



TO: Distinguished Professors Review Subcommittee

FROM: John A. Pelesko, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

RE: Guidelines for Promotion to Distinguished Professor

DATE: September 14, 2023

Note: All Promotion & Tenure materials must be submitted electronically to Kathleen O'Neill at ko86@njit.edu. A shared Google Drive folder is preferred.

Promotion decisions are critically important to the long-term future -- both of the faculty member and of the university. Promotion is dependent on past performance. The Distinguished Professor Review Subcommittee conducts a rigorous review, ensuring that the criteria for promotion are consistently applied across the university, and focusing its review and recommendation on the individual accomplishments of each faculty member being considered. The Subcommittee need not address questions of staffing, instructional and departmental needs, or mission, as these factors are considered by the senior administration (President, Provost and Deans) before final decisions are made.

In order to facilitate the Subcommittee's considerations, it is imperative that the documentation submitted by the academic unit or the nominee themselves to the Subcommittee be timely, complete, and clearly presented. A complete curriculum vitae documenting publications and patent applications since appointment or last promotion, teaching performance, scholarship, research, and professional/community service must be included, and submitted electronically in **Word format**.

In order to determine accurately the significance of the published scholarly work of individuals considered for promotion, each publication reference should be annotated to include a description of the review process as obtained from the publisher. Specifically, it is important that the Subcommittee be provided with information that establishes whether the technical review process involved only the editor or included peer review, and whether journals of importance in the appropriate fields of specialization are represented among the published work of the candidate.

The Subcommittee also considers documentation such as citation data for the candidate's work, awards in competitions, and the funding of the work by outside agencies, because each recognizes the importance of the work in the discipline and each represents peer review by experts in the disciplinary field. In many disciplines, the Citation Index contains a listing by author of publications cited in bibliographies and footnotes by other scholars. Awards in peer reviewed exhibits or competitions demonstrate the importance of the work within the field; peer reviewed grant and contract awards or commissions are furthermore a valuable source of support for graduate students. Applications for, and granting of patents and copyrights are recognized as a measure of importance and/or peer evaluation of the work in the field.

To promote consistency in assessment by the Subcommittee, an independent citation report for those coming up for promotion will be provided through our University Library; the research funding history for each candidate will be prepared by the Office of Sponsored Research Administration, and this history

will identify individual responsibilities as PI or as co-PI; the Office of Graduate Studies will verify that the candidate performed the role of advisor or thesis committee member for any students listed on the candidate's CV; and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness will also submit a report on candidate's teaching evaluations. These reports will be made available to the candidate and academic unit P&T committees to establish mutual concurrence of the record.

Documentation of success in creating an innovative, diversity-friendly and student-centered learning environment should include summaries of classroom evaluations by students and peers over the last several years, descriptions of new courses and activities developed, course or laboratory notes and/or manuals prepared, teaching related publications, and other pertinent material reflecting a commitment to diversity and to innovation in education. The documentation should also include a listing of undergraduate and student supervision and of post-doctorate positions under the direction of the candidate. As available, identification of post-degree career positions of MS and PhD students can be an important indication of the value of the graduate experience offered by the candidate.

Similarly, complete documentation of the candidate's service role to the department (and federated departments, when applicable), the university, the community, and his/her profession should be included. Departmental service is required of everyone, since faculty committees are essential to the operation of the university. A faculty member who provides significant levels of departmental administration should not, however, expect such service to substitute for other kinds of faculty accomplishments.

Documentation regarding promotion to Distinguished Professor will be due to the Provost's Office by October 31, 2023. All personnel actions involving promotion must be presented to the Board of Trustees no later than at its June 2024 meeting. Hence, I ask that the Subcommittee make its recommendations and send them to me prior to April 8, 2024.

Please note the following important points:

1. With regard to the list of names submitted by both the academic unit P&T Committee for letters of reference (*for those nominated by their academic unit*) and the nominee:
 - These letters are of high importance for promotion consideration, and the choice of references must be done responsibly. Letters should be solicited from those who can comment expertly on the candidate's teaching, service and scholarly activities.
 - Documentation of accomplishments in scholarly research requires reference letters from recognized experts in a Faculty member's field(s). The Chairperson of the Department/Academic Unit P&T Committee in consultation with the members of the Department/Academic Unit P&T Committee shall jointly nominate six (6) outside reviewers in ranked order.
 - The nominee shall submit their own list of six (6) outside reviewers.
 - Reviewers shall not participate, consistent with potentially disqualifying conflicts of interest* as follows:

A reviewer is ineligible if:

- i. it involves an individual with whom the candidate has a personal relationship with, such as close relative, current or former collaborator; or former thesis advisor/student;
- ii. they are employed at the candidate's current or most recent former employer; or

iii. they serve as a visiting committee member at the candidate's current employer.

*See https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/gpg/nsf04_23/appb.jsp

- Provide short descriptions of the credentials of each reference and indicate the reasons for the choice as a reference.
2. To promote consistency in assessment, the Office of Sponsored Research Administration and the Library will provide independent reports on research and citations. The Office of Graduate Studies will verify the candidate's role as advisor or thesis committee membership as listed on the CV. In addition, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness will submit a report on candidate's teaching evaluation. The reports will include:
- A citation report for those under consideration for tenure and/or promotion will be provided through the NJIT University Library and supported with subject domain analysis from assigned faculty within the academic department. This report will include impact assessment and rankings (as available) for the journals.
 - A research report for those under consideration for tenure and/or promotion will be provided through the Office of Sponsored Research Administration. SRA will provide a listing of research grants and the candidate's role and level of participation in each project, and grant expenditures under his/her responsible authority.
 - The Office of Graduate Studies will verify, in writing, to the Subcommittee that the candidate actually performed the role of advisor or thesis committee member for any students listed on the candidate's CV.
 - A report on candidate's teaching evaluations listing number of courses and sections taught; number of enrolled students; number of students completing the evaluations; and instructor evaluation scores as well as departmental, school/college, and university averages.

These reports will be provided to the candidate to establish mutual concurrence on the records.

3. The case for candidates being considered by academic unit P&T Committees should be discussed with the respective Dean. Subsequently, the Dean will review the dossier and prepare a letter giving his/her recommendation and rationale. This letter will be sent directly to the Provost along with the corresponding completed *Dean's* form, and the University P&T Committee will consider the Dean's assessment along with the materials submitted by the academic unit.

The remainder of this memorandum is devoted to an elaboration of the criteria for promotion to Distinguished Professor.

The [Faculty Handbook](#) (Section 2.3.1.4) states that at a minimum the rank of Distinguished Professor is "intended for individuals whose accomplishments significantly exceed those of Professors, and include a sustained record of nationally and internationally recognized preeminence in their field(s) of expertise". This rank is a special recognition conferred upon those faculty members whose exceptional academic, professional, and scholarly achievements have earned them the recognition among their peers as international leaders in their respective fields.

Recognition among peers is evidenced (especially since promotion to professor at NJIT) by such indicators as:

- a sustained record of publication in one's scholarly field(s), including significant numbers of articles published in the most prestigious journals in one's field, and/or books and book chapters published by premier academic or scholarly publishers;
- citations of such publications, taking into account numbers of article citations recorded in the NJIT Library's citation search, the h-index, and the numbers and the nature of citations in books in one's field; (self-citations will be examined)
- honors and awards for such publications, such as book awards and article prizes;
- reviews of such publications, taking into account not only what the reviews say but also the number of reviews, the reputations of the reviewers, and the status of the journals where the reviews appear;
- a record of sustained research funding and grants, and/or prestigious, highly competitive fellowships;
- for departments with graduate programs, a record of sustained advisement of doctoral students and graduate students as primary advisor;
- a distinguished record of speaking engagements and/or performances, including invited lectures, plenary lectures, and similar performances that indicate a distinguished national and international reputation among one's peers;
- the award of a significant prize or medal from a national or international professional organization, membership in a national academy, or election to the grade of Fellow of a major professional society;
- a sustained record of nationally and internationally recognized teaching excellence. This can be demonstrated by awards for teaching given by departments, colleges/schools, the university, alumni, and professional societies, recognizing activities such as outstanding and innovative classroom instruction, service as a student advisor and mentor, development of new courses and programs, writing text books that are widely adopted, and similar activities related to undergraduate or graduate education.

Variations in the above indicators may exist in certain non-STEM disciplines. For example, 'performance' may augment or sometimes replace 'publication' for faculty in fields like theater and architectural practice. However, the total record, especially since promotion to professor, must contain convincing evidence of a candidate's national and international reputation in his/her discipline, beyond what is normally expected at the rank of full professor.

Exceptions to university policies will be made only for good cause.

I urge you to take care in your recommendations for promotion. Thank you for your participation in this important work.

Materials and forms pertaining to promotion for academic year 2023- 2024 can be accessed on the [promotion and tenure](#) page of the [Provost's website](#).