

Frequently Asked Questions about Tenure and Promotion to Associate Professor Rank and Tenure Committee

Teaching

How much documentation of teaching is enough/too much? I've heard of people who include correspondence with students, assignments they've graded, etc. Is this standard or recommended?

In addition to your course evaluations, we expect other teaching related materials in your file.

On our "Tenure and Promotion File Check List", we request the following information:

Sample syllabi. *The most effective presentation is a sample of an early syllabus and the most recent syllabus for selected courses taught multiple times. Your self-assessment should address the course refinements that took place and how those changes are reflected in the later syllabus.*

Other teaching related materials. *Class assignments, tests, rubrics, etc. that demonstrate effective pedagogy and are addressed in the self-assessment. You can also include student papers with feedback/comments to students, particularly if you identify this as an important aspect of your teaching.*

You may include correspondence from your students, but the committee does not expect it.

Scholarship

What counts as scholarship?

Scholarship can be in any of the four Boyer Model categories: Discovery, Integration, Application, and/or Teaching. You do NOT need to be doing scholarship/professional activity in all categories or even more than one category. We are particularly interested in what kinds of scholarship are of higher value in your discipline. Some disciplines place weight on monographs and peer-reviewed journals, while others value artistic products or performances. We "count" whatever you demonstrate "counts"--white papers, code, SW, textbooks, public intellectual work, journal articles, books, art, music compositions, and so on.

*You can and should direct your special evaluator on scholarship to speak to your disciplinary standards and how your work **contributes** to the conversations in your field.*

If your department/school has a document explaining how scholarship is interpreted/understood, it is to your benefit to make sure that document is on file with R&T and referenced in your self-assessment as well as by your chair, dean, and special evaluator for scholarship. It is also helpful to note the unique contributions that your scholarship makes to the field, as well as any available data on acceptance rates for publications or refereed conferences and impact of articles (number of citations) if such data are available.

Are there any specific rules for scholarship? How many papers? Productivity per year? Productivity according to Rank and Tenure?

No. There is no magic number that “scores” productivity in scholarship. (We promise this is true. Please tell all your friends.) The important argument to make is that you are active in your discipline and are contributing at a rate and level that is accepted in your area as appropriate.

The one caveat: Scholarship of Teaching does NOT include things like reworking syllabi, curriculum revision, reworking your Sakai site, and so on. Those are what we would consider normal activities of classroom instruction. Scholarship of Teaching is scholarship of pedagogy--for example, writing an article or book chapter or giving a lecture or workshop on a particular pedagogical model or technique would count (read by/engaged by peers), but just using an innovative or effective technique in your classroom and then keeping that to yourself is not scholarship. That would go under teaching--and you should include those innovative ideas! But if you're not circulating them among peers, it isn't considered scholarship.

Service

What counts as service?

From the Faculty Handbook: “Faculty shall provide evidence of substantial and sustained service. Service may take any of the forms described below. Service to the university is expected. Faculty engage in activities that benefit the university, their profession, and the community through lives of thoughtful inquiry, work, leadership, and care.”

This indicates that service can occur in many different ways, including to the profession and the community, but that it is essential to provide service to the university, whether at the university and/or division/school and/or department level. The suggestions, below, are not meant to be an exhaustive list; service can take many forms.

Service to the university can include many activities - obvious ones include serving on an elected standing committee or an appointed committee. There are other ways to serve the university - scholarship interviews, membership on interdisciplinary committees, recruiting/outreach to potential students. Service also may occur at the department level - advising students, being faculty advisor/sponsor for a club, reviewing student application for admission to the major, work on curriculum committees, support for capstone students (attending presentations, working with individual students if these are outside your teaching load).

Service to the profession may include being an officer or committee member with a professional organization, being on an editorial board for a professional journal, coordinating a conference or a session at a conference, being a site visitor to another university, providing support to community-based practitioners of your discipline.

Community service is broad. See the [eFAR](#) for ideas of community service categories.

What happens if you are never elected to a university level committee?

Being elected to a university level committee is not a requirement for tenure and/or promotion. According the Handbook, service to the university “includes general and major advising; personal and career counseling of students; participating in committee work and curriculum development; performing administrative tasks; fostering collegiality among faculty; supporting student-centered extracurricular activities; speaking to student groups; recruiting and recommending students.”

As noted above, service to the university can take many forms. It is up to the candidate to contextualize the service - to tell the readers of the file the importance of this service to the university. That is, what defines your service as “substantial and sustained” (tenure/promotion to Associate), or “distinctive” (promotion to Professor)?

Promotion to Associate Professor

Can you clearly distinguish between promotion to Associate Professor and getting tenure?

According to the Faculty Handbook, “Decisions about tenure involve the judgment about the overall, long-term value of the candidate to the university and its mission. Such judgements are based on upon recognition of significant achievement and promise of continued achievement. Decisions about promotion are likewise qualitative and global, and involve a judgment about the accomplishments of a faculty member.”

Strength in each criterion - teaching, scholarship and teaching - is expected for tenure and promotion.

Tenure is about long-term value to the university, promotion is about a record of achievement. Further, the procedures of the committee require that favorable decisions on promotion require “clear and substantial evidence” that the candidate has met the criteria.

The qualifications concerning appointment and promotion to the rank of associate professor include:

- A. shall normally have an earned doctorate. Justifiable exceptions may be equivalent recognition or achievement.*
- B. shall have demonstrated competency and continued growth as a teaching on the university level.*
- C. shall have evidenced a continued development in scholarship.*
- D. shall have evidenced influence and leadership in the academic development of the university.*

While years of service at another institution are recognized in initial appointment and rank at PLU and are explicitly noted in contracts with regard to the tenure-clock, a case for promotion must demonstrate strength in all three areas—teaching, professional activity, and service—while at PLU. Accomplishment while at other institutions is part of a promotion case but cannot substitute for a continuing record of accomplishment at PLU.

Third Year Review

How should I track my development if my annual or third year review tells me that I need to improve in a particular area?

The Rank & Tenure committee is particularly interested in growth. We do not expect anyone to be a perfect teacher, scholar, or servant--that is unreachable and unproductive.

Use your [eFAR](#) to document how you take constructive feedback and make adjustments, and in turn, how you've grown as a teacher/scholar/servant in the process.

Your Tenure and Promotion File

During Summer 2018, PLU Rank and Tenure transitioned to an online platform, Interfolio Review, Promotion and Tenure (RPT). Candidates assemble required materials for teaching, scholarship and service and will transfer materials into their case packet in [Interfolio](#).

Detailed instructions/documentation on Dossier and RPT can be found in the Rank and Tenure section of the Faculty Governance website (<https://www.plu.edu/faculty-governance/interfolio/#terminology>). Interfolio training is also available—contact the Faculty Governance Manager/Interfolio Administrator through facgov@plu.edu.

Refer to our website (<https://www.plu.edu/faculty-governance/the-faculty-committee-system/rank-and-tenure/rank-and-tenure-materials/>) for information on how to assemble your tenure and promotion file.

I am a new faculty member, what and how should I be documenting? Or more specifically, what do most forget/omit?

Each faculty member should document notable teaching, service and scholarship activities and achievements in his/her [eFAR](#). Your eFAR should be taken seriously, and used to build a record of reflection and response. Your eFAR is a way to build evidence for your tenure and promotion case.

The committee's recommendation is based on the evidence provided by the candidate and through letters from colleagues and students. The committee cannot determine

whether a faculty member has forgotten to include a service activity or a teaching innovation.

Your self assessment

What makes a “good” self-assessment?

The committee relies on your self-assessment to guide our reading and interpretation of your evidence. Your self-assessment should explain who you are as a faculty member, how that relates to your teaching, scholarship and service. A strong self-assessment has a central argument that uses evidence to demonstrate that you have met or exceeded the tenure and/or promotion criteria.

In addition to speaking directly to the teaching criteria, frame your self-evaluation so the committee can see your teaching philosophy and how it connects to your evidence. What are your goals as a teacher and how do you seek to accomplish those goals? How are those goals represented in your teaching materials? Is your teaching constrained by external expectations (licensing, accreditation, service courses for other units)? You may identify specific examples in your file, that illustrate some of your goals and accomplishments as well as areas where you have demonstrated growth.

What questions does your scholarship seek to answer? How would you explain the importance of your scholarship to an intelligent person without much (or any) background in your field?

Respond to the service criterion with a narrative that explains how your service relates to the rest of your professional self and how/why it is significant. A list of service activities is not sufficient.

Process

How does the committee handle differences between disciplines during the evaluation process?

We seek information from self-evaluations, annual and third-year reviews, letter writers, departmental guidelines, the research itself, and if needed, we'll research journals, publishers, and organizations to clarify what is typical or a gold standard of research in a particular discipline. We then use PLU criteria to evaluate the candidates' scholarship

based on all of the above information. In addition, the committee itself is comprised of faculty from different disciplines--don't bank on us knowing what matters in your field, but assume an intelligent reader.

How are the criteria for tenure/promotion dealt with across broadly diverse disciplines?

The committee 'listens' carefully: to the candidate, their letter writers, their students, and the other members of the committee. The committee broadly represents PLU and this disciplinary diversity is helpful. Well written letters and self-assessments explain diverse and important professional aspects of faculty accomplishments in teaching, scholarship and service regardless of the discipline.

Are there any better guides than the general outlines provided in the Faculty Handbook?

Refer to our website (<https://www.plu.edu/faculty-governance/the-faculty-committee-system/rank-and-tenure/rank-and-tenure-materials/>) for information on how to assemble your tenure and/or promotion file.

Please consider having someone read your file from within your field, and having someone read it from an outside perspective prior to turning it in. Ask colleagues you trust for their self-assessments and/or files as a guide. Ask questions of the Rank & Tenure committee--that's what we're here for.

Mentorship and Outside Reviewers

Any recommendations for finding the three outside department and outside PLU letter writers?

For both: Consider who you've worked with in various capacities and how they can speak to your accomplishments in service, scholarship, and/or teaching.

From PLU examples: Think about members of committees you have served on - can someone comment on your contributions? Have you guest-lectured in classes outside your discipline? Have you been involved in planning campus wide events? Have you considered cross-disciplinary scholarship or teaching strategies - contact colleagues to explore those options.

Outside PLU examples: Colleagues from graduate school and research collaborators can often give insight about scholarship, people from community partner organizations

and colleagues from local or national professional organizations can write about your service, and people who have invited you to speak to their group in your professional capacity can write about presentation and organizational aspects of teaching skills.

I am in a department without mentors. Do you have any suggestions?

Contact the Provost or the Office of the Provost for guidance.