

PROMOTION TO THE RANK OF FULL PROFESSOR
IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY
A GUIDE FOR REGULAR TITLE ASSOCIATE PROFESSORS

This document is intended to provide information about the general expectations for promotion to full professor (regular title series) with tenure in the Department of Communication at the University of Kentucky. It was written with input from tenured and untenured faculty in the Department of Communication and College of Communication and Information and approved by faculty vote on April 11, 2012. It was then approved by Dean of the College. The document was revised to update teaching and research expectations and approved by the faculty on December 5, 2018. The intended audience is associate professors, area committee members, external evaluators, and University of Kentucky administrators involved in the promotion process. Promotion to the rank of full professor is of the utmost importance to both the university and the candidate. The promotion of a candidate should improve the overall scholarly quality and standing of the department and college. The cumulative effect of good promotion decisions is to strengthen institutional performance and reputation.

It is no exaggeration to say that the quality of a university's faculty is directly tied to the rigor and fairness of its promotion process. The standards for promotion to full professor are neither abstract nor defined with precision. They are continually re-created and reaffirmed in every decision. However, it is expected that, in accordance with AR II-1.0-1, Part V-B 7/1/08

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Appointment, reappointment, or promotion to full professor shall be made only after a candidate has met the criteria for associate professor and has demonstrated high scholarly achievements commensurate with his or her assignment in areas of: (1) teaching, advising, and other instructional activities; (2) research or other creative activity; (3)

professional, university and public service. Particularly, such an appointment implies that, in the opinion of colleagues, the candidate's scholarship is excellent and, in addition, she or he has earned a high level of professional recognition. Where appropriate, this recognition should be on a national or international level in the field of assignment. It is further emphasized that this rank is in recognition of attainment rather than length of service.

We offer the following guidelines on research, teaching, and service in an attempt to enhance and promote consistency in the promotion process.

RESEARCH

The University of Kentucky is a research university with high research activity (Carnegie classification RU/VH). The Administrative Regulations (AR II 1.0-1 V-B) emphasize the importance of a "balance of intellectual attainment" across research, teaching, and service (i.e., individuals should be excellent in each respect). Further, a faculty member's research should inform both their teaching and service, while teaching and service may expose the faculty members to problems that should be systematically examined in their research endeavors. Ultimately, it is the ability to conduct high-quality research in nearly every scholarly discipline that truly distinguishes a research university from other institutions of higher education.

What counts for promotion to full professor, above all else, is demonstrated scholarly productivity and quality. A general expectation is that candidates for the rank of full professor evidence a national and international reputation through programmatic research that exceeds those criteria expected of an associate professor, aiming for an average of two research publications per year. A record since the time of receiving promotion to associate professor with tenure that indicates substantial, significant, and continued growth, development, and accomplishment in research is expected.

Given the considerable variety of communication research and applicable research methods, it is not possible to identify a single standard for quantity or rate of publication that

would apply appropriately to all candidates. There are a number of factors that interact in complex ways to signify research excellence. However, the following criteria are meant to serve as guidelines for making an informed judgment of research productivity and performance. These guidelines reflect the consensus of the Department of Communication regarding the general research expectations of regular title associate professors' promotion to the rank of full professor. The department recognizes and affirms that the unique characteristics of an individual's research agenda may necessitate a different and equally appropriate pattern of publication. It is incumbent upon the candidate and his or her unit to make a compelling case for the strength of the research and publication record in all cases, but particularly in those that deviate from the standards outlined in this document.

Programmatic Research

A research program is a series of projects centered around a core of research questions. Ideally, these questions ought to be ones that the candidate's field recognizes as vital and problematic. This series of projects should result in an accompanying series of publications, beyond those achieved at the rank of assistant professor. In a very real sense, a research program is demonstrated through one's repertoire of publications. In this regard, a research program is essential. Unless publications appear to be logically linked in terms of theme and purpose, the conclusion could be reached that a research program is weak or not focused.

It is certainly time-efficient to have a primary research focus because it is easier to stay current with developments in the scholarly literature, relevant technology, research space etc. On the other hand, it might be desirable to develop more than one research program. The need to accommodate more than one set of interests often accounts for starting and maintaining parallel lines of work. It is not uncommon for an individual's focus to shift somewhat post-tenure. In

such a case, a coherent body of work is still expected. The candidate must be able to articulate and justify the coherent nature of his or her bodies of research.

Quality

Research quality is notoriously difficult to define. Evaluation of a candidate's research rests primarily on consideration of the contribution of the work. Quality might be assessed by direct examination of the work in regard to (a) how compelling the questions are that motivated the research (the potential gain to the field), (b) how well the study is designed, (c) how competently the study was conducted, (d) how productively the author is able to link the study's outcomes to practical or theoretical concerns, and (e) how well the author has articulated all of the above. Some potential indicators of quality and impact might include, but are not limited to the following: (a) recognition from outside sources as reflected in grant or donor financial support, (b) prestige of publication outlets which might include journal impact factors and rejection rates, (c) citation counts, (d) H-indices, (e) awards for scholarship and scholarly achievements, (f) types of research published (original research, research in brief, books, or book reviews), (g) competitive external fellowships, (h) funded grant proposals, (i) keynote addresses or other prestigious invited presentations, (j) participation in leadership roles for key journals or associations within the discipline (e.g., editor of a top journal or leadership role in NCA or ICA).

Trajectory

Trajectory refers to the growth (or decline) of research. A desirable trajectory is one that shows a steady production of published work. Perhaps the clearest trajectory is one that displays a steady rate of publication. Consistent production is a visible earmark of an accomplished, self-motivated scholar. However, it is recognized that variations in rate of productivity may occur

over one's career and wax and wane with funding or data collection cycles. Various models of research productivity are possible, and no one model is de-facto inherently better than others.

Authorship Credit

Authorship credit is significant in assessing a faculty member's contribution to a publication. It indicates which author had primary responsibility for the article, and which authors had more secondary roles. Sole authored work carries significant weight, as does first authorship in multi-authored pieces. Sole authorship signals the author did nearly all of the work and is completely responsible for what appears in print. Tied with sole authorship is first authorship on significant, multi-authored pieces. Indeed, in today's climate of inter- and transdisciplinary research, especially given the challenges inherent with gaining funding for one's research, team approaches are often invariably required if individuals wish to acquire financial support for their work. Significant team research efforts may also evidence quality programmatic productivity. When the candidate is generally a trailing member of the research team, *in the absence of a body of work wherein a more prominent role is illustrated*, a strong record is not necessarily indicated.

Co-authors who wish to signal unambiguously that equal credit should be given to all authors, regardless of order of appearance, must make sure that such a statement is printed, usually in the author's note on the first page of the article or in the forward of a scholarly book. Editor roles follow the same ranking guidelines as author roles.

Sometimes individuals facilitate mentoring by allowing graduate students or junior faculty to be first author, and consideration is given to such factors. However, faculty members must also continue to demonstrate their lead in their own programmatic research.

Publishing Venues

The venue within which one's work is published is extraordinarily important and directly related to the quality issue noted earlier. At time of promotion, reviewers will be cued to the importance of a body of work by where it is placed. Several factors interact in determining the quality of a publication outlet, including venue type, review category, book type, journal type, and journal rank.

Venue types can include scholarly books, journal articles, book chapters, edited scholarly books, and conference proceedings. The collection of journal articles and scholarly books are generally given priority, after which come book chapters, edited scholarly books and, finally, conference proceedings.

These rankings must be qualified, however, by the other factors. The most important factor is the review category. A refereed (i.e., blind peer-reviewed) manuscript is ranked much more highly than a non-refereed manuscript. So, for example, a refereed book chapter in a competitive publication such as *Communication Yearbook* would "count more" than a non-refereed article in a journal. An invited piece, typically reviewed by an editor, falls somewhere in between; of course, this ranking would be moderated by the prestige of the venue to which the candidate is invited to contribute (e.g., a major handbook). It is incumbent upon the candidate to stipulate clearly which publications are refereed, especially in cases where evaluators may assume they are not (e.g., book chapters).

In terms of type of book, scholarly books are most highly evaluated, followed by edited scholarly books. Textbooks do not count toward promotion in the category of research because they do not usually constitute original contributions to our knowledge of communication, and therefore textbooks are considered to fall within the purview of teaching. However, it is

important to note that many scholarly books that do make original contributions are also adopted for instructional use.

In terms of type of journal, national or international disciplinary journals are most highly evaluated (e.g., *Journal of Communication*, *Human Communication Research*; see the Department of Communication's list of "Wethington Award" journals for those that have been designated as "top tier"). Regional journals follow because, despite their national distribution, their affiliation with regional associations and the fact that most of the members of the editorial boards of these journals are from institutions in those regions reinforces their sub-national status. In addition, most regional journals and the like are not listed in ISI, and thus information on impact rating and other such criteria are not available. Specialty journals serve a more restricted interest, disseminating research and theory relevant to a special interest within the communication field. Although they usually will not have as large a circulation as the disciplinary journals, if they are related to a faculty member's research focus and have good reputations or rankings within that specialty or in other related specialties (e.g., *Health Communication*, *Journal of Health Communication* are often cited by researchers in Public Health and other health-related professions), they can be evaluated as highly as national and international disciplinary journals.

An important question concerns whether one should publish in journals "within the discipline" or "outside the discipline." Especially in the context of inter- or trans-disciplinary research, manuscripts may well be acceptable for journals that are not strictly identified as communication oriented. Publishing in appropriate outlets outside the discipline is acceptable, although, to earn promotion to full professor, a candidate should have published a substantive and impactful body of work within communication- and information-related venues.

Regardless of the disciplinary orientation, journals should be of superior standing. This refers to factors introduced under research quality (e.g., strong reputation, tier rating, prestige, high rejection rate, strong impact factor).

Grants and Fellowships

Grant awards are the lifeblood of research universities since they result in salary savings pay “indirect costs” for operating research facilities, supporting teaching and research assistants, etc. They also represent unambiguous and universally-recognized evidence of institutional research prowess. For the faculty member, grants are often the only way to conduct certain kinds of research—especially the kind that is cost-intensive. An associate professor does not necessarily have to be successful in getting grants for the purpose of promotion to the rank of full professor in the Department of Communication. However, in some areas of communication, acquisition of competitively available extramural funding is more normative than others. Grants are one (not the only) indicator in assessing research excellence. The attainment of external grants is not necessarily a criterion for promotion to full professor. However, where the candidate’s area of research specialization is one for which competitive research grants are normative, the department will expect candidates for the rank of full professor to have striven to achieve external grant funding to support his or her work.

TEACHING AND ADVISING

A candidate for the rank of professor must demonstrate teaching excellence. Just as a scholar has a program of research, a scholar can have a program of teaching. Indeed, the department recognizes that developing a program of teaching, like in research, is essential for having an impact. This program of teaching should predominantly be related to a faculty

member's research since this is the sine qua non, the ultimate justification, for a research university.

Teaching weighs significantly in one's "Distribution of Effort" (DOE), and thus it weighs significantly in the consideration of cases for promotion. The standard teaching load for tenured faculty in the Department of Communication is two courses per academic semester. In addition to teaching classes, faculty members are expected to advise students. The number of graduate student advisees is variable, depending on student interests and college needs.

Evidence of Effective Teaching

Teaching is a fundamental aspect of our mission. We strive to provide our graduate and undergraduate students with interesting, highly relevant instruction reflecting contemporary communication theory and research, and to mentor and advise our students wisely. In evaluating teaching performance, the department will consider performance *as a whole*, and assess performance in light of instructional context. Contextual factors to be considered include, but are not limited to, number of students per class, whether courses are required, upper versus lower division courses, content of the course, and the number of different courses taught. The department intends to ensure that candidates are not disadvantaged as a result of accepting difficult teaching assignments.

A Teaching Portfolio (following AR II-1.0-5) is required. Much of the teaching file is a product of the candidate's initiative. A Teaching Portfolio is a corpus of evidence to validate teaching effectiveness in one's program of instruction. Although attention is given to all aspects of the Teaching Portfolio, the following aspects of the file are of particular importance in considering a candidate's promotion case.

To begin, one form of evidence is the Teacher Course Evaluations that are administered to classes each semester. These evaluations (both quantitative and qualitative) must be collected for every class. The results (statistical summaries of the objective portion and open-ended remarks by students) are cited in annual merit evaluations, peer reviews, and ultimately in promotion dossiers. Typically, there are differences between “overall quality of the teaching” and “overall value of the course” scores (scores for “teaching” are usually higher), and there will be some variation based on whether a course is required, elective, large lecture, UK core, special topic, or a graduate seminar. With these caveats, and stating explicitly that there is no set score that must be attained, any individual score below a 4 (on the 5-point scale) is worrisome, and, across courses, an average of 4.00 or higher is desirable; of course, the higher the better. Materials beyond student perceptions of teaching are also considered. Teaching awards are an indicator of quality teaching, including the receipt of grants or awards for developing courses. Curricular materials (e.g., syllabi, course assignments) may also be considered at the time of promotion. Evidence of student learning (e.g., pretest-posttest scores) can indicate teaching effectiveness. Curricular contributions, such as willingness and ability to develop and teach courses as needed is another consideration. Contributions might also include the development of instructional aids, teaching innovations, and textbooks. Extracurricular teaching contributions within or outside of the university may be considered.

Advising is also an important part of a candidate’s instructional track record. The future of the discipline depends on the quality of the mentoring that faculty members provide to junior investigators, including junior faculty as well as graduate and undergraduate students. A number of factors can indicate excellence in advising. Such factors may include out-of-class consultation with students concerning class, program-related matters, or career development with graduate or

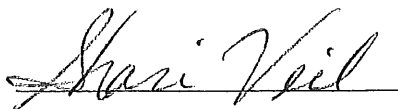
undergraduate students, writing letters of recommendation for students, presenting in workshops for students, directing independent studies, or allowing students to shadow one in teaching a course. In addition, a great deal of time is typically invested in involving students in research, including training students in designing a study, collecting data, analyzing data, and preparing manuscripts for submission to conferences and journals. Direction (and successful completion) of theses and dissertations as well as participation on such committees are also important indicators of advising excellence. Participation on graduate committees for examinations is expected.

SERVICE

Typically, a small percent of one's DOE is allocated to service, which traditionally is defined as service on academic committees, service to the profession, and often service to the public. Tenured faculty members are expected to contribute regularly to the governance and administration of the department, college, and university. They are expected to attend and participate in regular and special department faculty meetings, serve effectively on various committees as elected or appointed, and accept administrative assignment beyond committee responsibilities as reasonable at all levels within the university. In all of these endeavors, the quality of involvement, not mere committee membership, is paramount as it is indicative of exemplary departmental and university citizenship. Developing a program of service, ideally one that is related to the faculty member's research and teaching, will lead to service that truly has a meaningful impact on the university.

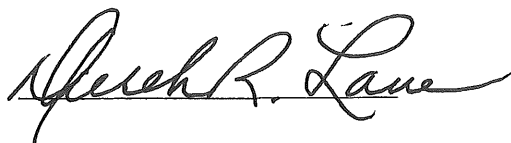
Professional service activities are often evidence of a candidate's stature in the field. Indeed, a candidate's service should indicate that he or she is recognized as a leader on campus and in the field. Candidates should engage in professional activities, such as editorial service for

professional journals, and service in professional associations, such as election or assignment to leadership in regional, national, or international associations. Professional service should include the evaluation of manuscripts submitted to scholarly journals (e.g., member of editorial board) and presses and conferences. It might also involve the assessment of applications to national funding agencies and involvement in the evaluation of scholarship and standing of individuals for tenure and promotion considerations at other institutions. Service on government panels in a candidate's area of expertise may also be recognized as service and be an indicator of one's recognition as an expert in one's field.



Shari R. Veil, Professor and Chair

Date 12/5/18



Derek Lane, Interim Dean

Date 12/5/18