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THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY  
Department of Chemistry

DEPARTMENTAL CRITERIA FOR ACTIONS INVOLVING REAPPOINTMENT,  
PROMOTION, AND TENURE

The American University Department of Chemistry expects, supports, and requires effective teaching, creative scholarship, and service to the department, the college, the university, and professional scholarly communities from faculty members seeking to qualify for reappointment, promotion and/or tenure. Faculty members seeking to qualify for reappointment, promotion and/or tenure must document success in each of these areas. The department follows the general standards, timetable, and procedures for reappointments, promotion, and tenure laid down in the *Faculty Manual* and supplemented by instructions from the Dean of Faculty, the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and the Committee on Faculty Actions.

This document seeks to make these criteria more focused and specific for faculty members in the Department of Chemistry applying for reappointment, promotion, or tenure, as well as for the department's Rank and Tenure Committee and the department chair in their roles in the reappointment, promotion, or tenure process.

The Rank and Tenure Committee and the chair consider the entire career-long contributions of faculty, with particular emphasis on contributions since their arrival at American University. We expect, support, and require excellence in both teaching and scholarship. A professor who fails to make a significant contribution to scholarship during the pre-tenure years will not receive promotion to Associate Professor or tenure, whatever his or her teaching record. Similarly, an excellent scholar who fails to teach effectively will not receive promotion or tenure. Promotion to the rank of Professor is a matter of the faculty member's level of cumulative scholarly achievement, pedagogical contributions, and professional service.

Service to the department, the university community, and the wider professional scholarly community is expected to be an intrinsic part of a faculty member's basic obligations. Such service, however, will receive less weight than teaching or scholarship in reappointment, promotion, and tenure decisions.

The department recognizes that pre-tenure faculty must build toward a record of teaching and scholarly excellence. They are encouraged to consult with more senior colleagues, the Rank and Tenure Committee, and the chair on matters regarding their development as a scholar and teacher. Expectations for tenure in the Department of Chemistry at American University are that pre-tenure faculty should establish a respected and independent research program, excel at teaching and mentoring students, and contribute meaningful service to the department, college, and university. Importantly, the department values efforts to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion – at AU and in the discipline more broadly.

The criteria that follow are not intended to be exhaustive or final. They provide general guidelines to assist faculty members under review, as well as senior colleagues conducting

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reviews. When a faculty member is convinced that the criteria below do not adequately capture his/her contributions, he/she is encouraged to express this in a narrative statement to be included in the file.

## **A. Guidelines for Promotion to Associate Professor**

### Scholarship

The development of a successful and productive program of scholarly research is required for tenure and promotion to Associate Professor. Evidence of quality scholarship will be measured by three major peer-reviewed components (publication record, external funding, and external reviews) and several secondary criteria.

Prior to the tenure and promotion decision, the candidate should have established a significant record of publication in top-quality journals within their field. These journals are often published by reputable established publishers with editorial board members who are experts in the respective fields. In addition, research metrics discussed in *Meaningful Metrics* by Roemer and Borchardt can be used as a guide to journal quality. Although review articles, patent disclosures, and conference proceedings can be indicative of establishing prestige in their field, the lack of tools for quantifying quality and impact of these outlets makes evaluating them problematic and hence less informative relative to journal articles. Posting manuscripts on a repository of electronic preprints, such as ChemRxiv, can be an effective way of disseminating the work. While these manuscripts have not gone through rigorous peer-review and cannot be counted as journal articles, there are valuable external assessments that can be gathered as evidence of scholarly quality. Among others, this evidence can include citations, opinions by grant reviewers, or public comments expressed by experts in the field in the preprint server or other public fora such as Pubpeer. To use these comments as the evidence of scholar quality, the identity of the commenters cannot be anonymous. Additionally, the department may consider other evidence-based criteria for the evaluation of the quality of preprints as they are developed by bibliographers. Publications that are educational, biographical or popular in nature, rather than about original research, will be considered as part of the junior faculty's teaching development and will not count as research publications. Evidence of scholarly impact will be documented by considering citation ratings, outside letters of evaluation from distinguished referees, news and highlights in professional magazines, national research awards, invited presentations as key-note speaker and/or to invitation-only venues, such as Gordon conferences and evaluated preprints. Since some types of research require more time than others, external evaluations will be used to help judge a member's productivity and the quality of his or her contributions relative to the norm in the sub-discipline.

It is recognized that nearly all publications will require collaborations, and thus authorship outside the department or university. It is not uncommon to have half a dozen authors on a single publication in chemistry, so publications will not be diminished by the number of authors on a paper. However, the publications (especially toward the end of a faculty member's pre-tenure service) should be representative of the faculty member's AU research program and

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demonstrate a degree of independence and scope outside the pre-tenure faculty's graduate or post-doctoral research. In addition, the pre-tenure faculty member should be the first, last, and/or corresponding author on at least one third of publications produced after the candidate joins AU. The date of submission of the file for action to the departmental Rank and Tenure Committee is the last relevant date for reporting publication of scholarship, other than updates regarding publication acceptances of materials already referenced in the file (as provided in the CFA's "Instructions for Submitting Files for Action").

The department recognizes the importance of securing external funding for building strong faculty research programs. As members of a smaller, teaching intensive, non-doctoral granting department, Chemistry faculty may face additional hurdles in acquiring funds from some sources. Nevertheless, successful acquisition of funding is important for the development of faculty careers. Pre-tenure faculty are expected to show evidence of vigorous solicitation of substantial grants from competitive sources and to secure funding from external sources. For tenure and promotion to Associate Professor, the university expects that a faculty member in the department should have been awarded external funding to sustain high quality and well-respected scholarship. The department recognizes and values funding awarded to support a range of activities. These activities can include, but are not limited to: laboratory research, translation of laboratory results to applied technology, improving education and engagement in chemistry, fostering international exchanges of scholars and students, and promotion of diversity, equity, and inclusion within the chemical enterprise. While PI status is preferable, significant grants on which the candidate is co-PI will carry weight in the context of a holistic analysis. In the case where a candidate's applications for highly competitive external grants go unfunded, the department will undertake a holistic evaluation of the candidate's research achievements, including (but not be limited to) receipt of an excellent score on one or more such grants and/or establishment of an exceptional record of published research.

There are a number of important indicators of the respect afforded the faculty member by the field, which will be considered secondary criteria in the assessment of overall scholarly achievement. These factors may include appointments to grant review panels, invitations to speak at other universities, invitations to write a review article, requests to serve on PhD committees at other institutions, publications in conference proceedings or book chapters, and successful internal grants and awards.

The use of external evaluators within the candidate's field of expertise and the trajectory of the candidate's scholarship will serve as important gauges of scholarship quality. Comments pertaining to the candidate's publication venues (quality), productivity, and overall contributions to the field will be given significant weight in judging scholarship. It is also expected that the candidate's productivity or national recognition is on track to meet the scholarship criteria of the potential future promotion to Full Professor. This can take the form of, among other accomplishments, a consistent and notable increase in scholarship productivity or national recognition leading up to submission of a file to the department Rank and Tenure Committee.

### Teaching

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In a department that offers a MS as its highest degree, effective and high caliber teaching is essential. The department believes that there are many measures of a faculty member's teaching ability. As recommended by the Beyond SETs Task Force established by the Faculty Senate, the department requires "a defined [teaching evaluation] portfolio with constrained SET use" . Candidates seeking tenure and promotion to Associate Professor should submit a teaching portfolio containing at least one item from each of the five categories listed in the Task Force's Final Report to the Faculty Senate. In addition, the department places emphasis on good rapport with students, efforts to support student learning outcomes, and involvement of students in faculty research. Evidence of such accomplishments includes, but is not limited to:

- Promoting diversity, equity and inclusion in and outside the classroom.
- Participating and promoting the university's activities to enhance diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Providing timely, fair, and objective assessment of student performance.
- Engagement with students outside formal classes, such as in undergraduate independent research projects, government laboratory tours, or one-on-one instruction.
- Inclusion of student work or student participation in conference presentations and peer-reviewed publications.
- Student lab report instruction.
- Significant course development, such as the preparation of a new course or new laboratory experiments.
- Service as director of undergraduate or graduate programs.
- Participation as a pre-medical advisor.
- Acquisition of a internal funding to support teaching activities.
- Serving as a master's student's committee advisor.

This evidence should be included in the portfolio. Becoming an excellent teacher is an ongoing process and all faculty need to build a record of teaching excellence. Each faculty member is encouraged to consult the departmental Rank and Tenure Committee and department chair regarding his or her overall development as a teacher.

### Service

Any academic institution flourishes by blending a variety of abilities, interests and commitments. The Department of Chemistry regards service as an important aspect of professional development. A strong record of service will be considered in reappointment, promotion and tenure decisions. However, the department also recognizes that service obligations should be minimal for pre-tenure faculty and should grow in scope post-tenure. It should be noted that an outstanding service record will not make up for deficiencies in other areas.

## **B. Guidelines for Promotion to Full Professor**

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Promotion to the rank of Professor is a matter of the faculty member's level of cumulative scholarly achievement, pedagogical contributions, and professional service. The candidate must give evidence of an arc of scholarly activity that demonstrates continued growth in both the breadth and impact of his or her work. Evidence of good visibility includes, but is not limited to, a strong record of publications in top-quality journals and active participation in national or international conferences. Successful acquisition of patent disclosures or invited participation in highly regarded panels constitute other prominent examples of evidence of good visibility. A highly regarded book or book chapter may be used as evidence of quality and impact in one's field. In this case, indicators of quality and impact may include the reputation of the publisher, the series, and contributing authors. In addition, the faculty member must continue to pursue grants from external sources. In most cases, the faculty member should have secured substantial funding from nationally recognized and competitive sources since the promotion to Associate Professor. Significant grants on which the candidate is co-PI will carry weight in the context of a holistic analysis, especially when the grant is an inter-departmental or inter-institutional collaboration. Candidates should submit a teaching portfolio containing SET scores and at least one item from two of the remaining four categories listed in the Beyond SETs Task Force's Final Report to the Faculty Senate.

The department appreciates that the balance among service, scholarship, and teaching often varies over the course of an academic career. We look to tenured faculty to demonstrate a record of active contributions to faculty governance at all levels. A candidate for the rank of Professor should clearly demonstrate a willingness and ability to provide leadership through service at the levels of the department, college, university, and profession. Of particular importance, we expect the tenured candidate to show effective mentorship of junior faculty.

The department evaluates a faculty member's consistent service to the profession through a range of indicators. These include: being elected to office in professional organizations; holding positions of responsibility (invited or elected) on professional committees; sitting on grant review panels; organizing or participating in professional conferences; serving on editorial boards of scholarly journals; refereeing works by other scholars submitted for publication; editing scholarly journals; and maintaining active membership in professional organizations.

While faculty service is a crucial component of all reviews for reappointment, tenure, and promotion, it is never the primary basis for tenure and promotion decisions. As a consequence, it cannot compensate for weak performance in scholarship or teaching at any stage of a faculty member's academic career.