

**The School of Engineering and Computer Science
Mechanical Engineering Department
Promotion to Professor**

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I. Introduction

At Baylor, principles applying to the rank of Professor are outlined in BU-PP 702, “Promotion for Tenure-Track and Tenured Faculty.” The document provides the following information about minimum criteria for promotion to the rank of Professor:

“In order to hold the rank of Professor, a faculty member should hold the terminal degree, or the clear equivalent. She or he should have established a distinguished record of excellence in teaching and mentorship and should also have produced a body of research and/or creative work that is recognized as excellent by authorities in the field who are in highly esteemed programs at notable institutions. Moreover, the faculty member should have compiled an appropriate record of activity in pertinent professional organizations and service to the university and community.”

This ECS document serves as a supplement to, and is subordinate to, the approved criteria, policy, and procedures established by the Executive Vice President and Provost of Baylor University, including:

1. BU-PP 704 (Policy for Tenure at Baylor University),
2. BU-PP 702 (Promotion for Tenured Faculty)
3. Promotion Procedures for Tenured Faculty at Baylor University, available on the website of the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost of Baylor University.

These documents hold priority should there arise any conflict between them and this ECS document.

II. Overall Guidance

This document offers guidelines for promotion in the areas of Research and Scholarly Activities, Teaching and Mentoring, Service to the Profession and University, and Active Christian Faith. The faculty member seeking promotion should have demonstrated her or his abilities by distinguished achievement in all four areas. While these guidelines are offered, the department may consider additional or more restrictive criteria and may suggest alternate supporting evidence for review at the department level. As a starting point, the faculty member should possess the qualifications required for tenure and promotion or appointment as Associate Professor, should have maintained excellence in teaching, and should have gained widespread recognition as a scholar with evidence of sustained productivity in research funding, journal papers, and PhD

graduates. Typically, faculty will not reach this level until at least six years past the granting of tenure. Promotions are based upon merit and are not automatic. While it is desirable for the University to have all tenured faculty sufficiently qualified to eventually gain promotion to Professor, no time limitations impel the faculty to seek the highest academic rank in the University. Associate Professors with tenure may stay at that rank for the duration of their careers; however, the desire should be to continue to improve and make progress toward promotion to the rank of Professor. Annual performance reviews of each Associate Professor should be conducted by the Department Chair and will include a discussion on their progress toward promotion to Professor which will help candidates determine if they are on an effective path to meet this goal.

A faculty member seeking promotion to the rank of Professor will be evaluated in the following areas:

A. Research and Scholarly Activities

1. *Scholarly Achievement and Research Contributions* – The candidate must demonstrate sustained research expectations commensurate with those in R1-designated institutions. Internal colleague reviews and external reviews by leading experts in the discipline should indicate that the candidate’s research is recognized for quality and that the candidate has achieved high distinction as a leading scholar in the discipline.
2. *Journal/Conference Publications* – A consistent record of refereed journal/conference publications should demonstrate the collective impact that the candidate’s body of work has had and is continuing to have on the candidate’s research area. The impact of the publications should be evidenced by such criteria as number of citations of the publications, impact factor of the journals, acceptance rate, and external reviewers’ assessment of the faculty member’s scholarship.
3. *Other Publications* – Depending upon the nature of the scholarship and research, books, book chapters, monographs, or papers presented at conferences or symposia may also be used to demonstrate impact and recognition of research and scholarship.
4. *Technology Transfer* – Patented and licensed inventions and other technology transfer activities such as initiation of a start-up company or similar venture may also be used to demonstrate impact or potential impact of research and scholarship.
5. *Funding* – It is expected that the candidate has maintained an external funding record at a level necessary to support her or his research program and has supported graduate students (and possibly post-doctoral scholars and technicians) in a manner that has allowed for scholarly productivity consistent with the candidate’s discipline at R1 research universities. Successful leadership in large, center-type proposals, while not required, can be particularly compelling. Similarly, a particular skill in generating large grants and contracts that provide not only for a large

research group but also the support of collaborators can be compelling evidence for promotion.

B. Teaching and mentoring

1. *Classroom Teaching* – The candidate for promotion to the rank of Professor should demonstrate a consistent record of strong and effective classroom teaching. Additional activities, such as development of new courses or pedagogical approaches, authorship of pedagogical articles or of a textbook in the field may also be evidence of dedication to teaching excellence. Teaching awards are also considered to be evidence of teaching excellence.

2. *Teaching Assessment* – The department expects the candidate to receive favorable student and peer evaluations since appointment to the rank of Associate Professor, with the possible exception of new courses that represent new preparations, that incorporate significant innovation in pedagogy or that are team taught. The faculty member should show that the results of student and peer evaluations are used as tools for improvement. It is also expected that evaluations would rate the “intellectual challenge” of courses at an appropriate level, with upper-level and graduate courses rated at or close to the median value for the School and the University.

3. *Mentoring Associated with Research* – The candidate is expected to demonstrate successful mentoring of graduate students to completion of M.S. and Ph.D. degrees within a reasonable timeframe, and of successful mentoring of any undergraduate and/or postdoctoral scholars with whom the faculty member has worked. The successful candidate typically will have mentored a sufficient number of students to completion of Ph.D. degrees. Leadership in proposals for funding of undergraduate and/or graduate research and/or education initiatives may also be strong evidence for dedication to excellence in mentoring.

4. *Mentoring and Advising of Undergraduates* – While mentoring undergraduate research is not a requirement for promotion, the candidate should demonstrate the willingness and ability to engage effectively in and be a valuable influence on undergraduate student research as opportunities allow.

C. Service to the Profession and University

1. *Broader Community Engagement* – The successful candidate for promotion to the rank of Professor is expected to be highly engaged in the broader research community, for example by serving on review panels and/or advisory boards to funding agencies, (co)organization of (inter)national conferences or symposia, election to society or agency offices or advisory boards, and/or activity as an (associate) editor of a peer-reviewed journal. Such activities should demonstrate that the broader community holds the accomplishments and opinions of the candidate in high regard.

2. *Departmental and University Participation and Contributions* – The candidate should show a consistent record of successful engagement within the Department, School, and broader University and should show a willingness and ability to serve effectively on committees. Moreover, the candidate should demonstrate that he or she is prepared, by activities and demeanor, to take on a leadership role within the University consistent with the duties of a Professor.

3. *Collegiality and Integrity* – The candidate should have demonstrated the ability to engage effectively with peers, students, and staff in ways that enhance the learning environment, the Baylor community, and demonstrate collegiality.

D. Active Christian Faith

1. *General Guideline* – An active Christian faith is a lifestyle that reflects Christ in all areas of life. The candidate should not only be active in a local church, but also serve in church or community-related activities. An active Christian faith should be evident in interpersonal interactions with other faculty, staff, and students. The candidate should be striving for all activities in which he or she engages to be consistent with Christian values. Evidence of a Christian worldview should be apparent in the classroom and teaching should reflect a commitment to enable students who are so inclined to examine spiritual issues involved with the profession.

2. *Defining Activities* - Examples of an active Christian faith are too diverse to list, and this document does not attempt to determine which actions are acceptable examples of faith.

III. Procedure for Promotion to Professor

The following assumes that the process follows the “Promotion Procedures for Tenured Faculty at Baylor University” document. These dates are given as guidelines and may vary slightly from year to year depending on when weekends and holidays occur; the exact dates will be decided by the Office of the Provost each year. Suggested timeline follows below:

A. **Fall Semester** - A department Promotion Evaluation Committee (PEC) comprised of tenured Professors in the department shall periodically review the Associate Professors’ progress toward Professor and recommend to the Chair which faculty are considered ready for application. The Department Chair would then notify the identified faculty who are considered eligible for promotion to Professor in the fall semester but no later than **January 1**. Associate Professors not recommended by the PEC could still apply for promotion if they believed they met the qualifications.

B. **February 15** - Eligible Associate Professor faculty must then notify the Department Chair in writing of their intent to apply for promotion by **February 15**. A promotion candidate shall provide a list of up to six external evaluators along with

a short biography of each evaluator at the time of notification of intent, **February 15**. The Department Chair, with the help of the departmental Promotion Evaluation Committee (PEC), will also develop a list of potential external evaluators different from the list presented by the applicant. The external evaluators should hold the rank of Professor, should be from peer or aspirant institutions, and cannot be research collaborators or mentors of the candidate.

- C. **April 1** – A promotion candidate’s credentials portfolio should be submitted to the Department Chair by **April 1**. This will be made available to all Professors in the department, the Department Chair, and the Dean. The credential portfolio will follow the format found in the Promotion Procedures at Baylor University document (Paragraph I.C.1.c). In particular, the letter is to follow Promotion Procedures at Baylor University (Paragraph I.C.1.c.i) in listing qualifications for promotion and setting forth reasons why promotion should be granted. Documentation should also include a Promotion CV (Promotion Procedures at Baylor University (Paragraph I.C.1.c.ii)) and supporting materials (Promotion Procedures at Baylor University (Paragraph I.C.1.c.iii - viii)).
- D. **October 1** – The Department Chair must obtain a minimum of four external reviews. All external evaluations received become part of the materials used to evaluate the candidate. The letters must be received by the Department Chair by **October 1** for review by the Professors in the department and the Dean prior to the meeting with the candidate.
- E. **December 1** - After receiving the external letters, the Department Chair will schedule a meeting with the PEC, the Dean, and the promotion candidate prior to **December 1**. The Department Chair will provide to the candidate and the PEC a summary teaching evaluation. Each member of the PEC will use the documentation provided by the promotion candidate and the external evaluation letters to form their assessments of the candidate.
- F. **December 6** - After the meeting, each member of the PEC must complete a Professor Promotion Recommendation Form and send it to the Department Chair by **December 6**.
- G. **December 12** - The Department Chair then prepares a summative letter to the Dean based on the Professor Promotion Recommendation Forms. This letter shall be submitted to the Dean by **December 12**, along with: the promotion candidate’s credentials portfolio; the external review letters, reviewers’ credentials, any justifications for reviewer choice, and a copy of the letter and the materials that were given to the external evaluators; the summary teaching evaluation; the Professor Promotion Recommendation Forms submitted by the available Professors of the department; and departmental promotion guidelines and any special conditions of the candidate’s employment

- H. **January 15** - The Dean will make the final written recommendation to the Provost, either favorable or not favorable. The Dean's recommendation and the department recommendation must be forwarded to the Provost along with the required documentation by **January 15**.
- I. **February 1** - The Provost will make a recommendation to the President by **February 1**.
- J. **February 15** - The President's decision, which is final, will be made by **February 15** and then communicated to the Provost who then communicates the decision to the Dean. The Dean should inform the Department Chair of the decision.
- K. **February 28** - The Dean or the Dean's designee will meet with the promotion candidate by **February 28** to convey the President's decision. At this time the official notification letter from the President will be delivered. The Dean or the Dean's Designee will prepare a statement documenting the content and date of the meeting and the fact that the procedures for this meeting have been followed. This statement will be included in the promotion candidate's official personnel file maintained in the Office of the Provost.