I. Guidelines for Tenure & Promotion

The goal of this document is to establish substantive and actionable criteria for reappointment, tenure and promotion to Associate Professor and promotion to Professor in the Department of Environmental Science. This document is a supplement to the minimum standards set forth in the University’s Faculty Manual and highlights instruments and metrics for evaluating a faculty member’s body of work as a teacher-scholar. A faculty member must demonstrate excellence in both teaching and scholarship to merit promotion; excellence in one will not make up for a deficiency in the other. Meaningful service to the department, the university, and the community at large is also expected from a faculty member, with those responsibilities increasing over time. Progression from reappointment to tenure and promotion to Associate Professor, and to promotion to Professor should be marked by a record of high quality scholarship, excellence in teaching, and substantial service to the department, the university, and the community.

A. Scholarship

Evidence of quality scholarship will be comprised of three major components: publications, external funding support, and external reviews. In addition, these components should reflect or provide evidence of a trajectory of scholarly growth and increasing significance of the candidate’s work.

Publications should consist primarily of refereed journal articles, but may also include books and book chapters. The candidate, especially in pre-tenure service, is encouraged to target high quality refereed journals in their field as the primary outlet for their scholarly work. Quantitative measures of publication quality and impact are now readily available; though they are not without deficiencies, they may be used as one metric to assess the quality of a candidate’s scholarship. Although books, book chapters, and peer-reviewed conference proceedings are legitimate outlets for scholarship, the lack of tools for quantifying quality and impact make evaluating them problematic and hence less informative relative to journal articles. Similarly, publications in dictionaries, encyclopedias and the popular press, reviews of textbooks, and trade magazine articles will rarely provide useful information when assessing the quality of an individual’s scholarship. Thus, these outlets should be regarded as secondary to journal articles, especially for pre-tenure faculty. In reviewing a file for action, emphasis will be given to work completed while at American University.

To support a productive research program, all faculty should actively pursue significant external funding at levels appropriate for their field. External funding from nationally recognized and competitive sources will be taken as affirmation of the quality of the candidate’s scholarly activities. For tenure and promotion to Associate Professor, the candidate should have a consistent record of external funding sufficient to support an active research program, preferably from nationally peer-reviewed, competitive sources.

To merit promotion to the rank of Professor, the candidate must possess an arc of scholarly activity that demonstrates continued growth in both the breadth and impact of his or her work. Supporting evidence should include a substantial publication record, which may include highly regarded books.

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or book chapters, and significant external funding, preferably from national sources, to support a range of scholarly activities including research, training, and capacity building.

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”).

### B. Teaching

Becoming an excellent teacher is an ongoing process, and new faculty members are expected build a record of teaching excellence. Faculty members are encouraged to consult their mentors and Chair regarding their overall development as teacher.

Excellence in teaching results in students who have developed competencies in their core discipline and have acquired critical faculties for understanding not only advances in their own field, but also significant work in related disciplines. To this end, the faculty shall provide timely, fair, and objective assessment of student performance.

Because “excellence” in teaching is not easily captured by any one measure, evidence will be sought in a variety of ways including:

- student evaluation of teaching (SET)
- narrative comments by students on teaching evaluations
- comments by faculty colleagues who have shared classrooms or served together on thesis committees
- classroom visits and peer evaluations from colleagues
- teaching materials such as course syllabi, assignments, and examinations that serve as evidence of a well organized, rigorous, and professional approach to teaching
- active engagement with students outside of the classroom such as supervision of student research and serving as faculty mentors

Among these, SETs, although imperfect, are important indicators. At a minimum, SETs should be comparable to scores of others in the department teaching similar types of courses.

To merit promotion to the rank of Professor, the candidate should have established a record of excellence in teaching across the departmental curriculum.

### C. Service

Any academic institution flourishes by blending a variety of abilities, interests, and commitments. Indeed, ENVS regards service as an important aspect of professional development. Thus, a strong record of service will be essential for reappointment, tenure, and promotion decisions. However, we also recognize that service obligations should be less for pre-tenure faculty and grow in scope post-tenure, where more service outside of the department or outside AU will be expected of candidates for promotion to Professor. It should be noted that an outstanding service record will not make up for deficiencies in other areas. Service to one’s professional societies is also encouraged, particularly

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This does not constitute an employment contract.

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in the case of candidates seeking promotion to Professor, but only to the extent that it does not compromise teaching and scholarly activities.

To merit promotion to the rank of Professor, a candidate must have a record of willingness and ability in providing leadership in faculty governance at all levels of the university community.

II. Term Faculty Promotion (Assistant Professor/Associate Professor/Professor Track) (multi-year term, research track)

With respect to the guidelines for promotion to Associate Professor and Professor outlined in the teaching and service sections of this document, the same criteria will apply for promotion of term faculty on the Assistant Professor/Associate Professor/Professor track. A strong and consistent record of teaching excellence will be expected of term faculty, as evidenced by the same measures outlined above for tenure-line faculty (i.e., SETs, engagement, teaching materials, classroom visits, comments from faculty colleagues, etc.). Term faculty will also be expected to provide significant service contributions at both the departmental and college levels.

Given that term faculty in the Department of Environmental Science 1) are encumbered with a significantly heavier teaching load than tenure-line faculty, 2) lack a research laboratory of their own, and 3) are sometimes restricted from submitting grant proposals to fund their research, the scholarship criteria for promotion of term faculty differs from that of tenure-line faculty as outlined below.

A. Publication Record

Although term faculty typically do not have their own research laboratory at American University, multi-year candidates on the term Assistant Professor/Associate Professor/Professor track are expected to continue their scholarship through off-campus collaborations or through collaborations and/or arrangements with faculty on-campus. Candidates will be evaluated primarily with regard to their record of publication in peer-reviewed academic journals and, to a lesser extent, their presentations at scientific conferences. The publication record of multi-year candidates on the term Assistant Professor/Associate Professor/Professor track should look very similar to that of tenure-line faculty, but extended over a longer time period. In other words, the quality of research (e.g., publication venue, impact on the field) is expected to be roughly comparable to that of tenure-line faculty, but with a reduced publication frequency to account for the significantly higher teaching demands (six course load) of term faculty.

B. External Funding

Term faculty members are not expected to apply for or procure external funding for promotion, but any success in obtaining such grants will be viewed very favorably.

C. External Evaluations

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The department will follow university guidelines with respect to the solicitation of external letters in promotion cases involving term faculty. If external evaluation is the university norm, the solicitation letter from the Science Rank and Tenure Committee will make it clear that the candidate has no laboratory space, is on a six-course teaching load, and is not expected to submit external grant proposals. Negative comments that arise from evaluators' lack of awareness of the distinction between tenure-line and term faculty will not be considered in the promotion decision.