

Date: Fall 2016
To: New and tenure-track faculty
From: Faculty Standards & Affairs Committee (FSAC) and University Reappointment,
Tenure and Promotion Subcommittee (URTPS)
Re: RTP Suggestions for Candidates

The following suggestions supplement the University RTP policy

(<http://www.sonoma.edu/UAffairs/policies/rtp.htm>). They are only suggestions, and are intended to help you present your professional work in the most favorable light to the Department, School, and University who may be peers from outside of your field.

The University RTP process documents your professional growth as you move towards Tenure and Promotion. It is an opportunity for you to examine yourself in light of what your faculty peers observe about you, what your students tell you, and how you reflect on your professional growth during your career at Sonoma State University. The RTP process can help you establish goals for further development in your career as a teacher and a scholar, and also capture changes in your university and community responsibilities and your scholarly agenda.

The materials you give to your Department RTP Committee are an opportunity for you to frame your professional identity, not only to your department, but to the school, Dean, University at large, and the President. Please review the following suggestions:

1. **Take charge of your own RTP process**
 - a. Anticipate deadlines (they are non-negotiable!).
 - b. Read the campus RTP policy and any supplemental RTP criteria from your department.
 - c. Seek out your department RTP committee and ask them questions. You don't need to wait for the reviewers to contact you first.
 - d. Use available campus resources to help you: attend RTP workshops, and consult with faculty peers from other departments or past members of the University RTP Committee.

2. **Be proactive**
 - a. Committees up the line frown on excuses for not following requirements of policy regardless of the reason.
 - b. Anticipate that for each review cycle you will need one to two peer evaluations of your classroom teaching and course content. Don't wait till the last minute to arrange for your colleague(s) to observe you.
 - c. Begin now to collect documentation that substantiates your university and public service. While you may not be able to obtain documentation for everything you've ever done for the University or the community, a letter from a committee chair that explains your role on a committee and your contribution makes your presentation stronger than merely listing the committee by name as one on which you've served. Start a file and add materials to it as you go along (conference programs, presentations made, papers accepted, workshops attended, service participation,

- community speaking engagements, etc.). Keeping your materials organized as you go along makes it easier when deadlines loom.
- d. Should you question a recommendation at any level, make sure the summary of the meeting or any new recommendations are being forwarded properly
- 3. Organize your CV specifically for the RTP process**
- a. Make sure your CV is up to date and accurate.
 - b. Organize your CV in the order of the three RTP criteria: 1) teaching effectiveness, 2) research and/or scholarship and/or creative projects, 3) university and community service.
 - c. Begin your academic background with the most recent degree
 - d. Be consistent in format and organization from one section to the next. Within each section, list your contributions chronologically, beginning with the most recent. Highlighting the items added since the last review (or hire) helps evaluators review many files carefully and consistently within the limited time frames available.
 - e. Provide full citations to publications. State clearly if a work is in progress, has been submitted, has been accepted, or has been published/presented.
 - f. Prepare your CV knowing that reviewers may be from other departments or schools, people who may not know who you are or what you do or the jargon of your discipline. The CV must make sense, by itself, to everyone who reads it.
 - g. **Focus on what you have done while at SSU and keep it to a reasonable length.** (We have already hired you, so we don't need your list of references, for example.)
- 4. Use your Self-Assessment of Teaching and Professional Activities as a framework for your progress**
- a. Teaching effectiveness carries a lot of weight in the review process, especially for newer faculty. The University wants to make sure that you can teach effectively. You need to supply solid evidence that you are effective and to describe ways you are continuing to grow as a teacher.
 - b. The essay (brief: no more than two pages, full: no more than seven pages) sheds light on your role as a "reflective practitioner." What is your teaching philosophy? What are your teaching goals? When you've developed new courses, or taught courses new to you, discuss what you did to make the courses unique and relevant to student needs, what experiments you tried, how they did or didn't work, and what you would do differently. It's not enough for you to state: "I've made a substantial contribution..." or, "I'm a valuable asset..." you must also document such claims. Where possible, steer clear of making evaluative comments about yourself, and let the data speak for you. For example, you might state: "Reviews of my teaching demonstrate..." Your essay should demonstrate critical analysis of data and performance as you see them, a discussion of their significance to you and your students, and specific goals and plans for your development as a teacher.
- 5. SETE Preparation**
- a. Provide all digital SETE evaluations from classes for each review cycle.

- b. Highlight raw, quantitative data from student evaluations pointing out to the reviewer items that fall significantly above or below departmental medians. In fact, such items should be highlighted and then discussed in the “self-assessment of teaching” essay. For example, if scores are significantly high, you might offer explanations or give examples of teaching strategies that have contributed to this effectiveness. Conversely, for lower scores, you need to explain what didn’t work as well as it could have, and what changes you envision to raise the scores in the future.
- c. Qualitative comments should be used by your Department RTP committee to further support your teaching.

6. Pay Close Attention to Prior RTP Recommendations

- a. Early on, your focus should be on teaching and establishing or continuing your research agenda. If you find you are being asked to serve on many committees, make sure this service will not adversely affect your teaching and scholarship.
- b. Conversely, if your teaching evaluations are stellar, and you’ve got a good handle on your scholarship and professional activities, you should seek out opportunities for service, as this may help you when the time comes to apply for promotions, tenure, and sabbaticals.
- c. If recommendations have been made in prior years, address them in your self-assessment.

7. Be prepared--and stay flexible

6. Your committee may make recommendations for reworking parts of what you submit, for example, your CV, or to add or clarify information. You are responsible for submitting your CV, student/peer evaluation data, self-assessment of teaching and professional activities, and any supplemental materials. The department RTP committee is responsible for writing up the evaluation, preparing the document to move to the next level of review, and making sure the document is complete.

8. Don’t be intimidated by the process

- a. Ask questions! Sonoma State is committed to seeing you grow through the tenure and promotion process.