

**Rochester Institute of Technology
Kate Gleason College of Engineering**

KGCOE Tenure Policy and Procedures

(draft: October, 2005)

I. OVERVIEW

This written statement of expectations for the achievement of tenure in the Kate Gleason College of Engineering is developed in accordance with Section E5.0 of the *Institute Policy and Procedures Manual*. The policy manual states that “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. . . .” The criteria to be used for granting tenure are stated below. The list of qualities and achievements is to be considered suggestive rather than exhaustive.

The possession of a doctoral degree should be a major consideration for a faculty member to be placed on the tenure track. Having successfully reached the point of tenure review, the qualities and achievements of the faculty member will be evaluated primarily in three principal categories:

- teaching and educational activities,
- scholarly, research and creative activities, and
- professional service activities (to the department, institute, community and profession).

Although there are no absolute standards on the relative importance to be placed on each of these three elements of a faculty member’s professional achievements and promise of future contributions, the subjective judgments made at all steps in the tenure review process should reflect the goals and objectives of the College as an institution committed to excellence in undergraduate teaching and a philosophy of learning by doing, where knowledge is created and communicated, where teaching and learning at the cutting edge of disciplines is a priority, and where everyone is engaged in lifelong learning. Although there are no absolute standards on the relative importance to be placed on each of the three elements of a faculty member’s professional achievements and potential for further contributions in the future, the evaluation process may use the following weighting factors as a guideline in the assessment process: teaching (40-60%), scholarship (30-50%) and service (5-15%).

II. CRITERIA FOR TENURE

A. Teaching and Education Activities

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 includes clearly and enthusiastically communicating special knowledge and expertise based on an understanding of curricular objectives and the learner's needs and abilities. To be eligible for tenure, it is expected that faculty members will develop excellent skills as an educator, and will develop relationships with

students and colleagues outside of, as well as inside, the classroom. The faculty member should place emphasis on the *quality* of the educational offerings provided to the students and on the extent to which students achieve the learning outcomes of the courses taught.

Prior to tenure, the faculty member will have successfully taught courses at both the undergraduate and graduate level, and will have provided innovation to the curriculum. Examples of curricular innovation may include items such as graduate and advanced undergraduate course development in their area of expertise, truly innovative developments in the undergraduate or graduate curriculum, and novel laboratory development.

B. Scholarly, Research, and Creative Activities

Scholarship, which includes research and other creative activities, is a critical element in being granted tenure. As stated in the *RIT Policy and Procedures Manual*: “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.” (Section 5 of E4.0, approved by Academic Senate, 9 January 2003) The Institute’s description of scholarship, reproduced from Section 5, is appended to this document.

Each faculty member should develop a scholarly activity program that fosters interaction with students through a variety of mechanisms such as graduate student advising, undergraduate design and research project mentoring, and advanced course development. Scholarly programs should enable faculty members to remain current in their technical field and impart a sense of passion about that field to their students. The long-term goal of the scholarship activities should be to advance the state of the art or general knowledge within a specific professional discipline.

To be eligible for tenure, it is expected that faculty members will publish the results of their scholarly activity in a variety of venues, such as conference proceedings, presentations, and technical journals. Faculty are expected to support their scholarly activity through a record of external funding, including elements such as graduate student assistantships, undergraduate research assistants, travel, and direct expenses associated with their scholarly work. Faculty members should publish the results of their work in cooperation with graduate students and are encouraged to participate in multidisciplinary and collaborative activities with faculty members inside the department, college, and institute, and from other institutions.

Prior to tenure evaluation, the faculty member will have successfully completed a body of work comprised of some, if not all, of the following elements: *externally* sponsored projects (including required program-related consulting), the advising of MS thesis and/or Ph.D. students, technical presentations at national conferences, published technical conference articles, and articles published in peer-reviewed journals.

C. Professional Service Activities

Prior to tenure, the professional service role of the faculty member will be less than that of more senior, tenured faculty members. Tenure track faculty members are encouraged to be members of professional societies as appropriate to their interest (such as ASEE, IEEE, ASME, etc) and serve on technical program committees in their discipline, the latter providing an opportunity for the faculty member to obtain external visibility and professional contacts within one's field of specialization.

Untenured faculty members should participate in departmental committee assignments as needed, and occasionally may serve on college or institute level committees or as advisor to a student organization. Committee service should not impede the untenured faculty member's primary focus on developing skills as an excellent educator and establishing a scholarly activity program. Service as a referee, article, or proposal reviewer for national conferences or sponsoring agencies is viewed as an excellent mechanism for untenured faculty to develop professional relationships beyond the boundaries of the campus.

Occasionally, an untenured faculty member will be asked to assume a leadership role on a key initiative within the department because of the individual's unique ability to contribute to the initiative. This responsibility cannot substitute for the importance of the teaching and scholarship activities in the assessment of an individual's suitability for tenure. However, the individual's ability to contribute in each of these areas will necessarily be mitigated by the scope of the leadership activities, and thus the expectation regarding the *quantity* of output in teaching and/or scholarship will be reduced appropriately in the tenure assessment process, with proper credit being given to the value of the leadership activity to the department and the time commitment required to provide this contribution.

III. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

In support of their case for tenure, candidates for tenure should provide to the tenure committee a portfolio of information that documents their accomplishments to date and their potential for continued professional growth in the three areas described above. The portfolio should contain the following items:

A. Curriculum Vitae that includes

- degrees earned,
- all professional employment,
- professional awards and honors,
- memberships in professional societies, listing any committee affiliations and offices held,
- service as a referee for peer-reviewed journals, conference proceedings, grant proposals, etc, including the frequency of such activities,
- publications, including conference proceedings, with peer-reviewed journal articles listed separately,
- presentations at technical conferences, with those that are peer-reviewed or by special invitation listed separately,
- patents and patent applications, but not patent disclosures,
- grants awarded
- funded grants, with title, agency or foundation, amount requested, duration, and date submitted
- courses taught, highlighting those for which new or substantially revised curricula were created,
- short courses and workshops developed and/or conducted,
- leadership and committee assignments in the department, college and institute,
- relevant consulting activities, and
- substantive community service that relates to one's role and expertise as a professor.

B. Personal Statement

The candidate should prepare a detailed personal statement that documents the professional accomplishments to date and the long-term professional development plan for future growth and accomplishments. The statement should be segregated into at least three sections, in accordance with the three primary elements of the assessment criteria: teaching and educational activities, scholarship, and professional service activities. The personal statement should not only document the specific activities in which the individual has participated, and the time commitment required, but also the quality and value of the accomplishments. In particular, with respect to teaching and educational activities, the individual should describe the extent to which curriculum was revised for the benefit of the students, the impact of these changes on learning outcomes, and the ways in which these accomplishments contribute to the overall educational objectives of the department and college. With respect to scholarship, the candidate should describe how the work fits within the broader context of the field of specialization and the extent to which the work contributes to the state of the art in the field. With respect to professional service activities, the candidate should describe his/her substantive contributions in providing such service and particularly the extent to which the candidate played a leadership role.

If appropriate, the candidate may include a section on consulting activities, describing the extent to which such activities have contributed to the individual's professional growth and to the external reputation of the college and institute.

C. Supporting Documentation

With respect to teaching and educational activities, the candidate should provide sufficient material to enable the Tenure Committee to evaluate the contribution made to improving the course content of the given curricula. Such information as new and/or revised course and laboratory development activities, course outlines, class notes, handouts, examinations, and laboratory assignments should be included in the submitted material. In addition, the candidate should provide copies of all student ratings and the statistical summaries of the reviews received for all courses taught at RIT. The candidate is encouraged to assess the ratings and discuss the effect of student feedback. Representatives of the Tenure Committee may visit the classroom of the candidate to observe teaching performance.

With respect to scholarly, research and creative activities, the candidate should provide copies of all papers published and submitted for publication, including all conference proceedings. In addition, the candidate should list all research proposals submitted, including for each the title, funding agency, dollar amount, duration, status, and extended abstract, and reviews if available. For funded proposals, the candidate should provide a status report on the accomplishments to date and a brief statement regarding the impact of the work on the profession.

D. References

The candidate should provide a list of references that are willing and qualified to discuss the candidate's professional competence and contribution to the profession. At a minimum this list should include the candidate's thesis advisor, professionals external to RIT from academia and/or industry who can objectively assess the candidate's scholarly contributions to the field, RIT faculty members both within and outside of the candidate's department and college, and students who are familiar with the candidate's teaching and mentoring abilities.

To obtain an objective assessment of the candidate's contributions to the field, the Tenure Committee will review opinions from at least six external references, of which at least two will be solicited in a manner independent of the reference list provided by the candidate. In addition, the Tenure Committee will solicit opinions at random from among those individuals who were students in courses taught recently by the candidate. If academic advising was a significant element of the candidate's plan of work, the Tenure Committee also will solicit opinions on the quality of advising from a random sample of the candidates advisees.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURE

A. Tenure Review Process

Granting tenure is the single most significant decision regarding an individual's relationship to the institution, as it represents a lifelong employment commitment that cannot be revoked except under extraordinary circumstances. Consequently, the decision must be made in a thorough, deliberate manner, considering all relevant information regarding the candidate and the long-term impact of the decision on the department, college and institution. The granting of tenure should be made if and only if there is compelling evidence that the candidate will be a significant, long-term asset to the individual's department and college. Quite simply, the evidence should demonstrate that the department and college will be stronger with the individual rather than without him/her.

Because the candidate's professional contributions and impact are greatest at the department level, it is critical that the candidate's case for granting tenure be comprehensively assessed by the tenured faculty of the candidate's department. A comprehensive assessment requires not only a review of the materials prepared by the candidate but also the recommendation letters submitted by people both within and outside of RIT. This assessment must involve at least one meeting among the tenured faculty within the department, at which the full portfolio of materials plus references is reviewed and discussed. The tenured faculty must vote for or against the tenure recommendation. The department head will report the outcome of this vote to the Dean of the College. In addition, the department head or his/her designate will submit in writing to the dean an objective, balanced assessment of the outcomes of the deliberations of the tenured faculty. Independently, the department head will submit to the dean a personal recommendation for or against granting tenure. Each tenured faculty member within the department is encouraged to write a letter to the department head, for communication to the dean, documenting his/her opinions regarding the suitability of the candidate for tenure.

Since the tenure decision has more significant long-term implications than promotion to associate professor, the criteria for tenure need to be more stringent than that for promotion to associate professor. Thus, if the candidate is currently an assistant professor, the tenure assessment process is synonymous with promotion to associate professor. However, because the recommendation for promotion to associate professor requires a vote of all department faculty members at the rank of associate and full professor, a second vote might be necessary to complete the process for recommending promotion to associate professor.

The Tenure Committee of the College will review all submitted material, including all letters of recommendation, and will consult, as required, with other members of the faculty and staff at RIT. If the information provided is insufficient or inconclusive, the Tenure Committee is authorized to request and obtain additional information to support its deliberations. When deliberations are completed, the Committee will vote by secret ballot as to whether or not the candidate should be recommended for tenure. Institute policy requires that a positive recommendation for tenure from the Tenure Committee must have at least five positive votes out of seven, and committee members cannot abstain. The Tenure Committee chair will forward to the Dean and the Provost, over the signatures of all Tenure Committee members, a summary of the deliberations along with the result of the vote.

In parallel, the Dean, upon review of the submitted material, the candidate's personnel file, and in consultation with the involved department head, will recommend to the Provost either approval or denial of tenure. When the recommendation of the Tenure Committee is at variance with that of the Dean, the Provost should consult with the Dean and the Tenure Committee chair in order to seek a resolution. The final decision will rest with the President of the Institute.

B. Formation of the Tenure Committee

The Tenure Committee of the College consists of seven tenured faculty members: one tenured faculty member from each department of the College, elected by the faculty of the College, and one member from another college of the Institute, designated by the Academic Senate. Each committee member from the College of Engineering will serve a three-year term. The terms will be staggered so that two new members will be elected each year with no faculty member serving more than two consecutive terms. The Tenure Committee will elect its own chair, typically from among the two individuals from the College who are in the final year of their term.

C. Time Schedule

In the Academic Year Preceding the Tenure Decision

- By May 1: Tenure Committee is formed.
- By May 1: Each department head submits to the dean a list of faculty to be reviewed for tenure.
- By May 10: Tenure Committee organizational meeting is called by the dean and held.
- By May 10: Dean notifies candidates of tenure eligibility.
- By May 20: Tenure Committee instructs candidates regarding the documentation to be submitted for review.

In the Academic Year of the Tenure Decision

- By Sept. 1: Candidate submits all documentation to department head and the KGCOE Tenure Committee.
- By Sept. 15: Head of candidate's department submits to the dean an endorsement that the candidate be reviewed for tenure. This endorsement is not a comprehensive recommendation of the candidate's suitability for tenure.
- By Nov. 15: Department head submits to dean and the Tenure Committee the outcome of the department's assessment of the candidate's suitability for tenure.
- By Nov. 15: Department head submits to dean a personal recommendation regarding the candidate's suitability for tenure.
- By Jan. 15: Tenure Committee completes review process and votes on a tenure recommendation.
- By Feb. 1: Tenure Committee chair completes summary of Committee deliberations and, after its review by the committee, forwards results to Dean and Provost.
- By Feb. 8: Dean completes an independent tenure recommendation and forwards it to Provost.
- By March 1: Provost informs candidate of the final decision regarding tenure.

Scholarship at RIT (approved by the Senate, 9 January 2003)

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.

A. “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.

B. 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.

C. 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.

D. 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.

E. 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. On-going faculty and graduate student research programs, however, must be supported through external funding.

F. 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, ~~and~~ **or** application to other projects.

*These definitions of “Scholarship” have been partially paraphrased and modified from definitions used by the American Association for Higher Education