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**University of North Alabama
College of Arts, Sciences, Engineering**

**DEPARTMENT OF GEOSCIENCE
FACULTY PERFORMANCE GUIDELINES**

TENURE AND PROMOTION GUIDELINES APPLICABLE TO ALL CASE FACULTY

(Approved February 1, 2012; Title Amended September 25, 2017; Updated September 1, 2020; approved by College Chairs, September 29, 2020; updated to reflect college name change and department number June 11, 2021; updated to include all schools January 30, 2024)

All college and departmental guidelines are intended to provide guidance to faculty members seeking to meet the University's criteria for tenure and promotion set forth in the *Faculty Handbook*, Section 2.6. All faculty members should familiarize themselves with those principles, which govern the processes and standards for all departments and colleges of the University. This document is intended to provide clarity to the appropriate sections of the *Faculty Handbook*.

As UNA's largest and most diverse college, the College of Arts, Sciences, and Engineering is composed of the School of the Arts, the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, and the School of Natural Sciences, Engineering, and Mathematics, encompassing more than twenty-five disciplines. Methods of demonstrating professional performance may vary with the traditions and goals of distinct disciplines. Teaching methods vary, as do the forms of scholarly or artistic performance, but all tenure-track faculty members are expected to demonstrate a pattern of sustained cumulative accomplishment in teaching, scholarly or creative performance, and service. All faculty members in the College of Arts, Sciences, and Engineering should recognize the following common expectations:

Teaching is a foundational professional function of faculty members at the University of North Alabama. A record of demonstrable success in teaching, as a UNA faculty member, is expected of every successful applicant for tenure and/or promotion in the College of Arts, Sciences, and Engineering.

Scholarship and creative accomplishment are essential to the academic profession. Every successful candidate for tenure and/or promotion is expected to provide convincing evidence of a pattern of scholarly or creative accomplishment appropriate to his or her discipline during the period of employment at UNA. Scholarship should include research or other forms of intellectual discovery made available to professional peers through publication and/or presentation beyond this university and the local area. For those in the performing or visual arts, creative activity should include performances, presentations, or exhibitions for audiences beyond the local area. Peer review or review qualified by critics is a proper consideration in the assessment of both scholarship and creative performance. Departments may consider professional consulting as an appropriate form of scholarship if the results of the consultation are made available to a professional audience beyond the proprietary interests. Service is an indispensable element in the professional performance of each UNA faculty member. The operation of a university is dependent on services provided by its faculty members beyond their classrooms, laboratories, and studios. Applicants for tenure and/or promotion are expected to present a record of effective service to the University, the community, and the profession during their period of employment at UNA.

While previous accomplishments will be recognized, special consideration will be given to accomplishments during the period of employment at UNA and since the faculty member's last promotion. In evaluating teaching, scholarly or creative performance, and service, it is appropriate to consider both the quality and the extent of each element. Especially in scholarly and creative performance, there are recognized hierarchies of organizations, journals, publishers, forms of dissemination, and venues for performance or exhibition in each discipline. It is appropriate to take into account the professional recognition of the instrument or venue through which scholarship or creative performance is presented.

More specific interpretation is provided by departmental guidelines. Faculty members are invited to discuss questions or concerns in advance of application for tenure or promotion with the department chair, tenured members of the department, and the dean.

Criteria for Professor Merit:

Those seeking Professor Merit after five years in or in the fifth year of the rank of Professor should demonstrate ongoing, excellent, and significant activity over the past five years in the areas of teaching, research/creative activity, and service.

For teaching, self-assessment, chair evaluations, peer review, and student evaluations should reflect effective teaching, syllabi should contain appropriate student learning outcomes with effective assessments that match the learning outcomes, and there should be evidence that the candidate continues to be abreast of recent developments or activity in the field during the past five years.

For research/creative activity, there should be documented and ongoing evidence of a national and/or international presence in venues deemed by their department to be of appropriate and high quality in the discipline during the past five years.

For service, there should be evidence of continued service at the department, college, and university levels as well as an indication of professional service during the past five years.

Criteria for Senior Lecturer:

Those seeking Senior Lecturer after five years in or in the fifth year of the rank of Lecturer should demonstrate ongoing, excellent, and significant activity over the past five years in the areas of teaching and service.

For teaching, self-assessment, chair evaluations, peer review, and student evaluations should reflect effective teaching, syllabi should contain appropriate student learning outcomes with effective assessments that match the learning outcomes, and there should be evidence that the candidate continues to be abreast of recent developments or activity in the field during the past five years.

For service, there should be evidence of continued service at the department, college, and university levels as well as an indication of professional service during the past five years.

INTRODUCTION

This document provides information regarding the Department of Geoscience’s expectations of faculty members and the criteria by which they will be evaluated for tenure and promotion. These expectations are departmental interpretations of the standards specified in the Faculty Handbook regarding tenure and promotion (see below), and indicate how, beyond the Faculty Handbook, the department evaluates teaching, research and scholarship, and service. The chair of the Department of Geoscience provides a written and oral evaluation to each faculty member at the end of the academic year with comments on teaching, research and service. The faculty member has the option to agree or not agree with the assessment and to respond in writing to the evaluation.

General Criteria for Promotion and/or Tenure (from Faculty Handbook 2.6.1)

As a regional, state supported institution of higher education, the University of North Alabama engages in teaching, research, and service in order to provide educational opportunities for students, an environment for discovery and creative accomplishment, and a variety of outreach activities meeting the professional, civic, social, cultural, and economic development needs of our region in the context of a global community. Faculty members seeking promotion and/or tenure are expected to demonstrate significant contributions in support of this mission as reflected in accomplishments specific to the criteria below.

1. Effectiveness in Teaching/Effectiveness in Role as Library or Educational Technology Services Faculty.

The candidate is evaluated upon evidence such as the following: knowledge of subject matter, including current developments in the discipline; active concern for the student's academic progress; evidence of success in supporting mentoring and student research and creative activity; ability to organize and effectively present and evaluate coursework, including effectiveness in oral and written communication; ability to motivate student interest and participation; ability to relate coursework to other fields with a view to broadening the student's general knowledge; evidence of conscientious preparation; and use of effective methodology and teaching techniques. The non-teaching faculty candidate (e.g., Librarians, Instructional Designers, etc.) is evaluated upon evidence of professional effectiveness such as the following: knowledge of the field, including current developments in the field; demonstrated active concern in providing resources that support student, faculty, and staff development and enhance academic progress; effectiveness in oral and written communication; and ability to develop their own unique contribution to their area and the university.

2. Effectiveness in Research, Scholarship, and Other Creative Activities. The candidate is evaluated upon the University of North Alabama's mission in research (including basic, applied, and pedagogical research, creative accomplishments, and other forms of scholarship) through recognition that active participation in one's academic discipline promotes intellectual growth and enhances and informs classroom, laboratory, clinical, and studio instruction. Scholarly inquiry and learning vary by discipline and the individual is evaluated upon evidence that one's scholarly accomplishments are valued by others in the discipline. Examples of such recognition would include publication of one's work in peer-reviewed outlets (books, monographs, journal articles) or invited contributions to scholarly works (book chapters); presentations and/or chaired sessions at professional society meetings; invited presentations at exhibits or recognition at juried shows; professional acclaim for performances or contributions to performances; honors or awards recognizing scholarly accomplishment; competitively awarded grants or contracts that support professional growth; selection as a professional referee or editor; and other generally recognized scholarly accomplishments.

3. Effectiveness in Rendering Service. The candidate is evaluated upon evidence such as recognition in the professional field; consultant services of high professional quality in business, cultural, educational, governmental, and industrial endeavors; activities in learned and professional societies; contributions to academic and university development and growth, including grants submissions and sponsored research; effective performance on committees and administrative assignments; and contributions to the improvement of student life. Evidence of service outside the university should ideally be related to the faculty member's profession or should contribute to promoting the University. Other contributions to the community are encouraged; however, such efforts should not constitute a majority of the evidence for effective service.

In addition to the three areas of general criteria, faculty members in areas with regional and specialized accreditation standards shall satisfy applicable credential and performance requirements.

DEPARTMENT OF GEOSCIENCE

Geoscience is a diverse discipline that embraces Geography, Geology, Geographic Information Science, Sustainability, Environmental Science, and other areas related to the Earth and to life on it in all its forms. Branches of Geoscience include those linked with Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) and natural sciences, social sciences, and the humanities. Given such a wide field, the department understands that standards of assessment may vary across the various branches of Geoscience. These

differences will be considered in determinations of a faculty member's eligibility for tenure and promotion.

The Department of Geoscience expects excellence in all faculty members evaluated in three professional areas: teaching, research and scholarship, and service. Definitions of excellence as well as expectations in each of the three areas of teaching, research and scholarship, and service are noted below. Specific requirements for promotion at each level are also explained below.

In addition, the department expects faculty to be collegial. The department understands collegiality as "companionship and cooperation between colleagues who share responsibility." Faculty are expected to work together as a team to advance the goals and mission of the department, which is defined, in short, as providing an excellent education for undergraduate and graduate students.

Defining Excellence

The basic assumption for tenure and promotion evaluation is that all faculty members perform at a minimum satisfactory level. Excellence is therefore seen as performance that is superior to satisfactory. In general, it is the quality of the contribution plus the quantity that distinguishes excellence from satisfactory performance.

For purposes of this process, excellence is defined as sustained superior performance of scholarly activities, receiving recognition from peers and colleagues in the profession, and having made positive contributions to the discipline. Moreover, excellence also includes engaging in the discipline with an attitude of intellectual curiosity, a desire to make meaningful contributions to the field, and sharing knowledge with students in a way which enhances their college experience and career opportunities.

Excellence is not an absolute quality measured by simple objective criteria, but requires the judgment by academic peers of evidence provided. It is up to the tenure or promotion candidate to provide evidence of excellence.

Teaching

Excellence in teaching is proven by student course evaluations, written course comments from the department chair or peers, letters from current and former students, teaching awards, and other relevant data.

Student evaluations are required for all faculty members regardless of rank and are a significant source of data for the assessment of teaching effectiveness. However, these evaluations cannot serve as the sole basis for the evaluation. Teaching evaluations in the Department of Geoscience are expected to be high. A direct comparison of scores among departmental faculty is an unacceptable means of evaluating teaching performance. Comparisons should be extended beyond the department to the College of Arts, Sciences, and Engineering and the University as a whole.

When applying for tenure and/or promotion, the applicant will explain the general trends within the student evaluations. Evaluating trends and changes in specific questions is encouraged, as these can be very revealing of improvements in teaching effectiveness. Documentation such as new course syllabi, study guides, class projects, fieldtrips, class exercises, and guest lectures, should be included. Strong student evaluations carry the greatest weight when accompanied by evidence that the faculty member maintains departmental academic standards; this evidence should be documented within the portfolio.

The faculty member's portfolio section on Teaching will be assessed based on performance in a substantial number of the following activities:

- Teaching or student mentoring awards
- Use of innovative methods of instruction
- Development of an innovative undergraduate or graduate course or teaching materials
- Development of study abroad/away programs
- Development of field-based or technology-based learning experiences
- Supervision of Master's theses (as primary supervisor)
- Direction of student independent study or capstone projects
- Serving on Master's theses committees
- Serving on Master's or Doctoral thesis committees outside UNA
- Teaching or conducting workshops outside the department and/or discipline
- Conducting workshops or seminars that substantially enhance teaching within the department
- Evaluations of course materials and/or teaching by the department chair and/or faculty peers
- Participation in departmental efforts to assess, standardize, improve, and monitor the delivery of multi-section courses
- Other related activities that support this area appropriately

Research and Scholarship

Faculty members are purveyors to the student population of accurate and current information, research and geographic methods, technology, and practical applications of their discipline. Faculty members have been trained to conduct research and to publish the results. Furthermore, the University and the Department expect faculty to maintain an active involvement in scholarship or research. Faculty members should also write applications for external funding to support research or scholarly activities, engage in professional development activities, and enhance their experience and certifications as appropriate. In order to keep current in the discipline and to contribute to disciplinary scholarship, the faculty member must be engaged in a range of scholarly activities.

The faculty member's portfolio section on Research and Scholarship will be assessed based on performance in a substantial number of the following areas:

Primary Consideration

- Research and Scholarship awards
- Publications in peer-reviewed journals (ISI Web of Science or Google Scholar listed, or for which it can be demonstrated that the journal is not predatory or pay-to-publish)
- Book publication
- Book chapter publication
- Presentation of research at academic conferences and other professional venues
- Presentations, seminars, or guest lectures at universities outside UNA

Secondary Consideration

- Serving as editor of a book or special issue of a journal
- Publication of research results in professional outlets such as atlases, conference proceedings, encyclopedias, textbooks, maps, and other professionally acceptable venues
- Citations or references in other scholarly publications
- Holding Visiting Scholar status at another university for short or long term

- Other related activities that support this area appropriately

Service

Service is defined as activities leading to the improved well-being, functioning, status, or image of the group concerned. Faculty members are expected to be active in service to the department, the college/university, the geoscience profession, and to the community (which can be local, regional, state, national, or international). A faculty member may choose to concentrate his or her service in one or several areas, but should not leave a void in any of the four areas.

Service to the Department of Geoscience

Service to the department consists of such activities as:

- Service on departmental committees
- Serving as department chair
- Serving as a department coordinator (for graduate studies, undergraduate studies, experiential learning, etc.)
- Departmental outreach
- Serving as an advisor for a departmental student organization
- Assisting with departmental publications and web pages
- Organizing departmental seminars, activities, or arranging for speakers
- Mentoring other departmental faculty members
- Providing leadership on departmental initiatives
- Other related activities that support this area appropriately

Service to the University of North Alabama

Service to the University includes service to the College of Arts, Sciences, and Engineering as well as to the University as a whole, and may consist of such activities as:

- Organizing college-wide and/or campus-wide events, seminars, or arranging for speakers
- Serving in a leadership role in a campus-wide organization
- Serving in the Faculty Senate
- Serving as an advisor for a campus-wide or college-wide organization
- Serving on college and/or university committees or task forces
- Serving as an academic tutor
- Serving as a mentor to faculty or students in other departments
- Assisting other college and/or university faculty members or students
- Other related activities that support this area appropriately

Service to the Profession of Geoscience

Service to the discipline may consist of such activities as:

- Serving as an officer of a professional society or organization
- Serving on a journal editorial board
- Serving on a committee of a professional society or organization

- Assisting with the organization of professional conferences
- Serving as a reviewer for external university department reviews
- Serving as a reviewer for journal or book manuscripts
- Serving as a reviewer for grant proposals
- Participating in geoscience outreach outside the university
- Other related activities that support this area appropriately

Service to the Community

The community is defined as the local, regional, state, national, or international community (outside of the university). Service activities to the community should have some connection to the faculty member's professional expertise, and may consist of such activities as:

- Serving as a speaker for a community organization or event
- Serving as a board or committee member for a community organization or event
- Acting as a consultant or advisor for a community organization or event
- Acting as a consultant or advisor for a media outlet
- Assisting with the organization of community conferences or events
- Other related activities that support this area appropriately

Collegiality

The department expects faculty to work together as a team to advance the department mission of providing an outstanding educational experience for undergraduate and graduate students. Collegiality is defined as "companionship and cooperation between colleagues who share responsibility." Faculty must demonstrate a positive attitude towards their work and, while holding their own opinions and viewpoints, engage cooperatively with each other.

Expectations for Tenure and Promotion

The structure of tenure and promotion committees is described in the Faculty Handbook. Committee members will review a candidate's portfolio for tenure and/or promotion and consider the three categories of activities: teaching, research and scholarship, and service. Committee members will rate faculty performances in each of these categories as **Excellent (4 points), Above Average (3 points), Satisfactory (2 points), or Unsatisfactory (0 points)**. Evaluators will score each section individually and will total the three numbers to obtain an overall score for tenure and/or promotion, and all committee member scores will be averaged for a final committee score.

Minimum Expectations (from Faculty Handbook 2.6.2)

2.6.2 Minimum Qualifications by Rank (Also refer to Appendix 2.D/2.D.1, Timeline for Promotion and/or Tenure) (from Faculty Handbook)

1. Lecturer/Visiting (Open Rank) Professor. Appointment to this rank typically requires possession of a master's or higher degree in the field of assignment. For appointments without the master's or higher degree in the field of assignment, there must be evidence of related work experience in the field, professional licensure and certifications, honors and awards, continuous documented excellence in teaching, or other demonstrated competencies and achievements that contribute to effective teaching and

student learning outcomes.

2. Assistant Professor. Appointment, promotion to this rank, and/or tenure requires possession of a doctoral degree or a terminal degree appropriate in the field of assignment as determined by university policy. There shall also be evidence of potential for effective teaching; research, scholarship, or creative activities; and service; as well as for a successful career. As per the terms of the letter of employment, faculty members hired to fill tenure-track appointments in anticipation of being awarded the terminal degree but who have not completed the degree at the time of hire will be employed at the rank of Lecturer. Upon receipt of the terminal degree in the teaching field from a properly accredited institution, the faculty member is automatically eligible for promotion to the rank of Assistant Professor upon the recommendation of the department chair and dean and final approval by the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs.

3. Associate Professor. Appointment, promotion to this rank, and/or tenure requires possession of a doctoral degree or a terminal degree appropriate in the field of assignment as determined by university policy. In addition, the applicant shall have had successful experience in teaching; research, scholarship, or other creative activities; and service. Promotion to Associate Professor: Faculty will be required to be evaluated for promotion and/or tenure no later than the sixth year of service as an Assistant Professor at UNA. Faculty employment contracts may, upon approval by the dean and the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, include credit for up to three years of service at the assistant professor level or higher at other institutions toward the six years of service. The credit given must be determined at the time of hiring and included in the employment letter. The relevant documentation of years of probationary service will be maintained by the Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and may be used in lieu of offer letters written prior to the 2017-18 academic year that do not include this information. An Assistant Professor must serve a minimum of two years at UNA prior to the review of the promotion and/or tenure application in the third academic year of employment at UNA.

4. Professor. Appointment, promotion to this rank, and/or tenure, requires possession of a doctoral degree or terminal degree appropriate in the field of assignment as determined by university policy. In addition, a minimum of 12 years' appropriate cumulative experience specific to the discipline is also required, at least six of which must be in rank as associate professor. Effective for new hires beginning fall 2012, promotion to this rank requires that three of the twelve years of cumulative experience shall be earned at UNA. In addition, the applicant shall have established a sustained and consistent record of excellence in teaching; research, scholarship, or other creative activities; and service. Promotion to Professor: Faculty will be eligible to be evaluated for promotion no earlier than the sixth year of service as an Associate Professor at UNA. Faculty employment contracts may, upon approval by the dean and the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, include credit for up to three years of service at the associate professor level or higher at other institutions toward the six years of service. The credit given must be determined at the time of hiring and included in the employment letter. The relevant documentation of years of probationary service will be maintained by the Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and may be used in lieu of offer letters written prior to the 2017-18 academic year that do not include this information. An Associate Professor must serve a minimum of two years at UNA prior to the review of the promotion application in the third academic year of employment at UNA. Tenure for Full Professors: Faculty appointed as full professors will apply for tenure after completing at least two years of service at UNA.

5. Professor of Merit (Criteria from CASE). Upon reaching the fifth year of service at the rank of Full Professor, faculty are eligible to seek designation as a Professor of Merit by demonstrating sustained, successful, and professionally significant activity over the most recent five years in the areas of teaching, research/creative activity, and service. In the area of teaching, a demonstrable record of self-assessment,

chair evaluations, peer review, and student evaluations should reflect effective teaching; syllabi should contain appropriate student learning outcomes with effective assessments that match the learning outcomes; and evidence should be provided that the candidate remains abreast of recent developments or activity in their field throughout the most recent five-year period since their last promotion. In the area of research/creative activity, there should be documented evidence of ongoing engagement over the most recent five years with recognized national and/or international organizations, publications, and venues of professional significance respected and deemed appropriate by their department as highly relevant to the candidate's individual discipline. In the area of service, there should be a professional record of continual service at the departmental, college, and university levels in addition to evidence of sustained professional service during the most recent five years that any candidate has served at the rank of Full Professor. For consideration for the Professor of Merit increase, a faculty member may choose to emphasize one of the three areas (teaching, research and scholarship, or service) but must document why and how this consideration should be given. Full professors are eligible to apply for the Professor of Merit increase repeatedly after each five-year service period beyond promotion to the rank.

Department of Geoscience Expectations

Faculty in Geoscience are bound by the conditions outlined in the Faculty Handbook (see above). In addition, the following is expected for tenure and/or promotion within the department (see explanation of points under "Expectations for Tenure and Promotion"):

Lecturer to Assistant Professor. In order to be recommended for promotion from lecturer to assistant professor, a person will have completed the Ph.D. and have a total of at least **seven (7) points**, with no Unsatisfactory scores (0 points). The applicant should also be assessed favorably in terms of collegiality.

Assistant Professor to Associate Professor. In order to be recommended for tenure and promotion from assistant professor to associate professor, a person should have a total of at least **nine (9) points**. In the area of research and scholarship, a person must have published at least one article in a refereed journal (ISI Web of Science or Google Scholar listed or in a journal that is determined by the committee to not be predatory or pay-to-publish). The applicant should also be assessed favorably in terms of collegiality.

Associate Professor to Professor. In order to be recommended for promotion from associate professor to professor, a person should have a total of **ten (10) points**. In the area of research and scholarship, a person must have published two additional refereed journal articles (ISI Web of Science or Google Scholar listed or in a journal that is determined by the committee to not be predatory or pay-to-publish) since their last promotion. The applicant should also be assessed favorably in terms of collegiality.

Merit Professor Increase. In order to be recommended for professor merit, a person should have a total of **ten (10) points**. In the area of research and scholarship, a person must have published one additional refereed journal article (ISI Web of Science or Google Scholar listed or in a journal that is determined by the committee to not be predatory or pay-to-publish) since their last promotion. The applicant should also be assessed favorably in terms of collegiality.

Mid-Tenure Review. Mid-Tenure Review provides tenure-track faculty with the opportunity to understand and participate in the tenure and promotion process, and provides assessment and feedback that can assist them when they apply for tenure and promotion. The University requires that all tenure-track faculty undergo a Mid-Tenure Review as outlined in the Faculty Handbook (Section 2.6.3). The process is the same as for regular tenure-promotion for Assistant Professor to Associate Professor. Though non-binding, applicants should strive to demonstrate the accomplishments and abilities that will form part of the actual

tenure-promotion process.

Process

Responsibility of the Department Peer Promotion Committee. The peer promotion committee members will review the candidate's portfolio and will prepare a written evaluation of each candidate for the department chair (or associate dean if the department chair is submitting their application) that addresses strengths and weaknesses in relation to the university, college, and departmental criteria established for advancement in rank. The evaluation, based on those strengths and weaknesses, will indicate whether promotion and/or tenure is recommended or not recommended and be recorded on the Promotion Recommendation Form no later than November 15. This written evaluation, composed by the chair of the candidate's peer committee, should provide information directly addressing the degree of merit or level of prestige or quality of scholarly outlets cited within the candidate's portfolio. These should include, but not be limited to, the quality of academic journals in which scholarly works appear, as well as the prestige/quality of presentations.

Responsibility of the Department Chair. When a faculty member applies for promotion, it is the responsibility of the department chair (or dean if the department chair is applying and additional committee members are needed from outside the department) to form a peer promotion committee by September 1. The department chair will evaluate the portfolios of the candidate(s) in the department and prepare a written evaluation of each candidate that addresses strengths and weaknesses in relation to the university, college, and departmental criteria established for advancement in rank. The evaluation, based on those strengths and weaknesses, will indicate whether promotion and/or tenure is recommended or not recommended and be recorded on the Promotion Recommendation Form by no later than December 1. This written evaluation, composed by the candidate's department chair, should provide information directly addressing the degree of merit or level of prestige or quality of scholarly outlets cited within the candidate's portfolio. These should include, but not be limited to, the quality of academic journals in which scholarly works appear, as well as the prestige/quality of presentations.