

College of Science (COS) Expectations and Guidelines for Collegiate Faculty Promotions (updates are highlighted)

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I. Overview of the Promotion Process

Promotion to a higher rank is granted to Collegiate Faculty members who have demonstrated excellence and innovation in instructional responsibilities, and who show significant evidence of related professional growth and development, including an appropriate level of recognition outside of the University through publication and other professional activities. Consideration for promotion may be requested by the faculty member or recommended by the department.

An application for promotion receives up to five independent reviews, in the order shown:

- Departmental Committee
- Department Head
- COS Collegiate Faculty and Professor of Practice Promotion Committee
- Dean of the College of Science
- Provost

Composition of the Departmental collegiate faculty promotion committee, and its procedures, are determined by the department within the bounds set by the Provost and the faculty handbook.

The College of Science CF & PoP promotion committee reviews both Collegiate Faculty and Professor of Practice applications for promotion. The goal is for this committee to be comprised of faculty at the associate or full level in the Collegiate Faculty and Professor of Practice ranks. Due to the currently small number of such faculty in the

college, this may not be possible for several years. Until then, candidates will be considered at the college level by a committee that will include some tenured faculty members. Committee members are nominated by COS departments and appointed by the Dean. The Dean, or other representative of the College of Science Dean's office as appointed by the Dean, serves as a non-voting member and committee chair. Minimal committee size will be four voting members. A faculty member serving on both the department committee and the COS CF & PoP promotion committee should vote at the departmental level. Faculty members should not serve on any promotion committee evaluating a spouse or partner. It is not sufficient to leave the room while the spouse or partner is discussed.

Any application that receives a positive recommendation from one or both of the Departmental Committee and the Department Head moves on to the College level. An application that reaches the College level continues to the Provost upon receiving a positive recommendation from one or both of the COS Collegiate Faculty and Professor of Practice (CF & PoP) Promotion Committee and the Dean. The Provost makes the final decision on applications reaching that level.

An applicant is provided written feedback if failing to advance at either the department or college level. Applications that are turned down at the department level can be appealed, but only after having been turned down in at least two separate years (details for appeals can be found in the Faculty Handbook). A negative decision at the college level, or by the provost, is final and cannot be appealed.

As stated in the Faculty Handbook, a negative recommendation on a promotion request need not translate into termination of employment. Indeed, a faculty member in the Collegiate Faculty series may remain at their current rank as long as their performance warrants continued employment and serves departmental needs. In COS, promotion and retention decisions are made independently, and being turned down for promotion does not preclude reapplying in a future year.

II. Specifics of the Promotion Process

The Collegiate Faculty promotion process proceeds according to a college-issued timeline, available in Section V of this document.

Contract lengths for Collegiate Faculty are three, five, and seven years respectively for appointments at the assistant, associate, and full levels. Ordinarily, Collegiate Faculty members within COS will not be considered for promotion any earlier than in the fifth year of their employment at their current rank.

A candidate for promotion prepares a dossier (see Section IV of this document) describing her/his performance and accomplishments and submits this to the departmental committee. Once a dossier is submitted by the candidate, it may not be revised or modified except for addition of material by department head, departmental promotion committee, dean and college promotion committee. Should additional information become available or if errors are identified during the review process, they should be included and/or explained as part of the department head letter and/or dean letter. This dossier is the document on which the request for promotion is judged at each of the five steps of the process. The culmination of each step is a letter containing a recommendation, pro or con, for the promotion.

The Departmental Committee reviews the dossier of each candidate and prepares a letter stating its recommendation, positive or negative, for promotion, and reporting the numeric division of the committee's vote. This letter should contain a thorough summary of the candidate's qualifications for promotion, reflecting the evaluation of the credentials by the committee with an informative, individualized and detailed assessment of the candidate's activities and contributions. In the case of a mixed vote, a minority report may be written. In the case of a negative vote, the letter will explain the basis for the negative recommendation. The committee letter should also include a list of names of the eligible voting members and note the names of ineligible or non-voting observers. The department committee letter should explicitly make a recommendation for or against promotion.

The Department Head independently evaluates each dossier and the recommendations of the departmental committee. The Head's letter is limited to 5-6 pages in length. It should clearly state the Head's recommendation on the case **and should address all areas as outlined in the Provost's Guidelines**. Particulars of the candidate's professional assignment should be provided, including the percentage of that assignment to teaching, for scholarly activities, and for service and outreach. The Head's letter need not repeat the information in the committee's letter, but must address the candidate's performance relative to the department's expectations for performance in the collegiate faculty series, explaining those expectations and the procedures by which the candidate was evaluated. If the faculty candidate did not meet an expectation, the letter should explain the reason(s) for not completing the expectation and may highlight other evidence that might show the candidate's success in a related area or intermediate progress in that area (e.g. scholarship published with students, student progress towards degree such as exams completed, etc.).

The Head should summarize the opinions of the external reviewers, providing explanations for any disagreements with those opinions. The Head's letter should also

explain why each reviewer is well-placed to write an external letter. If a reviewer has co-authored with the candidate, the letter should provide an explanation of how the reviewer is sufficiently removed from the candidate and how they can provide an independent and unbiased review. If the Head's recommendation is not in agreement with the committee's, this should be more fully explicated and justified. If the Head concurs with a negative recommendation from the committee, then the case is ended and does not move on to the college level; the Head provides written feedback to the candidate should this occur.

The COS CF & PoP promotion committee evaluates and prepares a letter about each candidate whose application reaches the college level, stating its recommendation, positive or negative, for promotion, and reporting the numeric division of the committee's vote. The committee letter should also include the list of names of the eligible voting members and note the names of ineligible or non-voting observers. Letters from the COS CF & PoP promotion committee should be detailed but succinct, as they need not repeat material well summarized at the departmental level. If the vote is not unanimous, a brief explanation of the concerns represented by the dissenting votes is included in the college committee's statement. In the case of a negative vote, the committee will explain the basis for the negative recommendation.

The Dean independently evaluates each dossier and the recommendations of the COS committee. The statement from the dean is an informative assessment of the candidate's accomplishments from the perspective of the college and the dean. The dean should provide an integrative summary of the candidate's contributions to the department, college, and university goals. In cases of a split vote or differing recommendations from the department or from the college committee, the Dean should explain and contextualize those differences so to aid understanding at the next level of review. If the Dean concurs with a negative recommendation from the committee, then the case is ended and does not move on to the Provost; the Dean provides written feedback to the candidate should this occur. Otherwise, the Dean writes a letter with her/his recommendation and forwards the dossier to the Provost. If the Dean does not concur with a CF & PoP promotion committee recommendation, the letter will explain the basis for the lack of concurrence. Notifications about CF promotion decisions are made by the Provost according to a published calendar.

III. Expectations for Promotion in the Collegiate Faculty Series

Expectations for Collegiate Faculty include:

- Quality instruction as evidenced by such measures as Student Perception of Teaching (SPOT) evaluations, student responses to supplemental questions, activities in non-classroom settings, and peer reviews.
- Participation in departmental activities as related to programs of instruction, curricular development, and their relationships and integration with other programs at the university. Development of leadership within the department on curricular issues and on evolving goals of the department's instructional mission.
- Pedagogical innovation in terms of course development and/or methods of instructional delivery. Promoting teaching excellence within the department.
- Proficiency at understanding and evaluating research that applies to their field and translating it to classroom settings.
- Research and professional development in alignment with the department's expectations for the faculty member's appointment. The research program may be scholarship on teaching and learning, and/or on disciplinary topics, and must produce findings that are presented in professional venues including conferences and journal publications. There is, however, no expectation of a research program so extensive as to be appropriate for a tenure-track faculty appointment.
- Adherence to the Virginia Tech Principles of Ethical Behavior and the Virginia Tech Principles of Community, as described in section 2.23 of the Faculty Handbook.

Where appropriate to their assignment, Collegiate Faculty members may interact with graduate students and interns, serve on graduate committees, and chair graduate advisory committees with the approval of the academic unit and the graduate school. They may also be expected to serve on departmental, college, or university committees as contributing members of their departments and the broader university community.

A faculty member in the Collegiate Faculty series should work with their department head to clarify and detail the expectations of their position within the guidelines provided by this document. This series allows for flexibility of the emphases placed on the various performance categories, so that positions may best be crafted to serve departmental needs. It is the joint responsibility of the department head and the faculty member to assure that expectations are sufficiently clear.

Credentials for appointment or **promotion to the rank of Associate Collegiate Professor** must document a record of significant instructional experience with sustained excellence, and of accomplishments relevant to the field and type of assignment. The strongest cases will show a pattern of these activities throughout the promotion period:

- Exemplary instruction, evidenced in the dossier by reference to such items as SPOT evaluations, student responses to supplemental questions, activities in a non-classroom setting, peer reviews, and annual departmental evaluations. Note that two letters or reports from departmental or college peer reviewers since last promotion are required. **These reviews should be a minimum of two**

pages each and provide substantive detail regarding the teaching and advising activities. Peer evaluation of teaching may address topics such as course organization and management, pedagogical strategies, content knowledge and communication, assessment strategies, and student engagement, among others. Additionally, the two peer reviews should represent different points of time in the review period and differing instructional events. Faculty whose evaluations of teaching, including peer evaluations and SPOT scores, suggest improvements in teaching are warranted should be sure to list what they have done to improve in the promotion dossier.

- Professional development contributing to a growing regional or national reputation, to include participation in professional conferences and publications in venues deemed appropriate for their assignment by their department.
- Course or curricular development or development of new pedagogies. This may include (but is not limited to) contributions to textbooks or to online teaching materials available to others beyond the faculty member's own classes; increasing the availability and relevance of undergraduate research experiences; introduction of active learning, flipped classroom and/or other innovative models to courses previously employing older formats; and developing/teaching new courses.
- Substantial contributions to the department's instructional program in the form of advising or mentoring students; for example, academic advising of undergraduate students, GTA advising or mentoring, peer mentoring, or advising student organizations. Faculty should describe graduate mentoring accomplishments in detail, including exams completed, scholarship published, funding of graduate students on grants and contracts, the successful graduation of master's and/or Ph.D. students, and other milestones that demonstrate effective and successful graduate student mentorship.
- Substantive service to the department, college, and/or university.

Promotion to the rank of Collegiate Professor requires exemplary performance across the full range of Collegiate Faculty expectations described above and is the capstone rank in the Collegiate Faculty series. Promotion to this rank requires distinguished professional achievement, and regional, national, or international prominence in the field. Credentials must document a record of significant, impactful instructional experience with continued excellence; of scholarly accomplishments relevant to the field and assignment; and of ongoing, valuable service within and external to the University. External validation of such accomplishments and leadership in the field is expected.

IV. Dossier Preparation

As with other faculty promotion processes at Virginia Tech, the format for and content within the dossier is prescribed by the provost. Candidates and departments should closely follow the detailed guidance on the [Provost's webpage](#) for the CF Dossier Template and [CF Dossier Guidelines](#) available there.

Beginning in 2023-24, each dossier must contain a dossier certification form. The form is signed by the candidate certifying that their dossier is an accurate and truthful record of their scholarly achievement and that they assume full responsibility for the presentation and formatting of the dossier. The name of the department head, chair or school director, the department/school P&T Committee chair, or the candidate's faculty mentor who reviewed the draft of the dossier and provided the candidate with dossier preparation feedback and mentoring should also be included.

Each CF dossier must contain, at a minimum, four external review letters chosen according to the process and criteria outlined in the Collegiate Faculty Series Dossier Guidelines. External reviewers should be accomplished senior academics and senior contributors to the appropriate discipline(s) and/or areas of scholarship, preferably at peer universities. Due to the distinctive responsibilities of collegiate professors, outside reviewers from less research-intensive colleges and universities may be appropriate.

The letters from external reviewers should address the candidate's research and scholarly accomplishments, oftentimes on innovative pedagogy; their teaching accomplishments to the extent they can be externally evaluated, their engagement in professional organizations and they should place the candidate's achievements in the context of similarly situated teaching-intensive faculty at other universities. The external review packet should include the candidate's CV, the candidate's research, teaching and service statement, 4-5 published articles, teaching evaluations (e.g. SPOT scores) and other materials essential for the evaluation described above. The dossier must include all external letters received, not just selected letters.

In addition to the Provost's requirements, the College of Science requires that full SPOT reports from courses taught by a candidate be included in the dossier as supplementary material, to cover the length of the candidate's instructional career at Virginia Tech up to the application for promotion, though not to exceed the five years immediately preceding the application for promotion.

V. College of Science Promotion Timeline for CF and PoP, 2023-24

April – May 2023	Departments determine faculty members who will be considered for promotion in either the Professor of Practice (PoP) series or the Collegiate Faculty (CF) series.
* June 1, 2023	Notify the Dean’s Office (Amber Robinson) of faculty for whom external letters will be requested. External letters are required for promotion to associate or full in the CF series, and for promotion to full in the PoP series.
May – June 2023	External reviewers are identified and invited to serve.
July 1, 2023	Letters and candidates’ packets, including candidates’ statements, are sent to external reviewers.
September 14, 2023	Due date for external letters to be received.
October 2023	Departmental deliberations and vote, and evaluation by the department head; dossiers for candidates going forward to the college are completed.
* November 14, 2023	Promotion dossiers submitted electronically to College of Science NAS.
January 21, 2024	COS CF & PoP Promotion Committee meeting, to review dossiers and issue recommendations, is scheduled within these dates.
* January 31, 2024	Letters from COS CF & PoP Promotion Committee, evaluating candidates, are finalized and submitted to the Dean.
February 2024	College and department staff members complete the final dossiers for all CF and PoP candidates going forward to the University Committee.
* March 1, 2024	Final dossiers submitted to the Provost’s Office.

***Due dates;** all other dates are suggested timeframes for departments.