

School of Environmental and Forest Sciences (SEFS)

Promotion and Tenure Guidelines

Developed by SEFS PMT Committee and presented to SEFS Faculty May 26, 2019

Introduction

The following provides advice and strategies to help junior faculty with promotion and tenure. This should be viewed as a living document, and should be updated annually, as expectations for tenure and promotions will change over time. The faculty of the School of Environmental and Forest Sciences (SEFS) work across diverse disciplines with different scholarly norms that recognize varying standards of distinction. Therefore, no single set of metrics is adequate to assess a faculty for promotion. Rather, the standards of performance for the purposes of promotion and tenure in SEFS need to be flexible, permitting all faculty members to meet the norms for achievement in their own discipline while demonstrating excellence in scholarship and professional distinction, and a commitment to meeting the educational, research, and service goals of our school. To this end, it is critical that junior faculty develop pre-tenure plans (see below) that prepare them to be assessed in terms of their own disciplinary standards for excellence.

Promotion to Associate Professor

Promotion to Associate Professor is normally coupled with the award of tenure. Faculty can choose to go up for promotion at any time but will be mandatorily reviewed in their 6th year for the work they fulfilled up to their 5th year at the University. The domains that are evaluated for promotion and tenure are research, teaching, and service. Within each domain there will be several metrics that are indicators of success. These metrics will measure the quality, productivity, and impact of the faculty's research, teaching, and service. In developing their pre-tenure plans, faculty should map their intended contributions in each domain and be cognizant that they will be evaluated in terms of quality, productivity, and impact. Following are some performance guidelines in each domain. It is critical that junior faculty, working with their mentor(s), determine the performance norms in their field and then strive to meet or exceed those norms when their application for promotion comes up for review.

Research

Candidates for Associate Professor should show evidence of emerging national recognition of their research. It is expected that the faculty will have established themselves as a credible research scholar with a national profile through the following:

- The development of a coherent and sustained research trajectory. External reviewers and UW internal faculty committees will be looking for a research program with clearly defined themes and a positive trajectory in research productivity and impact.
- Publication in peer-reviewed journals relevant to the candidate's areas of expertise. Peer-reviewed books, edited or co-edited volumes, and chapters in peer-reviewed books may also be considered scholarly publications if that is the norm for your discipline.
 - Number of publications is an important consideration but SEFS has no definitive publication target. Publications on which the candidate or their advisee is the lead/senior

author will strengthen the promotion case. As noted above, exhibiting an increase in scholarly output as your career progresses will strengthen your promotion portfolio. The Web of Science H-index is also commonly used to assess faculty publication records, but neither SEFS nor the College has recommended guidelines for an acceptable H-index. These benchmarks may vary considerably depending on one's field. It is critical that the candidate, working with their mentor(s) and examining the record of aspirational peers, understand the norms and expectations for their discipline and incorporate them into their pre-tenure plan. Some scholarly publications may have very broad impacts, as indicated by being highly cited or by internal and external peer evaluations and reviews. Both the quantity and quality of the research publications will be evaluated in the promotion process, with recognition of potential tradeoff between these two measures. Time required to set up a fully functioning laboratory or research group will be taken into account as this timing varies by discipline.

- Submission of grant applications for external funding to establish and pursue a research program. Junior faculty should actively seek funding for their research program. Outside funding may be challenging to obtain, especially given the current climate; therefore, it is critical that the faculty demonstrate a consistent track record of proposal submissions. Note, however, that having success in funding at least one nationally competitive proposal will significantly strengthen the case for promotion.

Teaching and mentoring

It is expected that faculty seeking promotion to Associate Professor be competent instructors and effective student mentors. The following items provide evidence for success in teaching and mentoring:

- Respectable scores on teaching evaluations.
 - An average evaluation of above 3 (out of 5) is generally considered as a good evaluation, with greater than 4 being very good.
- A strong evaluation of teaching by peer faculty members.
- Successful mentoring of MS and PhD students through completion of their degrees.
 - Whereas SEFS has no definitive graduation targets, it is generally expected that faculty will have graduated at least one or two graduate students before their mandatory promotion year and that have at least one PhD student working toward completion of their degree.

On the basis of student evaluations, peer reviews, awards, and participation in school and/or college or university activities related to teaching, the candidate must show clear effectiveness as a teacher in the classroom, in student advising, in mentoring of graduate students' work and supervision of independent studies or internships, and in other forms of instruction involving students. Candidates whose record reflects difficulty in teaching must also be able to document steps taken to correct these deficiencies, and their record should reflect, in the form of student evaluations, peer evaluations, and other means, that significant improvement has occurred.

Service

Junior faculty are not encouraged to devote substantial time and energy to academic service activities, but are expected to provide limited service on school committees, and, if asked to serve, limited service on campus committees or governing bodies. Junior faculty are encouraged

to engage in professional service (e.g., peer review of scientific papers and grant proposals) that will facilitate building a professional network. Engaging in professional service will also help to identify external faculty that may be good candidates for reviewing promotion packages.

Promotion to Professor

Candidates for promotion to Professor should have achieved national and international prominence as scholars. The criteria for promotion consider the realms of research, teaching and mentoring, and service and are similar to those for promotion to Associate Professor, but the faculty record needs to demonstrate substantial achievement in each of these areas and collectively make a good case for mature scholarship.

Research

Faculty who qualify for promotion to Professor must have an established research program with national and international impact. The research requirements for promotion for Professor are similar to those for promotion to Associate Professor, but the expectation is that the faculty will have a well-established research program. It is critical that the candidate - working with their mentor and the director, and examining the record of aspirational peers - understands the norms and expectations for their discipline for promotion to Professor. The following are guidelines for faculty seeking promotion to Professor:

- A publication rate that demonstrates good research productivity.
- An H-index and citation rate that demonstrates the impact and quality of their publications.
- Adequate external funding to support their research program while an Associate Professor. Faculty seeking promotion should demonstrate continued effort to submit proposals to maintain adequate funding. Success in being awarded competitive funding significantly strengthens the case for promotion.
- Evidence of national and international recognition for research in the form of reviews, citations, awards, external letters of assessment, invited talks/lectures, invitations to serve as high-level grant reviewers or panel members (e.g., from NSF, USDA, NIH, NASA), service on international scientific organizations (e.g., IUCN), and other distinctions can help demonstrate the candidate's level of recognition.

Instruction and Mentoring

Candidates for the rank of Professor should be able to demonstrate that they are effective classroom teachers as well as successful graduate student mentors. Evidence of success in teaching and service includes:

- Good scores on teaching evaluations.
 - An average evaluation of above 3 (out of 5) is generally considered as a good evaluation, with greater than 4 being very good.
- Positive evaluation of teaching by a peer faculty member.
- Successful mentoring of MS and PhD students through completion of their degrees. Faculty seeking promotion to Professor are expected to have graduated both MS and PhD students and should have a cohort of students at various stages toward their degrees.

Service

Successful candidates for promotion to Professor will demonstrate active participation in the life

of the school, the College, and the University by service on student, school, and/or college committees. They will show a record in school activities that goes beyond participation by documentation of their activities to improve life of the school, college, or university. Candidates for promotion to Professor are also advised to have maintained a strong professional service record, including service to journals in an editorial capacity, and should take leadership roles in professional organizations.

Service can play a larger role in the scholarship portfolio of faculty seeking promotion to the rank of Professor, provided the service can be demonstrated to have a scholarly component. Applying the results of one's research in the field or co-producing it with stakeholders, the community, or with industry are examples of scholarly service activities. Similarly, faculty engaging in K-12 education can be a scholarly service contribution provided the engagement is substantial. Some effort should be made to document the impact of this work, e.g., through testimonials, data on numbers of constituents reached and how, press accounts, awards or other recognitions. Faculty seeking promotion need to be careful, however, that service does not compromise their research and teaching productivity and quality.

Mentoring Candidates toward Promotion and Tenure

All tenure-track professors should have at least one, and preferably more than one, mentor. Working with the SEFS Director, junior faculty should identify and enlist faculty colleagues who can serve as a mentor. The purpose of the mentor is to give the candidate advice in the areas of research, teaching and graduate student mentoring, and service that is germane to achieving promotion and tenure according to school and University guidelines. It is important that the mentor be in the same field as the junior faculty such that they can advise on the general requirements for promotion in their discipline and outline what elements should be in successful promotion package.

Early in their first year, the tenure-track candidate should work with a mentor and the Director to develop a pre-tenure plan for achieving tenure according to their anticipated tenure review schedule. This schedule will take into account the procedures outlined by the College of the Environment and the guidelines discussed above. The plan, which is aspirational and thereby developed entirely for the benefit of the candidate, should provide both a sense of the level and forms of expected productivity, and the ways in which excellence (impact and quality) in performance will be assessed. The plan is to be understood as a "living document" in that it can be revised and reconsidered as necessary as the faculty member's program of scholarship develops. Faculty should meet with their mentor(s) regularly, no less than once a year, to update the pre-tenure plan and to assess progress against the plan. It is up to the junior faculty to make full use of their mentor(s) in developing their career portfolio.

Some Advice for Candidates Applying for Promotion and/or Tenure

Understand the criteria for P&T

- Review the College of Environment and University of Washington procedures, policies and requirements for promotion and tenure. Also recognize that the P&T guidelines and processes at the School, College, and the Provost Office may not perfectly align. For example, the College review may focus on the achievements since the last promotion but

the Provost Office requires full CV for promotion to Full Professor.

- Obtain promotion packages and CVs of recently promoted faculty in SEFS and of those who work in areas or modes of enquiry similar to your own as a means of identifying benchmarks.
- If you have a joint appointment, make sure a memorandum of understanding is crafted and signed at the beginning of your appointment. You may seek advice from colleagues who are or have been in a similar position. The MOU should clearly delineate the unit specific expectations, division of responsibilities, and procedures in the following areas: teaching duties, research, service, merit reviews, promotions and tenure, professional leave, research cost return, lab and office space, and the start-up package.

Establish a strong record of achievement

Promotion requires that you demonstrate that you are doing high-quality work in comparison to your peers, as judged by more senior professionals in your field. Combined, these elements demonstrate that you are making an impact. It is important that you show you are contributing to your field in important ways that are clearly visible and that you have established yourself as an effective instructor and mentor. The following are some suggestions to help you have a successful career in SEFS.

- Publish in outlets where your work influences others and becomes known to the field.
 - One way of strategizing article placement is to investigate the rankings of journals in your field. Most journals publish their impact factors but there may be other criteria in your field of study (e.g. the flagship journal of a particular society or professional field).
 - Consider the types of conferences typical for your field as well as the visibility and networking potential of these conferences.
 - Consider the more prestigious funding agencies/foundations in your field. Are certain grants expected in your discipline? What funding level is expected?
 - Consider scholarly awards for which you can apply or ask colleagues to nominate you for them. Many associations and their sub-sections have such awards.
 - Consider applying for career development awards, such as NSF CAREER awards.
 - Think carefully about the community of scholars to which you see your scholarship contributing as a means to determine how to accomplish the above steps. This community will also be a natural place to look for letter writers for your tenure application. Get help from your mentor(s) in identifying these individuals.
- Protect the time devoted to your scholarship/creative activities
 - Learn to say no and not feel guilty about it.
 - Seek advice/support from the Director and senior faculty for protecting your time, using time wisely, and learning what activities you should pursue and those you should avoid at this point in your career.
 - Make unbreakable appointments with yourself to write, research, do field work, etc.

- Network

Networking outside the university is especially important when you come up for tenure as you will be asked to suggest senior scholars in your field to act as referees of your scholarship.

These should be people with whom you do not have any close relationship, but it is advantageous if they are at least aware of you and your work. Networking helps them to know you, but also helps you know better who might be the most effective evaluators of your work.

- Attend conferences, get to know senior scholars. Participate in professional organizations, but think carefully about how to do this most productively. For example, by organizing conference panels you can both expand your CV and invite select people whom you'd like to meet.
- Offer to give seminars on your colleague's campuses; return the favor.

Networking within the university helps you develop relationships with faculty in other schools and units who can act as sounding boards, and sources of advice (work/life balance, dealing with administration, etc.). Your mentors should be able to help with intra-university networking ideas.

- Develop a plan for ongoing improvement in and documentation of your instructional effectiveness
 - The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) on the UW campus has tools and workshops that can help you develop your teaching effectiveness. Consider attending CTL teaching workshops.
 - You can ask senior colleagues for tips, and consider co-teaching courses with those who have outstanding instructional records. Co-teaching can then serve as peer evaluation of your teaching.
 - Recognize that time spent developing instructional *content* may not be as influential on standard measures of teaching effectiveness, as pedagogically valuable, or as interesting as spending time in developing instructional *strategies*. For example, concentrate energy on meeting learning goals in every lecture and course, rather than on being bound to cover specific material.
- Make use of all university policies and resources available to you that will help you succeed. Ask if you need resources, time, or help. The Director and your senior colleagues want to help you succeed. Make sure you communicate with your Director if you have any issues – at work or otherwise – that are affecting your progress toward promotion. Ask your mentor or senior colleagues for support to make sure policies are applied to your full advantage.
- Keep track of it all
Keep anything and everything that provides documentary evidence of your effectiveness in any area of your work (research, service, teaching) – even notes from students or external collaborators, or requests for reprints from colleagues. This portfolio is sometimes known as a 'tenure diary' and can include copies of your contract and records of conversations with the Director, the PMT committee, and your mentors regarding promotion and tenure expectations.