Policy Number: E5.0

Policy Name: POLICY ON TENURE

1. Preamble

In the academic profession, tenure confers the right of self-direction for faculty members to teach, research, and pursue studies without concern for the stability of their position. Professors on a tenure-track should be guided in those activities by a written Statement of Expectations developed in consultation with the dean (or equivalent) and the department chair (or equivalent). The signed Statement of Expectations document included in the letter of offer is tailored for each individual faculty member to ensure that tenure expectations are understood by each party and clearly states that the expectations and norms for tenure and promotion can evolve. This Statement of Expectations serves as the basis to evaluate the faculty member’s tenure eligibility.

The RIT tenure policy seeks to cultivate faculty who demonstrate excellence in instructional skills and scholarship competencies as well as effective participation in the University’s academic and cultural life. The right to tenure is earned through the demonstration of high standards in those areas and concern for students' personal worth and advancement. Tenure-track faculty should recognize a unique responsibility to maintain quality performance as guided by their Statement of Expectations. The judgment of colleagues will be considered primary in the assurance that those who achieve tenure are of proven distinction.

Tenured faculty must continue to grow and develop professionally. The department chair (or equivalent) and other administrators share responsibility to nurture and support tenure-track faculty and other colleagues.

Tenure decisions should be based upon the criteria and documentation outlined in the following policy. Throughout this policy, the category of ‘college’ will include the eight colleges of RIT as well as campus-wide institutes.

2. Conditions of Tenure Appointments

a. Appointment

(1) Appointment to the RIT faculty shall be consummated through explicit agreements stating specific criteria for being awarded tenure. This agreement is made between the dean (or equivalent) of the college, with input from the department chair (or equivalent) into which the candidate is being hired, and with the approval of the provost. Such agreements shall be final and binding only when confirmed by a signed, written contract issued by the Human Resources Department and signed by the appointee, dean (or equivalent) and provost. The contract shall clearly state whether the candidate is or is not to be granted a tenure-track appointment, and, in the case of a joint appointment, in which colleges the appointments shall reside.

(2) Statement of Expectations: When an appointment is to a tenure-track position, relevant university and college tenure policies shall be provided and a separate written Statement of
Expectations for the achievement of tenure by the particular faculty member shall be agreed upon and signed by the dean (or equivalent) and the faculty member. This Statement of Expectations may be changed with the mutual consent of both parties. Such statements will be governed by university and college criteria. If the norms for tenure change during a tenure-track faculty member’s probationary period, the faculty member affected by the change will have reasonable opportunity to satisfy the new norms if he or she so desires. To ensure a reasonable opportunity to satisfy the new norms, after the Third Year Comprehensive Review, the Statement of Expectations cannot be changed unless initiated by the candidate. All revised Statements of Expectations must be agreed upon and signed by the dean (or equivalent) and the faculty member. All Statements of Expectations and revised Statements of Expectations will be governed by university and college criteria.

(3) This individual Statement of Expectations, along with all subsequent statements related to the conditions of the faculty member's employment, prospects for tenure, and evidence bearing on the faculty member's performance, shall be kept on file in the office of the dean (or equivalent) and in accordance with C22.0 Records Management Policy.

(4) Written notice of non-reappointment or of intention not to recommend reappointment, except in situations of financial exigency or program discontinuance, shall be given by the dean (or equivalent) as follows:

(a) Not later than 1 March of the first academic year of service on the tenure track (regardless of when the first contract commences).

(b) Not later than 15 November of the second academic year of service on the tenure track.

(c) After two or more years of tenure-track service, notice of intent not to reappoint must be given by 30 June of the current contract; in which case the tenure-track faculty member will receive a terminal contract for one additional academic year.

b. Tenure Location

(1) A faculty member shall be granted tenure in one of the colleges or institutes of the University.

(2) In the case of a tenured faculty member changing from a single to a joint appointment or of a tenured faculty member who moves from one college to another, the location(s) and status of the faculty member's tenure should be established by following in general the provisions of E.21 - Policy on Assignment and Transfer of Tenure-Track Faculty at the time of the appointment or change of appointment. A written agreement shall specify the tenure location and status of the faculty member's tenure.

c. Probationary Period
(1) The probationary period before granting of tenure shall be seven contract years for a faculty member who has had no teaching experience before appointment to the University faculty. The tenure consideration and evaluation shall be made in the sixth year.

(2) For each year of equivalent teaching experience, the probationary period may be reduced by one year, but the minimum probationary period shall be four years except by action of the provost in very unusual circumstances. In these very unusual circumstances a recommendation from the dean (or equivalent) to the provost will be developed following in general the provisions of section 2.c.4 of this policy. Equivalent teaching experience normally shall be full-time teaching at the rank of instructor or above in a regionally accredited institution of higher learning or full-time teaching in a non tenure-track position at RIT.

(3) Credit may also be given for scholarship, research, or for developmental activities in fields related to the subject matter field in which the candidate is expected to teach. The equivalency of previous teaching or other professional experience shall be evaluated by the dean (or equivalent) and approved by the provost.

(4) Faculty members who have received the maximum credit of three years' equivalent teaching experience may, before the time of their consideration for tenure and with the agreement of the dean (or equivalent), reduce their initial equivalency credit if they desire a longer probationary period.

(5) Suspension of the tenure clock may occur under special conditions agreed upon by the candidate, the department head (or the equivalent), the dean (or the equivalent), and the provost. A candidate may request that a previously granted suspension be retracted in favor of the original tenure schedule. The request must be made by 1 January of the academic year preceding tenure consideration.

a. An extension of the tenure probationary period will be given to tenure-track faculty who apply for and are granted an approved leave of absence as defined in E17.0, E33.0, and E34.0.

b. A similar extension may be provided for tenure-track faculty who move to a non tenure-track research faculty position as described in E6.0.

c. In rare circumstances, tenure-track faculty may request an extension of the probationary period for extenuating circumstances agreed to by the candidate’s department chair (or equivalent, dean (or equivalent) and provost. This request for extension shall be submitted in writing and accompanied by a detailed work plan to the department chair (or equivalent). If the department chair (or equivalent) approves, the request and the department chair’s (or equivalent) recommendation will be forwarded to the dean (or equivalent). The dean (or equivalent) will forward his or her recommendation accompanied by the original request and department chair’s (or equivalent) recommendation to the provost for approval. If the dean (or equivalent) and the provost both approve, the faculty member will be notified of the extension and the projected tenure review date.

d. Criteria for Granting Tenure
1. The criteria used for granting tenure, including specific qualities sought and achievements are defined in each college’s published tenure policies.

2. In the Statement of Expectations, a dean (or equivalent), department chair (or equivalent) and a tenure-track faculty member might choose to weight items for subsequent annual Plans of Work. Each year, tenure-track faculty should reflect on the past year’s teaching, scholarship and service. In a written assessment, they should show how those activities met goals in the previous Plan of Work.

The basic consideration in initial appointments and salary adjustments, promotion, and tenure is the extent to which the Statement of Expectations is accomplished.

3. Scholarship forms the foundation of a faculty member’s career activities. Its elements will tend to be activities centered on new developments, publication, peer-review, and dissemination. Each administrative unit may define specific standards or qualities related to pedagogy, scholarship, and research yet the overall goal of these activities should focus on the way the scholarship can hold the greatest benefit for the students.

4. The view that teaching is the foremost activity of the RIT faculty is deeply rooted in the University’s traditions. Teaching will continue to be a hallmark of RIT; however, attention to other related responsibilities is also critical; e.g. a focus on scholarship or research.

5. An effective teacher, among other things, communicates special knowledge and expertise with sensitivity towards students’ needs and abilities. This entails selection and use of appropriate instructional methods and materials and providing fair, useful, and timely evaluation of the quality of the learner’s work.

6. Evaluation of teaching must include a conscientious effort to obtain and consider information that relates directly to teaching and learning and makes effective classroom performance possible. This includes the review of student and peer evaluations.

7. The University endorses the view that selective attainments in the areas outlined below undergird good teaching:

   a) Academic and Professional Qualifications

   These achievements refer to past and present professional and career experiences, professional recognition in the form of licenses, honors, degree attainment, and sustained effort directed toward professional and career updates.

   b) Scholarship (see E4.0)

   These include research and creative activity in a professional specialty, writing and publication in a specialized area, development of new courses and curricula, modification of existing courses or programs, and investigation of alternative learning strategies. All scholarship to be considered for both tenure and promotion must be peer reviewed and disseminated.
(c) Service (see E4.0)

These include working with students and colleagues outside the classroom such as might be found in college and university committee work, student advising, and student activities as well as linking the professional skills of members of the faculty to the world beyond the campus.

No faculty member has to be deeply engaged in all of the foregoing activities at any one time. Rather, specific forms of endeavor should be planned and agreed upon with the appropriate college authorities to the end that full opportunity is provided for individual development and enhancement of the teaching function.

Each college shall develop, approve, and publish its own additional specific tenure criteria as well as acceptable forms of evidence and documentation based on the previous general criteria and on section 2 of this policy. College criteria for tenure and for acceptable forms of evidence and documentation shall be no less than, and must be consistent with, sections 2 and 3 of this policy and those criteria listed in Policy E4.0.

3. The Tenure Process

The administration of the tenure granting process shall be consistent with university policy and under the direction of the provost.

a. Documentation

(1) All tenure recommendations shall be supported by responsible available documentation. This should include all agreements relating to the faculty member's conditions of employment; Statement of Expectations (original and any modifications) and requirements with respect to tenure; annual reviews as well as appropriate and reliable documentation related to the faculty member's teaching performance, academic and professional qualifications, scholarship, and service; and such other matters as the faculty and the administration of a given college shall deem appropriate. Review committees and recommending administrators shall use this documentation at the appropriate and necessary points in the tenure process.

(2) The documentation for each faculty member with a tenure-track appointment shall be maintained in the office of that faculty member's college and access to it shall be governed by the University's policy on "Access to Official Professional Staff Files" (E31.0).

(3) In order to assure that recommendations are completely candid and accurate, all recommendations for or against the awarding of tenure made by the tenure committee and administrators shall remain confidential and not become a part of a candidate's documentation. The content of all letters of review and assessment from the chair (or equivalent), dean (or equivalent), committee, and provost shall be made accessible to the candidate at the end of the process, should the candidate request this documentation.

b. Reviews
(1) Annual Reviews

Although the committees are not bound by any tenure implication contained in annual reviews, such reviews made during a candidate’s probationary period are an important measure of a candidate's progress toward tenure. These reviews are furnished in writing to the candidate by the dean (or equivalent) or other administrator of the college. The annual reviews will be supported by responsible available documentation and must include student and faculty evaluations as well as accounts of professional development and creative or scholarly production. If the college has special areas of competence to be emphasized or if there is any change in the original Statement of Expectations with respect to tenure, candidates should be clearly informed of this.

The reviews will conclude with a statement indicating whether current performance would normally lead to a recommendation for tenure.

(2) Third Year Comprehensive Review

(These provisions when approved will apply only to faculty who enter the tenure-track in fall 2009 and after.)

Although the third year review committees are not bound by any tenure implication contained in annual reviews, such reviews made during a candidate’s probationary period are an important measure of a candidate’s progress toward tenure. As part of the tenure process, tenure-track faculty members will undergo a comprehensive review process during the third year of their seven-year probationary period. Tenure-track faculty who have been given credit towards tenure may choose to undergo the comprehensive review process when they have been at RIT at least one full year and have at least three years remaining in their probationary period.

The purpose of this review is to provide preliminary feedback to the candidate midway through his or her probationary period. The review will cover all performance in all the areas required for tenure and will be conducted by the college tenure committee or by another equivalent committee established by the college. The exact model for an equivalent committee must be developed and approved by the college faculty and dean (or equivalent).

Tenure candidates will provide materials and other documentation to the committee as specified in the college’s tenure guidelines. Each college will establish its own dates for receiving materials from tenure candidates and communicating with them, or the committee can choose to follow the dates used by the University for the tenure review process.

The college’s tenure committee shall seek a minimum of two external peer reviewers in the candidate’s field of scholarship who, according to criteria established by the college, shall evaluate the candidate’s scholarship in their respective field. In its review of the faculty documentation, the committee will prepare a letter that discusses its analysis of the candidate's strengths and weaknesses and states whether current performance would normally lead to a recommendation for tenure under current guidelines. The dean (or equivalent) will forward the committee’s letter and the candidate’s documentation, including external letters, along with a
separate dean’s (or equivalent) recommendation letter to the provost. After review, the provost’s comments on the candidate’s progress toward tenure will be sent in a letter to the dean (or equivalent). The dean (or equivalent) and the candidate’s department chair (or equivalent) will discuss the content of the letter with the candidate.

The letters from the third year review process must be included in the tenure documentation at the end of the pre-tenure period when the candidate is considered for tenure. Like annual reviews, the third year comprehensive review is an important measure of a candidate's progress toward tenure. However, a favorable third year comprehensive review does not imply that tenure will eventually be granted; nor does an unfavorable review imply that tenure will not be granted.

The content of all letters of review and assessment from the chair (or equivalent), dean (or equivalent), committee and provost shall be made accessible to the candidate at the end of the process.

c. Tenure Review and Recommendations

(1) If an assistant professor is being evaluated for tenure, he/she must be simultaneously evaluated for promotion to the rank of associate professor. Each college or academic unit will have a procedure to ensure that it recommends to the provost either approval or denial of both tenure and promotion.

(2) The tenure candidate's department chair (or equivalent) shall submit a written recommendation to the dean (or equivalent) by 15 September based on the candidate's documentation as well as university and college tenure criteria.

The candidate's department chair (or equivalent) assesses the candidate’s performance during the probationary period. In addition, letters from tenured department members that contain comments that can be substantiated and supported with documentation can be sought. Letters and other documentation from the third year review process must be included in the tenure documentation. Based upon the documentation, the chair's (or equivalent) written assessment of a candidate's progress toward tenure shall be forwarded with other support materials and documentation to the college tenure committee.

Each college will establish a schedule to receive materials that support tenure review for tenure-track faculty within the academic unit. The tenure-track faculty member shall provide documents and other materials to show their efforts to fulfill the Statement of Expectations negotiated at hire and any modifications to the college tenure committee by 30 September or as specified in the college’s tenure guidelines. In turn, the committee shall weigh the strengths and weaknesses of the future tenure candidate’s efforts and seek a review of the faculty member’s work from outside experts in the respective field of scholarship, research, or creativity.
The college’s tenure committee shall seek a minimum of four external reviewers. The committee should strive to seek two reviews from individuals recommended by the candidate and two reviews not suggested by the candidate. The outside experts shall not have personal ties or conflicts of interest with the candidate. In all cases, the reviewers should have fields of study within the candidate's expertise. The committee shall send its evaluation of the faculty member's fitness for tenure to the dean (or equivalent) of the college by 30 January. The package should lay out the candidate's strengths and weaknesses, and state whether current performance merits a recommendation for tenure.

The dean (or equivalent) shall write a recommendation, based upon an assessment of the candidate, the tenure committee's analysis, and the opinions of the independent scholars consulted during the external review. The recommendation shall be forwarded along with the committee’s letter and the candidate's support materials to the provost.

The provost shall write a recommendation, based upon an assessment of the candidate, recommendation of the dean (or equivalent), the tenure committee’s analysis, and the opinions of the independent scholars consulted during the external review. The recommendation shall be forwarded with the committee’s letter and the candidate's support materials, to the president for final approval.

(3) College Tenure Committees

(a) When there are candidates for tenure in a college, a committee should be assembled - six tenured members from the candidate's college and another appointed by the Academic Senate from a list of nominees elected by the tenured and tenure-track faculty of each college. The group shall hold its initial meeting by 30 September. Each college shall determine its procedure for electing the members. College procedures shall, however, ensure that no less than one member was on the college tenure committee during the immediately preceding year to provide for continuity over time. The Academic Senate shall determine its procedure for appointing the outside member specified above.

Elections each academic year shall be conducted before 1 June of the prior year. Faculty members in colleges with six or more departments or academic units should choose one representative from each of six departments for the tenure committee. The committee shall review each candidate based on RIT’s and the college's tenure criteria, the candidate's documentation, and comprehensive written evaluations of the external reviewers, department chair (or equivalent), and the dean (or equivalent).

All members of the tenure committee must be present for and not abstain from the committee’s vote. Recommendation for approval or non-approval of tenure, a written statement of reasons for approval or non-approval, and
the vote shall be forwarded by the chair of the tenure committee to the dean of the college (or equivalent) and to the provost by 30 January.

(b) In the case of a joint academic appointment that crosses two colleges, a joint tenure review committee shall be formed and hold its initial meeting by 30 September, comprised of four tenured members of the faculty of the college in which the candidate’s primary appointment resides (and in which tenure will reside, if granted), two members from the college in which the candidate’s secondary appointment resides, and one tenured member of another college in the University. The committee shall review the candidate based on RIT’s and the college’s tenure criteria, the candidate’s documentation, and comprehensive written evaluations of the external reviewers, department chairs (or equivalent) and deans (or equivalent).

(4) Dean (or equivalent) of the College

(a) Shortly after the membership of the college tenure committee is determined by the above process, the dean (or equivalent) shall:

- Announce to the college the names of the committee members. The records of the election process shall be kept on file in the dean’s office (or equivalent) until 15 November and be placed at the disposal of those who wish to examine the process.
- Call the committee to its initial organizational meeting. This meeting shall be called prior to 30 September. During that meeting, the dean (or equivalent) shall:
  - Announce to the committee the names of that year’s candidates for tenure.
  - Provide the documentation, the written recommendation of the department chair (or equivalent) and the comprehensive written evaluation of the dean (or equivalent) for each candidate.
  - Instruct the committee to elect a chair from the faculty elected in 3.c (3)(a) above. The dean (or equivalent) shall depart before the election of the chair.

(b) The dean of the college (or equivalent) shall prepare a tenure recommendation, separate from that of the college tenure committee described in 3.c(2), based on university and college criteria and on the candidate’s documentation, and forward it to the provost by 8 February along with the recommendation of the department chair (or equivalent) and the candidate’s documentation.

(5) Expedited Tenure Review

An expedited tenure review can be requested in the infrequent case where the University wishes to offer a potential hire (the “candidate”) a faculty rank with tenure (also see E4.0.1 and
E8.0. The faculty rank must either be associate professor or full professor. The candidate must hold (or have held) a tenured (or equivalent) faculty rank at an institution of higher learning.

The request for an expedited tenure review shall be initiated by the candidate’s department chair (or equivalent) and the request must be approved by either the provost or the president. Upon approval of the request for expedited tenure review, the provost or the president will ask the dean of the college (or equivalent) in which the tenure will reside to have the college’s tenure committee evaluate the candidate for tenure in an accelerated timeframe. The dean (or equivalent) will provide the tenure committee with all the application materials collected by the search committee.

If one or more members of the college’s tenure committee are not available during this accelerated timeframe, each such member can be substituted by an alternate elected by the faculty of the college. Each college shall ensure that a full tenure committee can be assembled as needed for the purpose of this expedited tenure review. Within one week of the receipt of the complete application materials, the tenure committee will evaluate the candidate and provide the dean (or equivalent) with an unequivocal recommendation on tenure for the candidate. The dean (or equivalent) will forward the tenure committee’s evaluation and recommendation to the provost.

(6) The Provost

To form a tenure recommendation, the provost may call upon the department chair (or equivalent), the college tenure committee, or the dean (or equivalent) for clarification or additional information and may meet with any of them to reconcile opposing views. In circumstances where the assessment of a candidate’s tenure portfolio is in conflict, the provost may convene the chairs of each of the college tenure committees.

This group will be convened only:

- When a college’s tenure committee and dean (or equivalent) are in dispute over a candidate’s viability, and/or
- When there is a disagreement between the provost and the dean (or equivalent) as representative of the college regarding the candidate’s viability.

The convened group’s actions shall be guided by the specific tenure criteria outlined by the candidate’s college. Its role is to advise the provost toward a final decision.

The group will relate its findings in writing to the provost. When satisfied on all points, the provost shall make an official recommendation to the president that includes all prior recommendations received.

(7) The President
The president in turn shall in all cases make the final decision in granting or denying tenure.

d. Granting or Denial of Tenure

The granting or denial of tenure shall be in the form of a written communication from the provost to the candidate no later than 15 March. In the case of denial, the letter shall set forth the specific reasons and the details of the college tenure committee vote.

If granted, tenure becomes effective on the first day of the following academic year; if tenure is denied, the candidate shall have a one-year contract for the following academic year.

If a candidate wishes to appeal a tenure denial, the university faculty grievance procedures are available to the extent provided in E24.0. Such appeal shall be limited to the question of whether the policies and procedures set forth in the tenure policy have been followed in the candidate's case.

4. Addendum for Implementation of Tenure Policy

a. If there are any perceived differences, tenure-track probationary years completed before adoption of this policy, May 2009, should be evaluated in accordance with the former tenure policy III-G.

b. Faculty granted tenure in two colleges under former tenure policy III-G may retain it.

c. Faculty formerly tenured at the department or school level will be adjusted to tenure at the college level.

d. During the implementation of this tenure policy, the provost may call on the Academic Senate chair to convene those elected as outside tenure committee representatives (see 3.c.(3)(a) ) to review and comment on individual college tenure criteria and procedures.

Responsible Office: Academic Senate and Office of the Provost and Senior Vice President

Effective Date: Approved September 23, 1963

Policy History:
Revised May 2009
Revised October 2009
Revised April 22, 2010
Edited August 2010