

Advice from the Provost on Tenure and Promotion

For AY 08-09, the Provost uses the following criteria and guidelines to assess promotability and tenurability

RIT Policy: From the RIT policy E4:

While teaching is the foremost activity of the RIT faculty, faculty are expected to engage in significant scholarship as measured by external disciplinary and professional standards as acknowledged by department and program practices of faculty review.

(1) “Scholarship” at RIT will encompass four elements:*

Scholarship of discovery: When faculty use their professional expertise to discover knowledge, invent, or create original material. Using this definition, basic research as well as, for example, the creation of innovative computer software, plays or artwork would be considered the scholarship of discovery.

Scholarship of teaching/pedagogy: When faculty engage in the scholarship of teaching practice through peer-reviewed activities to improve pedagogy. Using this definition, a faculty member who studies and investigates student learning to develop strategies that improve learning has engaged in the scholarship of teaching.

Scholarship of integration: When faculty use their professional expertise to connect, integrate, and synthesize knowledge. Using this definition, faculty members who take research findings or technological innovations and apply them to other situations would be engaging in the scholarship of integration.

Scholarship of application: When faculty use their professional expertise to engage in applied research, consultation, technical assistance, policy analysis, program evaluation or similar activities to solve problems. This definition recognizes that new intellectual understandings arise out of the act of application.

(2) The top priorities for Scholarship at RIT are to enhance the education of our students and our institutional reputation. Faculty engaged in either sponsored or unsponsored scholarship in any of the four areas defined above are expected to disseminate the knowledge acquired in these endeavors through normal scholarly means.

(3) All four aspects of scholarship are important for RIT, and must be recognized, valued, supported, and rewarded in the tenure, promotion, and merit salary increment processes in each unit.

(4) All tenured and tenure-track RIT faculty must be actively participating in the scholarship of their disciplines. There will be considerable variation, however, in the amounts of scholarship in which different faculty engage within the same departments

and colleges, as well as throughout the Institute. Along with institutional service and student advising, proportions of professional time devoted to teaching and scholarship will be determined by individual faculty Plans of Work.

(5) RIT will continue to fund faculty professional development for the benefit of RIT, including discretionary seed funds to assist in the initiation of faculty research programs. Ongoing faculty and graduate student research programs, however, must be supported through external funding.

(6) While RIT will accept externally funded proprietary and classified projects, knowledge acquired through such projects must be available within a reasonable time frame for wider dissemination through publications, classroom teaching, or application to other projects.

From E5:

The criteria to be used for granting tenure are stated below. The list of qualities or achievements is to be considered suggestive rather than exhaustive and is more specifically defined in each college's published tenure criteria. The categories are presented in priority order but without any assigned weight. The dean, director, or other appropriate administrators and the faculty member may wish to give weights to categories and items in the initial agreement of expectations and/or in subsequent annual reviews.

The view that teaching is the foremost activity of the RIT faculty is deeply rooted in the traditions of the institution, and the primacy of teaching continues to be a hallmark of RIT. Consequently, the basic consideration, both in initial appointments and matters pertaining to salary adjustments, promotion and tenure, is the extent to which high standards of teaching can be achieved and maintained.

Effective teaching, among other things, consists of clearly and enthusiastically communicating special knowledge and expertise based on an understanding of curricular objectives and the learner's needs and abilities. Further, it entails selecting and using appropriate instructional methods and materials which lead to learning, and providing fair and useful evaluations of the quality of the learner's work. Effective teaching requires a sensitivity to and rapport with the learner.

The evaluation of teaching cannot be totally objective, but such evaluation must include a conscientious effort to obtain and consider information bearing upon the work of the classroom and the activities which make effective classroom performance possible.

The Institute endorses the view that good teaching is undergirded, and indeed made possible, by selective attainments in the areas outlined below which are appropriate to individuals in the circumstances of their academic units:

(1) Academic and Professional Qualifications

These achievements refer to past and present professional and career experiences, professional recognition in the form of licenses, honors, degree attainment, and sustained effort directed toward professional and career updates.

(2) Professional Activities and Scholarship (see E4.0.5)

These include research and creative activity in a professional specialty, writing and publication in a specialized area, development of new courses and curricula, modification of existing courses or programs and investigation of alternative learning strategies.

(3) Service

These include working with students and colleagues outside the classroom such as might be found in college and Institute committee work, student advising and student activities as well as linking the professional skills of members of the faculty to the world beyond the campus.

No faculty member can be deeply engaged in all of the foregoing activities at any one time. Rather, specific forms of endeavor should be planned and agreed upon with the appropriate college authorities to the end that full opportunity is provided for individual development and enhancement of the teaching function.

Each college faculty shall develop, approve, and publish its own additional specific tenure criteria, as well as acceptable forms of evidence and documentation based on the previous general criteria and on section 4 of this policy

Tenure and Promotion committees need to document the evidence they have used to make assessments of a candidate's teaching or scholarship abilities.

Teaching: Effective teaching must be demonstrated from a variety of measures. Examples of evidence of effective teaching could include:

- A. Student evaluations
- B. Collegial peer review of the candidate's courseware, e.g.:
 - a. Syllabi and assignments
 - b. Text and other materials
 - c. Graded work
 - d. Exams
- C. Collegial peer outcomes assessment, e.g.:
 - a. Student preparedness for subsequent cores
 - b. Walk-ins
- D. Assessment results that demonstrate student learning of course outcomes

- E. Awards and other recognitions, either internal or external, for teaching effectiveness
- F. Alumni evaluations

Scholarship: Examples of evidence of strong scholarship could include:

- A. Collegial and external peer evaluations of published or exhibited scholarship.
- B. External funding in support of scholarship, research, and creative work; evidence of submitting proposals to attain such funding
- C. Invention disclosures, patents or licensing agreements that demonstrate the technology transfer of ideas;
- D. Professional reputation or standing of presses (publications), journals, shows, exhibits, conferences, etc., through which the scholarship has been disseminated
- E. Quantity of disseminated, peer-reviewed, and documented scholarship
- F. Citations by other professionals of the candidate's disseminated scholarship.

Responsiveness to Annual Review: Tenure and Promotion candidates should assess the correlation between the candidate's annual Plans of Work and the department head's annual reviews. How responsive has the candidate been to the annual reviews?

Evidence of Growth: Candidates should show growth during the tenure probation period or since the candidate's previous promotion. Doing the identical thing six years in a row does not qualify a candidate for tenure or promotion.

Department Need: The case for tenure must take into consideration the current and projected needs of the department for the contributions, which can be made by the candidate. Tenure is not an entitlement and need not be granted to an individual whose work, even if regarded positively, is no longer needed by the department.