

Communication Studies Department
Personnel Policies Committee

Guidelines for Evaluating Communication Studies Faculty

Mission

“We provide learners with skills, a body of knowledge, and a system of inquiry related to communication studies. We mentor learners to become active and responsible communicators among their peers and the greater community.”

Evaluation Committee Guidelines for Definition of “Expected” Levels of Performance

The general outline for evaluation of faculty will be the five categories of the Board of Trustees’ Policies: Effectiveness in Teaching, Scholarly Ability, Effectiveness of University Service, Continuing Growth, and Mastery of Subject Matter. In general, faculty will be expected to meet consistently high levels of performance as years in the position increase. Early in their academic position faculty will be expected to attend mainly to their immediate task at hand in the areas of teaching (e.g. course and class preparation, advisement, etc.), research (including initiating a program of research and preparing materials for publication at meetings and in journals), and mastery. Those still working on a terminal degree bear the additional burden of completing their degree as determined by terms of hiring. Clearly in the final analysis it is the teaching and the scholarship potential evident at hiring that are expected to be actualized in early evaluations.

A five-point scale will be used to rate faculty members’ overall performance in the five areas. When using the rating scales, evaluators will consider the middle point of the scale to be “expected level of performance.” It must be noted that the expected level of performance is relative to the faculty member’s stage in her or his career in the Communication Studies Department.

There are four types of evaluation that will occur: Retention, Continuing Appointment, Promotion and Discretionary Salary Increase.

Retention.

New Faculty hired on term lines should expect to submit materials for evaluation one time during their first year, two times during their second year, and one time thereafter through their fifth year, on a schedule determined by the provost and the department. Because there is an extensive review of credentials and performance prior to hiring new faculty, it is expected that retention decisions during the first year will generally be formative. During the first year, the department expects to see evidence of progress and development, particularly in the areas of teaching, research, and, where appropriate, mastery of subject matter. In the case of faculty hired in Human Communication and Public Relations with all work for their Ph. Ds completed except for the dissertation, a specific time-frame for completion will be negotiated with the chair at the time of hiring usually not to exceed four years. Retention recommendations will be made only if the candidate has met the terms of that agreement. Expectations during the second – fifth years will be discussed below.

Continuing Appointment.

Continuing Appointment members of the faculty will conduct a continuing appointment review and evaluation during the sixth year of the faculty person’s career. In making tenure recommendations, continuing appointment faculty will consider performance during the entirety of the career. Evaluation decisions differ somewhat from retention decisions because the department is evaluating the faculty member’s overall contributions to the department and the college and whether those contributions complement the needs of the department and college. It is expected that faculty who are being reviewed for continuing appointment would have made considerable progress toward fulfilling the standards for associate professor.

Promotion.

Promotion decisions require meeting the expectations not only for a particular year of service, but also matching the expected standards for particular ranks (as outlined below). Although faculty will usually fulfill the standards for associate professor by the time of their tenure year, some of these faculty may never go beyond associate

professor status. Similarly, most full professors will never reach the ranks of the “distinguished” designation. The following descriptions are guidelines for the particular ranks.

Assistant Professor: In the case of Human Communication and Public Relations faculty, the candidate must possess a Ph.D. or equivalent, or have completed all degree work but dissertation. If the Ph.D. is not complete it will be completed according to the terms negotiated at the time of hiring. Some research and scholarly endeavors should be well under way early in the faculty member’s career.

Associate Professor: The candidate for Associate Professor should have demonstrable achievements beyond those expected of an Assistant Professor. The candidate, if in Human Communication or Public Relations possesses a Ph.D. or equivalent. In the case of candidates in Journalism and Broadcasting, significant and current professional experience as well as a Master’s degree in Journalism or Broadcasting is required. In addition to possessing the required degree, a candidate for Associate Professor should have achieved scholarly endeavors (e.g., publications and presentations), should have demonstrated a commitment to service (e.g., awards and evaluations), and should have demonstrated a commitment to service (e.g., participation on departmental and college-wide committees) that are considered excellent by peers and others. There should be evidence that suggests that the faculty member has developed a regional reputation and recognition; such evidence might include such materials as reprint requests, invited conferences and presentations, and positive feedback solicited from individuals outside the institution. Decisions to promote to Associate Professor will be based on review of materials since the previous promotion.

Full Professor: In addition to possessing the require degree, and, in the case of faculty members in Journalism and Broadcasting significant and current professional experience, candidates for Full Professor should have demonstrable achievements beyond those of the Associate Professor. The candidate for Full Professor should be considered outstanding in research, teaching, and service. There should be evidence of national recognition; such evidence might include reprint requests, invited conferences and presentations, and solicited feedback from individuals outside the institution. Decisions to promote to Full Professor will be based on a review of materials since the previous promotion.

Discretionary Salary Increases.

Faculty who have been at SUNY Oswego for at least one full year can submit materials for review for DSI decisions in those years when monies are available. Evaluation decisions regarding merit (discretionary salary increases) are somewhat different from those for tenure, retention, and promotion in that the decisions have to do with rewarding particularly meritorious performance during a specified time period under consideration. In making merit decisions the evaluating faculty members will be looking for performance at the expected level in all areas and above the “expected” levels in one or more of the five areas of the Board of Trustees criteria. Meritorious performance will be based on standards set by the profession and the needs of the profession. In some cases, previously agreed upon needs of the department and institution will be considered.

Faculty Committee Directly Involved in Review

The faculty committee directly involved in reviews for retention, tenure, promotion, and merit shall be the department’s Personnel Committee. The Personnel Committee, per department bylaws, is made up of three faculty and one alternate. The members and alternate will be elected according to procedures set forth in the Communication Studies Department bylaws; the department chair shall not be a member of the committee. Of the three faculty members, at least two must be tenured. In all deliberations affecting one of the three members of the committee or a relative of any of the members, the alternate will vote in the place of the regular member. In cases in which two members of the committee need to absent themselves for reasons of conflicts of interest, a second alternate will be elected by the department in advance of any deliberations. In all cases at least two-thirds of the committee shall be tenured faculty, and all candidates for retention, tenure, promotion, or DSI must be considered and voted on by three regular or alternate members of the committee.

Procedures for Deliberation

- I. Classroom visitations shall play a part in all decisions regarding retention, tenure, promotion, and DSI. All formal classroom visitations should include the approved departmental form. For purposes of classroom visitations, tenured Associate and Full Professors will be defined as senior faculty and tenured Assistant professors will be considered junior faculty.

Regarding classroom visitations:

A. For tenured faculty:

It is the responsibility of each individual faculty member to request visitation from a colleague of equal or greater tenure status and rank. The person asked to evaluate need not be a member of the Personnel Committee. The person asked must not be a relative. The person asked should not have evaluated the person in the immediate preceding evaluation period.

B. For non-tenured faculty:

It is the responsibility of the Personnel Committee to observe and evaluate a non-tenured faculty member. The observed faculty member will have no say in who does the evaluation. He/she may, however, invite additional faculty to evaluate but not in the place of the Personnel Committee member. Only tenured faculty will be asked to do official evaluations of non-tenured faculty.

II. At least ten days before the committee begins its deliberations about retention, tenure, DSI, or promotion, the committee shall notify in writing all department members of its schedule.

III. The committee shall deliberate, making use of all summary data included by the candidate in her/his credentials folder, which must include the required data on teaching effectiveness. All submitted materials concerning the candidates shall be maintained in a department file under the supervision of the department chairperson during the review period.

Retention and Continuing Appointment:

A. Each committee member (or alternate) will privately rate each candidate on a five-point scale for each of the five criteria. These individual ratings will be used as a basis for further discussion of the candidate. Individual members may make changes in ratings in light of the discussion.

B. All ratings will be collated; the committee will collectively review and discuss them, referencing the contents of each candidate's folder in the process.

C. A Yes-No secret ballot will be taken after all candidates have been discussed. A majority vote of committee members will be necessary to arrive at a decision on any candidate.

D. The Committee and the department chairperson shall meet to discuss their respective recommendations before the lists are forwarded. The meeting will enable the committee and the chairperson to discuss the relative strengths and areas to be strengthened of individuals under consideration, to define areas of agreement and to articulate differences. The Committee may vote to reconsider any candidate(s) at any time, provided a majority of the Committee agrees to do so.

Promotion:

A. Each committee member (or alternate) will privately rate each candidate on a five-point scale for each of the five criteria. These individual ratings will be used as a basis for further discussion of the candidate. Individual members may make changes in ratings in light of the discussion.

B. All ratings will be collated; the committee will collectively review and discuss them referencing the contents of each candidate's folder in the process.

C. A Yes-No secret ballot will be taken after all candidates have been discussed. A majority vote of committee members will be necessary to arrive at a decision on any candidate.

D. Each Committee member will priority rank all the candidates in the recommended promotion pool across professorial ranks, with "1" being the top priority rank. The committee members are encouraged to avoid tied ranks where clear distinctions can be made.

E. Individual rankings will then be collated and presented. The average of the rankings for each candidate will be used to establish priority-ranking lists both across and within professorial ranks.

F. The Committee and the department chairperson shall meet to discuss their respective recommendations before the lists are forwarded. The meeting will enable the committee and the chairperson to discuss the relative strengths and areas to be strengthened of individuals under consideration, to define areas of agreement and to articulate differences. The Committee may vote to reconsider any candidate(s) at any time, provided a majority of the Committee agrees to do so.

- IV. A final written justification shall include a summary of all material considered by the committee. The justification must be composed and read by all committee members unless said justification is for a committee member, in which case the letter will be composed and read by the alternate. The composed letter will then be signed by the committee chairperson, unless the candidate for merit is the chairperson or a relative. In that case, another regular member of the committee will sign the letter.
- V. After the committee completes its work and submits justifications to the department chairperson, the candidate will be notified in writing as to the recommendation. The candidate will see the justification sent forth and have the opportunity to respond. In the case of a negative recommendation, the candidate may request from the department chairperson a summary of the reasons for such denial or a meeting to discuss such with the department and committee chairpersons. The justification shall be made available to the candidate. After the justification has been made available to the candidate, there shall be at least ten (10) working days before the recommendation is forwarded to the next level. A candidate wishing to respond to the justification must respond to the committee within five (5) days. The candidate's response shall be attached to the report, as well as any committee comments on the candidate's response. These committee comments shall then be made available to the candidate.
- VI. The committee chairperson shall forward to the appropriate next level (to the subdivision committee in the cases of DSI and promotion or to the dean in the cases of retention and tenure) the recommendations of the Personnel Committee. Written justifications will be included. DSI and promotion rankings from the Personnel Committee and the chair should be published to all members of the department. Rankings will be published on a time-line that complies with faculty bylaws.

Mastery of Subject Matter

The faculty of the Department of Communication Studies affirms the statement contained in our bylaws regarding mastery of subject matter. Mastery of Subject Matter is inherent in the hiring process and therefore not heavily weighted in personnel decisions regarding DSI, promotion, and/or continuing appointment.

The policy follows:

Those individuals who teach exclusively in the Human Communication or Public Relations area must have for initial appointment (whether a one-year appointment or term) a Ph.D. in communication. Therefore, the Ph. D. is needed for tenure and for any promotion. In some circumstances an ABD will be considered for initial appointment with the caveat that for retention or continuing appointment (tenure) the Ph. D. must be completed within a specific time frame.

Those individuals who teach in the Broadcast/Mass Communication and Journalism areas must have a Masters Degree for initial appointment and current professional experience. The Masters degree and current professional experience is considered mastery of subject matter with regard to all promotion levels and continuing appointment.

Clear precedent has been established in this department with regard to the Masters degree in Broadcasting/Mass Communication faculty career paths.

Further, any faculty hired beginning September 1999 in the Broadcasting, Public Relations and Journalism areas must have a Masters Degree and professional experience.

Beyond those expectations mastery of subject matter may be documented by:

1. Honors, Awards
2. Distinguished reputation in subject matter field
3. Media interviews
4. Listing in honorary publications
5. Peer review responsibility for refereed publications
6. Consulting
7. Respondent/reviewer at national or regional conferences

Teaching Effectiveness

The Department of Communication studies faculty recognizes that teaching effectiveness is the most important criterion for all personnel decisions. It is the primary responsibility of all faculty and therefore is weighted heavily in all personnel decisions.

On the five-point scale used in personnel decisions, a “5” indicates consistently excellent performance in teaching. A “4” indicates very good teaching. A “3” indicates average performance and is the minimum expectation for all personnel decisions. Any faculty who is rated a “2” or a “1” will not meet minimum expectations and therefore will not be recommended for DSI, promotion, or continuing appointment regardless of rankings in the other Board of Trustees categories.

Specifically teaching effectiveness may include the following:

1. Regarding classroom evaluations and visitations, see “Department Bylaws” and guidelines in this document
2. Curriculum and course development
3. Advisement/Mentoring
4. Intern sponsorship, lab supervision, teaching, research assistantships
5. Independent Studies
6. Honors thesis advisement
7. Student awards or presentations as a direct result of an instructor’s class (e.g. Quest presentations)
8. Innovative classroom assignments
9. Ongoing development, updating
10. Student written testimonials, compiled by a third party
11. Workshops attended to improve teaching effectiveness
12. Teaching/advisement awards

Scholarship

The Department recognizes that scholarship can take many forms such as publishing a book or an article, exhibiting a work or creative project, conducting original research, seeking and receiving grant funding, and/or presenting at a conference. The hallmark of scholarship is that one’s endeavors have been adjudicated by recognized experts in the field and found to be a significant contribution to the existing body of knowledge and our understanding of the world. More specifically, evaluation of one’s work might come through qualified critical review, peer and colleague review, and success in juried or refereed exhibitions, contests, and journals.

No person can be considered exempt from the demand to carry out scholarship inasmuch as the quality of one’s mastery of subject matter, teaching ability, service, and continuing growth are all significantly enhanced by the process of research and creative activity. Furthermore, the level of expectation in this area of performance differs between junior and senior faculty, and among the ranks of Adjunct Faculty, Instructor, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor and Professor. At the higher ranks, sustained and increasingly mature levels of effort should be demonstrated over a period of years.

In approximate order of significance, the following items can be considered as scholarly and creative accomplishments:

Level 1

- * Published scholarly books, textbooks, and monographs.
Distinctions should be made among university, academic, commercial, and vanity presses.

Level 2

- * Articles, reviews, and proceedings published in refereed, scholarly venues.
Distinctions should be made among refereed national, regional, and state journals (traditional and electronic).

- * Grants submitted and funded.
Levels of funding should be documented.
Distinctions should be made among national regional, state, and local funding agencies.
- * Audio and video productions, if contracted or entered in competitive situations, and evaluated by credentialed third parties.
Distinctions should be made among university, academic, commercial, and vanity presses.

Level 3

- * Published scholarly book chapters, textbook ancillaries, and non-refereed proceedings.
Distinctions should be made among university, academic, commercial, and vanity presses.

Level 4

- * Papers and panels submitted and accepted for presentation.
Distinctions should be made between competitively and non-competitively selected presentations.
Distinctions should be made among national, regional, state, and local venues for presentations.

Level 5

- * Scholarly and creative projects submitted for publication/exhibition/presentation but still under review.
Distinctions should be made among national, regional, state, and local venues.
Distinctions should be made between competitively and non-competitively selected presentations.
- * Grants submitted but either not funded or still under review by funding agencies.
Levels of funding sought should be documented.
Distinctions should be made among national, regional, state, and local funding agencies.

Service

Documentation should distinguish among the following four types of service:

- * Professional Service – generally considered as contributions beyond the campus to academic disciplines and their organizations, as in, for example, officer positions in scholarly associations, organizing of conventions, and panels, and interests groups, chairing conference panels, maintaining scholarly listserves and newsletters, reviewing textbooks and so forth.
- * Department Service – generally considered as regular participation in standing and ad hoc departmental committees/assignments, organizing, sponsoring, and attending departmental events such as student recruitment drives, open houses, advisory board meetings, and so forth. Advisement of student organizations, unless the nature of the task is co-curricular and directly related to one's teaching specialties, in which case it should be documented under the category of Teaching.
- * University Service – generally considered as regular participation in standing and ad hoc university committees, non-refereed audio and video productions, organizing, sponsoring, and attending university events such as student recruitment drives, open houses, advisory board meetings, fund raisers, and so forth.
- * Community Service – generally considered as contributions to non-university groups and organizations whereby the use of one's professional expertise is the predominant qualifier and is reflected in the nature of the contributions. Examples include consultancies (paid and unpaid), school presentations, non-refereed public service audio and video productions, writing newsletters, pamphlets, and other informational materials, items published in non-refereed outlets, etc.

Continuing Growth

For the most part, the category of growth is marked by activities leading to increasing responsibilities, competencies and endeavors in the areas of Mastery of Subject Matter, Teaching, Scholarship and Service. Examples of growth can include the following:

- * Attendance at pertinent conventions, workshops, seminars, conferences, colloquia, to develop, enhance, or refine skills and abilities in areas such as teaching and learning methods, research, computers and/or technology, advisement, etc.
- * Attendance at pertinent institutes (generally more sustained in focus than workshops) to develop, enhance, or refine skills and abilities in areas such as teaching and learning methods, research, computers and/or technology, advisement, etc.
- * Preliminary research projects, grant proposals, or audio and video projects that are actively under way but not yet selected for presentation, or publication, or funding.

Note that evidence of growth over time as appropriate to one's rank, should also be documented in the categories of Mastery of Subject Matter, Teaching, Scholarship, and Service.

Accepted at Communications Studies Department retreat, June 17, 2004.