to determine the worth of a merit point. Each faculty member’s merit pay is determined by multiplying their individual merit point total by the merit point value. Only tenured and tenure-track faculty will be eligible for merit pay consideration.

Should there be a year where no merit money is available, the points will be figured into the next year when merit funds are available.

III. Merit Categories

A. Teaching
Faculty members applying for merit consideration are expected to show evidence of conscientious effort and success in teaching. Information to be considered when reviewing teaching includes evidence of well-organized, relevant and current subject matter; innovative projects or assignments; new course development and/or preparations; independent studies; student evaluations; teaching awards; professional development; student load; service on thesis/media project committees; and results from assessment of student learning outcomes. Merit packets MUST include evidence of standard objectives, but may also include evidence of other meritorious activities.

**Standard Objectives:**

All standard objectives must be met before the faculty members receive a satisfactory peer review or merit awards are considered.

- Develop and implement course syllabi that effectively address appropriate student learning and program outcomes.
- Teach established or assigned course load within the department.
- Utilize a variety of instructional and student assessment methods.
- Adhere to scheduled class meeting times and utilize instructional time effectively.
- Demonstrate knowledge in subject, including familiarity with current work in the field.
- Maintain appropriate office hours and be reasonably available for student conferences and counseling.
- Integrate technology into classroom instruction as appropriate.
- Submit grades, reports, etc., in a timely manner.
- Use fair and appropriate grading practices.
- Adhere to university/college/department timelines, policies, and procedures.
- Maintain appropriate professional demeanor in student interactions.

**Meritorious Objectives:**

The follow list includes objectives that deserve additional consideration for merit awards when evaluating faculty members’ teaching:

- Serve as chair of Master’s thesis committee.
- Serve as a member of Master’s thesis committee.
- Serve as a member of Doctoral dissertation committee.
- Supervise undergraduate independent study and/or research projects.
- Creative or innovative use of pedagogical resources and/or technology.
- Consistently challenge students with written assignments and provides appropriate feedback.
- Engage undergraduates in meaningful research as part of course requirements.
- Engage professional development aimed at improving teaching effectiveness.
- Develop new courses or incorporate instructional innovations in existing courses.
- Engage in grant or contract activity primarily related to teaching.
B. Scholarly/Performance Activities

It is recognized that professional advancement at Stephen F. Austin requires faculty to engage in research and/or other creative activities. Therefore, merit considerations will be influenced by the quantity and nature of work in this category. Relevant citations shall include at minimum the elements listed below under Standard Objectives. Additional content and activities may be considered. Examples of such activities are enumerated herein under Meritorious Objectives.

Unique incomplete/unpublished scholarly work may be submitted as “In Progress” for one review cycle only. Scholarly work may then be submitted in a following review cycle when published or otherwise completed. Special provisions may be made for longitudinal projects.

**Standard Objectives:**

At least two of the standard objectives must be met before the faculty members receive a satisfactory peer evaluation or merit awards are considered.

Non-tenure track faculty will not be evaluated on scholarship. Merit standards will be evaluated on a modified basis to account for the lack of this area.

- Document an ongoing scholarly research agenda with identifiable benchmarks and deliverables.
- Scholarship contributions must be in the field of Mass Communication in order to qualify for merit considerations.
- Provide evidence of professional activity appropriate to the faculty members’ professional role, including, but not limited to, one or more of the following:
  - Author an encyclopedia entry in a research publication.
  - Author or contribute to a textbook.
  - Present a scholarly paper at a regional meeting.
  - Participate in a scholarly meeting as discussant, chair, panel member, poster presenter, etc.
  - Provide professional service as article, manuscript, grant, or conference paper evaluator/reviewer.
  - Creative scholarship in which the faculty member plays a central production role.

**Meritorious Objectives:**

The follow list includes objectives that deserve additional consideration for merit awards when evaluating faculty members’ scholarly activity:

- Publish a book, book chapter, or peer-reviewed journal article.
- Serve as editor or peer-reviewed journal article.
- Participate in post-doctoral study related to the faculty member’s professional role.
- Present a scholarly paper at a national or an international scholarly meeting.
• Engage in grant or contract activity primarily related to scholarships.
• Present a research, creative scholarship, or teaching techniques and theory in a poster presentation.

C. Service

Faculty members are expected, beyond teaching and scholarship, to accept appointments for service on program, division, college and university committees. In addition, faculty contributions to the university's student recruitment and retention activities are recognized as service and are counted toward merit consideration.

In addition, faculty merit is earned by service to professional associations and organizations. Greatest weight will be placed upon service to the department. Specifically, meritorious service includes service to the department, college, university, or discipline. Activities are considered meritorious if they reflect positively on or otherwise benefit Stephen F. Austin State University.

Standard Objectives:

All standard objectives must be met before the faculty members receive a satisfactory peer evaluation or merit awards are considered.

• Chair or serve on a department, college, or university committee.
• Participate effectively in the activities of the department, college, and university

Meritorious Objectives:

The follow list includes objectives that deserve additional consideration for merit awards when evaluating faculty members’ service. NOTE: Activities for which the faculty member received a stipend or release time may not be considered as evidence of meritorious service.

• Provide effective student advising.
• Author a book review in an academic journal.
• Document efforts to provide student recruitment, retention, and mentoring.
  Engage in faculty-community collaboration for scholarly projects.
• Provide student organization sponsorship.
• Serve on advisory boards for groups appropriate to the faculty member’s professional role.
• Hold office in a professional association.
• Serve on a committee of a professional organization.
• Organize conferences, programs, or public events appropriate to the faculty member’s professional role.
• Deliver presentations to school or community groups appropriate to the faculty member’s professional role.
• Engage in grant or contract activity primarily related to service.

Merit Review Policy Revised 5/2014
T&P Policy Revised 10/2012
Revised 8/09
Original Adoption 11/9/04

Sources consulted: SFA Policy Manual
Tenure and Promotion Guidelines Department of Mass Communication Texas State University
Tenure and Promotion Guidelines Department of Mass Communication Sam Houston State University
AEJMC accreditation standards rubrics