

Communication Faculty Guide

**Department of Communication
College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
Blacksburg, VA 24061**

Last Review Date: November 28, 2006

1.0 Departmental Governance

1.1 Governance Review

The faculty as a whole shall review this governance document at the beginning of the fall semester of even-numbered years. Additional review may be requested according to procedures detailed in Sturgis Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure, 2nd Ed.

1.2 Administration

1.2.1 Department Head

According to University Policy No. 6100, departments are under the supervision of a department head that is responsible to the dean of the college. Department heads are responsible for the growth and vigor of the academic programs, for the recruiting of new faculty, and for the administration of the curriculum and the budget of the department. The department head has primary administrative responsibility for all personnel, budget, program, equipment, and facility matters related to the academic department or division.

1.2.2 Assistant Department Head

The assistant department head is appointed by the department head to help with various tasks as assigned. The individual serves as a major advisor to the head and is responsible for course scheduling, space utilization, and assessment. In addition, the assistant department head serves on the Executive Committee and attends all staff meetings.

1.2.3 Director, Undergraduate Studies

The undergraduate director is responsible for all undergraduate matters including record keeping, advisor assignments, transfer policy and implementation, course substitutions, course adds and drops, specific student problems or technical difficulties, and the collection of management data. The undergraduate director serves as a major advisor to the department head, as chair of the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, and on the Executive.

1.2.4 Director, Graduate Studies

The graduate director is responsible for all graduate matters including record keeping, policy development and implementation, management of resources—human and financial—assigned to the graduate program, curriculum development and management, recruiting, and any specific problems related to graduate education. The graduate director serves as a major advisor to the department head, as chair of the Graduate Committee, and serves on the Executive Committee.

1.3 Committees

1.3.1 Personnel Committees

The department head has the ultimate responsibility to the faculty and to the administration for all personnel matters. To assist the head in personnel matters and to assure faculty representation, the department shall have a five-member Personnel Committee elected by the tenure and tenure-track faculty in the following way:

- Three tenured faculty members elected on an alternate year basis for two-year terms.
- One non-tenured tenure-track faculty member for a two-year term.
- One tenured faculty member appointed by the head for a one-year term.

Elections and appointments shall occur in spring semester as needed to maintain a fully constituted committee. Members must receive a majority vote of the tenured and tenure-track faculty.

The Personnel Committee advises the department head on matters of faculty development, faculty review, and retention of faculty.

Duties of the Personnel Committee include:

- Assisting the head in annual evaluation of faculty.
- Identifying and evaluating faculty for awards.
- Reviewing and developing policies and procedures related to matters of faculty evaluation.

1.3.1.1 Promotion and Tenure Committee

In years when faculty members will undergo probationary two-and/or four-year evaluations or will be evaluated for promotion to associate professor with tenure, or for promotion to professor the tenure and tenure-track faculty will elect one additional tenured faculty member to serve with the four tenured members of the personnel committee to form the Promotion and Tenure Committee.

Duties of the Promotion and Tenure Committee include:

- Identifying and evaluating candidates for promotion and tenure in the spring semester each year.
- Assisting the candidates in assembling and evaluating materials for the dossiers.
- Making tenure and promotion recommendations.

1.3.1.2 College Personnel Committee

The tenured and tenure-track faculty members will elect one tenured faculty member to serve on the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences Promotion and Tenure Committee for a two-year term as established by the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences bylaws. The person serving on the college committee may also be a member of the department personnel committee.

1.3.2 Instructor Evaluation Committee

The instructor evaluation committee will advise the department head in all matters related to instructor personnel performance, workload, and instructor development. The committee is constituted of the Chair of the Personnel Committee, the Director of Undergraduate Studies, and two full-time regular appointment instructors elected by their peers for two-year terms on alternating years.

1.3.3 Undergraduate Curriculum Committee

The department head has the ultimate responsibility to the faculty and to the administration for all matters of curriculum. To assist the head in curricular matters and to assure faculty representation, the department shall have a four-member Curriculum Committee constituted as follows:

- One tenured faculty member elected by the full-time faculty for a two-year term on even-numbered years.
- One non-tenured faculty member elected by the full-time faculty for a two-year term on odd-numbered years.
- One additional faculty member of any rank appointed by the head for a one-year term.
- The Director of Undergraduate Studies serves as the committee chair.

Elections shall be held during the spring semester as needed to maintain a fully constituted committee. All full-time, continuing faculty members will participate in electing members of the undergraduate curriculum committee.

A department faculty member who is serving on the University Commission on Undergraduate Studies, if not elected during his/her term, should be the head's appointee.

The committee will select one member of the Undergraduate Curriculum committee to serve as the department representative to the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences Undergraduate Curriculum Committee.

Duties of the Curriculum Committee shall include:

- Continuing assessment of the department's curriculum in coordination with the assistant department head.
- Assisting the head in preparing changes to be submitted to the college Curriculum Committee.
- Assisting the head in preparing annual copy for the university catalog.
- Assisting the internship director in overseeing the internship program by:
 - Setting eligibility standards for students seeking academic credit for interning.
 - Reviewing existing internships for suitability to the program.

- Seeking and/or creating new internship opportunities.
- Considering other curriculum-related issues as deemed necessary by the head.
- Identifying potential employers for the college Destinations Career Fair.
- Assisting the director of undergraduate studies in developing and implementing programs to assure excellent undergraduate advising.

1.3.4 Graduate Committee

The purpose of the Graduate Committee is to direct all aspects of the graduate program including: recruiting activities, graduate course development, graduate course rotation, admission of graduate students, evaluation of graduate teaching assistants, program of study approvals, and to formulate needed policies and render decisions related to graduate education.

The committee will consist of five members:

- Two elected tenured faculty members for two-year terms on alternating years.
- One elected non-tenured, tenure-track faculty member for a two-year term.
- One faculty member appointed by the head for a one-year term.
- The director of graduate studies will serve as chair of the committee.

The coordinator of public speaking and the department head serve as ex-officio committee members. The committee will select one of its members to serve as the department representative to the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences Graduate Curriculum Committee.

1.3.5 Honorifics Committee

The honorifics committee shall publicize, coordinate, nominate and recommend all undergraduate scholarships and awards in cooperation with the faculty of Communication. The committee shall elect from its membership representatives to the college student awards committee, as needed.

Membership shall be constituted of three full-time faculty members of any rank. Two members will be elected by a

majority of the faculty for two-year terms on alternating years. The third member shall be appointed by the department head.

1.3.6 Executive Committee

The executive committee is responsible for reviewing, revising, updating, and implementing the departmental plan, advising the department head on departmental strategies for college and university issues, helping to frame department issues and concerns for faculty discussion, acting as a conduit for specific departmental needs and concerns, and serving as counsel to the department head.

The committee will consist of the assistant department head, director of undergraduate studies, director of graduate studies, chair of the personnel committee, chair of the research committee, an instructor selected by instructors holding full-time regular instructor appointment, a graduate student representative selected by the full-time graduate students, and a senior student major in the department nominated by the faculty and selected by the executive committee.

1.3.7 Research Coordinating Committee

The Research coordinating committee is responsible for promoting the research mission of the department. The committee will foster a climate of research productivity through publicizing faculty research, identifying faculty needs for research support, and providing oversight of IRB compliance and implementation of human subjects policy.

The membership of the committee will be comprised of:

- Two tenured faculty members elected for two-year terms on alternating years;
- One untenured faculty member elected for a one-year term.

1.3.8 Ad Hoc Committees

The department head shall have the right and responsibility to appoint ad hoc committees and determine the composition of it whenever he/she deems such action necessary.

1.4 Faculty Meetings

The department shall hold faculty meetings at least once a month to hear reports from the head and the various committee chairs. The head shall have the right

and responsibility to determine the agenda for each faculty meeting. When necessary, proceedings at faculty meetings shall defer to in Sturgis Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure, 2nd Ed.

2.0 Professional Review and Development

2.1 Probationary Period Review

The departmental Promotion and Tenure Committee will evaluate faculty members by the end of the fall semester of their second year of employment and by the end of the fall semester in their fourth year of employment and/or by the end of fall semester any year a contract expires to assess their performance in teaching, research, and service during the probationary period. The initial appointment for Assistant Professors, and for Associate Professors and Professors employed without tenure, is ordinarily for a period of not less than two years. Multiple-year appointments may be subsequently recommended. Instructors are ordinarily appointed for one-year terms. The maximum total period for probationary appointments is six years.

All probationary faculty members shall be evaluated according to the guidelines established in the department's Guidelines for Promotion to Associate professor with Tenure & Promotion to Professor

The department head will use this evaluation in making the determination to renew or not to renew a faculty member's appointment, stipulations for continuance of a contract past the initial two-year renewal stage, and suggestions for improvement in the faculty member's overall performance.

Decisions about tenure, if not made earlier, are made in the sixth year of the probationary appointment. If the tenure decision made in the sixth year is negative, a one-year terminal appointment will be offered as described in the Faculty Handbook.

Probationary faculty members shall be evaluated in the three mission areas of teaching, scholarship, and service in their second and fourth year of service. The purpose of the probationary reviews is both evaluative and advisory. Probationary faculty members should be given a clear sense of their progress toward tenure and areas for improvement. A negative evaluation in either the two- or four-year review will result in a one-year terminal appointment for the following academic year.

Faculty members under consideration are responsible for providing the committee with a curriculum vita mirroring the format and guidelines for tenure and promotion and a personal statement as required for tenure and promotion. The Promotion and Tenure Committee will compile materials relevant to

evaluation including annual reviews, FAR reports, evaluations of teaching, and additional materials as deemed necessary.

The Promotion and Tenure Committee shall evaluate the peer teaching evaluations, student evaluations of teaching, and all additional evidence of teaching performance as detailed in the university tenure and promotion dossier guidelines and Guidelines for Promotion to Associate professor with Tenure & Promotion to Professor.

As part of the evaluation process, members of the Personnel Committee will conduct at least one peer review of teaching for probationary faculty members each year during the probationary period. Ideally, peer reviews will evaluate the range of courses a faculty member is assigned to teach during the probationary period. Peer reviews should follow guidelines provided in the department's Guidelines for Peer Reviews of Teaching.

The Promotion and Tenure Committee will evaluate the progress and quality of the faculty member's scholarship (published research, creative work, work in progress, conference papers, grants, etc.) as indicated on the faculty member's vita, Faculty Activities Report (FAR), and from evidence of scholarship provided by the faculty member under review as well as discussions with the faculty member. The faculty member will receive an evaluation of scholarship, progress toward tenure, and suggestions for strengthening his/her research program.

The faculty member will be evaluated on the quality of contributions to the overall functioning and health of the department, the university, and the broader discipline of communication. For this evaluation, the Promotion and Tenure Committee will consider service on committees, student advising (where appropriate), collegiality, commitment to the department, and any other contributions to the outreach mission of the university.

The Promotion and Tenure Committee will prepare a final, comprehensive report assessing the faculty member's performance in teaching, research, and service. This report will include recommendations to the department head for reappointment or non-reappointment, conditions for continued employment, and suggestions for improving performance. The department head may provide a separate evaluation if he/she deems it appropriate.

The department head will convey the results of the report to the faculty member under review. If the faculty member wishes to challenge the validity of the report, beyond any discussion with the Personnel Committee, the faculty member should follow the normal grievance procedures of the university described in the Faculty Handbook.

2.2 Evaluation for Promotion to Associate Professor with Tenure

The maximum total period for probationary appointments is six years, unless an extension is extended to candidates according to university policy. Decisions about tenure, if not made earlier, are made in the sixth year of the probationary appointment. Candidates may declare candidacy for promotion to associate professor with tenure before reaching the sixth year via a letter addressed to the department head. The letter should be delivered no later than August 1 of the academic year in which the candidate wishes to be considered.

No later than August 1 of the year during which a candidate will be evaluated for promotion and tenure, the department head will review with each the candidate the most recent guidelines for promotion and tenure and procedures and levels of tenure and promotion review as described in the Faculty Handbook. The candidate will be asked to provide names of four potential outside evaluators. Finally, the department head will establish deadlines for dossier and supporting material submission to the personnel committee.

A member of the personnel committee will be assigned as the primary consultant for the faculty candidate. That person should assist the candidate in gathering dossier materials, including soliciting letters of evaluation from alumni, letters of support from those familiar with the candidate's outreach activities and/or other evidence relevant to the tenure and promotion decision.

The Promotion and Tenure Committee is responsible for identifying no less than six outside evaluators of scholarship and creative activity. No more than two of the selected reviewers should come from the candidate's list. The department head will contact selected reviewers to ascertain their willingness to serve. Once the reviewers have agreed, the department head will forward all relevant materials to the reviewers with instructions for review as provided in the tenure and promotion guidelines.

The department head will convene a meeting of the Promotion and Tenure committee and complete a thorough review of each candidate's dossier, taking into account the department's Guidelines for Promotion to Associate Professor with Tenure & Promotion to Professor as well as all university guidelines. The committee may request additional information or explanation from the candidate, if needed. In addition, the committee shall solicit input from tenured faculty members not serving on the Promotion and Tenure Committee during a meeting of the tenured faculty. Faculty members not serving on the Promotion and Tenure Committee may provide the committee with written letters of

evaluation. The department head shall be present, but will not participate in deliberations other than to answer questions of fact related to the dossier.

After a thorough review, the members of the Promotion and Tenure Committee shall vote individually either to support or deny promotion to associate professor with tenure. The Promotion and Tenure Committee will provide a recommendation on each candidate to the department head, including a written evaluation of the candidate's performance in each mission area. The division of the vote is conveyed to the department head and a minority report may be included in the committee's recommendation if the vote is not unanimous.

The department head provides an independent recommendation to the dean. If the department head's recommendation does not concur with the committee's, the committee is so notified.

All other review guidelines and procedures are detailed in the Faculty Handbook.

2.3 Evaluation for Promotion to Professor

Promotion to professor is not governed by specific time constraints. Faculty members who believe they have reached the threshold for promotion to professor may declare candidacy for promotion in a letter to the department head no later than August 1 of the year in which they wish to be evaluated. The department head will meet with candidates to establish deadlines for submission of the dossier and supporting materials.

The Promotion and Tenure Committee will assist the candidate in compiling the promotion dossier according to university guidelines and will solicit letters of support from alumni and others who can offer evidence of the candidate's contributions in the university mission areas.

The Promotion and Tenure Committee is responsible for identifying no less than six outside evaluators of scholarship and creative activity. No more than two of the selected reviewers should come from the candidate's list. The department head will contact selected reviewers to ascertain their willingness to serve. Once the reviewers have agreed to serve, the department head will forward all relevant materials to the reviewers with instructions for review as provided in the tenure and promotion guidelines.

The department head will convene a meeting of the Promotion and Tenure committee and complete a thorough review of each candidate's

dossier, taking into account the department's Guidelines for Promotion to Associate Professor with Tenure & Promotion to Professor as well as all university guidelines. The committee may request additional information or explanation from the candidate, if needed.

The Promotion and Tenure Committee will convene the tenured faculty to provide feedback on the candidate's contributions and performance. Individual faculty members may provide written evaluation to the committee. The department head shall be present, but will not participate in deliberations other than to answer questions of fact related to the dossier. At this point, professors in the department not serving on the Promotion and Tenure committee should register a vote of support or non-support for promotion.

After a thorough review, the Promotion and Tenure committee shall vote individually either to support or deny promotion to professor. The committee will provide a recommendation on each candidate to the department head, including a written evaluation of the candidate's performance in each mission area. The division of the vote is conveyed to the department head and a minority report may be included in the committee's recommendation if the vote is not unanimous.

The department head will provide an independent recommendation to the dean. If the department head's recommendation does not concur with the committee's, the committee is so notified.

All other elements of the evaluation process are detailed in the Faculty Handbook.

2.4 Annual Faculty Performance Evaluation

At the end of each calendar year, each faculty member must complete the Faculty Activities Report (FAR) citing instructional, research, and service activities during the year. The department head, personnel committee, and Dean review these reports.

The Annual Evaluation serves the following purposes:

- To provide peer review and evaluation by colleagues.
- To systematize faculty evaluation and review.
- To provide a context for faculty development
- To increase faculty input and responsibility for departmental and colleague development.
- To provide clear expectations of successful teaching, scholarship, and service.
- To provide a mechanism for performance feedback.

- To provide a basis for faculty promotion and/or tenure decisions in a systematic manner.
- To assist the department head in salary increment decisions.

The following procedure will be undertaken annually for each faculty member:

- The Personnel Committee reviews, discusses, and obtains some consensus on areas and ratings for evaluation (e.g., what does an “exceptional” mean in teaching, research, or service? Are there differences in expectations among academic ranks? If so, what are those differences?)
- Faculty will be evaluated by rank in alphabetical order.
- The bases for evaluation include the Faculty Activities Report (FAR), student teaching evaluations, peer teaching evaluations, and other data available on the personnel form of each faculty member.
- The department head will record ratings, listen to discussion, and raise issues or questions.
- Committee members being discussed will leave for the duration of their evaluation.
- Although the Personnel Committee is advisory, the head may also request the committee to provide an evaluation of his/her performance following the same procedures used for the faculty.
- The Personnel Committee will summarize the evaluation of each faculty member and submit the report to the department head.
- The department head will provide each faculty member with the committee’s evaluation and a separate department’s head evaluation that that may or may not correspond to the committee evaluation. This evaluation will be shared with the individual faculty members during a personal conference with the department head.