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School of Computing
Memo on Procedural Guidelines for RPT
August 15, 2020

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Background

This document describes a few procedural guidelines for the School of Computing related to retention, promotion and tenure of tenure-line (tenured and tenure-eligible) faculty (see PPM 6-300). The School of Computing adopts the College of Engineering's RPT Guidelines, which expands upon the University of Utah's RPT Policies and Procedures. This memo supplements the University and College documents with additional guidelines, while conforming to the procedures defined in these documents.
Supporting Documents:
https://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-303.php
https://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-311.php
https://intranet.coe.utah.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/coe-rpt-guidelines-final-170313.pdf
https://intranet.coe.utah.edu/retentionpromotion-and-tenure-rpt/

RPT Criteria

The CoE policy states that "Promotion to the rank of Associate Professor will be approved only when a person has given such clear evidence of ability that they may be expected, in due course, to attain the rank of Professor." The School of Computing faculty notes that such evidence is provided by the candidate's clear ability to meet the criteria for promotion to the rank of Associate Professor.

The criteria for research, scholarship, and teaching will also include artifacts that have an impact on the candidate's community, e.g., animations, films.

Early Tenure

Policy 6-311 in University policy states: "Credit for prior service may be assessed once, either at the time of appointment or before a review for tenure commences. The departmental RPT committee (by majority vote), the department chair, and the dean must agree as to the number of years credited for prior service."

If there is no credit for prior service, then for an early tenure request based on extraordinary progress, the policy states: "The candidate must obtain approval from the department chair and the RPT chair to be reviewed earlier than the final year of the normal probationary period. If the candidate has served fewer than five years if appointed initially as an assistant professor, or fewer than three years if appointed initially as an associate professor or professor, then the candidate must obtain additional approvals from the dean and cognizant senior vice president to begin the review."

We note that the RPT chair will represent the RPT committee's majority opinion when approving requests for early tenure.

Informal RPT Reviews

The model for informal RPT reviews for tenure-track faculty within the School is as follows:
- First-year reviews are performed by RPT chair/director.
- Fifth-year reviews are handled like a formal review, but without external letters.
- Second-year and Fourth-year informal reviews follow the process below.

Regarding the 2nd and 4th year reviews:
- Informal RPT Committee[1] will be appointed in consultation with RPT chair & director for a one-year term. These will include a mix of associate and full professors, and represent a diversity of research areas. Members will not be asked to serve on any standard RPT subcommittees concurrently.
- Committees will consult with junior faculty mentor(s).
- Template RPT reports will be auto-populated based on data-entry by faculty. Committee will be responsible for refinement, context, and commentary. For example, selecting comments from teaching reports; confirming correct categorization of top-tier publications.
- Recommended ratings for each reviewed faculty member will be proposed by Informal RPT committee.
- Reports will be circulated to the full department RPT committee and summarized in a meeting, where after brief discussion, the full committee will vote to determine final ratings.

To assist career-line faculty in their 2nd and 4th years, the Informal RPT committee will also provide feedback on career-line cases by including candidate mentors in discussions.

Associate RPT chair:
- This leadership role is open to any tenured faculty member.
- Responsibilities include
    - Chair of Informal RPT committee(s)
    - Meeting with faculty evaluated by Informal committees to discuss evaluation (this is in addition to required meeting w/Director, & may be joint with RPT chair).
    - Oversight of the faculty mentoring program (including assisting the director in assigning mentors, revising School practices as needed, and helping facilitate regular and constructive meetings between mentors/mentees).
- Appointment would be subject to vote by full faculty; one-year term (typically renewed for a second year). Ideally this term is offset from that of the RPT Chair to help with consistency.

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[1] This may be split into separate 2nd & 4th year committees, both chaired by the Associate RPT Chair if workload necessitates.