

PROMOTION GUIDELINES FOR NON-TENURE TRACK FACULTY  
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION  
VIRGINIA TECH

Last Reviewed: November 6, 2007

## **OVERVIEW**

According to the Faculty Handbook, Sections 2.3.1.4 & 2.3.1.6, promotion to a higher rank is granted to instructors who have demonstrated excellence in instructional responsibilities and show significant evidence of related professional growth and development.

Non-tenure-track faculty members fill critical roles in the learning, discovery, and engagement missions at Virginia Tech. They are intended to complement the efforts and qualifications of tenure-track faculty; provide access to specialized faculty resources, and to allow flexibility to address programmatic needs. As valuable contributors to departmental and institutional missions, they are entitled to fair treatment and compensation, access to professional development opportunities, recognition for their accomplishments, and participation in the life of the university community.

Eligibility for promotion is limited to instructors on regular (rather than restricted) appointments; however, years as a “restricted” employee will count toward years of service. Promotion in rank for any non-tenure-track position is not a requirement of continued employment, or an entitlement for years of service without evidence of exceptional merit, continued professional development, and contribution in the assigned role. An approved promotion in rank is recognized by a change in title, increased length of appointment contract, and a base salary adjustment as identified in the annual faculty compensation plan approved by the Board of Visitors.

Consideration for promotion in rank shall include preparation of a dossier using a common university format. Typically such a dossier would include a statement of professional direction and accomplishment, a full curriculum vitae, and documentation of contributions to the instructional program.

The promotion dossier shall be reviewed at three levels: department, college, and provost. The provost reviews college and dean recommendations and make recommendations to the president. Final approval is granted by the Board of Visitors.

## **CONSTITUTION OF DEPARTMENT REVIEW COMMITTEE**

### **Year One (2007-2008)**

The review panel shall consist of the current Promotion & Tenure committee [5 members] and one member of the current Instructor Committee. No candidate under review can serve on the review committee.

### **Year Two (2008-2009)**

The review panel shall consist of five members: two instructors who have been newly promoted to Advanced or Senior Instructor and three members appointed by the department head from the

Promotion and Tenure committee. To ensure continuity, the department chair will appoint at least one tenured faculty member from the previous year's review panel.

#### Year Three and Thereafter (2009--)

At such time as promotion makes possible the committee structure described below the Department of Communication governance document shall be revised to establish a permanent Instructor Promotion Committee. The committee shall be composed of three Advanced and Senior Instructors and two tenured faculty members. The tenured faculty representatives will be appointed by the department head. Instructor representatives will be elected by the full-time instructors.

Should there not be sufficient instructors holding the rank of advanced or senior instructor to comprise a five-member committee, the department head will appoint tenured faculty to compose a committee of five.

### **THE INSTRUCTOR RANK**

The instructor rank is the initial rank for appointment of a full- or part-time faculty member whose primary responsibilities are to the instructional program of the department. Assignments may vary depending on the faculty member's expertise, experience and departmental needs, but typically they include teaching undergraduate courses, advising students, developing or revising courses and curricula, and fulfilling other instructional, administrative, or service responsibilities. Appointments at this rank consist of a series of one- or two-year renewable appointments with a minimum of five years of completed service before consideration for promotion.

### **INSTRUCTOR RANK EXPECTATIONS**

1. Good instruction as evidenced by such measures as Student Perception of Instruction (SPOI) evaluations, student responses to supplemental questions, activities in a non-classroom setting, peer reviews, and annual departmental evaluations.
2. Participation in department meetings and workshops related to programs of instruction.
3. Well-developed syllabi and instructional materials that reflect department goals and requirements.
4. Adherence to the Virginia Tech Principles of Ethical Behavior and the Virginia Tech Principles of Community, as described in section 2.7 of the Faculty Handbook.

### **CRITERIA FOR PROMOTION TO THE ADVANCED INSTRUCTOR RANK**

In addition to the basic expectations for the instructor rank, successful candidates for Advanced Instructor will demonstrate evidence of outstanding teaching as well as one or a combination of the achievements described under section 2 (below). Promotion to the rank of advanced instructor is generally accompanied by a renewable three-year contract.

1. **Outstanding Teaching (required)** will be evidenced in the dossier by reference to
  - a. SPOI evaluations
  - b. Student responses to supplemental questions,
  - c. Peer reviews,
  - d. Annual department evaluations,
  - e. Evidence of continuing professional development through participation in department workshop and panels, and
  - f. Other indicators might include teaching awards and records of achievement by former students.

2. **Additional teaching–related achievement (one or a combination required)** will be evidenced in the dossier by demonstration of engagement with the Virginia Tech Department of Communication programs (s) and increasing knowledge of the teaching discipline, as represented in one or a combination of the other criteria. The strongest cases will show a pattern of these activities throughout the promotion period.
- a. **Professional development**, evidence of extended professional development beyond department workshops and panels; for example, participation in university workshops or study groups on teaching, completion of courses or short courses related to pedagogy or subject matter, or participation in professional conferences.
  - b. **Course, Curricular, or New Course development**, for example, teaching a new course title, preparing a course for online delivery, contributing to a textbook or to online teaching materials available to others beyond the instructor’s own classes.
  - c. **Advising and mentoring**, substantial contributions to the instructional program through advising and mentoring of students; for example, academic advising of undergraduate students, GTA advising or mentoring, peer mentoring, advising student organizations.
  - d. **Administrative service** related to instructional mission; for example, management of centers or programs, assisting or managing an undergraduate conference, diversity initiatives, service learning initiatives, outreach, active participation on department committees.
  - e. **Scholarly or creative work that enhances instruction** such as presentations at professional conferences and published work related to instruction (i.e. invited articles; peer-reviewed articles; textbook chapters; textbooks)

A minimum of five years of completed service at the advance instructor rank is required before consideration for promotion to senior instructor.

### **CRITERIA FOR PROMOTION TO SENIOR INSTRUCTOR**

Senior instructor is the capstone rank in the instructor series. Promotion to this rank denotes exemplary instruction, demonstrated continued professional development, and significant contributions as a leader in undergraduate education. In addition to teaching courses, senior instructors may have considerable responsibility in mentoring junior colleagues or graduate teaching assistants, overseeing course development or special instructional initiatives, student advising, or other non-teaching responsibilities reflecting their role as instructional leaders. Promotion to the rank of senior instructor is generally accompanied by a renewable five-year contract.

Advanced instructors applying for the Senior Instructor position must demonstrate exemplary teaching as described in criterion 1 above [under Advanced Instructor] and steady and significant achievement in one or more or a combination of the areas outlined in criterion 2 above [under Advanced Instructor], since their last promotion.

### **PROCEDURE FOR MOVING FORWARD TO COLLEGE-LEVEL REVIEW**

The Instructor Review & Promotion Committee will review any and all dossiers presented to the committee. The committee will then prepare a letter summarizing and explaining its recommendation for promotion or not; the specific vote of the committee will be reported in the letter. In case of a mixed vote a minority report may be written. In the case of a negative vote, the vote and report of the committee will be submitted. The department chair will independently review dossiers and prepare a letter explaining her/his independent recommendation. If either the chair or committee recommends promotion the application goes forward to the college

review committee. These letters become part of the dossier reviewed at the other university levels. Date for presentation of dossiers will be determined according to the university calendar. The candidate will be given the opportunity to withdraw his/her dossier after departmental review.

### **PROMOTION POLICIES FOR NON-TENURE TRACK REGULAR RANK FACULTY**

While most faculty members serving in non-tenure track positions hold the title of instructor, Faculty Handbook Section 2.3.1.6 notes exceptions. It states, "In a few cases, faculty members with regular academic rank (assistant, associate, or full professor) hold non-tenure track appointments because of unusual job responsibilities and historical lack of appropriate alternative ranks. These policies also apply to those individuals."

Non-tenure track faculty members holding the title of assistant professor without tenure may be promoted under the non-tenure track faculty policies to the rank of associate professor without tenure and professor without tenure. The standards for promotion and indicators of excellence are those provided in the Department of Communication Guidelines for Promotion to Associate Professor with Tenure & Promotion to Professor. While tenure-track assistant professors are encouraged to pursue excellence in the area of research, non-tenure track assistant professors are encouraged to demonstrate excellence in the area of teaching with competence in the areas of research and scholarly activity and service and outreach. Guidelines for promotion to professor are identical for tenure-track and non-tenure track faculty.

Candidates for promotion to associate professor without tenure are eligible for promotion consideration after 5 years of service as a non-tenure track assistant professor. Associate professors without tenure must serve a minimum of five years before consideration for promotion to professor without tenure.

Candidates should follow the dossier preparation guidelines provided for tenure-track faculty, excluding the section devoted to letters from external reviewers for promotion to associate professor.

Review of non-tenure track candidates for promotion will be conducted by the Department of Communication Promotion and Tenure Committee according to the calendar established by the college and provost's office. The committee will review the dossier and supporting materials of all candidates for promotion and prepare a letter summarizing and explaining its recommendation for promotion or not; the specific vote of the committee will be reported in the letter. In case of a split vote a minority report may be written. In the case of a negative vote, the vote and report of the committee will be submitted. The department chair will independently review dossiers and prepare a letter explaining her/his independent recommendation. If either the chair or committee recommends promotion the application goes forward to the college review committee. These letters become part of the dossier reviewed at the other university levels. Date for presentation of dossiers will be determined according to the university calendar. The candidate will be given the opportunity to withdraw his/her dossier after departmental review.

The Faculty Handbook provides all other procedures related to review process and appeal.