

School of Plant and Environmental Sciences

Promotion and Tenure Policies and Procedures

Revised January 2022

Preface

1. Promotion and tenure (P&T) is one of the most important institutions within the university. The following policies have been developed with the goal of creating a process that rewards high-quality work while ensuring that it is conducted in a manner that is fair and transparent.
2. The SPES charter document states that SPES will retain three representatives to the CALS P&T committee, so as not to reduce the representation of the three former departments at the college level.

SPES Promotion and Tenure Policies and Procedures

SPES P&T Committee Structure

The SPES P&T Committee will consist of 9 voting members (including the committee Chair) and 3 non-voting representatives to the CALS P&T Committee, and up to 3 Assistant Professor observers.

1. Election of the P&T Committee: Membership on the SPES P&T Committee is open to both full and associate tenured professors who are not seeking promotion within the next year. Filling the committee will consist of a two-step process.
 - a. Step 1. Initial members of the P&T Committee shall be elected from a ballot listing eligible SPES faculty that the SPES Director will assemble and distribute in February of each year.
 - i. A total of 9 members will be elected by the entire faculty.
 - ii. Voting will be confidential and all tenured and tenure-track SPES faculty may vote for P&T Committee members.
 - iii. No less than half of the P&T Committee shall be of the full professor rank. The committee will be populated by the 5 full professors with the most votes, and the 4 faculty members receiving the next most votes (regardless of rank).
 - iv. The ballot should include relevant information (e.g., rank, area of expertise, resident location) on each faculty member to assist voters who may not be familiar with all SPES faculty.
 - v. Any ties that occur in voting at this stage will be resolved by the Director.
 - b. Step 2. The elected members of the committee will meet to finalize the committee composition.
 - i. The full professor member receiving the highest vote count will be the P&T

Chair for that year.

- ii. The 9 members of the committee will then discuss and elect 3 additional members from the SPES faculty with the goal of balancing representation on the committee, including, but not limited to: Area of expertise, resident location (Blacksburg vs. AREC), type of appointment (research, teaching, extension) and specifically enhancing diversity, equity and inclusion on the committee.
 - iii. From the resulting 12 members, 3 faculty (preferably of full professor rank, but exceptions may be permitted) will be selected to serve as representatives to the CALS P&T Committee. In making these selections the committee will strive to represent the diversity of SPES among the CALS representatives.
 - c. Candidates for promotion should make their intentions known to the Director at the time of balloting to avoid potential conflicts of interest with the committee's charge.
 - d. An elected faculty member may decline to serve on the SPES P&T Committee.
2. CALS P&T Committee representatives: As described above, the elected members of the SPES P&T Committee will select representatives to the CALS P&T Committee.
 - a. Representatives should reflect the breadth of diversity and expertise in SPES.
 - b. Representatives will not vote at the final review and the SPES level, but will read all materials and observe all P&T Committee deliberations.
 - c. Representatives normally serve 2-year terms.
3. Assistant professor observers: The SPES Director shall appoint up to 3 assistant professors as non-voting members of the P&T Committee so they can gain exposure to the process.
 - a. All assistant professors will have at least one opportunity to sit as an observer at P&T Committee deliberations.
 - b. Preference should be given to faculty who are between years 2 and 4 in their tenure clock so they will have time to incorporate knowledge from this experience into their work and dossiers.
4. Role of the P&T Chair.
 - a. The Chair will organize and run meetings of the P&T Committee.
 - b. The Chair will ensure that external letters of evaluation are solicited and received (with help from P&T Committee members).
 - c. The Chair will compose the final P&T Committee letter for each candidate (with input from committee members).
 - d. The P&T Chair will serve a 1-year term and may be reelected.

P&T Process

1. The decision to seek promotion.
 - a. Faculty members who wish to apply for promotion or promotion and tenure should consult with the SPES Director, their AREC director, and/or the current P&T Chair before February of the year in which they intend to apply for promotion.
 - i. The SPES Director, AREC director, and/or the current P&T Chair may advise the faculty member of the prospects for P&T; it is up to the faculty member to decide if (s)he wishes to apply, unless it is his/her mandatory year.
 - ii. Faculty who have decided to apply for promotion or promotion and tenure should notify the SPES Director of their decision by mid-February.
 - b. The SPES Director will notify untenured faculty members when a promotion and tenure application is mandatory.
2. Formation of the P&T committee (as described above) takes place in late February.
3. In March, the P&T Committee solicits dossiers from all faculty members seeking promotion or promotion and tenure
4. On or about June 1 (exact date specified by the Chair), the Chair receives dossiers prepared in accordance with the Provost's guidelines and distributes them to the appropriate P&T Committee members.
5. In late June, the full P&T Committee will meet to review dossiers and assemble feedback that will be provided to candidates to help them improve candidate's dossiers.
 - a. For off-campus faculty, a letter will also be solicited from the relevant AREC Director.
 - b. The candidate should develop a list of three potential external reviewers. This list must be developed independently from the list generated by the P&T Committee.
 - c. The P&T Committee will develop their own list of potential external reviewers. The Chair will merge the candidate and committee lists and solicit external review letters.
6. In early July, the candidates will submit the improved version of their dossiers to the P&T Committee Chair. Candidates should be aware that dossiers submitted at this time will be sent to external reviewers, and therefore must be in near-final review form. Dossiers will be sent to external reviewers.
7. On or about August 15 (exact date specified by the Chair) candidates must submit their final dossier to the P&T Committee. Dossiers must be in final form, as only specific edits are allowable subsequent to this date (as designated by Provost's guidelines).
 - a. A dossier copy will be distributed to the SPES Director.
 - b. For off-campus faculty, a copy will also be sent to the relevant AREC Director.

8. In early October, the P&T Committee will reconvene to deliberate on the final dossiers and external letters. Any letters from AREC Directors will also be considered at this time.
 - a. The P&T Committee will conduct a final detailed review and discussion of each dossier. This will include an initial non-binding vote, an opportunity for in-depth discussion, and a final vote.
 - b. The Chair (assisted by P&T Committee members) will compose the required letters from the SPES P&T Committee, indicating the outcome of the deliberations. This letter, and any letter from an AREC Director, will be sent to the SPES Director.
9. The SPES Director will consider the votes and input of the P&T Committee and make an independent decision on whether to support or dissent with the recommendations. The Director will then prepare a separate letter.
 - a. The SPES Director is not a member nor an observer of the P&T Committee, but may be consulted by the P&T Committee Chair on specific questions regarding candidates or process.
 - b. The SPES Director may provide a charge to the P&T Committee at the initial meeting.
10. Within three business days of receiving the votes and rationales from the P&T Committee, the SPES Director will inform candidates of the P&T Committee decision (yes/no) and a summary of the basis for that decision.
11. For candidates proceeding to the CALS P&T review, the SPES P&T Committee Chair will meet with the candidate to review necessary changes and edits that are required/allowed in the final CALS level dossier.

Other work of the P&T Committee

1. The P&T Committee will perform required *2- and 4-year reviews of assistant professors* by March 15 of each year as necessary. Assistant professors should thus prepare their dossier in the official P&T format by mid-February of the designated year.
 - a. The P&T Committee will provide candidates with detailed feedback in terms of productivity and document style/format.
 - b. The Committee will draft a letter containing its recommendation to the Director with respect to continuance of appointment.
2. The P&T Committee will perform reviews of *Progress Toward Promotion to Professor*. Per the university guidelines. At least one review of progress toward promotion to professor should be conducted three to five years after promotion and tenure is awarded.
 - a. The faculty member will complete a draft promotion dossier to organize and present information for review. The precise timing of the dossier submission and review may be arranged with the current P&T Committee Chair.

- b. The review shall be developmental and focus on the faculty member's progress toward promotion to professor. The developmental guidance should focus on recommended future activities and plans that will position the faculty member for promotion.
 - c. The reviews will be submitted in writing, with the faculty member acknowledging receipt by signing and returning a copy for his or her departmental file.
 - d. The faculty member may request a meeting with the P&T Committee Chair and the Director to discuss the review and recommendations.
3. The P&T Committee will review dossiers for promotion of *Research Professors*. In accordance with the CALS timetable, the faculty candidate will submit their dossier to the SPES Director and the Chair of the SPES P&T Committee. The committee will provide a review of the dossier as described above under P&T Process for tenure track dossiers, starting at step 5, with appropriate adjustments to the timing.
4. The P&T Committee will review dossiers for promotion of *Collegiate Faculty and Professors of Practice*. In accordance with the CALS timetable, the faculty candidate will submit their dossier to the SPES Director and the Chair of the SPES P&T Committee. The committee will provide a review of the dossier as described above under P&T Process for tenure track dossiers, starting at step 8, with appropriate adjustments to the timing.
5. The P&T Committee will review applications for *Adjunct and Affiliate Faculty* status in SPES. The Director will transmit appropriate letters, C.V.s, etc. to the P&T Committee Chair. The committee will discuss the merits of the application and provide a simple letter containing a recommendation to the Director.
6. At the Director's request, the P&T Committee will review applications for *Emeritus/Emerita Faculty* status in SPES. The Director will transmit appropriate forms and resolution statement documents to the P&T Committee Chair. The committee will provide a simple letter containing a recommendation to the Director.