

**SAN JOSÉ STATE
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**Amendment N to S15-7, University Policy,
Retention, Tenure and Promotion for Regular
Faculty Employees: Procedures**

Legislative History:

On February 24, 2025, the Academic Senate approved Amendment N to University Policy S15-7, Retention, Tenure and Promotion for Regular Faculty Employees: Procedures, presented by Senator Riley for the Professional Standards Committee.

Action by University President:

Date: March 6, 2025

Signed and approved by: 
Cynthia Teniente-Matson, President,
San José State University

University Policy

**Amendment N to University Policy, S15-7 Retention, Tenure
and Promotion for Regular Faculty Employees: Procedures**

Rationale:

Amendments A through J to S15-8 Retention, Tenure, and Promotion for Regular Faculty Employees: Criteria and Standards added language on the scholarship of engagement, the scholarship of teaching, activities that enhance inclusion, educational equity, and achievement, and so on. University RTP policy thus encompasses a broader range of work being done across campus and greatly lessens the need for Department RTP Guidelines.

There has been uneven implementation of Department RTP Guidelines across campus. Initially, one college required its departments to create them; otherwise, only a handful of departments have found Guidelines useful. Of the roughly 66 departments/schools on campus, 18 have Department RTP Guidelines; only two of those are required to have them (Counseling and Psychological Services and the University Library). Professional Standards has also observed that many approved Department RTP Guidelines have expired and not been revised in relation to recent Amendments to S15-8 possibly indicating no continued need for Guidelines.

Moreover, most of the Department RTP Guidelines that PS currently reviews tend to repeat University policy and do not follow the requirements laid out in Section 4 of this policy. PS has discussed the tremendous amount of labor invested in developing Guidelines that often are returned to the Departments for revision, requiring additional time-consuming process. Frequently, the Guidelines are never resubmitted to PS for subsequent review, so there is no substantive outcome for all of the labor. Unproductive faculty labor is of concern and PS believes it lowers faculty morale. PS is also aware of the unintended stress that the creation of Guidelines causes, particularly among probationary faculty who have the sense that only perfect and fully inclusive Department Guidelines will protect them during the RTP process. Finally, PS is concerned that from an equity perspective, Guidelines may create additional barriers and constitute a form of gatekeeping for faculty who are marginalized in their fields or the academy.

After significant consultation and deliberation, Professional Standards strongly encourages Departments to phase out any current Guidelines per the timelines already established in §4.4.3. As a reminder, allowances for the continuity of Guidelines across a faculty member's period of review are articulated in §4.4.5 and will remain in place. PS ensures that there will continue to be a process to create guidelines for academic units required to have them as well as for departments that are not well-represented by University RTP policy in one or more of the Categories of Achievement (Academic Assignment, Service, and/or Scholarly/Artistic/Professional Achievement). To develop a streamlined submission and review process and to complete its work on Guidelines already awaiting review, PS requests a temporary moratorium on the submission of Department RTP Guidelines.

Resolved:

- 1) A temporary moratorium on the submission of Department RTP Guidelines for review and approval will be effective August 17, 2025, through January 26, 2026, for a one-semester moratorium following approval of this policy recommendation.
- 2) Faculty Services will establish the following timelines for all currently approved Department RTP guidelines for Departments:
 - a. All Guidelines currently approved or approved during 2024-25 will expire on the normal timeline outlined in § 4.4.3.

- b. Any Departments working on new or revised Guidelines that have not yet been submitted for review will have to complete the process before the moratorium begins or use the procedures in this proposed amendment after the moratorium ends. PS encourages departments to wait until after the moratorium and the establishment of a supportive process unless their need is urgent.
- 3) Amend section 4.0 to clarify the purpose and content of Guidelines and to develop a more efficient process for the creation and review of Department RTP Guidelines for specific departments required to have them and for departments that may want to develop them.
- 4) Amend section 5.2.2 to update changes to the Chair's Description of Assignment relating to Department RTP Guidelines.

Approved: February 18, 2025

Vote: 9-0-0

Present: Magdalena Barrera, Caroline Chen, Dawn Hackman, Gilles Muller, Chima Nwokolo, Sarika Pruthi, Priya Raman, Shannon Rose Riley (Chair), Gigi Smith

Absent: Farzan Kazemifar

Financial Impact: None anticipated

Workload Impact: Overall, we anticipate a reduction in workload at multiple levels involved in the creation and approval of guidelines. There will be some increase in workload for Professional Standards in the semester of the moratorium as it prepares a new process for consultation and preparation of Guidelines.

4. Department Guidelines for Achievement

4.1. Purpose of Guidelines

The purpose of guidelines is to assist committees and administrators outside the department in understanding the standards appropriate to the applicant's profession and to ensure fair and equitable application of these standards to the broader procedures, standards, and criteria of University policies. They are not a roadmap for tenure-line faculty nor do they replace a well-crafted narrative statement and supporting evidence in the dossier.

- 4.1.1. Non-teaching units (Counseling and Psychological Services and the University Library) are required to develop Department RTP guidelines for the category of "Academic Assignment" in order to assist committees and administrators outside the unit in their evaluations.
- 4.1.2. Departments not well-represented by University RTP policy in one or more of the Categories of Achievement (Academic Assignment, Service, and/or Scholarly/Artistic/Professional Achievement) may develop

Guidelines in order to assist committees and administrators outside the department in their evaluations.

4.2. Content of Guidelines

Guidelines have required elements and may include additional relevant information, as indicated below.

- 4.2.1. Department RTP Guidelines may be created for one or more of the Categories of Achievement (Scholarly/Artistic/Professional Achievement; Academic Assignment; or Service) in order to describe work that is relevant to the Department and not accounted for in University policy.
- 4.2.2. Department RTP Guidelines must offer at least two inclusive hypothetical sample faculty profiles for each level of achievement (unsatisfactory, baseline, good, or excellent per S15-8 §3.3 Criteria to be Used when Evaluating Candidates for Promotion and Tenure) within a given Category of Achievement. Note that while Department RTP Guidelines provide sample faculty profiles that would warrant a given level of achievement, they do not replace the Criteria and Standards of University Policy. Rather, they augment/supplement them. What follows is a sample profile template to be used as a model—it is not intended to be used as an actual profile.
 - 4.2.2.1. A sample profile contains a description of what kind of work qualifies for a certain level of achievement: “A faculty member achieving BLANK in Scholarly/Artistic/Professional Achievement may have a published BLANK during the period of review or may have produced a BLANK and BLANK.”
- 4.2.3. Guidelines may also specify the sorts of documentation that are expected to be relevant to the evaluation of the professional effectiveness of faculty in a particular academic area.
- 4.2.4. Guidelines are inclusive and not exclusive. They shall not be used to exclude accomplishments from consideration that were unanticipated when the guidelines were created. When candidates submit genuine accomplishments that were not anticipated in the Guidelines, the accomplishments will be assessed using the language of the University policy on Criteria and Standards.
- 4.2.5. They provide realistic estimates of the resources required to meet each given level of achievement.
- 4.2.6. They are equitable; they do not make it more or less difficult for faculty to achieve tenure or promotion.
- 4.2.7. Departments that contain more than one discipline, or contain very different subdisciplines, may produce more than one set of specialized guidelines. When this occurs, particular care must be taken to specify to

which faculty each set of guidelines applies; the applicable guidelines should be specified in the Chair's Description of Assignment and included in the dossier (*see* §5.2.2).

4.3. Development and Approval of Department Guidelines

- 4.3.1. Consultation and Support: Departments interested in creating Guidelines, whether required or not, will go through a pre-development process in which Professional Standards will provide consultation and support to minimize time and effort at the Department level and to ensure that Guidelines conform with Section 4.2, Content of Guidelines. PS will provide a process to help Departments not required to have Guidelines determine whether guidelines may be necessary or desirable and how to proceed with the development, submission, and approval process. Departments required to have Guidelines will also receive support through a consultation process designed to minimize labor in the creation or updating of Guidelines.
- 4.3.2. After the consultation phase with PS, Departments must develop guidelines that closely follow the criteria laid out in section 4.2, Content of Guidelines, as well as any advice provided by Professional Standards or the Provost.
- 4.3.3. The proposed Guidelines must be approved by a vote of department probationary and tenured faculty, using secret ballots. The vote tally and date shall be reported at the top of the Guidelines document at the time of submission to Professional Standards. Guidelines without this information will be returned to the Department for correction.
- 4.3.4. Guidelines that comply with 4.2 Content of Guidelines and University policy shall be approved and authorized for use by the Provost in consultation with the Professional Standards Committee. Before making its recommendation to the Provost, PS shall review the proposed guidelines and solicit input from the Dean or corresponding Associate Dean, and/or the College Research Committee. The PS Committee's determination will be shared in writing with all involved parties by the PS Chair or the Provost's designee.
- 4.3.5. In some cases, Departments may need to revise and resubmit the document for subsequent review. The Committee remains available for consultation during this phase of development.

4.4. Publication, Distribution, and Use of Guidelines

- 4.4.1. All approved Department RTP Guidelines shall be posted on the Faculty Services website (or equivalent) and shall display the date they were last approved.
 - 4.4.2. Once approved and published, Department RTP Guidelines must be applied when judging the level of achievement of all candidates to which they apply, bearing in mind the limits of such guidelines.
 - 4.4.3. Approved Guidelines must be kept current. The Department shall submit them to Professional Standards for review every five years; Guidelines shall display the date they were last approved as well as the new vote results at the top of the document. Guidelines without this information will be returned to the Department for correction.
 - 4.4.4. Guidelines that display a date more than five years old calculated from the time of the submission of the dossier shall be considered invalid, except as provided for in § 4.4.5, Continuity of Guidelines throughout the Review Period.
 - 4.4.5. Continuity of Guidelines throughout the Review Period. Normally, any valid (current) guidelines must be included in each candidate's dossier. If, however, guidelines have changed during the candidate's period of review, the candidate shall have the right to choose to include either the old or the new guidelines. Similarly, if guidelines that were valid during a part of the candidate's period of review are no longer valid and have not been replaced, the candidate may choose between including the old guidelines or including no guidelines. Only one set of guidelines may appear in the dossier, and reviewers are restricted to considering only included guidelines.
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- 5.2.2 Department Chair's Responsibilities. The department chair or school or division director shall inform in writing faculty members who are to be reviewed of the nature of materials required by the retention and tenure committee and the date by which these materials must be received for the committee's consideration. It is the responsibility of the chair to ensure that a detailed Description of Academic Assignment of the faculty member for the period under review is placed in the dossier at least one week before the submission date of the dossier, in order to establish a frame of reference for evaluation of the candidate by persons from outside the department. The Chair's Description of Academic Assignment must state whether there are Department RTP Guidelines in

use and the Chair must ensure that a copy is included in the dossier. In cases where a Department has more than one set of RTP Guidelines (per §4.2.7., above), the Chair's Description of Academic Assignment must specify which set of guidelines applies to the particular faculty member. The faculty member may attach a response to the Chair's Description of Academic Assignment before the closing date; any such response shall also be included in the dossier. During the period that the dossier is open, it is the responsibility of the Chair to ensure that the evidence necessary for a full and fair evaluation is contained in the dossier.