E5.0 Policy on Tenure

Policy reorganized and updated based on suggestions from faculty and administration
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Preamble: Rewrote ‘goals’ for policy

Existing policy:

“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.”

Proposed policy:

“The RIT tenure policy is designed to encourage and reward excellence in teaching, scholarship, and service and to promote the atmosphere of critical inquiry and creative expression that is vital to the academic and cultural life of the university.”
Preamble: Rewrote ‘goals’ for policy

Existing policy:

“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.”

Proposed policy:

“The RIT tenure policy is designed to encourage and reward excellence in teaching, scholarship, and service and to promote the atmosphere of critical inquiry and creative expression that is vital to the academic and cultural life of the university. Tenure is earned by demonstrated achievements and ongoing pursuit of advancements in teaching, scholarship, and service, guided by concern for students' and colleagues’ personal worth and advancement.”
Preamble: Rewrote ‘goals’ for policy

Existing policy:

“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.”

Proposed policy:

“The RIT tenure policy is designed to encourage and reward excellence in teaching, scholarship, and service and to promote the atmosphere of critical inquiry and creative expression that is vital to the academic and cultural life of the university. Tenure is earned by demonstrated achievements and ongoing pursuit of advancements in teaching, scholarship, and service, guided by concern for students' and colleagues’ personal worth and advancement. Colleagues’ judgment of such achievements is primary, informed by an individual’s Statement of Expectations.”
Preamble: Rewrote ‘goals’ for policy

Existing policy:

“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.”

Proposed policy:

The pursuit of excellence continues beyond the tenure decision. Tenured faculty, department heads, and other administrators share responsibility to ensure that all faculty continue to grow and develop professionally.
2.a.(2) Statement of Expectations

Proposed policy:

The Statement of Expectations may be updated to modify the candidate-specific expectations with the mutual consent of the candidate, the department head, and the dean. Before the Comprehensive mid-tenure review, the candidate, department head, or dean may initiate a modification. After the Comprehensive mid-tenure review, only the candidate may initiate a modification. In either case, a signed copy of the updated Statement of Expectations with the modified candidate-specific expectations, agreed to by all parties, shall be provided to the candidate. The initial Statement of Expectations, and any updates to that Statement, provides a frame of reference for those evaluating each faculty member throughout the tenure review process.
2.b.(1) Tenure Location

Existing policy:

“A faculty member shall be granted tenure in one of the colleges or institutes of the University.”

Proposed policy:

“A faculty member shall be granted tenure in one of the colleges of the university or in the Golisano Institute for Sustainability.”

[Note that the existing text was inadvertently changed in August 2010.]
2.c.(2) Reducing the Probationary Period

Existing policy:

Existing policy describes the probationary period as “seven contract years.”

Proposed policy:

“The probationary period before granting of tenure is normally six contract years for a faculty member who has had no teaching experience before appointment to the university faculty. For candidates with no reduction of the probationary period, the tenure consideration and evaluation shall be made in the sixth year. If tenure is granted, it is effective at the start of the following contract year.”
2.c.(2) Reducing the Probationary Period

a) Equivalency Credit

i. For each year of equivalent teaching experience, the probationary period may be reduced by one year, with a maximum reduction of two years, except by action of the provost in special circumstances, or in accordance with the Expedited Tenure Process section 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.

ii. A reduction in the probationary period may also be given for scholarship in the subject-matter field in which the candidate is expected to teach and conduct scholarship.

iii. The equivalency of previous teaching and/or scholarship shall be evaluated by the department head and dean, and approved by the provost.
2.c.(2).b Reduction in Equivalency Credit

Existing policy:

“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.”

Proposed policy:

Faculty members with equivalency credit may reduce their initial equivalency credit by one year by written notice to the dean. Such notice must be made before the first day of the Spring term before their scheduled tenure review. Further reductions in equivalency credit may only be granted with the written agreement of the dean. The dean shall notify Human Resources and the office of the provost of any reduction in equivalency credit.
2.c.(3) Hiring with Tenure

Expedited tenure review is mentioned in this section, but described in Section 4, Expedited Tenure Review
2.c.(4) Extension of Probationary Period

Existing policy:

Existing policy allows for extension of the probationary period for a) approved leaves, b) temporary moves to research faculty positions, and c) extenuating circumstances, if requested and approved by the chair, dean, and provost.

Proposed policy:

The proposed policy adds an automatic one-year extension for faculty who become a parent by birth or adoption. Note that the extension may be waived by the faculty member.

The proposed policy also explicitly states that any extension shall not increase the expectations for achievement towards tenure.
2.c.(4) Extension of Probationary Period

Proposed policy:

“i. A pre-tenured faculty member who becomes a parent by birth or adoption before the tenure documentation is due is automatically granted a one-year extension to the tenure probationary period. Written notice of birth or adoption must be provided to the department head, dean, and provost within six months of the birth or adoption. The automatic extensions may be waived if the faculty member so desires and so indicates in writing to the dean before the first day of the Spring term preceding the requested tenure consideration date.”
2.d. Criteria for Granting Tenure

This section has been reorganized, and many definitions replaced with references to E4.0 (Faculty Employment Policies).

Existing

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.

Proposed

The section begins with the statement, “The view that teaching is the foremost activity of the RIT faculty is deeply rooted in the university’s traditions. While teaching will continue to be a hallmark of RIT, scholarship is of significant importance, and service is also central to the academic endeavor.”
2.d.(1) Criteria for Granting Tenure

Each college shall develop, **approve through faculty vote**, and publish its own additional specific tenure criteria, as well as acceptable forms of documentation based on the general criteria of this policy. College criteria for tenure and for acceptable forms of documentation shall be no less specific than, and must be consistent with, this policy, and those criteria listed in Policy E.4. The criteria used for granting tenure, including specific qualities sought and achievements shall be defined in each college’s published tenure policies. **Faculty within each administrative unit may define specific standards or qualities related to scholarship that are consistent with college policy.**
The initial Statement of Expectations provides the framework, or general parameters, for the faculty member’s agreement for hire and initial appointment. Updated Statements of Expectations may modify the candidate-specific expectations, and changes to university and college tenure policy that take effect before a candidate’s Comprehensive mid-tenure review may affect the policy and criteria used in evaluating that candidate. Changes to university and college tenure policy that take effect after a candidate’s Comprehensive mid-tenure review will not be used in the candidate’s tenure evaluation process.
3.a.(1) Documentation / Content

... At a minimum, this shall include:

• all agreements relating to the faculty member's conditions of employment (provided by dean’s office);

• the current and if applicable previous version(s) of the Statement of Expectations and requirements with respect to tenure (provided by dean’s office);

• annual reviews on record (provided by dean’s office);

• appropriate and reliable documentation related to the faculty member's teaching performance, academic and professional qualifications, scholarship, and service (provided by candidate);

• materials submitted by the candidate for mid-tenure review (provided by candidate);

• other material as specified in college tenure policies.
3.b.(2) Comprehensive Mid-tenure Review

The mid-tenure review process is only briefly described in the existing policy ...
3.b.(2) Comprehensive Mid-tenure Review

iii. Department Head: The department head shall provide a written assessment of the candidate’s appropriate progress towards tenure from the perspective of colleague, supervisor, and administrator based upon the candidate’s documentation. The department head’s written assessment of whether the candidate is making satisfactory or unsatisfactory progress toward tenure shall be forwarded with the candidate’s documentation to the college tenure committee.
3.b.(2) Comprehensive Mid-tenure Review

iii. Department Head: The department head shall provide a written assessment of the candidate’s appropriate progress towards tenure from the perspective of colleague, supervisor, and administrator based upon the candidate’s documentation. The department head’s written assessment of whether the candidate is making satisfactory or unsatisfactory progress toward tenure shall be forwarded with the candidate’s documentation to the college tenure committee.

iv. Input from Department Tenured Faculty: The committee shall seek letters from tenured department members that contain comments that can be substantiated regarding whether or not the candidate is making satisfactory progress towards tenure. Input from each tenured faculty member within the department shall be sought. If letters are not received from all tenured faculty members, the tenure committee should make an additional attempt to obtain input from all tenured faculty.
3.b.(2) Comprehensive Mid-tenure Review

vii. External Review Letters: Each comprehensive mid-tenure review committee shall seek a minimum of two external peer reviewers in the candidate’s field of scholarship. The external review letters will be received by the dean’s office of the candidate.

The external reviewers shall evaluate the candidate’s scholarship in their respective field according to policy and criteria established by the college. At mid-tenure review, external review letters from thesis advisors or co-authors may be included in the official list of external letters. However, to maximize objective feedback for the candidate, college review committees are encouraged to also seek letters from reviewers who are not thesis advisors or co-authors.
3.b.(2) Comprehensive Mid-tenure Review

viii. Evaluation: In its review of the faculty documentation, the committee shall prepare a letter that discusses its analysis of the candidate's strengths and weaknesses, stating whether current performance would normally lead to a recommendation for tenure under current guidelines and offering guidance for continued improvement. The committee’s letter shall include a summary of the departmental faculty letters and a summary of the external review letters.
3.b.(2) Comprehensive Mid-tenure Review

ix. Access to Comprehensive Mid-Tenure Review Documents: The letters of review or assessment from the department head, dean, committee, and provost shall be made accessible to the candidate by the dean at the end of the mid-tenure review process. However, all other letters, including those from individual department members and external reviewers shall remain confidential and will not be made accessible to the candidate.
3.b.(2) Comprehensive Mid-tenure Review

ix. Access to Comprehensive Mid-Tenure Review Documents: The letters of review or assessment from the department head, dean, committee, and provost shall be made accessible to the candidate by the dean at the end of the mid-tenure review process. However, all other letters, including those from individual department members and external reviewers shall remain confidential and will not be made accessible to the candidate. The purpose of the comprehensive mid-tenure review process is to provide advice and council regarding the achievement of tenure. To maximize the value of that advice and council, at the conclusion of the process, the candidate’s department head shall receive the department faculty letters and the external reviewer letters. The letters of review or assessment from the department head, dean, committee, and provost from the comprehensive mid-tenure review shall be included in the tenure documentation at the end of the probationary period when the candidate is considered for tenure. See Table 1 of this policy for a table describing access to documentation.
3.b.(2) Comprehensive Mid-tenure Review

Table 1: Access to Documentation for Comprehensive Mid-tenure Review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Documentation</th>
<th>Access of each party:</th>
<th>Access of each party:</th>
<th>Access of each party:</th>
<th>Access of each party:</th>
<th>Access of each party:</th>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department Faculty Letters</td>
<td>Summary provided by Tenure Committee (or equivalent)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes (at conclusion of review process)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Department Head Recommendation</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure Committee (or equivalent)</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>-</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Review Letters</td>
<td>Summary provided by Tenure Committee (or equivalent)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes (at conclusion of review process)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dean Recommendation</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provost Evaluation</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Access is indicated by a checkmark (Yes) or a dash (No).
3.c.(1) Tenure Review and Recommendations / Department

The candidate's department head assesses the candidate’s performance throughout the probationary period as part of the annual review process. The department head shall provide a written assessment of the candidate’s progress towards tenure from the perspective of colleague, supervisor, and administrator based upon the candidate’s documentation. The department head’s letter shall include a clear vote (yes or no) in regards to tenure attainment of the candidate followed by an explanation of the vote. The department head’s written assessment of the candidate's progress toward tenure shall be forwarded with the candidate’s documentation to the college tenure committee by September 15th.
3.c.(2).i. Composition of tenure committees for small colleges

The proposed policy establishes special committees for colleges that have fewer than eighteen (18) tenured faculty and fewer than six (6) departments or academic units. In those units, two experienced faculty from other units would join with four faculty from the small academic unit to form the core six, joined by a seventh committee member.
Input from Tenured Department Faculty: The tenure committee shall solicit input from each tenured faculty member within the department. The input should include a clear recommendation for or against tenure accompanied by a supporting explanation. If letters are not received from all tenured faculty members within the department, the tenure committee should make an additional attempt to obtain input all those faculty.
3.c.(2).iii External Review Letters

Existing policy:
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 college tenure committee shall seek to obtain a minimum of four letters from external reviewers in the candidate’s field of scholarship who shall evaluate the candidate’s scholarship according to policy and criteria established by the college. If fewer than four letters are received, the tenure committee should make an additional attempt to obtain four letters. The external review letters will be received by the candidate’s dean’s office.
3.c.(2).iii External Review Letters

Proposed policy:

The committee must seek letters from at least two reviewers suggested by the candidate. The external reviewers shall not have personal ties or conflicts of interest (C4.0) with the candidate. In all cases, the reviewers should have fields of study within the candidate's expertise. A maximum of one reviewer may be a co-author. Letters from thesis advisors are not to be used in the official list of external letters. However, they may be included in the dossier as further evidence of the candidate’s work.
3.c.(2).iv. College Tenure Committee Vote

Recommendation for approval for tenure by the college tenure committee shall require a minimum 2/3 majority in favor as determined by secret vote. All members of the committee must vote; there shall be no abstentions or avoidances of voting by absence. 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 by 30 January. If the candidate for tenure had received an extension to his/her tenure probationary period, the reasons behind this extension will not be disclosed within the committee’s letter.
Access to Tenure Review Documents: The letters of review or assessment from the department head, dean, committee, and provost shall be made accessible to the candidate by the dean at the end of the tenure review process. However, all other letters, including those from individual department members and external reviewers shall remain confidential and will not be made accessible to the candidate. See Table 2 of this policy for a table describing access to documentation.
### 3.c.(2).v Access to Tenure Review Documents

Table 2: Access to Documentation for Tenure Review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Access of each party:</th>
<th>Documentation</th>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Tenured Faculty</th>
<th>Department Head</th>
<th>Tenure Committee</th>
<th>Dean</th>
<th>Provost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Candidate’s Portfolio</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department Faculty Letters</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department Head Recommendation</td>
<td>No¹</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure Committee (or equivalent) Recommendation</td>
<td>No¹</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Review Letters</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dean Recommendation</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provost Evaluation</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Available at the end of the tenure review process upon request
4. Expedited Tenure Review

Existing policy:

The current policy allows for candidates to be hired with tenure after an expedited (maximum one-week) review if they have already earned tenure (or equivalent) at another university.

Proposed policy:

The proposed policy removes the “or equivalent” option from the short expedited review and extends the maximum time for review to two weeks. A second, more thorough one-month maximum expedited review option is added for candidates who have not earned tenure at an accredited institute of higher education, but are thought to have achieved the “equivalent” of tenure.