Tenure and Promotion Policies

Department of Computer Science and Engineering
University of North Texas

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1 General Considerations

1.1 Mission Statement

The mission of the Department of Computer Science and Engineering is informed by the University's mission statement. The Department works to provide an environment in which students, as well as faculty, can grow and mature as computer scientists by gaining both knowledge and understanding of the discipline and how it relates to community, state, and national needs.

In accordance with that mission, the Department strives to provide an effective, high quality education to its students at the bachelor's, master's and doctoral levels, to provide an environment in which faculty can maintain a scholarly research program that gains national and international recognition for the Department and the University, and to assist the community in those areas in which our expertise lies.

1.2 Adherence to University and College Guidelines

The "University Policy on Academic Promotions," found in its entirety in the University of North Texas Faculty Handbook (also available online at http://www.unt.edu) is the principal document governing academic promotions at UNT. The Department's criteria for tenure are the same as those stated in the University "Policy Statement on Academic Freedom, Responsibility and Tenure", found in the Faculty Handbook. Additionally, the Department will adhere to the College of Engineering criteria and policies for tenure and/or promotion (available online at http://www.eng.unt.edu).

1.3 Issues on Collegiality and Community of Scholars

As described in the Faculty Handbook, a faculty candidate considered for tenure/promotion is expected to understand the importance of "collegiality" and the nature of membership in a "Community of Scholars". In particular, the candidate is expected to adhere to high standards of integrity and professional ethics, have the ability and desire to work as a member of a group while retaining all rights of individual expression, and feel a sense of responsibility for the well-being of the University of North Texas and a commitment to work for the accomplishment of its goals.
2 Criteria for Tenure and Promotion to Associate Professor

Different individuals will demonstrate different strengths in qualifying for tenure/promotion; thus, tenure/promotion recommendations must be made on a case-by-case basis. However, in all cases, the overriding standard shall be the quality of performance both in terms of accomplishments at the time of consideration and potential for continued success.

Evaluation of a faculty member for tenure/promotion to Associate Professor shall focus on the areas of teaching, professional activity, and service. Of special importance are the provisions calling for outstanding achievement in at least one of the evaluation areas, for breadth and balance among activities, and for greater stringency in performance measures as the institution matures.

2.1 Teaching

The candidate for tenure/promotion must demonstrate competence in teaching and the capacity for growth and improvement. Quality teaching is a minimum expectation, and includes the ability to convey subject matter to students, to maintain academic standards, and to stimulate the interest of students. Nonetheless, it presents the most formidable measurement problems of any of the three evaluative categories. One of the tools used in the evaluation of teaching ability will be the scores obtained by the candidate on the Student Evaluation of Instruction forms, with particular attention paid to student comments. In addition, the Personnel Affairs Committee may use other sources of information to assess the quality of teaching.

Aside from the Student Evaluation of Instruction, there are many other things that are indicative of a dedication to excellence in teaching, such as supervision of graduate students, revision of old courses, introduction of new courses, publication of textbooks, teaching grants, awards for teaching, and membership in state, national, and international committees on teaching computer science and computer engineering at the undergraduate or graduate level.

2.2 Professional and Creative Activities

A candidate for tenure/promotion to Associate Professor is expected to have the Category III Graduate Faculty status. A candidate for tenure shall have demonstrated competence to carry out research of high quality and scholarly significance, and the ability to train students in computer science and computer engineering. A key part of an established research program is the publication of high quality refereed research papers, as well as external funding to support the faculty candidate’s research. While the departmental PAC encourages funding from all possible sources, it would highly acknowledge the importance of funding from the federal sources. In some sub-disciplines of Computer Science and Engineering, journal publications are regarded higher than conference papers, while other disciplines may value conference paper highly. While there is no hard-and-fast measure of the number of papers that should be published per year, evidence of an established research program that has grown and matured with the professional development of the candidate is expected. There is also the expectation that publications will adhere to the highest standards of scholarly significance.

It is expected that the candidate’s research be ranked highly on a national level. Letters of recommendation from outside the University of North Texas are an important factor in determining
the research stature of the candidate. External funding is also an indicator of a high quality research program.

Finally, memberships of Editorial Boards of high quality journals and professional organizations, memberships of Program Committees or invited talks at high quality conferences and universities, are an indication of the visibility of a faculty member and are encouraged by the departmental PAC.

2.3 Departmental, University, and Community Service

Service to the department and, whenever appropriate, to the college and the university is expected of all candidates. Although such service will not serve as a primary basis for promotion, it is expected that the candidate shoulders his or her share of departmental responsibilities.

3 Criteria for Tenure and Promotion to Full Professor

In general, all the criteria and guidelines stipulated in Sections 1 and 2 will be followed with considerably higher expectations of the candidates considered for tenure/promotion to Full Professor. The entire professional career, with emphasis on the time since the last promotion will be used in evaluating faculty for promotion. In addition, the evaluation will also be based on the following.

- Faculty members considered for the promotion/tenure to Full Professor must have maintained excellent teaching records with a strong commitment of quality education to the students. Indication of commitment to quality education include supervision of MS and PhD theses, introduction of new graduate or undergraduate courses, and the introduction of innovative techniques in the classroom, when appropriate.

- Faculty members considered for the promotion/tenure to Full Professor must provide evidence of very high quality research that results in national and international reputation. The evidence for quality of a research program will be judged by the quality of peer-reviewed publications, citations, external funding, and external evaluations of the candidate’s contribution to the profession.

Memberships of Editorial Boards of high quality journals, and Program Committees for high quality conferences and workshops, publication of books, and awards for research and scholarly activities, are also indicators of the candidate’s visibility and are encouraged by the departmental PAC.

- The candidates must feel a sense of responsibility for the well-being of the other members of the Department and a commitment to help the Department to accomplish its goals. The candidate is expected to provide effective leadership and service in various activities of the Department and demonstrate commitment and/or willingness of effective service in the College, University, and/or Community areas. Serving on the Editorial Board of journals, and membership on national and international professional committees shall be considered as a part of service.
4 Internal Procedures and Policies

Procedures for promotion and tenure represent a combination of processes spelled out in such documents as the Faculty Handbook, College of Engineering Guidelines, Departmental Policy, and the cumulative results of annual departmental peer evaluations. The Department will also follow the College and University deadlines in this process. A few important procedures are stipulated below.

1. Each faculty will be evaluated annually for progress towards tenure/promotion and written evaluations will be made available to the faculty member. The Department Chair and the PAC will provide appropriate counseling to individual faculty regarding the outcome of annual evaluations. The PAC and the chair may decide to recommend to the Dean to terminate a tenure-track faculty member due to the unsatisfactory performance.

2. Early Fall of each academic year, individuals who wish to be considered for tenure and/or promotion shall notify the departmental Personnel Affairs Committee (PAC). The Committee may consider any other individual for promotion. A faculty member is normally considered for tenure and promotion from Assistant Professor rank to Associate Professor rank in 6 years, and for tenure and promotion from Associate Professor rank to Full Professor rank in 5 years. Exceptional candidates may be considered earlier.

3. Department Chair and Department PAC discuss with candidates the procedures for preparing a dossier for promotion and tenure according to College and University Guidelines. The candidate must assist the committee in building a dossier and supplying all support materials requested by the Committee. It is the candidate’s individual responsibility to ensure that all deadlines are met and all the necessary documents for his/her own file are submitted to the appropriate offices.

4. The Department Chair solicits letters of recommendations from external reviewers and uses them in the tenure and promotion evaluation process. The Chair will follow College guidelines as closely as possible in this process.

5. The entire PAC will evaluate a candidate for tenure and promotions to Associate Professor rank. A sub-committee of PAC consisting of only Full Professors will evaluate candidates for promotion to Full Professor.

6. The PAC and the Chair will make their decisions regarding promotions and tenures and notify the candidate in writing in a timely manner to permit the candidate due process in case of a negative recommendations. The internal procedures as described in the Departmental Charter must be followed in such cases.

7. If someone is to be recommended by the Department, the Personnel Affairs Committee
shall prepare a document in support of the candidate. A separate recommendation will be prepared by the Chair of the Department. By the College deadline, the complete dossier prepared by the candidate along with the external letters and recommendations by the PAC and Department Chair will be forwarded to the Dean.

8. If a candidate not recommended by the Department intends to appeal his/her own case, the internal appeal procedures as described in the Departmental Charter and By-Laws must be followed.