

# **COLFA GUIDELINES REGARDING TENURE AND PROMOTION FOR EVALUATION OF TEACHING**

Passed Effective December 14, 2017

The COLFA Guidelines Regarding Tenure and Promotion drafted in 2014 established that in keeping with Tarleton's mission, and recognizing the long tradition that the university has had as a teaching institution, the College of Liberal and Fine Arts is dedicated to excellence in teaching. That document additionally holds that effective teaching is an essential qualification in all instances of promotion and tenure, so at each level and rank, tenure and/or promotion candidates should demonstrate teaching effectiveness through a set of evaluative procedures involving department head evaluations, peer evaluations, student evaluations and self-evaluations.

The university has established five university-wide indicators of effective teaching:

1. Content knowledge (current, deep broad, experienced)
2. Effective instructional skills (creative, varied, promoting active learning and application)
3. Clarity of expectations (clear student learning objectives and organization)
4. Professionalism (integrity, civility, respect, preparation, consistence, class attendance, fidelity to office hours)
5. Enthusiasm, passion, dedication, engagement, effectiveness and openness in communication

These five indicators can be measured with some combination of data included in evaluations conducted by the four data acquisition methods (i. e. evaluative artifacts from department heads, peers, students, and the candidates themselves) described in the college's 2014 document and updated below.

## **Department Head Evaluation of Teaching (as described in the COLFA Guidelines Regarding Tenure and Promotion)**

The candidate's evaluation of teaching should be included in the department head's required letter of recommendation for promotion and/or tenure. The data included in the department head's letter of recommendation will be predicated on two data acquisition strategies, classroom observations and an assessment of course structure. This evaluation should be a comprehensive assessment of the candidate's teaching effectiveness during the entire time in rank.

### ***Classroom observations***

Such observations of an entire class meeting or session should begin in the faculty member's first year with a minimum of three subsequent classroom visits throughout the required time in rank. At least one of the sequence of classroom observations should take place in the semester before the candidate's application for promotion and/or tenure is due.

The department head will record his or her observations of the candidate's classroom teaching, laboratory/studio/individual lessons, and/or other applicable teaching activities in narrative form and memorialize the instructor's alignment with the five elements of effective teaching listed above on a rubric designed for that purpose.

### ***Assessment of course structure***

For purposes of annual evaluations and as a data acquisition strategy for his or her recommendation letter, the department head should survey the instructor's course documents and

ancillaries (course syllabi, Blackboard postings, texts, technologies, *inter alia*) in order to assess the instructor's course alignment with both core curriculum and program assessments and the five elements of effective teaching.

### **Peer Evaluations of Teaching (as described in the COLFA Guidelines Regarding Tenure and Promotion)**

Given that it is the department's responsibility to put forward a qualified candidate, the process of selection, mentoring, and advocacy for a faculty member seeking promotion or tenure is a collaborative responsibility, so peers (faculty holding equal and higher rank) should be part of the tenure and promotion process. Candidates will, therefore, also provide evaluation results from faculty peers with written comments responding to classroom and/or other teaching observations in the form of letters of support.

Matters of particular pertinence in peer letters of support include, but should not be limited to

- The candidate's role in the program in relation to his or her area(s) of specialization
- The candidate's clarity of expectations and anticipated course outcomes
- The candidate's course attendance, availability to students, and presence on campus
- The candidate's breadth of knowledge in his or her discipline

### **Student Evaluations of Teaching (as described in the COLFA Guidelines Regarding Tenure and Promotion)**

The application review process requires that both quantitative scores and written comments from students' evaluations of the candidate be included in the application. While the college recognizes that student evaluation results are not the sole indicator of teaching effectiveness, an examination of the applicant's student evaluations will be an important part of the process, with certain empirical expectations (i. e. The review committee currently expects that the overall mean of student-evaluation scores from the four long semesters immediately preceding the tenure and/or promotion application will not be lower than 3.1.), and more open-ended written commentary seen as possible indicators of necessary or appropriate modifications in course delivery, the response(s) to which can serve as a component of the candidate's self-evaluation data. Beyond the content of official student evaluations, a candidate can introduce organic (non-solicited) positive written student comments.

### **Applicant Self-evaluation (as described in the COLFA Guidelines Regarding Tenure and Promotion)**

According to the COLFA Guidelines Regarding Tenure and Promotion, candidates for tenure in COLFA should be given the opportunity to make good cases for their promotions and their application's timing, allowing their departments and the college tenure and promotion review committee to apply this document's guidelines with flexibility and goodwill when interpreting their tenure application and supporting materials. A teacher's knowledge of his or her subject and discipline, as the primary component of the five elements of effective teaching listed in this document's introduction, should be a significant aspect of the promotion packet and a substantive component of pedagogical strategy. A candidate's self-evaluation of his or her teaching effectiveness can be presented within a framework pedagogical strategies and practices that the candidate should produce to establish his or her effectiveness.

#### ***Self-evaluation inclusions***

- Evidence of thorough class preparation and continuous growth in organizing classes consistently, meeting the class for the scheduled number of times and at the allotted times
- Copies of course syllabi distributed to students for all courses taught while in current rank
- Descriptions and grade distributions for each of the courses taught, along with commentary concerning reasons for and appropriateness of specific grade distributions in those courses
- Submission of a brief essay reflecting on the candidate's teaching philosophy and/or methodology, diverse teaching techniques that strengthen the curriculum and/or that integrate research with instruction, along with any other topics deemed appropriate
- Evidence of the candidate's teaching techniques, which may include, but are not limited to, course materials, textbook or topic choices, exam/paper/presentation requirements for students, general grading strategies, and care and thoroughness in evaluation of student work. Materials submitted should demonstrate active, continuous, relevant innovation, involvement, and informed improvement to instruction
- Evidence, where applicable (i.e. for online courses), of technology, innovation and/or digital materials
- Evidence of unusual efforts to help students individually (tutoring beyond the class schedule, for example)
- Artifacts of the candidate's development of curriculum, degree programs, and new courses
- Evidence of the candidate's adherence to high standards for student success, such as grade distributions and rigor of grading rubrics
- Documentation of the candidate's attendance at and/or participation in workshops dealing with pedagogy and the improvement of teaching
- Recognition of teaching excellence in the form of teaching awards, special recognitions for teaching, student success and/or student-achievement awards
- Documentation of the candidate's teaching activities relevant to a certain field, as senior faculty in the candidate's academic department deem appropriate