Notes from Promotion to Professor Workshop, Friday, June 28, 2024

The recording of the workshop is available at:

https://video.vt.edu/media/COE+Promotion+Workshop+for+Instructional+Faculty+%28April+21%2C+2023%29/1_bvy1i54h

A survey was created to gather feedback on the workshop. That survey will remain open through Monday, August 1, 2024. The survey is available at:

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=hGiVYK0Q-kCGPU8yweOjejQRGbbz0dJMcgkIqap8UmyhUN0g1ODdMQk5SN0xVODFURUlxMkxTOUdKNS4u

Links for Useful Promotion Resources:

Faculty Handbook (see Chapter 6 “Research Faculty”): https://faculty.vt.edu/academic-personnelacademic-policies-and-resources/faculty-handbook.html

University Guidelines for Promotion (include the dossier template): https://faculty.vt.edu/academic-personnel/promotion-and-tenure.html

COE College Guidelines for Promotion (see page 14 for Research Faculty expectations and Appendix D on starting on page 21 for additional guidance on dossiers): https://eng.vt.edu/faculty-staff-resources/promotion-and-tenure-resources-for-coe-faculty.html

Q&A:

Q: A couple of attendees asked about how to clarify career progress steps in the breakdown of accomplishments, particularly for cases in which tenure was granted after promotion to rank of Associate Professor.

A: In the Executive summary, the summary tables must either be divided into Before Associate and After Associate or Before Joining VT and After Joining VT. This is explicit in the latest University Guidelines. However the lists of accomplishments required in Sections IV and V allow for more nuanced presentation.

For example, consider a faculty member who attained the rank of Associate at a non-peer institute who is hired at VT as an Associate Professor without tenure. The faculty member then attains tenure as a stand-alone P&T action and then goes up for promotion to Professor a couple of years later. That presents three distinct career milestones: promotion to Associate at a different university; joining VT; and then tenure. The executive summary tables would split the accomplishment metrics into before and after joining VT totals. In the listing of accomplishments later in the dossier, the candidate could indicate each of the career milestones with sub-headers, so Section V.B.6. Papers in refereed journals might look like:

6. Papers in refereed journals (both print and electronic)
Since attaining tenure at Virginia Tech
1. Xxxxxxx
2. Xxxxxxx

Since joining Virginia Tech as an Associate Professor, but before attaining tenure
10. Xxxxxxx
24. Xxxxxxx

Prior to joining Virginia Tech, but after promotion to Associate at xxxxxx
25. Xxxxxxx
31. Xxxxxxx

Prior to promotion to Associate at xxxxxx
32. Xxxxxxx

Q: There is one year between when I submitted my tenure packet and when I received promotion to Assoc. Prof. with tenure. Do achievements in that one year that was not evaluated with my tenure packet count towards the achievements since last promotion?
A: There is never a clear dividing line between accomplishments before and after any career milestone and different reviewers will do this differently. Some will use the calendar year in which promotion occurred and say that anything that year and later has occurred since the last promotion (that will be everything since January of the year in which the last promotion was conferred). Others may use the academic year since that will coincide with the start of the 1st contract with the Associate Professor rank (August of the year in which the last promotion occurred). Over a typical Associate professor time frame, this difference of a few months won’t be that significant and the overall career total will still be unchanged in either case. I recommend asking your department if they have a specific preference. The college committee will tend to look closely at the timing of accomplishments in the list of contributions and other performance areas and will understand from that if a candidate’s trajectory of performance has remained strong.

Q: When counting graduate students for the Executive Summary table should graduate students in which you were just a committee member be counted?
A: No. The Executive Summary count just includes graduate students in which you were the primary advisor (committee chair) or a primary co-advisor.

Q: How should grant values in non-U.S. currencies be listed?
C. Sponsored Research and other grant awards

Note: Grants awards in euros, €, are presented in their original euro value with the converted U.S. dollar value presented in parentheses. An exchange rate of 1€ = 1.07145$ has been used.

External Awards

1. Xxxxxxxx €158,000 ($169,289) ...... Candidate’s portion: €79,000 ($84,645).

Q. There were some questions related to the data shown in the slides, particularly to understand when a career total is shown vs accomplishments that occurred only during the Associate Professor time frame or since joining VT.

A. The college collects career total data annually from promotion and tenure dossiers and tracks trends in metrics over time. A sample of that data is shown on slide 21 of the presentation. Candidates may be shown this data during discussions with their department head or department P&T committee.

For this workshop, I also separated Associate only totals, data on performance metrics that occurred only during time in rank as Associate Professor. This data is shown in slides 22 – 26 of the presentation.

Lastly, slide 27 shows some data for candidates who joined VT at the Associate rank. For this slide, the data is only for accomplishments that occurred since joining VT.

For slides 23, 24, 25, and 27, I also took the performance totals that occurred in rank or since joining VT and divided by time in rank or since joining VT to present the data as an average annual rate. This was done as an attempt to normalize data from candidates who have different time ranges.

For all data, it is important to understand that these are provided for benchmarking purposes only. Reviews take into account the overall record of a candidate and the quality of work. While comparison of a candidate’s quantitative accomplishments against past cases can be useful, it is just one way of looking at a candidate’s performance.
COE Workshop for Promotion to Professor

KEITH THOMPSON
ASSOCIATE DEAN FOR ACADEMIC (AND FACULTY) AFFAIRS

SUMMER 2024
JUNE 28, 2024

Notes about this workshop:

• *The workshop is being recorded* and will be posted later at: [https://eng.vt.edu/faculty-staff-resources/promotion-and-tenure-resources-for-coe-faculty.html](https://eng.vt.edu/faculty-staff-resources/promotion-and-tenure-resources-for-coe-faculty.html)  
  *(There is no need to turn on your camera. Please make sure your mute is on.)*

• *Place any questions in the chat.* I have some time set aside for Q&A at the end. I will also take all questions from the chat and create a document with answers to be posted later at the website above.

• *I welcome your feedback.* There will be a link to a feedback survey at the end of the workshop. This survey will remain open for one month after the recording of the session is posted for those who couldn’t make it today, but watch the recording later on.
What are my qualifications to give this presentation?

- Have been the COE Associate Dean for Academic Affairs for 4 years. One of my roles is to support promotion and tenure review at the college level.

- Each year I supervise the college-level review of 20-30 tenured or tenure-track promotion and tenure cases, 2-10 instructional faculty promotions, and 1-4 research faculty promotions:
  - I see every dossier that comes through for COE college-level review.
  - I work with the faculty who do these reviews and are familiar with their views.
  - I help compose the committee’s review letters that go into the dossiers and prepare the dossiers for submission to the University level of review.
  - I track data for the college committee.

- I oversee revisions of the college promotion and tenure guidelines.

- I liaise regularly with the university Faculty Affairs Office on promotion issues.

Topics of this Workshop:

1. Overview of the promotion review process and resources
2. Overview of the COE expectations for promotion to Professor
3. Data from past faculty promotions
4. Advice for putting together your dossier

This workshop does not cover tenure only reviews for faculty hired at the rank of Associate Professor or Professor. That was covered in a prior workshop which is posted at:

https://eng.vt.edu/faculty-staff-resources/promotion-and-tenure-resources-for-coe-faculty.html
The Promotion Process

Important Resources:

- Chapter 3 of the Faculty Handbook “Tenure-Track and Tenured Faculty”
  [Link](https://faculty.vt.edu/academic-personnel/academic-policies-and-resources/faculty-handbook.html)

- University Guidelines for Promotion
  [Link](https://faculty.vt.edu/academic-personnel/promotion-and-tenure.html)
  Website where dossier template is posted

- College Guidelines for Promotion
  [Link](https://eng.vt.edu/faculty-staff-resources/promotion-and-tenure-resources-for-coe-faculty.html)
  Website where this presentation will be posted

➤ Each department also maintains a document that describes their internal procedures for promotion and tenure review.
High-level requirements:

- The Faculty Handbook requires review at three levels: department, college, and university. Discussion and votes at each of these levels are confidential, but candidates will receive a notice when a case moves to the next level.
- External validation of candidates is also required. The university requires at least 4 letters. COE requires 5 letters. As a candidate, you will have an opportunity to suggest external reviewers.
- The university provides the template for the dossier. All dossiers must follow this template. Section D of the COE Guidelines provides additional dossier requirements that are compliant with the university template.
- There is no mandatory time for promotion to professor and currently there is no limit on the number of times a faculty can request promotion.

General steps in promotion review

- Submit Dossier of your accomplishments
- Department pre-review may occur
- Letter from Center/Institute Director (optional)
- External Review
- Department Committee Review
- Department Head Review
- College Committee Review
- Dean Review
- University Committee Review
- Provost/President
- Board of Visitors
- Conferral of New Rank

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dossiers generally due to Provost's Office by Feb. 1</td>
<td>Late January</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late January</td>
<td>February - March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March - April</td>
<td>June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July - August (start of next contract)</td>
<td>Changeover of Calendar Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer to Early Fall</td>
<td>Late Summer to Early Fall</td>
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<tr>
<td>Late Summer to Early Fall</td>
<td>Late Summer to Early Fall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late Summer to Early Fall</td>
<td>Mid- to Late Fall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late Fall</td>
<td>Late Fall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>January</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>~1 Year</td>
<td>~1 Year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What happens in these reviews?

External Review

- The Department and the Candidate will independently develop lists of possible reviewers. It is okay if there is overlap between the lists.
- From the combined list, any reviewers with Conflict of Interest (COI) will be eliminated. The university and college guidelines have rules defining COI.
- Five reviewers will be selected. At least three of these reviewers must be from the department’s independent developed list.
- A standard solicitation letter is used (see the COE Guidelines for the template, pages 28-29). Reviewers are asked to disqualify themselves if they have COI.
- If the department cannot get a review from someone, they will select another reviewer from the lists.
- All external review letters that are received must be included in the dossier.

What happens in these reviews?

Department-Level Review

- Prior to contacting external reviewers, most departments will conduct a pre-review to assess the readiness of a promotion request to move forward. Departments are trying to help candidates achieve a successful outcome by providing this feedback. Generally, the advice of the department on readiness should be accepted and followed.
- Department committee composition varies, but promotion to professor cases will generally be reviewed by tenured professors within the department. Most departments require a simple majority in favor (50% yes) to support promotion.
- The department head does an independent review and provides a positive or negative recommendation.
- Letters from the committee and the department head are generally the most detailed that get added to the dossier.
- If either the committee or the department head recommendations are positive, the case moves forward for college-level review.
College-Level Review

- The college committee consists of 25 voting members: 12 department heads, 12 faculty reps from each department (usually the dept committee chairs), and one additional rep selected by EFO. The committee is assisted by several associate deans. The Dean and the COE representative to the University Committee also sit in during discussion but do not participate in voting.

- Dossiers are made available to the committee in mid-December. The committee meets in person twice during the second week of January. Cases are introduced and discussed during the 1st meeting. At the end of the first meeting, a preliminary poll for each case is held. Additional discussion (as needed) for each case is held during the second meeting. The 2nd meeting ends with the final vote.

- Members cannot vote on cases from their own department, so typically 23 votes are cast for each case. A 2/3 majority in favor is required for a positive committee recommendation (16 out of 23 voting members must vote “yes”). Abstaining is not allowed.

College-Level Review (con’t)

- Discussions are thorough. Committee members will examine all aspects of a candidate’s performance. Cases that had any negative votes at the department level will generally be scrutinized heavily. The committee wants to understand candidates and the performance expectations for their departments as much as possible before making any judgements. Considerations are holistic.

- The Associate Deans help write the committee letters. Meanwhile the Dean makes an independent recommendation and writes a letter for every candidate.

- If either the college committee or the Dean recommendations are positive, the case moves forward for university-level review.
University-Level Review

- The University Committee consists of 17 voting members: each of the 8 college deans; a faculty rep from each of the 8 colleges, and 1 additional at-large faculty rep. The committee is chaired by the Provost who is non-voting.

- Three meetings are held:
  - The first is just among the faculty reps who discussion each case and decide which cases they have concerns about. These concerns are subsequently communicated to the deans.
  - The second meeting includes the deans and faculty reps. The deans present information addressing the concerns determined from the first meeting and full committee discussion is invited. A preliminary rating of each candidate occurs.
  - The last meeting provides an opportunity for any remaining comments on cases and then a final vote of each case occurs. Deans do not vote on cases from their own college and faculty reps do not vote on any case for which they previously voted at an earlier level of review. A simple majority of positive votes counts as a positive committee recommendation.

- The Provost makes an independent recommendation and communicates all recommendations to the President who then communicates final recommendations to the Board of Visitors for final approval.

Expectations for Promotion
Faculty Handbook Expectations:

- **Teaching:** “... evaluating candidates for promotion and/or tenure should give special consideration to teaching effectiveness: faculty members must demonstrate the ability to evaluate scholarship applicable to their field and effectively teach their discipline to students.” (2 peer evaluations must be included in the dossier)

- **Scholarship:** “Quality should be defined largely in terms of the work’s importance in the progress or redefinition of a field or discipline, the establishment of relationships among disciplines, the improvement of practitioner performance, or the creativity of the thought and methods behind it. ... Promotion to the rank of professor requires evidence of ongoing or renewed productivity and the realization of a candidate’s potential for greater impact nationally or internationally, including a description of how their scholarship has influenced their field.

- **Service:** “Candidates must demonstrate their contributions to the governance, development, and vitality of the university, their academic professions, and other relevant communities at the local, state, national, and/or international levels.”

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From the COE Promotion and Tenure Guidelines

- **General Expectations:** The primary responsibility of T/TT faculty is to maintain a strong research program, publishing scholarly work, advising graduate students, teaching, and service. Promotion and tenure of T/TT faculty is dependent on demonstrated ability to sustain funded research that can support graduate students and produce scholarship-worthy results. The quality of scholarship must be validated through peer-review and acceptance by high-quality venues of dissemination (journals, conferences, and/or other recognized means). Success in advising graduate students is evidenced through the history of graduating MS and PhD students and the accomplishments of those students. Tenured and tenure-track faculty must also demonstrate effective teaching, engagement in professional service, and engagement in university, college, or departmental service and/or university outreach.

- The candidate for **promotion to Professor (Full)** should demonstrate continued success in the aforementioned areas with leadership in their research field, noted impact from their research, and external recognition of their research accomplishments. The dossier should highlight accomplishments since the last promotion, particularly recent scholarship, research funding, and successful mentoring and graduation of PhD and MS students along with continuous improvement of teaching and leadership activities in their professional and internal service. Additionally, the accomplishments of the candidate must be validated by letters of external evaluation.
What does the committee look at?

**Trajectory:** Is the candidate continuing to secure funding, publish, recruit and graduate PhD students, and progress in their engagement with relevant professional societies? Is the candidate’s scholarship continuing to generate citations? The committee will examine recent trends in all these areas, not just overall accomplishments.

**National or International prominence:** The committee will look at the statements in the external reviews. They will also look for evidence in the citation count and h-index, the quality of the journals that the candidate is publishing in, leadership positions in their professional field, and awards that indicate external prominence. There may be other indicators, but these items are generally the ones that come up in discussion.

**Holistic achievement:** A candidate does not have to excel in every area, but they should not be weak or have gaps in any fundamental areas. Additionally, there should be one of two strengths among the areas of performance.

Others Notes:

- **Expectations are written broadly** – there is never a specific quantity of funding, papers, or any other performance metric stated. Demonstrated quality is more important than quantity.

- **Reviewers are making judgement calls** based on broad guidance in the expectations and the evidence they see in your dossier. Is the case presented in your dossier strong enough that it convinces enough reviewers to vote “yes” on your promotion?

Your odds for successful promotion increase as you move this way.
Data from Past Cases

Notes on the Data

- Only COE cases that were successful through all levels are included in the database.
- We have good data from 2017-18 to the present (7 promotion cycles with 60 cases).
- The overall success rate over that time was 55/60 = 92%. For comparison, the overall university success rate for promotion to professor over the same time was 230/247 = 93%.
- Promotion to Professor Cases tend to have several variations:
  - The most common case is a faculty member that was promoted to Associate at VT and their entire Associate record is at VT.
  - About 15% of cases are someone who achieved Associate rank elsewhere and then worked at VT for a few years before going up for their next promotion.
  - A smaller percentage of cases are someone who came into a T/TT role from a less common background and may have spent a longer time as an Associate Professor before requesting promotion.
**COE P&T Metric Data – Career Totals**

Every year COE produces a summary of metric data from successful promotion cases. This data represents career totals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Promotion to Professor</th>
<th>Median Values Each Year</th>
<th>Five-Year Summary: 2019-20 to 2023-24 (n=38)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2019-20 (n=9)</td>
<td>2020-21 (n=6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD Year</td>
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<td>Years in Academia</td>
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<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Years at Rank</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Journal Articles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Refereed Proceedings Papers</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPOT Rating (6 pt scale)</td>
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<td>5.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. Total Research Projects</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Ext. Research Funding (M)</td>
<td>5.33</td>
<td>12.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Personal Share (M)</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>4.90</td>
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<tr>
<td>PhD Completed</td>
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<tr>
<td>PhD in Process</td>
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<tr>
<td>MS Completed</td>
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<tr>
<td>MS in Process</td>
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<td>2</td>
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COE P&T Metric Data – Time in Associate Rank before Promotion

55 cases from 2017-18 to 2023-24.

Time in rank includes years elsewhere if a person was promoted to Associate before joining VT.

Median: 7 years
COE P&T Metric Data – Publication Record While in Associate Rank

- Median: 54 pubs
- Median: 8 pubs/yr

- Additionally, Google citation count and h-index will always be checked as an indicator of impact.

COE P&T Metric Data – Personal Share of External Funding While in Associate Rank

- Median: $2.01M
- Median: $308k/yr
COE P&T Metric Data – PhDs Graduated While in Associate Rank

Number of Candidates

PhDs Graduated While in Associate Rank

Number of Candidates

PhDs Graduated per Year

Median: 0.83/yr
Graduating a new PhD every 1.2 years

COE P&T Metric Data – PhDs Graduated While in Rank and Those in Progress at the Time of Promotion

Number of PhD Students

Candidates sorted by Lowest to Highest PhDs Graduated While Associate

PhDs Graduated
PhDs in Progress
Associate Professors with a record at VT and another institution:

Performance while at VT:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Median</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Publications per Year</td>
<td>3.5 – 27.3</td>
<td>12.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Publications</td>
<td>25 - 103</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Share per Year</td>
<td>$102k - $1,280</td>
<td>$369k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Personal Share</td>
<td>$0.31M - $3.84M</td>
<td>$1.66M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhDs Graduated per Year</td>
<td>0.20 – 2.33</td>
<td>0.67</td>
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<td>PhDs Graduated</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>PhD pipeline</td>
<td>1 - 11</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Candidate sorted by least to most time at VT before Promotion

Advice
General Advice

• Embrace feedback on your progress toward promotion whether that comes through a formal progress toward promotion review, a pre-review of your dossier, the annual FAR, or some other method.

• Promotion to professor relies on national or international prominence in your field, so you must invest regularly in networking and collaborations.

• Sometimes a faculty’s research area will become stale during their time as an Associate Professor which will impede research productivity and the ability to support graduate students. If this occurs, have discussions with your department head about options for branching into new areas.

Make your dossier organized and clear

• Reviewers get tired – they need to dossier to follow the correct formatting to make it easier for them to read.

• Follow the university template and the guidance given in Section D of the COE guidelines, particularly for the Executive Summary tables.

• Double-check presentation of information to make sure it is consistently presented throughout the dossier.

• Talk to someone from the P&T committee about the quality they expect in a dossier.

• Don’t leave your dossier to the last minute. Download the template and work on it periodically as you progress.
Dossiers (continued)

- For listed items (journal articles, proceedings, external grants, etc):
  - List in reverse chronological order (newest to oldest, for grants use the start date)
  - Number your list to make counting easier
  - Put in headers and/or a separator to divide the list into “after promotion to associate” and “before promotion to associate” or “after joining VT” and “before joining VT” – it can be useful to include subtotals with these breaks
  - Publications need an explanation of journal impact factors and/or conference selectivity.
  - Grants should clearly list whether you were PI, Co-PI, Co-I, etc. The total amount and personal share should also be provided for each grant. External grants are listed separately from internal grants.
  - Co-advising of PhD and MS students is usually indicated. Co-advised students still count as 1.

Q & A in the time we have left

How did I do?
Please complete the feedback survey:

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=hGIVYK0Q-kCGPU8ywe0jejQR6bbz0DjIMgkiqap8UmhyUMTFOTVIUDJKVVo5UTBMRVM3NuLMDFCUy4u