

College of Science (COS) Expectations and Guidelines for Collegiate Faculty Promotions

Promotion to a higher rank is granted to Collegiate Faculty members who have demonstrated excellence and innovation in instructional responsibilities, and who show significant evidence of related professional growth and development, including an appropriate level of recognition outside of the University through publication and other professional activities. Consideration for promotion may be requested by the faculty member or recommended by the department.

Overview of the Promotion Process

An application for promotion receives up to five independent reviews, in the order shown:

- Departmental Committee
- Department Head
- COS Collegiate Faculty and Professor of Practice Promotion Committee
- Dean of the College of Science
- Provost

Any application that receives a positive recommendation from one or both of the Departmental Committee and the Department Head moves on to the College level. An application that reaches the College level continues to the Provost upon receiving a positive recommendation from one or both of the COS Collegiate Faculty and Professor of Practice (CF & PoP) Promotion Committee and the Dean. The Provost makes the final decision on applications reaching that level.

An applicant is provided written feedback if failing to advance at either the department or college level. Applications that are turned down at the department level can be appealed, but only after having been turned down in at least two separate years (details for appeals can be found in the Faculty Handbook). A negative decision at the college level, or by the provost, is final and cannot be appealed.

As stated in the Faculty Handbook, a negative recommendation on a promotion request need not translate into termination of employment. Indeed, a faculty member in the Collegiate Faculty series may remain at their current rank as long as their performance warrants continued employment and serves departmental needs. In COS, promotion and retention decisions are made independently, and being turned down for promotion does not preclude reapplying in a future year.

Specifics of the Promotion Process

The Collegiate Faculty promotion process proceeds according to a college-issued timeline, available as the last page of this document.

Contract lengths for Collegiate Faculty are three, five, and seven years respectively for appointments at the assistant, associate, and full levels. Ordinarily, Collegiate Faculty members within COS will not be considered for promotion any earlier than in the fifth year of their employment at their current rank.

A candidate for promotion prepares a dossier describing her/his performance and accomplishments and submits this to the departmental committee. This dossier is the document on which the request for promotion is judged at each of the five steps of the process. The culmination of each step is a letter containing a recommendation, pro or con, for the promotion. As with other faculty promotion processes at Virginia Tech, the format for the dossier is prescribed by the provost. Candidates are referred to the provost's webpage (provost.vt.edu/faculty_affairs/promotion_tenure.html) for the CF template available at that page. The College of Science requires that full SPOT reports from courses taught by a candidate be included, to cover the length of the candidate's instructional career at Virginia Tech up to the application for promotion, though not to exceed the five years immediately preceding the application for promotion. Each CF promotion dossier must contain letters of evaluation from reviewers external to the candidate's department. The College of Science requires that at least three of these letters be obtained, and that at least two of the letters obtained are from reviewers external to Virginia Tech.

The Departmental Committee reviews the dossier of each candidate and prepares a letter stating its recommendation, positive or negative, for promotion, and reporting the numeric division of the committee's vote. This letter should contain a thorough summary of the candidate's qualifications for promotion, reflecting the evaluation of the credentials by the committee with an informative, individualized assessment of the candidate's activities and contributions. In the case of a mixed vote, a minority report may be written. In the case of a negative vote, the letter will explain the basis for the negative recommendation.

The Department Head independently evaluates each dossier and the recommendations of the committee. Particulars of the candidate's professional assignment should be provided, including the percentage of that assignment to teaching, for scholarly activities, and for service and outreach. The Head's letter need not repeat the information in the committee's letter, but must address the candidate's performance relative to the department's expectations for performance in the collegiate faculty series, explaining those expectations and the procedures by which the candidate was evaluated. The Head should summarize the opinions of the external reviewers, providing explanations for any disagreements with those opinions. If the Head's recommendation is not in agreement with the committee's, this should be more fully explicated and justified. If the Head concurs with a negative recommendation from

the committee, then the case is ended and does not move on to the college level; the Head provides written feedback to the candidate should this occur.

The COS CF & PoP promotion committee will prepare a letter about each candidate whose application reaches the college level, stating its recommendation, positive or negative, for promotion, and reporting the numeric division of the committee's vote. Letters from the COS CF & PoP promotion committee should be detailed but succinct, as they need not repeat material well summarized at the departmental level. If the vote is not unanimous, a brief explanation of the concerns represented by the dissenting votes is included in the college committee's statement. In the case of a negative vote, the committee will explain the basis for the negative recommendation. The Dean independently evaluates each dossier and the recommendations of the committee. The statement from the dean is an informative assessment of the candidate's accomplishments from the perspective of the college and the dean. The dean should provide an integrative summary of the candidate's contributions to the department, college, and university goals. In cases of a split vote or differing recommendations from the department or from the college committee, the Dean should explain and contextualize those differences so to aid understanding at the next level of review. If the Dean concurs with a negative recommendation from the committee, then the case is ended and does not move on to the Provost; the Dean provides written feedback to the candidate should this occur. Otherwise, the Dean writes a letter with her/his recommendation and forwards the dossier to the Provost. If the Dean does not concur with a CF & PoP promotion committee recommendation, the letter will explain the basis for the lack of concurrence. Notifications about CF promotion decisions are made by the Provost according to a published calendar.

Departmental Committee

Composition of the departmental Collegiate Faculty promotion committee, and its procedures, are determined by the department within the bounds set by the Provost and the faculty handbook.

COS Collegiate Faculty and Professor of Practice Promotion Committee

The College of Science CF & PoP promotion committee reviews both Collegiate Faculty and Professor of Practice applications for promotion. The goal is for this committee to be comprised of faculty at the associate or full level in the Collegiate Faculty and Professor of Practice ranks. Due to the currently small number of such faculty in the college, this may not be possible for several years. Until then, candidates will be considered at the college level by a committee that will include some tenured faculty members. Committee members are nominated by COS departments and appointed by the Dean. The Dean, or other representative of the College of Science Dean's office as appointed by the Dean, serves as a non-voting member and committee chair. Minimal committee size will be four voting members. A faculty member serving on both the department committee and the COS CF & PoP promotion committee may vote at only one of these levels. Faculty members should not serve on any promotion committee evaluating a spouse or partner. It is not sufficient to leave the room while the spouse or partner is discussed.

Expectations for the Collegiate Faculty Series

- Quality instruction as evidenced by such measures as Student Perception of Teaching (SPOT) evaluations, student responses to supplemental questions, activities in non-classroom settings, and peer reviews.
- Participation in departmental activities as related to programs of instruction, curricular development, and their relationships and integration with other programs at the university. Development of leadership within the department on curricular issues and on evolving goals of the department's instructional mission.
- Pedagogical innovation in terms of course development and/or methods of instructional delivery. Promoting teaching excellence within the department.
- Proficiency at understanding and evaluating research that applies to their field and translating it to classroom settings.
- Research and professional development in alignment with the department's expectations for the faculty member's appointment. The research program may be scholarship on teaching and learning, and/or on disciplinary topics, and must produce findings that are presented in professional venues including conferences and journal publications. There is, however, no expectation of a research program so extensive as to be appropriate for a tenure-track faculty appointment.
- Adherence to the Virginia Tech Principles of Ethical Behavior and the Virginia Tech Principles of Community, as described in section 2.23 of the Faculty Handbook.

Where appropriate to their assignment, Collegiate Faculty members may interact with graduate students and interns, serve on graduate committees, and chair graduate advisory committees with the approval of the academic unit and the graduate school. They may also be expected to serve on departmental, college, or university committees as contributing members of their departments and the broader university community.

A faculty member in the Collegiate Faculty series should work with their department head to clarify and detail the expectations of their position within the guidelines provided by this document. This series allows for flexibility of the emphases placed on the various performance categories, so that positions may best be crafted to serve departmental needs. It is the joint responsibility of the department head and the faculty member to assure that expectations are sufficiently clear.

Criteria for Promotion to Associate Collegiate Professor

Credentials for appointment or promotion to this rank must document a record of significant instructional experience with sustained excellence, and of accomplishments relevant to the field and type of assignment. The strongest cases will show a pattern of these activities throughout the promotion period:

- Exemplary instruction, evidenced in the dossier by reference to such items as SPOT evaluations, student responses to supplemental questions, activities in a non-classroom setting, peer reviews, and annual departmental evaluations.

- Professional development contributing to a growing regional or national reputation, to include participation in professional conferences and publications in venues deemed appropriate for their assignment by their department.
- Course or curricular development or development of new pedagogies. This may include (but is not limited to) contributions to textbooks or to online teaching materials available to others beyond the faculty member's own classes; increasing the availability and relevance of undergraduate research experiences; introduction of active learning or flipped classroom models to courses previously employing older formats; and developing/teaching new courses.
- Substantial contributions to the department's instructional program in the form of advising or mentoring students; for example, academic advising of undergraduate students, GTA advising or mentoring, peer mentoring, or advising student organizations.
- Substantive service to the department, college, and/or university.

Criteria for Promotion to Collegiate Professor

Collegiate Professor is the capstone rank in the Collegiate Faculty series and promotion to this rank requires exemplary performance across the full range of Collegiate Faculty expectations. Promotion to this rank requires distinguished professional achievement, and regional, national, or international prominence in the field. Credentials must document a record of significant, impactful instructional experience with continued excellence; of scholarly accomplishments relevant to the field and assignment; and of ongoing, valuable service within and external to the University. External validation of such accomplishments and leadership in the field is expected.

College of Science Promotion Timetable, 2021-22

Collegiate Professor and Professor of Practice Series

April – May 2021	Departments determine faculty members who will be considered for promotion in either the Professor of Practice (PoP) series or the Collegiate Faculty (CF) series.
*June 1, 2021	Notify the Dean’s Office (Allison Craft) of faculty for whom external letters will be requested. External letters are required for promotion to associate or full in the CF series, and for promotion to full in the PoP series.
May – June 2021	External reviewers are identified and invited to serve.
July 1, 2021	Letters and candidates’ packets, including candidates’ statements, are sent to external reviewers.
September 14, 2021	Due date for external letters to be received.
October 2021	Departmental deliberations and vote, and evaluation by the department head; dossiers for candidates going forward to the college are completed.
*November 15, 2021	Promotion dossiers submitted electronically to College of Science NAS.
December 8, 2021	COS CF & PoP Promotion Committee meeting, to review dossiers and issue recommendations, is scheduled within these dates.
*December 13, 2021	Letters from COS CF & PoP Promotion Committee, evaluating candidates, are finalized and submitted to the Dean.
January – February 2022	College and department staff members complete the final dossiers for all CF and PoP candidates going forward to the University Committee.
*March 1, 2022	Final dossiers submitted to the Provost’s Office.

***Due dates;** all other dates are suggested timeframes for departments.