Guidelines for Mentoring Leading to Tenure

Department of Geosciences
East Tennessee State University
2013-2014

This document addresses the East Tennessee State University, Department of Geosciences (Department) guidelines for mentoring tenure-track faculty. For tenure-track positions, a candidate has a probationary appointment until tenure is granted. The Department uses five formal methods for mentoring such tenure-track Faculty and those pursuing higher rank:

1. Meeting during the first term to discuss the pursuit of tenure and promotion as well as the Departmental guidelines

The Departmental Tenure and Promotion Committee (TP Committee) will present an overview of the tenure and promotion process to the faculty within the first four weeks of their appointment. This will provide an opportunity for the TP Committee and the candidate to establish the ground rules for pursuing tenure and promotion.

2. Review of annual Faculty Activities Report (FAR)

The FAR provides annual feedback in the areas of teaching, research and service for faculty. Internally (within the Department), a candidate’s FAR will be reviewed first by members of the TP Committee and then by the Chair. The TP Committee will provide feedback directly to the chair and the candidate. The Chair, however, will prepare a summary that is in-turn provided to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

3. Review of annual Student Assessment of Instruction (SAI) reports

SAI’s are a standard metric for providing quantitative and qualitative data on the Candidate’s effectiveness in teaching. Student opinions about a range of indicators of teaching effectiveness are solicited. As with the FAR, internally a candidate’s SAI will be reviewed first by members of the TP Committee and then by the Chair each year. The TP Committee will provide feedback directly to the chair and the candidate.

4. Peer-review of teaching

Peer-reviews will be conducted at least once a year while the candidate is in probation, allowing faculty to provide constructive feedback about teaching effectiveness. Candidates are responsible for requesting peer-reviews from fellow tenured-faculty at ETSU.

5. Internal review of candidate’s performance during the third year

The TP Committee will conduct an internal review of the candidate during the third year of the probationary period, to provide further guidance to the candidate with respect to progress toward tenure and promotion. For this step, the candidate submits a document patterned on a normal tenure folder. After the document is read by the TP Committee and the Chair of the Department, a written report is sent to the candidate and to the Chair. This report is to be followed by a meeting of the TP Committee and the candidate (Q&A) within two weeks of its completion.

April 2015
Departmental Criteria for Academic Tenure

Department of Geosciences
East Tennessee State University

This document outlines the process by which tenured members of the Department of Geosciences evaluate tenure-track candidates for academic tenure. It is intended to provide guidelines for the pursuit of tenure, and to present the metric used by the Department to evaluate applications. The Department recommends candidates work diligently to fulfill the requirements of their contract and to meet the Department’s requirements for contributions to the three principal areas for which they are evaluated—teaching, research, and service. Statements about the meaning of academic tenure, an overview of the tenure process and a detailed discussion of teaching, research and service requirements are provided below.

What is Academic Tenure?
From the ETSU Faculty Handbook, Section 2.0 on Employment, Policy on Tenure:

Tenure is a personnel status in an academic department or other academic program unit pursuant to which the academic or fiscal year appointments of full-time faculty who have been awarded tenure are continued at a university until the expiration or relinquishment of that status, subject to termination for adequate cause, for financial exigency, or for curricular reasons. The awarding of tenure is recognition of the merit of a faculty member and of the assumption that he/she would meet the long-term staffing needs of the department or other academic program unit and the university. Tenure is awarded only to those members of the faculty who have exhibited professional excellence and outstanding abilities sufficient to demonstrate that their future services and performances justify the degree of permanence afforded by academic tenure.

Overview
Evaluation for tenure will be in the principal areas of teaching, research, and service. For evaluation purposes, the relative importance of these three activities are taken in the order of teaching > research > service. While individual circumstances and specific requirements may vary, approximately 60% teaching, 30% research and 10% service is the norm for departments in the College of Arts and Sciences at ETSU. It is clear that these areas are not entirely separable. Teaching, for example, often includes discussing the importance and limitations of research in the various fields of Geosciences. Faculty-guided research at the undergraduate level involves instruction in principles specific to the programs in the Department and research techniques. The Department considers that research is one of the best forms of instruction available, so it is important that candidates for tenure demonstrate effective teaching and produce quality research. While candidates have great discretion in the type of service in which they engage, at times specific requests or assignments may be made by the Departmental Chair.

Candidates for tenure must supply documentation supporting their levels of accomplishment in all areas of teaching, research, and service from throughout the probationary period. In teaching, this would include high scores on student and peer evaluations, development of new teaching methods and or materials, publications in education journals or other presentations in venues aimed at education. In research, this would include a number of papers published in peer
reviewed journals, government and industry whitepapers, books, book chapters, conference presentations, and grant proposals. In service, this would include involvement in service to the Department, College, University, Discipline and Community. In summary, the Department is looking for a continuing program of accomplishments in the three principal areas.

**Teaching**

The candidate is required to submit an application demonstrating that he/she is an effective teacher. Effectiveness must be documented using standard metrics common in academia, and ETSU; specifically Student Assessment of Instruction (SAI). ETSU also requires annual peer review of instructors by faculty. In this case, tenured faculty from ETSU attend the candidate’s lectures, and written evaluations are provided to the candidate and Chair of the Department. All evaluations should be included in the third-year review and tenure application. Those performing the peer reviews should focus on classroom presentation style, communication skills, teaching methodology and student-faculty interaction.

**Research**

The Department can provide release time typically in the area of teaching and/or service the first year for new faculty, so expectations of demonstrated productive research are high.

Faculty seeking tenure must have publications in nationally and internationally recognized peer-reviewed journals. Dependent on content and format for development, government whitepapers can be of value. The Department further recognizes that research in pedagogy is important, so articles in educational journals are encouraged, though they may be considered under “Teaching”. While the Department does not attempt to quantify the value of publications in different journals, it does expect faculty to publish in journals germane to their discipline. Differences between theoretical, experimental, and applied research should be considered carefully. In summary, the Department is looking for evidence that the candidate has built a program of successful research that shows promise of continued success.

In addition, the Department places an emphasis on the need to seek external funding to support the candidate’s research and that of undergraduate and graduate students. The Department looks favorably upon candidates developing creative ways to fund research, such as cost-leveraging with government agencies or public-private entities. Candidates are also strongly encouraged to pursue internal funding available at ETSU, although this should not be the sole source of funding throughout the probationary period.

**Service**

The Department encourages service in the categories of:

- **Department:** includes service on Departmental committees, academic committees, administrative duties, recruiting efforts, interacting with students and participating in field trips.
- **College:** serving on and participating in College level committees and functions, developing and exploring collaborative teaching and research opportunities across departments.
- **University:** serving on and participating in campus-wide committees and functions, and exploring and developing multidisciplinary research and teaching opportunities.
• Discipline: includes reviewing grant proposals and papers for peer-reviewed journals, convening or otherwise participating in panel discussions, workshops, conferences, field camps, etc., giving lectures to similar academic departments at different universities.
• Community: interviews with news media, public speaking engagements outside mainstream academic settings— in civic club meetings, schools, etc.
• The advisement of undergraduate and graduate students is also within this category.

Additional Criteria

Here we discuss criteria used to evaluate tenure that do not fit in categories of research, teaching and service. The Department reserves the right to augment its guidelines with those of the ETSU Faculty Handbook, Section 2.0 Employment, Policy on Academic Tenure. The committee may choose to consider candidate’s professional degrees, awards, certifications, and achievements during their tenure-track period. It may also consider staffing needs and their contribution to the objectives of the Department, the College of Arts and Science and ETSU. Additionally, it will weigh the potential for continuing professional growth and the candidate’s demonstrated willingness and ability to work effectively with colleagues to support the mission of the Department, the College of Arts and Sciences and ETSU.

For further information, see: http://www.etsu.edu/senate/facultyhandbook/section2.aspx#facPromotion