

Promotion of Law School Faculty

Approved by Office of the Provost, April 29, 2021
James Bennighof, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs

I. Promotion Policy and Procedure Governing Law School Faculty

The policies, process and procedure governing the promotion of professors to the ranks of Associate Professor of Law and Professor of Law shall be solely governed by this subsection.

II. Policy

Law school education has the primary purpose of developing highly competent practicing lawyers. A law graduate is not awarded an academic PhD., but rather a Juris Doctor in the Law. This distinction establishes that the graduate has completed not only a rigorous training in the theoretical aspects of legal analysis but also extensive training in the practice of law. The J.D. graduate must be prepared to pass a bar exam establishing his or her minimum competency to practice law and upon successful completion has the legal right to represent the interests of any person within the Federal and/or State legal systems.

The Law School's promotion and tenure policy reflects the mission of being a professional school whose primary purpose is to develop practicing lawyers. The policy mandates that no professor can achieve tenure or be considered for promotion without demonstrating excellence of teaching in and outside the classroom. Only by developing such teaching expertise may a faculty member establish his or her right to be promoted and ultimately to become a permanent member of a faculty. Thus, teaching excellence is the primary goal of the tenure-track professor, as an Assistant and Associate Professor, and the continuing duty of the tenured Professor of law.

Scholarship is also a vital aspect of the Law School tenure policy and in order to be promoted and to earn tenure, the professor must not only establish that he or she is an outstanding teacher, but that he or she has produced and will continue to produce meaningful scholarship that will benefit the development and application of the law within our legal systems, State or Federal. It is vital not only that the Law School's scholarship focus on national/federal issues, but that certain professors, due to their area of expertise, be encouraged to become experts in and leaders for the development of Texas jurisprudence, theoretical and practical in nature.

III. Achievement

Within the Law School, a tenure-track professor who has established an exemplary record of teaching proficiency and demonstrated significant scholarly production at the national or state level, by the end of the third year will be awarded the rank of Associate Professor. A faculty member who receives tenure based on exemplary teaching, establishing a significant record and continuing potential for significant scholarship at the national or state level, and who has compiled an appropriate record of activity in pertinent professional organizations as well as service to the university and community shall hold the rank of Professor.

IV. Procedure

A. Promotion and Tenure Committee

The Promotion and Tenure Committee (P & T Committee) shall be comprised of all of the tenured faculty members in the School of Law.

B. Promotion-Associate Professor of Law

An Assistant Professor of Law will automatically be considered by the P & T Committee for promotion to the rank of Associate Professor concurrently with his or her third-year pre-tenure review. The Dean, Provost and President shall review such recommendation of promotion simultaneously with the consideration of the P & T Committee's pre-tenure recommendation as set forth in the University Tenure Guidelines.

C. Promotion- Professor of Law

An Associate Professor will automatically be considered by the P & T Committee for promotion to the rank of Professor concurrently with his or her tenure review, which will include a consideration of the required outside reviews of the candidate's scholarship.