REPORT: UNIVERSITY PROMOTION AND TENURE TASK FORCE - TERM FACULTY
Date of Draft Submission: March 11, 2024/ Second Version: April 23, 2024/Current Revision: August 19, 2024

Overview and Membership
On September 20, 2023, Provost Fotis Sotriropoulos and Senior Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs, Dr. Mangala Subramaniam announced a task force for the University Promotion and Tenure Policy guidelines with a focus on term faculty. The purpose of the Task Force was to make recommendations to several components of the Promotion and Tenure structure and process for the Term (non-tenure track) faculty at VCU.

MEMBERS OF THE TASK FORCE: Co-Chairs: Hamid Akbarali and Liz Canfield
Members: Michael Abelson, Roy Brown, Caroline Budwell, Charlene Crawley, Kelley Dodson, John Kinter, Sylvia Rozario, Evan Sisson, Qasarah Bey Spencer, and David Toney.

Task Force Process:
The committee was given a list of cluster questions (Appendix A) to examine the process and the content of VCU's Promotion and Tenure guidelines from the perspective of term faculty. The committee considered these through examining the current guidelines for promotion at the University level, as well as individual schools/colleges. The committee also examined the report that the 2020 Promotion and Tenure Task Force did (Appendix B) as well as made suggestions to revise the existing policy (Appendix C). Below are the committee's recommendations:

Who are Term (non-tenure track) faculty?

So-called "term" faculty at VCU make up a little over 60% of people working at the university with full time faculty status. They work in a variety of contexts, which is what makes term faculty difficult to generalize. They work as clinical faculty, research faculty, administrative faculty and teaching faculty. The most common non-tenure track positions and workloads at VCU consist of the following: Teaching Term Faculty (80%, Teaching, 20% Service); Research Term Faculty (80% Research, 20% Teaching); and Service/Administrative Term Faculty: (80% Service, 20% Teaching). However, there are others that the committee hasn't encountered, or the categorization may have different percentages, based on an individual faculty member's work duties.

> Recommendation: After a robust conversation, in the name of equity and inclusion it was decided that term faculty shouldn't be distinguished from tenure track and tenured professors. All faculty, tenured, tenure track or not, should be called Instructor, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, and Professor. Calling term faculty "term" or "of practice" perpetuates the two-tiered system that the university is trying to get past.

Note: It is indeed possible to "code" term faculty differently from tenure track and tenured faculty to run reports, etc. on the back end, but in all university documentation that is outward facing, the committee would like to be called the same as our TT/tenured colleagues (Instructor, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, Professor).

Process for Term Faculty Promotion

The process for promotion for term (non-tenure track) faculty should be distinguished

from the tenure track/tenure faculty as expectations for term faculty are quite different, however should be included in the same set of guidelines.

Recommendation: Process for promotion should be distinguished at each level i.e. department, college/school, and university. This includes committee formation, criteria based on workload and requirements with regard to dossier preparation.

Faculty Ranks and Appointments: Faculty appointments are made at the rank of professor, associate professor, assistant professor, instructor, etc. whose responsibilities are a mixture of teaching, research and/or service.

For example, the committee believes that term (non-tenure track) faculty should have their own sections in the Promotion/Tenure Policy Document where it applies. See examples of this below.

2.0 Faculty Ranks and Appointments

Tenure Track	Term Track
This document applies to the university faculty appointments at the ranks of professor, associate professor, assistant professor and instructor whose responsibilities are primarily teaching or research. All faculty appointments shall be either tenured, or probationary (tenure-eligible). Section 3.0 defines these types of appointments.	This document applies to all university faculty who are hired in a non-tenure role, whose responsibilities are a mixture of teaching, research, administration, and/or service. . Section 3.0 defines these types of appointments.

Criteria for Promotion (2.1):

2.1 General Criteria and Criteria Definitions for Tenured, Tenure-eligible, and Term (non- tenure) Faculty Members

Tenure Track	Term Track (revision)
In order to ensure distinction in learning, research, scholarly pursuits and creative expression, and service, the following criteria shall apply in the evaluation of all tenured and tenure-eligible faculty members for promotion and tenure. For faculty members holding term (non-tenure) faculty appointments, the	In order to ensure distinction in learning, research, scholarly pursuits and creative expression, and service, the following criteria shall apply in the evaluation of all term faculty members for promotion and tenure. All faculty members' work plans are developed in accordance with the Faculty Roles and

criteria shall be applied in the evaluation for promotion as appropriate to the individual faculty member's special mix of duties. All faculty members' work plans are developed in accordance with the Faculty Roles and Rewards policy. Faculty members holding administrative positions must meet the guidelines of their own academic unit. General criteria include:

1. Appropriate credentials and experience.

2. Demonstrated continuing scholarship and professional growth. Faculty members should be continuously engaged in productive and creative scholarly activity in areas relevant to the goals and mission of their academic unit. They should make a substantive contribution to the body of knowledge in their discipline that reflects high standards of quality in creativity, scholarship and professional competence. They should demonstrate leadership and professional competence in independent scholarship and/or collaborative research that leads to the creation of new knowledge or creative expression. Scholarship can be in the form of research and discovery scholarship, the scholarship of teaching and learning, or community-engaged research. Research and discovery scholarship breaks new ground in the discipline and answers significant questions in the discipline. Scholarship of teaching and learning includes applied research regarding various pedagogies, student learning, and assessment practices; development and dissemination of materials for use in teaching beyond one's own classroom. Community-engaged research is a collaborative process between the researcher and community partner at all stages of the research process. Examples are community-based participatory and action research.

3. Demonstrated quality in teaching. Teaching shall be evaluated based primarily upon the impact of the faculty member's teaching in

Rewards policy. Faculty members holding administrative positions must meet the guidelines of their own academic unit. General criteria include:

1. Appropriate credentials and experience.

2. Demonstrated professional growth in the faculty's appropriate areas based on their contract and job description. This growth can be in the following areas as described below, scholarship, teaching, and/or service.

2a. Scholarship: Faculty members should be continuously engaged in productive and creative scholarly activity in areas relevant to the goals and mission of their academic unit. They should make a substantive contribution to the body of knowledge in their discipline that reflects high standards of quality in creativity, scholarship and professional competence. They should demonstrate leadership and professional competence in independent scholarship and/or collaborative research that leads to the creation of new knowledge or creative expression. Scholarship can be in the form of research and discovery scholarship, the scholarship of teaching and learning, or community-engaged research. Research and discovery scholarship breaks new ground in the discipline and answers significant questions in the discipline.

Scholarship of teaching and learning includes applied research regarding various pedagogies, student learning, and assessment practices; development and dissemination of materials for use in teaching beyond one's own classroom.

Community-engaged research is a collaborative process between the researcher and community partner at all stages of the research process. Examples are community based participatory and

programs relevant to the mission of their academic unit. Faculty members must demonstrate mastery of their subject matter and at communicating this understanding to student learners; most fundamentally, faculty members should demonstrate that their students learn. There should be evidence of the candidate's sustained commitment to classroom instruction, to inclusion of advising and availability to students as a component of teaching, to sustained effectiveness as a contributor to the intellectual development of students through devices such as course design, course material, curriculum development, and attention to other mechanisms of enhancing student learning. Mentoring, and other forms of beneficial interactions between the candidate and learners, may be given appropriate weight as a part of the teaching criteria as determined by the academic unit. Demonstrated quality of teaching may include community-engaged teaching that connects students and faculty members with activities that address community-identified needs through mutually beneficial partnerships that deepen students' academic and civic learning. Examples are service-learning courses or service-learning clinical practica.

4. Demonstrated performance in service. Faculty members are expected to give of their time and expertise for the betterment of their department, school and university, their profession and/or the broader community. Service includes engaging in the application of learning and discovery to improve the human condition and support the public good at home and abroad. Demonstrated performance in service may include community-engaged service, which is the application of one's professional expertise to address a community identified need and to support the goals and mission of the university and the community partner.

action research.

Appropriate consideration should be given to those engaged in "team" science. Team science includes contributions towards multi-scholar projects and those conducted as part of a larger group science.

2b. Demonstrated quality in teaching. Teaching shall be evaluated based primarily upon the impact of the faculty member's teaching in programs relevant to the mission of their academic unit. Faculty members must demonstrate mastery of their subject matter and at communicating this understanding to student learners; most fundamentally, faculty members should demonstrate that their students learn. There should be evidence of the candidate's sustained commitment to classroom instruction, to inclusion of advising and availability to students as a component of teaching, to sustained effectiveness as a contributor to the intellectual development of students through devices such as course design, course material, curriculum development, and attention to other mechanisms of enhancing student learning.

Mentoring, and other forms of beneficial interactions between the candidate and learners, may be given appropriate weight as a part of the teaching criteria as determined by the academic unit. Demonstrated quality of teaching may include community-engaged teaching that connects students and faculty members with activities that address community-identified needs through mutually beneficial partnerships that deepen students' academic and civic learning. Examples are service-learning courses, service-learning clinical practica, and other forms of experiential learning.

2c. Demonstrated performance in service. Faculty members are expected to give of their time and expertise for the betterment of their department, school and university, their profession and/or the broader community. Service includes engaging in the application of learning and discovery to improve the human condition and support the public good at home and abroad. Demonstrated performance in service may include community-engaged service, which is the application of one's professional expertise to address a community identified need and to support the goals and mission of the university and the community partner.

2d. Because diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging are important values to VCU and because a strong commitment to DEIB creates strong communities in the classroom, clinic, and beyond, faculty must demonstrate a commitment to DEIB through their teaching, research, and/or service.

3. Faculty contracts must specifically denote and define the expectations for the term faculty in the areas of teaching, research (scholarship), and service in accordance with the agreed upon work plan between the faculty member and their supervisor. These guidelines will be the basis for assessing promotion eligibility.

2.1.1 Application of Criteria and Criteria Rating for Term Faculty

<mark>Note:</mark> The committee envisioned this section in a table format like above, and the committee made significant revisions to the policy to better reflect issues that impact term faculty.

Faculty member performance with respect to teaching, scholarship, and service shall be rated (in descending order) as excellent, very good, satisfactory, or unsatisfactory. Credentials and experience shall be rated as satisfactory or unsatisfactory. All written reports and evaluations of term faculty performance ratings shall use this terminology.

Appointment or promotion to assistant professor shall indicate the candidate can be expected to perform satisfactorily all required academic duties and holds promise for further professional development.

Appointment or promotion to associate professor requires a minimum rating of excellent in either scholarship or teaching and a rating of very good in the other of these two categories. Candidates also must achieve a minimum rating of satisfactory in service. Candidates should make a demonstrated contribution to the body of knowledge in their discipline that reflects high standards of quality in creativity, scholarship and professional competence.

Appointment or promotion to professor requires a minimum rating of excellent in either scholarship or teaching and a rating of very good in the other of these two categories. Candidates also must achieve a minimum rating of very good in service. Candidates should make a substantial contribution to the body of knowledge in their discipline that reflects high standards of quality in creativity, scholarship and professional competence.

If service is a major component of a faculty member's work plan, then excellence in service should be a criterion for promotion.

Recommendation: Commitment to active and responsive mentorship, as well as an active role in mentoring, advising and supporting the academic success of students and postdoctoral scientists, will also be documented as part of the process that defines promotion.

The committee agreed that mentorship is an important quality to have for promotion/tenure, as this is often part of the "invisible labor" that term faculty (along with minoritized tenure-eligible/tenured faculty) do. Mentorship can be classified as teaching or service, but should be named as a sub-category.

<mark>**A note about Service**</mark>:

The committee noted that term faculty should be evaluated for promotion based on the percentages in their work plans, meaning if service is a large portion of a faculty member's work plan, it should count as criterion for promotion.

Structure of the Promotion Committees

Recommendation: The Size and composition of committee at each level should be attentive to inclusion of term faculty.

Committee composition: At the department level, the committee shall consist of no fewer than three faculty members. Any school with term faculty should also have voting term faculty on the promotion committee. None of the committee members shall hold an administrative title at the level of departmental chair or above. School/Unit committee members should be elected by the faculty. The process for filling vacancies on an interim basis should be covered by the school/unit policy. School/Units should determine whether term faculty should vote on tenure review/promotion at the school/unit committee level as well as the selection process for the committee members.

Members of the school/unit promotion and tenure committee shall serve staggered three-year terms. Those who have served three consecutive years are ineligible to serve again for one year. In the event committee vacancies should occur, an interim election or by appointment shall be held to fill the incomplete term. Each year the committee shall elect a chairperson from its members.

Recommendation: The departmental promotion committee should be a committee of peers with the committee chair being a faculty member who is at least at the rank the candidate is applying for. The department chair should not be a member of this committee as evaluation is provided by the chair each year.

Recommendation: At the School/College level, the committee proposed that the following model, as it works well in places where it is already practiced at VCU: having a standing committee of term and tenured faculty at the full professor rank to look at all promotion cases for that School/College, that is elected every 3 years. The committee felt that this model should be standardized across all schools and colleges.

Recommendation: At the University level the committee should **not** be composed of deans, but rather, again, a standing committee of term and tenured professors at the full professor rank serving 3 year terms. This is for many reasons: deans are not in the classroom, deans may never have served clinical hours, or had a research position (particularly with the trend of upper administrative positions not coming from existing faculty).

Recommendation: Term full professors can be voting members for tenure-eligible/tenured faculty.

Process for Department/School to modify promotion guidelines to fit University guidelines:

Recommendation: The current process is that each department/school/college guidelines are required to follow university guidelines (and certainly not contradict them). However, there are other discipline-specific guidelines that should be allowed. For this, a school/college level committee should examine the departmental guidelines and a university level committee that approves unit guidelines that are specific for term faculty.

Credentials

The task force agreed that whether and when terminal degrees were required depends on the unit (School or College), and maybe even department, as different disciplines

have different criteria (for example, in the arts, a MFA is the standard degree and is considered "terminal" even though it is possible to get a PhD in the arts). It is crucial that we retain this flexibility at the unit/department level if we are to be able to recruit talented faculty.

Term (non-tenure) appointments shall always be at the rank of professor, associate professor, assistant professor, or instructor.

Recommendation: Term appointments should be a separate section in the P/T guidelines as outlined above, using the parallel table format.

Dossier Composition (See COVER SHEET FOR DOSSIER AND CANDIDATE'S DOSSIER

COVER SHEET:
Recommendation: Include two fields for the name. One being legal and the other being the name of use, in order to be more inclusive. This is a sensitive issue, particularly, for people who are gender non-conforming.

CANDIDATE'S DOSSIER:
Recommendation: The categories (Teaching, Research and Service) should be put in the order of their weight, according to the faculty member's work plan and their percentages should be noted alongside. For example: Teaching (70%), Service (20%), Research (10%)

Recommendation: Candidate's Dossier should include a section for their credentials

Recommendation: In order to ensure consistency in the mechanism of assessing each candidate, the composition of dossier materials must be dictated/specified on the school/college level.

Section 1: Research & Discovery
Recommendation: For Term faculty, this section is typically the smallest; therefore, it should be listed last, after teaching and service.

Summary of research contributions (maximum 2,000 words): Recommendation: Contributions as part of 'team' science and other collaborations should be given consideration in the promotion according to each rank.

We felt from the COVID statement to 1b was reasonable, however committee members had an issue with impact factor being used as a measure:

Recommendation: Impact factor is a flawed measure and not always available for all journals. It is only available for journals that are in the Web of Science. This could be an issue for those in a discipline where their journals are not in Web of Science. Would it be enough just to have a candidate identify the citation counts for their published works, which can also be flawed, yet it is better than IF? The impact factor could introduce bias into the process, as it is based on a science model and eliminates humanities and the arts.

Section 2: Teaching & Learning
Recommendations: This section should be listed first If this criteria the basis for nomination (for most term faculty this is the major criteria)

<u>Recommendations:</u> Mentorship should form an important component in this criteria for promotion, and should be a separate section under Teaching

<u>Recommendation:</u> Public teaching should be a factor

<u>Recommendation for 2(c)</u>: Should be more fleshed out; what do we want to collect as part of the teaching portfolio? It should be a recommendation at the University level, not a requirement.

Section 3: Service

<u>Recommendations:</u> If a faculty member conducts any type of service for the University, it must be considered as a possible basis for promotion, and the weight of this consideration should be on par with ***their allotment for service as indicated in their annual work plan***. This is an important point for faculty who do substantial administrative work especially. However, it applies to most term faculty, who carry the burden of service work for the University. Also, service is crucial to shared governance.

Evaluation of Candidate Dossier:
Section 7.1.2 of the current Promotion and Tenure Policy document describes the role of the department chair, which includes adding a "written recommendation" after "receiving the file from the peer committee."

<u>Recommendation:</u> Annual evaluations provide formal communication between faculty members and supervisors related to faculty performance. They should be included in the faculty member's dossier.

<u>Recommendation:</u> The committee suggested that updating the dossier should be recommended but not required, as we have to update our materials for annual review by our chairs/supervisors.

Rubric for Evaluation:
<u>Recommendation:</u> A vote of yes/no, where each 'no' vote must be explained or the vote will be invalid.

Use of External letters:
Each department should specify the need for letters of recommendation and independent reviewers as appropriate for the faculty's contract and job specifications. Faculty with teaching and service only roles may elect to request external letters of recommendation or independent review from peer institutions**.**

<u>Recommendation:</u> External letters do not have to be from R1 universities if the candidate's main area of responsibility is teaching or service.

<u>Recommendation:</u> A minimum of three letters

These guidelines shall also specify each unit's procedures for consultation with external evaluators and how the use of external evaluators is reported to the candidate. External evaluators shall be at a rank equal to or higher than the rank for which the candidate is being reviewed.

Candidates shall have the opportunity to attach an addendum one week before the committee meets at each level – department, college, university. That is, the candidate may submit an addendum note to indicate an article has been accepted (attached editor's note of acceptance), or an in-press article is out; or a grant has come through, or approval has been obtained for a new patent and so on.

Decision to Move candidate forward if Negative Vote
<u>Recommendation:</u> We recommend that the head of each level can decide to move the candidate forward should the level below vote against promotion:

Department level: Chair of department
College/School level: Dean

Appeals process:
<u>Recommendation:</u> If promotion is denied, the candidate may appeal at the University level. The Appeals Committee should be a similar mix of tenured and term faculty as the University level Promotion and Tenure committee, and should be elected every 3 years.

Otherwise, the appeals process should follow current policy.

Extensions:
An extension of a year, for parental leave or illness, should be granted without a formal appeals process, both for tenure eligible/tenured and term faculty. (Appendix D)

Appendix A:
CLUSTER QUESTIONS PRESENTED TO COMMITTEE
from:
https://faculty.provost.vcu.edu/faculty-resources/task-forces-and-committees/promotion-and-ten
ure-task-force/2023-term-faculty-promotion-and-tenure-task-force/2023-term-faculty-pt-task-forc
e-charge/

Clusters of Questions - Specific points to consider:

Categorization of non-tenure track faculty
- What are the types of non-tenure track positions and workloads we have at VCU?
- Should term faculty positions be renamed and classified to better reflect the expectations of the position and best set up these faculty for success?

Process
- Process at each level – department, college/school/university. If needed, distinguish between tenure track/tenured versus term faculty

Structure
- Size and composition of committee at each level being attentive to tenure track/tenured versus term faculty

Do you need a committee at each level – department, school/college, university? Department chair serves as the chair of the dept committee– need to make additional provisions if the department chair is not a full professor. Alternatively, to be more inclusive, do we want faculty "as a whole" voting on dossiers? "As a whole" means all tenured associates and fulls vote on the tenure and promotion of all tenure eligible assistant professors; and all tenured fulls will vote on promotion of tenured associates to full at the department level. A minimum of five faculty members must be eligible to serve on each of these committees. If that is not possible, the dean should appoint one or more faculty members from related disciplines. At the School or College level, the dean chairs the committee – and this committee will comprise all department chairs and at least three to five additional full professors from the College appointed by the Provost. The Dean of the College/School will send names to the Provost. Also, have a committee at the university level to incorporate more voices? At the university level, the committee will comprise the deans of the Colleges/Schools and six to eight full professors at large from across colleges/schools. No school/college will have more than one representative on the university committee.

What would a structure for term faculty look like? Perhaps having a mix of tenured and term full professors can be considered at each level (department, college, university)? This is the structure emerging in other institutions.

Credentials
- For non-tenure track faculty – specify terminal degree?

Criteria for promotion

- Focus on 'scholarship of...' research, teaching & learning; community engagement and how this should align with workload responsibilities (and effort) for tenure track/tenured faculty versus term faculty. Innovation in teaching is also an item for tenure and/or promotion. All faculty members should contribute to service and be rated satisfactory as is in the current policy. But service is not a criterion for tenure and/or promotion.
- Candidate should also have demonstrated excellence and scholarly productivity in at least one of these areas – research, teaching & learning with the understanding that, ordinarily, strength would be apparent in more than one. Use workload assigned to specify?
- Commitment to active and responsive mentorship, as well as an active role in mentoring, advising and supporting the academic success of students and postdoctoral scientists, will also be documented as part of the process that defines tenure and promotion.
- What should each department and school/college incorporate in their tenure and promotion guidelines? Develop guidelines on key aspects which the school/college can use to revise/modify. Define a process by which (a) a department and (b) a school will revise/modify P&T guidelines to align with the university guidelines.

Dossier

- Cover sheet (see **Appendix A**)
- Candidate's dossier (see **Appendix B**).
  - Content? Develop a form with three key parts: (1) Scholarship: Scholarship on Research, Scholarship on Teaching; Scholarship on Community Engagement (2) Teaching & Learning, (3) Service – department, college/school, university, professional, community. What are the items to be included in each part.
  - Should annual evaluations be included? What are the pitfalls of doing this? Candidate dossiers should be evaluated as whether they are 'ready' at the given point in time and not what they did each year. Scholars discourage use of annual review/evaluation letters in P&T dossiers as they are most likely to introduce bias into discussions.
  - Should the dossier be updated by the candidate each year?

Rubric

- Rubric for evaluation of dossier at each level
  - Scale or simply vote as yes/no.
  - If scale is recommended: each non-excellent vote must be explained or the vote will be invalid. If vote of yes/no, each 'no' vote must be explained or the vote will be invalid.

External Letters

- How many letters?
- How will the slate of letter writers be decided – at least two from candidate's list and three from department faculty. But do NOT distinguish this in the dossier?

- R-1 institutions? Provision for letters from scholars in non-R-1s. Seek approval of the dean.
- Who solicits letters?
- Need template letters to be created within each College/School for soliciting external letters.
- What materials need to be shared with external letter writers? A two-page statement that summarizes research contributions, teaching contributions, and a paragraph on service, the candidate's CV, five published (or accepted) articles and/or teaching portfolio and/or a book manuscript (publisher contract should be attached if book is still not out). May use unpublished articles or articles under review. Should be consistent within a unit
- Template letter to be used for soliciting external letters, materials shared with external letter writers, and the external letters must be part of the candidate's P&T dossier. Any change in template letter must be justified in the candidate's dossier. Focus on the value of the work (research and teaching) and how do they compare to other faculty members you know in the same stage of the career. Do not seek recommendation of letter write
- Tracking the number of solicited external referees who decline or fail to provide letters and/or recording their stated reasons for not writing does not provide relevant, useful information about the quality of the candidate's case. Thus, this practice should be strongly discouraged.

Making additions through the process
- Candidate shall have the opportunity to attach an addendum one week before the committee meets at each level – department, college, university. That is the candidate may submit an addendum note to indicate an article has been accepted (attached editor's note of acceptance), or an in-press article is out; or a grant has come through, or approval has been obtained for a new patent and so on.

Moving candidate forward or not
- Decision to move candidate forward if negative vote
    - At Department level: Chair of department
    - At College/School level: Dean

Appealing a denial
- Appeal Process
    - Appeal process at university level, include basis for appeal
    - Appeals Committee
    - Appeal for extension of a year to go up for promotion?

Appendix B: 2020-21 Task Force on P/T Report
(Access here:
https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/12lGroSx8v9yLRU_TQ-80EG
jlWppOnMPg)

Appendix C: Existing P/T Policy with Committee Notes/Suggestions
(Access
here:https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/12lGroSx8v9yLRU_TQ-80E
GjlWppOnMPg?usp=sharing)

Appendix D: Letter from Advance VCU Promotion and Tenure
Subcommittee
(Access Here:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1SeasvA6F4PcVo2cIhhqYpgRltbQ1VLD
B/view?usp=sharing)