

**DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE SCIENCES
POLICY FOR PROMOTION AND TENURE**

Context. Promotion to a higher rank and appointment with tenure may be granted to faculty members on standard faculty appointment who have demonstrated satisfactory accomplishments in an appropriate combination of instructional, research, extension, and other professional activities. This document outlines procedures for evaluation of a faculty member's performance for purposes of reaching a recommendation regarding the granting of promotion or tenure. Nothing in these recommendations shall contravene provisions regarding promotion and tenure as presented in the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University *Faculty Handbook*. The Virginia Tech Guidelines for Promotion and Tenure Dossiers (http://www.provost.vt.edu/documents/pt_guidelines_08-09.pdf, p. 3) sets out the following passage.

Effective fall 2008, the departmental guidelines will be:

Composition and size: Individual departments must develop and publish written policies to guide their promotion and tenure review processes, including the rules governing eligibility and selection of the committee members. Individual departments determine who is eligible to serve on committees from among tenured faculty members. A balance between adequate representation and effectiveness of operation as a committee suggests that a size between four to seven members is most appropriate.

Methods of selection: Some significant elements of faculty choice must be part of the selection procedure. Some possibilities are the following:

- *a combination of elected and appointed representatives;*
- *an elected slate significantly larger than the committee size, allowing the department head or chair to appoints a committee from the slate;*
- *a committee elected from the faculty.*

Role of the department head or chair: Given their responsibility to make a separate and independent recommendation on each case, department heads or chairs may not vote as members of committees or chair them. Department heads or chairs may convene committees and may discuss each candidate with committees as appropriate. However, it is recommended that committees discuss the merits of the candidates and frame their recommendations without heads or chairs in attendance.

The College of Natural Resources also has its Policy for Promotion and Tenure (adopted October 1993, modified October 1999 and September 2006).

The purpose of this document is to set out the policy of the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife Sciences for promotion and tenure. Nothing in this policy will contravene policies set out by Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University or the College of Natural Resources.

Departmental evaluation. The Department shall have a committee with appropriate faculty representation to evaluate candidates for promotions and tenure and make recommendations to the Department Head. The Department Head will remain separate from the committee's deliberations and will subsequently receive its recommendations.

Six faculty members will be selected to serve on the departmental Promotion and Tenure committee on a basis of a vote of the tenured and tenure-track departmental faculty, and the Head of the Department will appoint one additional member of the committee.

All tenured faculty members are eligible for selection to the departmental Promotion and Tenure Committee. While university policy presented in the *Faculty Handbook* does not mandate that members of the Promotion and Tenure committee be full professors, it is clear that the review process may benefit from the perspective of a full professor, especially when a possible appointment to the rank of full professor is under consideration. Hence, faculty members are encouraged to consider voting for full professors and the department head to appoint a full professor to the Promotion and Tenure Committee in situations where a promotion to full professor is considered.

Two members of the Departmental Promotion and Tenure Committee will be elected by the faculty to serve on the College of Natural Resources Promotion and Tenure Committee. These individuals may participate in the discussion of dossiers for candidates for promotion and tenure, but will not vote at the departmental level.

The committee will elect its chair. The committee shall review the cases of all faculty members who submit their credentials to the Department Head for consideration for promotion or tenure, including those faculty members in the sixth year of probationary service. The Department Head furnishes the committee with a dossier for each candidate. The form and contents of each dossier will be in accordance with the most recent Promotion and Tenure Guidelines distributed by the University Provost.

The dossier will include a statement by the Department Head. This statement should be limited to 3-4 pages, and should include:

1. a summary of the candidate's professional assignment at Virginia Tech;

2. an evaluation of the academic performance and effectiveness of the candidate in each of the areas of faculty responsibility – teaching and academic advising; research, scholarly and/or creative achievement; and public service and extension;
3. a summary of important accomplishments and interpretation of significant contributions;
4. an explanation of the procedures by which the candidate was evaluated; and
5. the Department Head's recommendation.

Peer teaching reviews should be completed and accompany the promotion and tenure dossier for all candidates. Peer teaching reviews should be thoughtful, constructive assessments of a candidate's teaching effort based upon a good-faith effort to gain a thorough sense of the candidate's teaching abilities.

At least four evaluative letters from external assessors will be solicited and, where, available, should be included with the materials sent forth to the Departmental Promotion and Tenure committee for all candidates.

The Department Head may make presentations on each candidate as requested by the committee, but the Head must be absent from further deliberations concerning the merits of the candidates and from the framing of the recommendations of the committee. The Department head does not vote in committee decisions.

The departmental Promotion and Tenure Committee will make a recommendation of each candidate to the Department Head, including a written evaluation that assesses the quality of the candidate's performance in each relevant area. The committee will reach its recommendation by means of a vote, the outcome of which is determined by a simple plurality. The Department Head will be notified of the committee's decision by the committee chair.

In all cases of mandatory (sixth-year) tenure decisions, the Head will pass on to the Dean the dossier of every candidate, which will include the committee's evaluation and recommendation (including the division of the vote) and the head's own recommendation, whether concurring or not. Should the committee and the head agree on a negative recommendation, the Dean may declare this to be the final decision or may choose to have the recommendation reviewed by the college committee.

In all other cases (promotion or tenure before the sixth year of probationary service), the head will follow the same procedures, except that, when the committee's recommendation is negative and the head concurs, the head declares a final decision and no further review is carried out in that academic year. The head will inform the faculty member of a negative decision. In that case, the faculty member is informed of appeal options.

Accompanying the set of dossiers submitted to the college level will be a statement from the head describing the formation and procedures of the departmental

committee and summarizing the number of candidates in each category (mandatory tenure, pre-sixth year tenure, promotion at each rank).

Considerations of rank for federal faculty will undergo the same process as for university faculty.

The research professor ranks – research assistant professor, research associate professor and research professor – are designed for research faculty members whose appointments are expected to last more than one year and whose credentials are comparable to those of tenure-track faculty of the same rank. In accord with the Special Research Faculty Handbook (Section 2.2.3), research professional faculty members being considered for promotion will have their dossiers reviewed at three levels: (1) by the departmental committee and the department head, (2) by the college committee and the dean, and (3) by the Office of the Vice President for Research.