

SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION TENURE AND PROMOTION GUIDELINES

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INTRODUCTION

The School of Communication (SOC) is comprised of four divisions (Communication Studies, Film & Media Arts, Journalism, and Public Communication) that share a common mission: “Engaging, enterprising, experiential. The School of Communication inspires leaders through excellence in teaching, research, creativity and unique real-world opportunities.” This document is one of the resources guiding candidates for tenure and/or promotion in the School of Communication. Other resources include the annual instructional memo from the Committee on Faculty Actions (CFA) and Dean of Faculty (DoF), as well as the American University Faculty Manual.

The School of Communication expects its faculty to be outstanding scholar-teachers who have made original and high-impact contributions to the field of communication, whether related to a professional practice, creative endeavor, or academic discipline. To earn tenure and promotion, faculty are expected to produce excellent work that contributes to knowledge. Faculty should demonstrate sustained productivity and a clear trajectory for ongoing work that extends and expands on the impacts of previous efforts. SOC values a diversity of work that contributes to scholarship, advances the practice of communication, is directed toward a public purpose, and demonstrates innovation and leadership that has brought recognition or influence in their chosen area. In addition to the school-wide standards that define research expectations in the School of Communication, specific benchmarks and measures of success are found in the divisional guidelines included in this document.

Our faculty is widely diverse in its interests and practices, so we depend upon criteria drawn from our practices and the ecology in which they take place. As stated in the American University Faculty Manual:

Faculty members’ thorough understanding of and significant contribution to their field are essential to the mission of the university and to the advancement of knowledge. All teaching units or academic units must have criteria that require creative, scholarly, and professional achievements of the highest quality and with national or international impact. The university shall base its assessment of a faculty member’s achievements on the aggregate productivity and impact of the work since degree completion, including evidence that the faculty member is productive at AU. The work should relate directly to the criteria established by the teaching unit or academic unit. An additional required assessment addresses the likelihood of continued successful achievements.

In reviewing a file for action emphasis is given to work completed at American University. For candidates bringing to American University substantial credit toward tenure, the balance can be adjusted accordingly.”

Scholarly (research, scholarship, and creative or professional activity, as defined in the Faculty Manual) contributions to the field are valued irrespective of financial compensation or funding; the decisive features for tenure-ability are creative control, innovation that demonstrates leadership in the field, impact, and recognition.

We value colleagues who integrate their knowledge across research, teaching and service. We believe this makes our faculty stronger teachers, as well as better resources for students, faculty, the community, and leaders.

EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING

SOC expects its faculty to be effective and inspiring teachers, drawing from their deep knowledge of and experience in their field as well as their research, creative and professional work. SOC believes that successful teaching involves engaging students both inside and outside the classroom, which means creating a positive learning environment, advising and mentoring, providing effective feedback on assignments, helping students develop critical thinking and writing skills, and, in some cases, including students in their creative, research, and professional work. Indeed, effective engagement with students outside the classroom may take many forms including: encouraging, promoting, and showcasing student creative and research work; advising student-run organizations; accepting invitations to speak to student groups; planning and organizing special events (*e.g.*, American Forum-style programs; on-campus film screenings) that include notable student participation; responding favorably to interview requests from student-run media, and serving on blended student-faculty committees. Faculty are expected to teach challenging and demanding courses that have clear objectives and meaningful assignments and provide timely, fair, and objective assessment of student performance. SOC faculty are encouraged to promote innovation in their curriculum. To evaluate effective teaching, SOC looks for strong student evaluations, quality syllabi and assignments, active engagement with students, evidence that the faculty member is accessible to students, creative approaches to curriculum, and genuine efforts to improve teaching.

EXCELLENCE IN SERVICE

Service to the Division, the School, the University, and the field is expected of all SOC faculty. Faculty are expected to engage SOC and their Division primarily through their work on standing and ad hoc committees as well as through any individual efforts to develop curriculum, affect policy, manage programs, or initiate change. Faculty are also expected to attend Division and SOC Council meetings. Involvement and leadership in their Division, SOC, the University, and student initiatives is also encouraged, as is participation and leadership in professional organizations, activities, or publications.

EXCELLENCE IN SCHOLARSHIP

Communication Studies

To achieve tenure and promotion, faculty members in the Communication Studies Division must attain high standards of demonstrated excellence, aggregate productivity, and impact in their scholarly work as stated in the introduction to the SOC Tenure and Promotion Guidelines.

The Division expects faculty members to produce research/creative/professional work that makes distinctive, well-recognized contributions to the field, and to have developed an ongoing scholarly agenda that promotes sustained productivity. The Division does not prescribe a single tenure path, and recognizes the importance of flexibility in interpreting these guidelines, reflective of the rapidly changing nature of our field. At the same time, faculty members seeking tenure are expected to demonstrate recognized expertise and impact in one's field, visibility and a clearly defined research trajectory. The paths to achieving these objectives include a combination of the following:

- A book or books published by a high-quality, well-respected academic press;
- A consistent record of refereed articles in top journals in communication fields, including works as a single or lead author;
- A high-impact and consistent contribution to the communication fields through monographs, refereed conference proceedings, articles in highly selective professional and policy publications (including journalistic and opinion pieces), as well as rigorous research reports and policy briefs aimed at policymakers, the press, industry and NGOs.

The Communication Studies Division also encourages and values the development of innovative platforms such as: digital tools for data collection, aggregation and analysis, interactive platforms for new forms of communication engagement, and new digital research method tools that have impact on the field.

Peer review is a key factor in understanding the candidate's reception in the field; as such, refereed work is highly valued. It is up to the candidate to provide evidence for significant work that is not peer reviewed but that has demonstrated significant impact. If the research is drawn principally from dissertation work, it is particularly important to demonstrate progress on an ongoing research agenda. Single-authored books and articles are highly valued, as are collaborative works in which the faculty member demonstrates his or own significant role in the jointly authored publication.

Demonstrable impact is essential. Therefore, books, peer-reviewed journal articles, and articles in archived, peer-reviewed conference proceedings are taken as more significant than, for example, conference and working papers. Impact in Communication Studies can be measured in several ways: citations, scholarly reviews of work, honors and awards, invited lectures, influence on policy, changes in professional practices as a direct result of work, outside funding, press coverage, metrics of software usage. While these are important indicators, the list is not necessarily exhaustive.

Film and Media Arts

The broad range of research/creative/professional accomplishments of the Film and Media Arts (FMA) faculty reflect the evolving scope of film, video, photography, emerging media and gaming fields.

Tenure and promotion in FMA is based primarily on the evaluation of a faculty member's substantial body of work, of which s/he is the primary creator, and that represents significant impact in the field. This impact may be evidenced by peer-review, national or international recognition, or notable targeted impact. It is the faculty member's responsibility to clearly define her/his body of work for those within and outside the field. FMA recognizes that there are multiple routes to achieving tenure and promotion.

By establishing goals of excellence, impact, leadership, and innovation, FMA requires faculty to articulate a clear forward trajectory and to document a career defined by active scholarship as defined as research, scholarship, and creative or professional activities that demonstrate impact on the creator's peer group and intended audience. FMA recognizes that contributions to the field will vary across film, video, photography, gaming, and emerging media, and according to the type of research/creative/professional activity. For example, a faculty member's work might have broad impact on a field through international, national, or targeted reach through public purpose work, input on conversations about race, culture, and gender, interdisciplinary activities, innovative impact through an emerging media lab, and so on. In all cases, the faculty member is expected to clearly define and frame her or his contribution to the field with evidence that demonstrates significant impact.

Evidence of ongoing and future work can be presented in many forms. The tenure candidate must demonstrate excellence and advancement in the field, as well as significant recognition in the field. Evaluative criteria include selection for highly regarded peer-judged, peer-reviewed, or curated festivals, competitions, installations, or publications; national and international or high-impact festivals, conferences, and other events; invited showings, screenings and other displays of work; as well as awards, honors, prizes, serving on juries for awards and festivals, curating, being selected for residences and scholarships in the field, or other such peer recognition.

We are not providing a prescriptive list in recognition that there are a variety of paths to tenure. As the field evolves, FMA faculty should be free to pursue whatever new forms are most appropriate for personal scholarship (creative, professional, research), for themselves, their fields, and for their students.

Journalism

Journalism faculty may achieve tenure and promotion by demonstrating substantial accomplishment and significant impact in professional, creative, or scholarly work reflecting the broad range of print, broadcast, film/video, online and emerging media in our evolving field. Candidates must also demonstrate a clear trajectory for future scholarly, creative, or professional activity. Successful research agendas may be entirely comprised of professional, creative, or scholarly work in the discipline, or may reflect some combination of the three modes of research

unified by theoretical or conceptual approaches.

Tenure and promotion in Journalism is based primarily on the evaluation of a faculty member's substantial body of work, the majority of which s/he should have a primary role in the authorship and/or production, and its significant impact on the field. Given the increasing emphasis on collaborative work in journalism, the faculty member should explain the relative roles and contributions of the respective authors and producers. Impact and significance can be illustrated by peer review; national or international recognition; audience size and reach; rankings, acceptance rates, and peer regard of publication and distribution venues; evidence of direct influence or change in response to reporting/research. The responsibility for defining one's body of work and its evidence of measurable impact lies with the candidate for tenure and promotion.

The Journalism division places a high value on innovation and leadership in our changing field and recognizes that scholarly, creative, and professional research may take a wide range of forms. These include, but are not limited to, print and online journals, magazines, newspapers, journalistic websites, books, monographs, video and film, broadcast, online audio, multimedia, infographics and data visualizations, games and interactive platforms, and mobile applications. Impact and recognition for a candidate's work and contributions to the field may take the form of national and international awards, citations in peer-reviewed literature, refereed or invited conference presentations, grants and fellowships awarded, invited appearances or screenings, professional consultations, media appearances, service on expert advisory committees, invitations to jury or review competitions or journals, and authorship of government or organization reports. These criteria enable a path to tenure and promotion via professional, creative, and scholarly work. For professional journalistic work, measurements of peer review include metrics such as editorial selection for publication in highly competitive news outlets and refereed selection for awards that are mediated by distinguished professionals in the field.

In achieving impact, leadership, and innovation in a constantly evolving field, Journalism candidates for tenure and promotion may define their audience, peers, and sphere of influence in a variety of ways. These entities may have international and national reach, or may target a specific issue of significance, innovation in the field, or new modes of conveying journalistic knowledge which may have a more defined audience. The Journalism division recognizes that continuing innovation in the field and the range of research modes, in the forms of print, online, broadcast, video/film, and emerging media, will necessitate varying definitions of audience, peers, and impact. In all cases, the candidate for tenure and promotion is expected to clearly outline the definitions and significance of his/her work for evaluation by those within and outside the field.

Journalism faculty seeking tenure and promotion will also use the standards described above to outline a clear path for future work that continues to further advance his/her impact on the field, as well as establish a path for excellence, leadership, and innovation in creative, professional, and scholarly pursuits.

Public Communication

Scholarship and the pursuit of knowledge in the Public Communication Division are built on a diverse faculty that draws its expertise and insight from the study of and/or participation in the field of public communication, which is also known as strategic communication. Our faculty's scholarly mission is to create, examine, embody, advance, and illuminate the knowledge, insights, and strategic thinking essential to the field.

We value contributions to knowledge and demonstrable impact on the methods or practice, or understanding of the profession itself. We also value work that in its scope and depth has a clear and appreciable influence on society, which means work that may fuel social change, advance adoption of an issue or cause, or contribute to public knowledge or debate.

Because our field intersects the academy, the practice, and the public arena, the Public Communication Division embraces faculty expertise drawn from academic study, professional experience, and public discourse, which means that our definition of scholarship incorporates academic research, public intellectual analysis, creative production, and professional work. Some faculty may pursue knowledge primarily in one of these areas, but they are not mutually exclusive, so some may cross over into the others and blend them together. Our division respects all approaches consistent with the work of our field, which includes diverse genres and specialties that comprise the persuasion, advocacy, research, analytics, and storytelling work of public communication. We also value work that advances an understanding of the rapid changes that are constantly disrupting and transforming our field.

As a broad field involved in various media, we respect a range of faculty work and diverse means of professional and scholarly peer review. Faculty may document their scholarship in ways that include though are not limited to the following:

- written, digital, or broadcast products such as authored, co-authored, and edited books, peer-reviewed and invited academic journal articles, chapters in edited books, publications in news outlets, reports and monographs as well as software, websites, documentaries and media productions in which the faculty member had a key role in creating or developing;
- the creation of innovative techniques in the field;
- lectures, presentations, conference papers, testimony, exhibits, workshops, film festivals, and ongoing work as a media commentator, analyst or invited expert;
- authorship of government, foundation, NGO, organizational or professional research reports;
- media productions developed or produced by the candidate;
- professional accomplishments in the field, which may include but are not limited to significant involvement as a strategist, researcher, writer, data analyst, or

producer for a planned, research-based persuasive or informational campaign.

As a diverse field drawing from both professional and scholarly expertise, we require all faculty seeking tenure and promotion to articulate a clear forward trajectory that provides evidence of sustained productivity, impact and significance. Our division values a scholarly record that exhibits quality and productivity, though a record of high quality work is more consequential as a measure of impact and long-term influence than the quantity of what a faculty member produces.

We examine and measure the impact of a faculty member's scholarship and work based on benchmarks that may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- multiple references to or citations in books, reports, news stories, testimony, peer-reviewed literature, and/or well-regarded articles and essays;
- reviews of a book or media production in well-regarded media outlets, trade publications, and/or academic journals;
- the receipt of noteworthy grants, awards, consultations or positions in the field, profession, advocacy organizations, the media, or society at large;
- invitations to serve on expert advisory boards or committees;
- the distribution or screening of media productions in well-regarded competitive, juried or reviewed venues, which may include distribution via theaters, broadcast, online or streaming platforms, and screening at film festivals or professional convenings;
- work that initiates, influences, advances or shapes public discussion, debate, issues, policies, or institutional, political, cultural or social change.

For candidates putting forward a case based on transformative impact on the way the profession itself is practiced they must document significant impact on the methods, standards or practices of the profession itself, including testing, dissemination and/or adoption of innovative approaches by others in the field.

To achieve tenure and promotion, faculty members in the Public Communication Division must attain high standards of demonstrated excellence, aggregate productivity, and impact in their scholarly, creative and professional work as stated in the Introduction to the SOC Tenure and Promotion Guidelines.”

Collaboration with others is not unusual for those in public communication; however, candidates must demonstrate the role played within any collaborative effort in order to assess contribution and impact. Also, we note that professional work in strategic communication campaigns may take place behind the scenes and frequently in collaboration with others, so in these cases we do not expect authorship or attribution, only documentation of significant involvement and accomplishment.

PROMOTION TO FULL PROFESSOR IN SOC

Specific scholarly (research, creative, and professional) criteria for the granting of tenure and promotion to associate professor are discussed above by division. The logic of these criteria carries over to promotion to full professor. In addition, several common standards and expectations are shared across the divisions of the School of Communication. We look at the cumulative record of teaching, service, and evidence of impact through research/creative/professional work — as well as evidence that the candidate will continue to pursue a robust and well-developed research/creative/professional agenda. We also look for prominence and leadership in service, as well as high-quality and effective teaching that is characterized by engagement with students both in and out of the classroom. Candidates for promotion to full professor also will have attained a well-recognized national or international reputation for their accomplishments and made a significant and demonstrable impact through their work. Depending on their emphasis in research/creative/professional work, that impact may include making notable and ongoing contributions to knowledge, advancing the practice of communication, shaping public debate, or helping to bring about social, political or institutional change. Candidates for full professor must also demonstrate prominence in their field and leadership within the School and the University. Finally, candidates for full professor are expected to serve as mentors to other faculty in the Division, School, university and their discipline.