

Department of Communications

Tenure & Promotion Guidelines

PREFACE

Since Aristotle, the communication discipline has been comprised of both critical inquiry and practice. As a Department, we embrace both sides of our discipline. We value the diversity of experiences that a Department offering a comprehensive study of communications and its members can produce, including but not limited to theoretical inquiry, research, criticism and evaluation, as well as creative endeavors involving performance, writing and production.

Our Department recognizes that teaching, research and service are interconnected. Like Ernest Boyer (1990), our goal in describing these kinds of activities is not to create dividers among intellectual functions, but to explicate the variety of activities that academic duty may entail within the discipline of communication.

Moreover, we encourage our faculty to create and maintain a balance between teaching, research and service. We recognize that academic duty requires dedication to each of the three areas. As the Contexts and Criteria for Faculty Evaluation (aka the Green Book) notes, differences in activity among the elements in the triad may occur given the needs of the Department and the goals of the individual faculty member. Consequently, while the Department expects activity in all areas, the evaluation should consider the collective weight of the candidate's contribution to the discipline and profession, department, college, university and community.

TEACHING

The Department of Communications promotes teaching excellence and continually monitors its teaching effectiveness. Teaching involves the practice of pedagogical activities to advance our students' knowledge, critical thinking skills, ethics, appreciation of diversity and ability as practitioners within the discipline of communication. We value the connection between scholarship and pedagogy, which can lead to the scholarship of teaching, involvement of students with faculty research, and the infusion of faculty scholarship in curricular content and teaching methods. We also value the connection between service and pedagogy, which can lead to the scholarship of engagement, involvement of students in service-learning, and the infusion of the scholarship of engagement in the classroom.

Our Department recognizes excellence in traditional classroom settings and non-traditional classroom settings, such as labs and studios, as well as excellence in the delivery of distance learning. We also embrace a range of teaching philosophies, styles, methods and assessment techniques and encourage innovation in teaching. To attain the Department's high standards of teaching excellence within the context of our comprehensive approach to communications, members of the Department strive to develop curricula and participate in assessment in a cooperative manner.

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We assess our teaching excellence with the aid of a variety of sources and instruments:

1. **Faculty** members document their teaching-related activities, and through them, they reflect and offer a cumulative body of materials that can be used to assess their conscientious effort to be effective teachers.
 - a. **Self evaluations and portfolios** can be used to assess an individual's teaching experience, methods, assessment, outcomes, and professional development. Self evaluations and portfolios offer important insights into the individual's overall commitment as a teacher.
 - b. **Advising students** also constitutes a teaching activity. Through academic advising, faculty members assist students with course selection, programmatic decisions, career information and planning, letters of recommendation, etc. – although we recognize that faculty members may also make referrals to other University units when students seek assistance outside academic areas.
 - c. **Mentoring students** extends the classroom and is essential to excellent teaching. Evidence of mentoring includes but is not limited to working with students on assignments; independent studies; and extracurricular field trips, projects, clubs and media experiences. Student mentoring offers important insights into the faculty member's ability to stimulate learning outside of the classroom.
 - d. Faculty members also document their **pedagogical innovations**, including but not limited to the development of teaching skills, the integration of new material into a course, and the enhancement of curricula through course development and revisions. Pedagogical innovations offer important insights into the individual's growth and continuous improvement as a teacher over time.
2. **Peer reviews** can be used to assess an individual's performance in the classroom, as well as subject content, currency and mastery. Peers can offer collegial insight and achieve depth that is not present in students' evaluations.
3. **Student evaluations** can be used to assess a teacher's concern and respect for students, skill as a communicator, and ability to stimulate student learning. Student perceptions of teaching effectiveness must, however, be considered in relation to self-evaluations and portfolios, peer reviews, and departmental instruments.
4. **Department instruments** assess and document teaching effectiveness. They are important for our collective internal and external reviews. Department assessment provides us with information about our teaching performance, advising activities and overall effectiveness as a unit.

Mass communication units must also meet any external teaching standards established by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC).

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RESEARCH

The Department of Communications promotes the engagement of its faculty in their research and creative endeavors, given the faculty members' obligation to present the timely instruction that emerges from scholarly, professional and community engagement. While the Department values traditional research, we also value the creative and applied aspects of our discipline. Our Department encourages and supports endeavors that are interdisciplinary in nature and make full use of the broad context of the discipline of communication.

We encourage faculty to develop a cohesive and ongoing research agenda. A well-planned agenda is one that will continue to evolve as the faculty member and discipline evolve. We emphasize the quality and contribution of scholarly production more than the quantity of output. The Department believes a person who seeks promotion to associate professor should have scholarly work that has received sufficient merit on the state or regional level, and an applicant for professor should have scholarly work that has received merit on the regional, national or international levels.

Scholarly Engagement

The Department of Communication recognizes that scholarly engagement may take a number of forms. We follow the approach offered by Boyer (1990); Braxton, Luckey & Helland (2002); and Glassick, Huber & Maeroff (1997), and embrace Boyer's four main avenues of scholarship.

The Scholarship of Discovery

This avenue of scholarship is most familiar to academics and often implied when they discuss research. This scholarship contributes to the development of knowledge and includes original research or creative endeavors that require the faculty member to investigate ideas or build connections to theory or application. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Publishing in peer-reviewed publication or juried competitions
- Presenting original research or creative endeavors at an academic conference

The Scholarship of Integration

While closely related to the previous avenue, this scholarship focuses on the ways research and creative endeavors can cross boundaries – such as boundaries of a disciplinary nature, boundaries shaped by established intellectual patterns, boundaries between academics and professionals or boundaries between the academy and the community. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Presenting research to a lay audience or a professional organization
- Developing, producing, or directing media content for lay audiences or professional organizations

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The Scholarship of Application

We define this avenue of scholarship as the capacity to serve the public good. This avenue has particular significance for our Department as a result of the applied and professional nature of three of our four academic programs. Moreover, this kind of scholarship positions the University as a guardian of public interest. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Directing a project that meets institutional or community needs
- Documenting service-learning activities related to one's area of expertise

The Scholarship of Teaching

The scholarship of teaching is the active discovery of styles, techniques, methods of assessment and issues that enhance a faculty member's performance in the classroom. While teaching requires the use of scholarship, the scholarship of teaching implies an active pursuit to discover, implement or document teaching practices. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Presenting a teaching portfolio that emphasizes the scholarship of teaching
- Publishing or presenting information related to teaching techniques
- Identifying significant, intellectual questions that can be addressed via classroom activity and documenting the scholarly process

Professional Engagement

Faculty members should be active in their disciplines or connected to their profession in some way. Given the professional nature of the several programs within the Department, our faculty may belong to organizations that are professional as opposed to scholarly. We value membership and activities in both. This connection not only has the potential to invigorate or inspire faculty, but it insures the institution that what we do in the classroom reflects the current state of the discipline or the profession.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Attending professional meetings and conferences
- Reviewing papers, manuscripts, or creative works
- Serving on committees, editorial boards, or as an officer for a professional organization
- Receiving significant honors, grants and/or awards
- Professional consulting or performance
- Judging media or speaking events

To assist in the review process, the Department asks that faculty members seeking promotion and/or tenure to

- 1) identify a research agenda or concentrated areas of research;
- 2) articulate how various examples of their scholarly engagement relate to extend that agenda;

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- 3) document these activities with detail (i.e., by noting the type of presentation or publication to clarify if the work was reviewed by a peer or professional, or if the presentation was to an academic, professional, or lay audience); and
- 4) provide an external assessment from appropriate peers or professionals when their work falls outside the parameters of the traditional peer-reviewed process.

SERVICE

The Department of Communications promotes effective service activities that will advance and enhance the institution, profession and community. We define service as the commitment of personal time and talents, as well as professional expertise to benefit all levels of the university, profession and community. We recognize that service is vital to the operation of the Department, the management of our student organizations and media assets, and the furthering of our collective goals.

Following the parameters and examples established in the Employee Handbook and the Contexts and Criteria for Faculty Evaluation, faculty members in the Department will be expected to engage in service activities in their Department, College, University, discipline and profession, and community. Faculty members should demonstrate their engagement in the community by using their professional or disciplinary expertise in those activities. Faculty members seeking promotion and/or tenure should organize their activities under the headings below. While a variety of activities can be interpreted as service activities, examples include but are not limited to:

University Service

- Serving in an appointed or elected position at the University level
- Serving on a University council or committee (e.g., Core Curriculum Council or core-related committees)
- Assisting other University units with activities (e.g., faculty sponsor for a student organization, acting as an Assessment Day proctor, representative for United Way fundraising, etc.)

College Service

- Serving as a committee, council or task force member to meet college goals and objectives
- Participating on other departments' committees (e.g., search committees, review committees, etc.)

Department Service

- Serving as an assistant Department chair, a committee chair, or an area coordinator for a Department major
- Serving as a committee or task force member to meet Department goals and objectives
- Writing and/or administering grants that enhance the Department

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- Helping the Department meet University or College obligations (e.g., representing the Department at Southern Hospitality Days, working at High School Media Day or other Department-related workshops)

Professional Service

- Engaging in informational activities a (e.g., seminars, conferences, and institutes) that address problems, issues, and concerns important for and relevant to the communication discipline and that are aimed at either general or specialized audiences such as practitioner or occupational groups
- Conducting studies on specific problems brought to one's attention by individuals, agencies, businesses or through media coverage
- Serving on committees for learned societies

Community Service

- Giving presentations or performances for the public that fall outside the purview of professional or scholarly engagement
- Evaluating programs, policies, procedures, communication obstacles or personnel for agencies
- Consulting with town, city, or county governments; schools, museums, parks, media outlets, and other public institutions; companies; groups; or individuals
- Using one's area of expertise as a board member for various community agencies, organizations or businesses
- Providing services to media by writing for popular and nonacademic publications (e.g., newsletters and magazines directed to agencies, professionals, or other specialized audiences; magazines, newspapers, television/radio, editorials, advertisements, public service announcements)

To document service, faculty members seeking promotion and tenure should

- 1) categorize their activities under the following headings: University Service, College Service, Department Service, Professional Service, and Community Service; and
- 2) describe their service and how their contributions meet needs at the university, college, department, professional and community levels. In the case of community service, faculty members should explain how service relates to their scholarly, professional and personal goals.