Faculty Responsibilities, Retention, Promotion and Tenure
Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering

A faculty member’s responsibility is to inspire excellence in others and to strive to maintain and improve the academic quality of the Department, College, and University. In return, he or she merits trust and recognition from the University being manifest in tangible form by retention, promotion and, ultimately, tenure. The overriding criterion in all deliberations regarding retention, promotion and tenure is evidence of commitment to superior intellectual attainment. Demonstration of achievement in areas of teaching, research and scholarship, including the exercise of professional expertise, is an indispensable qualification for promotion and tenure. For retention, a reasonable potential for achieving these criteria must be evident. Effective participation in University and Professional service is a necessary component of a faculty member’s activities. Insistence on the highest attainable standards for faculty members is essential for the maintenance of the quality of the University as an institution dedicated to the discovery as well as the assimilation and dissemination of knowledge. Maintaining these standards throughout a faculty member’s working lifetime is also necessary. To this end, annual reviews and a periodic thorough re-evaluation of a faculty member’s contributions must be carried out in accord with University Regulations.

A. General Procedures

1. The Retention, Promotion and Tenure Committee (RPT) will be commissioned on an as-needed basis. It shall consist of all tenured/tenure track faculty at or above the professorial level that the candidate is pursuing. This might result in more than one committee during each promotion/tenure cycle.

2. A chairperson of the committee shall be selected by the department head prior to the first meeting of the committee.

3. All tenured faculty above the rank of assistant professor will vote on retention matters. An annual retention review of tenure-track faculty is conducted by the Department Head in consultation with the tenured faculty during the fall semester. As the first step in the annual retention review process, the tenure-track faculty member must prepare a summary of teaching, research / scholarship / creative activity, and service during the previous academic year, in accordance with departmental by-laws. The tenured faculty will re-view the summary and solicit input from the faculty member’s mentor or mentor commit-tee. The tenured faculty review is intended to provide the faculty member with a clear, thoughtful, and professional narrative that describes and discusses his or her progress to-ward promotion and tenure in the context of his or her appointment and departmental by-laws. After completing its review, the tenured faculty will take a formal retention vote. The narrative developed by the tenured faculty and the record of the retention vote by the tenured faculty will be shared with the faculty member and the department head.

4. All tenured or tenure-track faculty who are at and above the proposed professorial level of each candidate will review and vote on promotion matters.
5. All tenured faculty will discuss and vote on tenure matters.

6. A sub-committee of at least two will be appointed to assist in dossier preparation and to report back to the full committee on each formal action. One member, the advocate, will be chosen by the candidate.

7. It is the responsibility of each candidate to ensure that all required documentation is submitted to the sub-committee in a timely manner.

8. All formal actions for tenure and promotion will require letters of recommendation from outside authorities.

9. A formal meeting of the RPT Committee will be held at an appropriate time to meet the deadlines set by the College for forwarding the results to the College RPT Committee.

10. The promotion and tenure process in the Department of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering is an entirely confidential process. The members of the RPT committee are not at liberty to discuss the existence of the committee with anyone not on the committee.

11. The order of business of the formal RPT Committee Meeting will be as follows:
   a. Retention of assistant professors
   b. Promotion from assistant to associate professor
   c. Retention of untenured associate professors
   d. Tenure of associate professors
   e. Promotion from associate professor to professor
   f. Tenure of professors

12. The chairman of the RPT Committee will submit a report to the Head of Department on each candidate. The Head of Department will submit his report to the College Committee and the Dean of Engineering with the RPT Committee report as an appendix.

B. Specific Procedures

Review of Performance

The Department Head will, each year, review the teaching, research, thesis and dissertation supervision, committee assignments, publication record, scholarly contributions, and University and public service activities of each faculty member. The Department Head and the faculty member will discuss plans for the future and individual goals and objectives. How these goals and objectives relate to the Department’s long-term objectives and strategic plan will also be discussed. The review will culminate in a narrative describing strengths, weaknesses and expectations of the faculty member and a rating of the faculty performance on the following scale:
In accord with the directives of the UT Board of Trustees, each tenured professor will undergo a post-tenure review by his or her peers approximately every five years. This review is intended as an aid to the individual in assessing his or her performance and the determination of changes that need to be made to improve it. In cases where the performance is deemed to be unsatisfactory with respect to teaching, research and service, this review may serve as a basis for initiation of termination procedures for adequate cause. In cases where the annual reviews by the Department Head have resulted in unsatisfactory reviews for a period of not less than two successive years, the Department Head will ask the tenured faculty to review the faculty member’s performance in teaching, research, and service, and to vote on the question of whether termination proceedings should be initiated for adequate cause. Termination proceedings may also be initiated for (a) misconduct, (b) due to financial exigency or program discontinuance, or (c) due to an unauthorized leave of absence, as defined in the University of Tennessee publication entitled "Policies Governing Academic Freedom, Responsibility, and Tenure" and in the Faculty Handbook.

Retention

Annual informal retention reviews are conducted by the Department Head. A formal retention review will be conducted by the RPT committee for untenured assistant professors during their third or fourth year, the particular year to be recommended by the Department Head. Untenured associate professors and professors will be reviewed formally no later than their third year. For assistant professors whose first formal review uncovered problems serious enough to make ultimate tenure doubtful, a second formal review will be conducted one year later. Such a procedure, well documented, allows the individuals concerned adequate time to correct deficiencies and credits the individual with progress made.

In instances of unsatisfactory performance, the Department Head may, at his or her discretion, ask the committee to vote on whether to recommend that termination proceedings be initiated for the candidate.

Promotion

The normal times at which promotion will be awarded to appropriate individuals are the seventh year for assistant professors and the fifth year for associate professors. Early promotion can be awarded to suitably qualified individuals, especially when prior service has occurred at equivalent institutions. Years spent in full time administration will not be included in the time period except at the request of the
candidate. Documentation on the case is to consider, at a minimum, the following four areas: (a) teaching, (b) research, (c) scholarship, (d) university and professional service. Evidence appropriate to each area is listed in a separate section.

As stated in the preamble, a commitment to superior intellectual attainment is of overriding importance and is manifest through excellence in teaching, the education of graduate students, authorship of texts and refereed articles, all corroborated by peer review. Although success in obtaining research funding and authorship of refereed articles explicitly involve peer review, individual overall assessments by authorities in a candidate’s chosen area of specialty are essential.

After consultation with the faculty member, the Department Head will seek the advice of at least three and preferably four to six persons not on the faculty of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, whose expertise is closely related to that of the candidate and who are willing to provide thoughtful evaluation of the candidate’s written work or other suitable evidence of scholarly and/or creative research performance. None of these references may be the former thesis advisor, postdoctoral mentor, or a collaborator.

After having been denied promotion from associate professor to professor, an individual may request reconsideration of the case for promotion after a period of no less than two years.

Tenure

Granting of tenure is regarded as the University’s most critical personnel decision and will not be considered for assistant professors. Whenever possible, tenure will be granted on promotion to associate professor status, but it will entail a separate decision. The award of tenure is in response to an individual’s demonstrated achievements in teaching, research, and scholarship. It involves a strong assumption that those standards will be maintained or surpassed in future years. Accordingly, documentation must cover the areas of (a) teaching, (b) research, (c) scholarship, and (d) university and professional service. At least five letters of recommendation will be required, with no more than 50% being suggested by the candidate. These must conform to the restrictions described under the paragraph on "promotion."

C. Documentary Evidence

Teaching

Ability to teach effectively, at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, is required of all faculty. Appropriate sources of documentation include student evaluations, peer review by colleagues and exit interviews of graduates. Demonstrated ability to develop courses and participate effectively in curriculum design is essential.
Research

Participation in both personal research and direction of graduate student research is recommended. All faculty should serve on graduate supervisory committees and chair some of those committees. The ability to direct research is manifest in the production of undergraduate and master’s theses and doctoral dissertations by supervised students. The following are all forms of recognition of research ability: (a) publication of research papers and patents, (b) the award of research funds by organizations using peer review, (c) active participation at research meetings of professional societies, (d) presentation of seminars and invited lectures, and (e) reviewing of journal articles and research proposals.

Scholarship

There are many forms of evidence of scholarly activities. These include: (a) awards and prizes, (b) fellowships in professional societies, (c) authorship of texts, (d) authorship of review articles and book chapters, (e) sole authorship of articles in peer-reviewed journals, (f) co-authorship of articles in peer-reviewed journals, (g) authorship of articles in conference publications.

Service

Two major forms of service indispensable to the University and the profession are (a) willing and active participation in committee activities at the departmental, college and university levels, and (b) participation in the activities of professional societies at the local, regional, national, and international levels.

Examples of the former include curriculum development, student advising, recruiting at all levels, service as safety officer, and active efforts to solve the various problems and concerns raised in routine committee assignments, service on the Faculty Senate, and service on the Undergraduate and/or Graduate Council, to name but a few.

Examples of the latter include such activities as serving as an officer of a professional society, development of symposia at regional, national or international meetings, and serving on professional society committees. Other examples of professional service include participation, as advisors, in local, state and federal government agencies as well as to national organizations,

D. Level of Performance Expected

Faculty are expected to perform at a level that will bring respect and honor to themselves, to the Department of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering and to the University of Tennessee. Such efforts will involve certain activities carried out at a level that is sufficient to maintain and grow both our undergraduate and graduate programs. It is recognized that faculty are a diverse group with some being more adept at teaching, while others may be more capable researchers. However, all tenure track faculty must engage in scholarly activities, teaching, research, and service at a reasonable level. A typical faculty member is expected to continuously support and direct the research of 3-5 graduate students,
Teach two to four classes per year, publish three refereed journal articles per year, participate actively in appropriate professional technical societies (including presentation of papers at national and international meetings, holding offices, serving on committees, organizing symposia, etc.), and effectively serving on the Department, College, and University wide committees and governing bodies. While quantity of effort and output must be sufficient to maintain an active presence in the field of expertise, quality of teaching, research, scholarship and service are of the greatest significance in determining level of performance and qualifications for promotion and pay increase.

The following represent some guidelines that may be used to establish rankings in individual categories based on the above described scale. It is important to keep in mind that the final assessment is an overall determination, averaged over all the faculty member’s activities.

**Teaching**

Grades consistently below 2.8 out of 5.0 on the Chancellor’s Teaching Evaluation Program (CTEP) raise serious questions about the quality of teaching. In such cases, the faculty member will be required to provide other evidence that his or her teaching is satisfactory. Possible other evidence includes other types of evaluation such as the Tau Beta Pi Evaluation Form, letters from students testifying to the quality of instruction, etc. Generally, faculty who rate between 2.8 and 3.3 will be categorized as "needs improvement," those who rate between 3.3 and 3.8 will be categorized as "meets expectations for rank," and those who exceed 3.8 will be categorized as "exceeds expectations for rank," with respect to teaching. Of course, other forms of evidence of quality teaching will also be considered in making the final evaluation. The CTEP ratings are only one readily available measure. Faculty are encouraged to find other means to demonstrate the quality of their teaching.

**Research**

Publication of research papers in peer-reviewed journals is the primary measure of research accomplishment. However, the quality of the papers is as important as the quantity. As a minimum standard in this area, a typical faculty in Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering must publish two quality papers per year on average in a peer-reviewed journal. Invited seminars and presentations at national and international meetings are also expected. In order to achieve "meets expectations for rank," a faculty member must typically also provide support for a minimum of two graduate students from externally funded research projects. Faculty who rarely publish and who do not contribute to the support of graduate students, will be categorized as "unsatisfactory" with respect to the research function. For a faculty member to be categorized as "exceeds expectations for rank" with respect to research, he or she must substantially exceed the above stated criteria for "meets expectations for rank."
Scholarship

Scholarship should be at a level that will be sufficiently recognized that the faculty will be asked to prepare review articles or will publish books, etc. Faculty will grow into this level of expectation. Early years will involve preparation of scholarly papers. Faculty whose primary activity is in teaching are expected to write textbooks and/or publish in educational journals.

University and Professional Service

Faculty are expected to accept and perform well in the various departmental, college and university-wide committees. A consistent absence of such efforts will constitute grounds for concern in the overall evaluation. Faculty are also expected to associate with appropriate professional societies consistent with their area of special expertise. They should seek leadership positions in these societies and, in particular, they should perform such service as developing symposia at national and international meetings, refereeing papers and proposals, etc.