

Faculty Guidelines and Criteria for Renewal, Continuing Appointment, and Promotion at SUNY Oneonta

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1. **Overall Expectations**

The University is committed to **effective teaching/librarianship** and identifies teaching/librarianship as the primary duty assigned to all teaching/librarian faculty. Defining ourselves first and foremost as a community of teacher-scholars, SUNY Oneonta invites faculty members to share their passion for their disciplines and their understanding of connections across disciplines with colleagues and, most of all, with our students. This commitment to student learning remains at the heart of our mission.

SUNY Oneonta recognizes that **scholarship** varies widely across different disciplines and programs of study. Scholarship, while defined more specifically in accordance with the Boyer model later in this document, is broadly conceived of as traditional forms of research, experimental research designs, and creative work. To avoid privileging one form over another, as is so often noted by 'research or creative activity,' this document refers to any and all forms of creative work and research as scholarship.

The University expects its faculty to become members not only of a particular department, program, or school, but also of the larger SUNY Oneonta academic community and to contribute willingly to the faculty's shared work, which is important to the proper functioning of the University and the well-being of the University community. Because there are so many different ways, both formal and informal, for faculty members to contribute to the University, **service** represents the most varied area of faculty work.

All teaching faculty are expected to provide mentoring and advising to students. These duties require an investment of time and attention to ensure that students receive accurate information and supportive interaction. Other aspects of service may encompass involvement with student groups on campus, contributing to curricular design or other aspects of faculty governance, bringing visiting scholars to campus, assisting in student recruitment and orientation-to name just a few such opportunities. In addition, faculty members are encouraged to provide service to their academic discipline(s) and communities beyond SUNY Oneonta.

In all three areas of professional obligations-teaching/librarianship, scholarship, and service-faculty are further expected to demonstrate **continuing growth** in their respective fields. This may mean reading or attending workshops to stay abreast of developments in their field of teaching expertise or library operations, undertaking workshops or attending professional meetings to enhance skills in research or creative works, and/or handling increased responsibility by taking a leadership role in University service. While all new faculty are expected to demonstrate basic **mastery of subject area** at the time of hire, continued growth in this area can be demonstrated by scholarship, acquisition of honors, awards, and reputation over the course of professional life.

2. Teaching/Librarianship

SUNY Oneonta expects members of the faculty to fulfill their responsibilities as teachers and librarians by the intellectual and creative development of our students in scheduled courses and in other contexts (e.g., through independent studies, informal disciplinary and cross-disciplinary advising) in which instruction occurs.

2.1 General expectations.

The following should be considered features of successful teaching.

2.1.1 *Content Expertise.*

Successful teaching presents a disciplinary or interdisciplinary framework to students through a faculty member's own perspective. Through the course material, a faculty member challenges

students to achieve excellence and enables students to connect their academic work to other areas of their lives.

2.1.2 Course Design.

A well-designed course is one that promotes student learning through the careful selection of course content; sequencing of learning experiences; identification and development of effective course materials; and creation of individual, group, or laboratory activities, writing assignments, and/or exams. Faculty members are expected to renew course materials and to prepare new courses. These efforts are guided by curricular needs of academic programs, best practices and developments in an academic field, and a faculty member's expertise and personal experience.

2.1.3 Pedagogy.

Faculty members are encouraged to create environments that promote student learning through a variety of teaching techniques, activities, and strategies that assist them in presenting ideas and explaining complex concepts. Learning environments should take student diversity into account and foster achievement of the course learning objectives. Faculty members should engage in pedagogical development through informal interactions with colleagues and formal opportunities available to them through the University or professional organizations.

2.1.4 Course Management.

Faculty members should be proficient in organizing and executing tasks that support instruction, such as preparing course assignments and exams, timely and helpful comments on student work, holding office hours and making themselves available to students for consultation outside of class, keeping accurate records and submitting final course grades in accordance with University guidelines.

2.1.5 Fostering Student Learning.

The most important aspect of successful teaching is a faculty member's ability to help students learn. Successful teaching fosters an inclusive learning environment and is attentive to the diverse needs of the student body, making learning accessible. Successful teachers stimulate student's interest and learning through their commitment and enthusiasm for their subject matter.

2.2 Evaluation of Teaching/Librarianship.

The quality of a faculty member's contribution to student learning is the most important criterion for evaluating the performance of teaching faculty. To receive contract renewal, continuing appointment, or promotion, supporting documents must be provided of continued success in teaching/librarianship at the level of accomplishment satisfying the applicable standard for Assistant, Associate, or Professor level. For the review process, the quality of the information provided to evaluators largely dictates their conclusions about how a faculty member is performing and their recommendations for renewal, continuing appointment, and/or promotion.

2.2.1 Required Documentation.

In each renewal portfolio, and in cases of both continuing appointment and/or promotion, all classroom teaching faculty are required to include at least two peer observation letters. Guidelines for Peer Observations of Teaching are provided in Appendix A of this document.

Additional required documentation is listed in Section 7, "Preparation of the Professional Development Portfolio," of the SUNY Oneonta Faculty Renewal, Continuing Appointment and Promotion Policy (henceforth, the "RTP Policy (2025)").

2.2.2 *Additional forms of supporting documents.*

Other documentation should be provided and may include the following. This list is not intended to be exhaustive or prescriptive.

- Documentation of teaching awards (internal or external to the University)
- Documentation of independent studies, capstones, or projects that were supervised
- Examples of student work showing academic or creative achievement
- Documentation of new courses developed or courses significantly redesigned
- Documentation of computer technology or software developed for teaching or adapted for use in one's courses
- Documentation of participation in activities to improve teaching (internal or external to the University)
- Letters or retrospective comments from majors and alumni

2.3 Specific Departmental Expectations for Teaching/Librarianship.

Each department is expected to create a copy of this Guidelines and Criteria Document and add this section to include their discipline-specific criteria for teaching. See Section 6 of the Policy, "Evaluation Criteria," for further information.

3. Scholarship

Though necessary for renewal, continuing appointment, and promotion, successful teaching/librarianship alone is not sufficient. Evaluating the quality of scholarship is an important way for the University to assess the level of expertise that faculty members bring to their teaching/librarianship.

3.1 General expectations.

The University expects members of the faculty to remain engaged with the continuing conversations and innovations that constitute an academic career. Specifically, the University expects its faculty members to cultivate, over the course of their careers, the scholarly independence sufficient to define problems and issues in their areas of expertise, which they then engage in their own work. Developing such a mature perspective on one's discipline enables a faculty member to integrate and evaluate the elements that constitute both a discipline's history and its present developments. In addition, interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary scholarship are valued as part of active academic engagement.

The University expects such a developed perspective to inform the instruction that our students receive. Remaining active as scholars also enables faculty members to bring current developments in their fields to their teaching, to model for their students a life of involvement with their discipline(s), and to invite students to participate with them in their scholarly work (which the University encourages faculty to do, where and when possible).

3.1.1 A broad definition of scholarship.

Given the breadth of disciplines, the differences among teaching contexts, and the diversity of our faculty, there are many appropriate ways for faculty members to fulfill the expectation that they remain actively engaged with their fields. Specifically, the University endorses the view that research or creative activity—whether it is individual or collaborative—is hitherto and henceforth known as "scholarship" and may originate in any ONE, or a combination, of the four ways described in the report, *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*, Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (Boyer, 1997), including: discovery, pedagogy, integration, and engagement (or application). Scholarly activities must be intended and reasonably expected to lead to the production of scholarly works that must be communicated with and validated by peers beyond the University campus community. The means of communication as well as the comparative value of types of scholarly activity and work are to be determined by each department and reflect what is commonly accepted in the discipline.

3.1.2 The role of peer commentary and review.

In most disciplines, there exists some standard process of peer review and commentary that helps to establish the impact of scholarship in particular fields of study on other scholars' research, on the knowledge base of society, and on scientific, cultural, or artistic lines of inquiry and innovation. Impact may be demonstrated in many ways, but it typically occurs through citation by other scholars and other sources, reviews of the work, invitations to give lectures and participate in conferences, invitations to serve in scholarly leadership capacities such as editorial or review boards or to hold offices in scholarly societies, and professional recognition earned from various honors and awards that are bestowed on individuals and works of merit. In the arts and humanities, creative productivity encompasses, among other activities, published fiction, non-fiction, poetry and drama; multimedia productions or musical compositions performed or published; musical, dramatic, and other forms of public performance; and exhibitions of painting or other graphic work. In some fields technical, procedural, or practical innovations made clinically or professionally constitute evidence of productive scholarship. While quantity of publications does not by itself establish a measure of scholarly significance in a given discipline, it is important to the degree that significance and impact are often built by sustained productivity.

3.2 Evaluation of scholarship.

At the time of a review, the University expects all members of the faculty—no matter which of the above categories of professional development characterizes their work—to produce tangible supporting documentation of their ongoing scholarly endeavors that have received favorable feedback from disciplinary peer(s). Teaching and library faculty should follow their departmental interpretations of specific activities or standards within each discipline.

As a general rule, the University finds it reasonable to expect that high-quality professional work will be marked by some combination of the following features: clear goals, adequate preparation, appropriate methods, significant or interesting conclusions, results (within the scope of the research), artistic products, effective presentation, reflective self-critique, and/or attention to questions whose relevance can be articulated in light of issues in the field. And yet,

the expectations, challenges, styles of presentation and standards for scholarship can vary considerably by discipline.

In cases of continuing appointment and/or promotion, faculty should refer to Section 7, "Preparation of the Professional Development Portfolio," of the RTP Policy (2025) regarding the requirements for letters addressing the candidate's scholarship.

3.2.1 Examples of supporting documentation of scholarship and scholarly activities are listed below. This list is not intended to be exhaustive or prescriptive. Some items may fit in multiple categories.

- Publication of new work, such as excerpts from journal articles, books, stories, conference proceedings, original compositions, original screenplays, translations, books or articles edited, book or article reviews
- Creative activity documentation, such as gallery openings, results from juried exhibitions, programs from performances, recordings, publications in popular press
- Books/magazines/online media, plays, musical theatre pieces, or operas that one directed, wrote, adapted, and/or compiled
- Abstracts or materials related to presentations at professional conferences or other meetings, speaking invitations
- Documentation related to student scholarship supervised or mentored by the faculty member, such as student creative activities, publications, presentations, abstracts
- Documentation related to serving as an area expert, creation of pedagogical tools, instructional software packages written, textbooks, editions, or technical manuals, descriptions of demonstration projects 'developed for use in teaching
- Grant seeking and/or winning documentation, such as samples from grant applications, acknowledgments of grant awards from award sponsors
- Documentation of professional awards received for excellence in scholarship
- Documentation of participation in scholarly professional development and participation in scholarly community, such as participation in workshops, seminars, working groups
- Other documentation related to scholarly activities, such as patent documentation, technological research or applications, sound or video recordings of performances, shows, podcasts, description or other documentation of laboratory or experimental apparatus designed or built, samples of works-in-progress with indication of current status

3.3 Specific Departmental Expectations: Scholarship.

Criteria will be evaluated on an on-going basis through the regular program review process. Candidates should include the published departmental criteria relevant to the current evaluation (term contract renewal, promotion or continuing appointment), and to the discipline of the candidate, in the relevant section of the portfolio.

4. Service

As members of an academic community, faculty are responsible for performing a share of the labor which must be accomplished if programs, departments, schools, and the University are to function effectively and students are to be well-served. Because of the importance of service to

the educational mission of the University, satisfying this criterion is a necessary condition for renewal, continuing appointment, and promotion.

4.1 General expectations.

Faculty service is wide-ranging, but can generally be categorized as student-centered, department- wide, University-wide, within the community, and to professional organizations. It is understood that each department has unique needs in terms of service. Therefore, in connection with discipline- specific standards, and in consultation with their Dean, departments should establish rank-specific performance expectations for renewal, continuing appointment, and promotion.

Below are examples that encompass the range of professional activities related to service: *service to students* (including mentoring students, serving as adviser for a student organization, serving on graduate research committees, and otherwise assisting student growth and development); *service to departments, schools, or academic programs* (including serving as Department Chair or Program Director, directing a theater space, supervising a certificate program, assisting in a departmental or programmatic review, participating as a member of a search committee, or contributing to curricular development); *service to the University and campus* (assisting at Admissions events, directing a student research symposium, performing or speaking at an event on campus, involvement in SUNY-wide program events, participating in campus ceremonies and open houses, and serving in UUP positions); *service to the community* (including organizing on- or off-campus events that are open to the public, volunteering or presenting at community events, serving on non-profit or community boards, volunteering or consulting with community organizations); *service to the academic profession* (including holding office or some other position of responsibility in a state, regional, national, or international professional or disciplinary organization, and serving as consultants or reviewers for professional organizations, publications, troupes, accrediting bodies, and other institutions).

4.2 Evaluation of service.

At the time of a review, the University takes account of a faculty member's contributions to service. In cases of continuing appointment and/or promotion, faculty should refer to Section 7, "Preparation of the Professional Development Portfolio," of the Policy regarding the requirements for letters addressing the candidate's service.

4.2.1 Examples of supporting documentation of service activities are listed below. This list is not intended to be exhaustive or prescriptive. Some items may fit in multiple categories.

- Documentation of involvement in professional societies
- Announcements of presentations at community events
- Documentation of service related to diversity, equity, and inclusion, on and/or off campus
- Excerpts of materials created in committee work (including narratives of role in creation)
- Documentation of organized trips with students (may include itineraries, invitations, awarded travel grants, etc.)
- Documentation of union service

- Scholarly service such as book or article editing, journal refereeing, area-expert judging, etc.
- Documentation or certificates of completion regarding training in advising, mentoring, etc.
- Solicited letters or brief testimonials

4.3 Specific Departmental Expectations: Service.

Each department is expected to create a copy of this Guidelines and Criteria Document and modify this section to include discipline-specific criteria for service. See Section 6 of the Policy, "Evaluation Criteria," for further information.

5. General Guidelines for Renewal, Continuing Appointment, and Rank Specific Expectations

5.1 To merit renewal as an Assistant Professor/Senior Assistant Librarian, a member of the faculty must present documents as specified in this document and Section 7 of the RTP Policy (2025) "Preparation of the Professional Development Portfolio", supporting the following professional activities:

- a) Effective teaching/librarianship and the promise of continued growth and progress toward meeting the standards for promotion to Associate Professor/Associate Librarian. With assistance from colleagues, Assistant Professors should be building a repertoire of courses and developing their skills in the classroom, laboratory, clinic, or studio; Assistant Professors should be afforded such opportunities in concert with curricular needs. Progress toward meeting the standards for Associate Professor/Associate Librarian will be shown by increasingly successful teaching performance/librarianship and increasing independence. Teaching faculty seeking renewal are required to have at least two peer observation of teaching letters in each renewal portfolio.
- b) Continuing active involvement with their discipline(s) as evidenced by a developing scholarly agenda, with the promise of continued involvement in their discipline(s) and/or field(s) of creative activity. Assistant Professor/Senior Assistant Librarian is a transitional rank in terms of scholarship. Faculty members at this rank are identifying problems and issues that are interesting and relevant within their field, creating their own scholarly agendas, and making progress toward accomplishing those agendas.
- c) Effective contributions in service and the promise of becoming a successful academic mentor. Assistant Professors/Senior Assistant Librarians may be encountering the broad scope of faculty work for the first time in a career. They should take advantage of occasions to begin learning more about a program, department/library, school, and the University as a whole. Opportunities will present themselves for Assistant Professors/Senior Assistant Librarians to make effective contributions, though these may be limited in scope at first. In order to merit continuing appointment and promotion, Assistant Professors/Senior Assistant Librarians need to present a record that includes supporting documentation of effective service and evidence that indicates a willingness to contribute in the future.

- d) Improvement in any area(s) of performance that have been identified as needing attention during previous renewals, as applicable.
- e) Accomplishments in any other areas identified in the faculty member's profile.

5.2 To merit continuing appointment

A continuing appointment (tenure) gives a faculty member the contractual right to employment with the University until the faculty member resigns, retires, or otherwise separates from service with the University.

When faculty members become eligible for continuing appointment (tenure), responsibility for making the case that they have met the necessary standards rests with them. To receive tenure, members of the faculty must demonstrate, by virtue of the evidence submitted that they satisfy the relevant evaluation criteria at levels that meet the applicable standards for tenure, as specified by the SUNY Board of Trustees Policies, the Faculty Renewal, Continuing Appointment and Promotion Policy and the Departmental Guidelines and Criteria.

The fundamental purpose of tenure-indeed, its primary justification-is to provide the necessary protection of academic freedom to the professoriate. Specifically, tenure frees faculty members to pursue knowledge or engage in unfettered creative activity and, most importantly, to share the results of their inquiries with students and other constituencies, secure that espousing unpopular viewpoints will not place them at risk of losing their employment. The institution of tenure, therefore, is essential to fulfilling the primary educational mission of the University. It is also important in helping the University to attract and retain faculty of the highest quality.

Article XI, Title I of the SUNY Board of Trustees Policy and Article 9 of the New York State/UUP Agreement states: "It is the policy of the University to maintain and encourage full freedom, within the law, of inquiry, teaching and research. In the exercise of this freedom faculty members may, without limitation, discuss their own subject in the classroom; they may not, however, claim as their right the privilege of discussing in their classroom controversial matter which has no relation to their subject. The principle of academic freedom shall be accompanied by a corresponding principle of responsibility. In their role as citizens, employees have the same freedoms as other citizens. However, in their extramural utterances employees have an obligation to indicate that they are not institutional spokespersons."

After receiving tenure, the requirement for documentation for dismissal or termination shifts from the faculty member to the University. In the pre-tenure renewal period, the candidate must establish a record that satisfies the standards for continuing appointment. and warrants the inference that the candidate is likely, over the course of a career, to advance the long-term goals of the department, the school, and the University. In a close decision those making the judgment must bear in mind that the responsibility for demonstrating that the standards for tenure have been met rests with the candidate. By contrast, after tenure has been granted, the burden of proof shifts to the University, which then must show cause and follow due process pursuant to

disciplinary requirements set forth in the New York State/UUP Agreement in order to terminate a tenured faculty member's contract or dismiss that person for adequate cause.

Although tenure typically provides a faculty member full-time appointment at the University until retirement or resignation, it does not unconditionally guarantee life-long employment. The long-term commitment of the University to protect the academic freedom and security of the faculty member must be reciprocated by a commensurate long-term commitment to excellence as a teacher, scholar or creative artist, and engagement in the academic community. If the University is to provide the highest quality educational opportunities to students, faculty members must continue to meet the standards of performance throughout their careers at the University. Therefore, a tenured faculty member may be dismissed in accordance with any applicable provision of the State/UUP agreement and Board of Trustees Policy.

In granting tenure the University is expressing the highest level of institutional confidence that a tenure-track faculty member meets the applicable standards of performance and is likely to continue to do so for the remainder of his or her time at the University in a way that advances the long-term goals of the department, the school, and the University.

Those faculty members and administrators charged with making a tenure recommendation or decision—as opposed to making a promotion recommendation or decision alone—must answer two questions in writing:

- a) Has the faculty member provided evidence sufficient to establish that he or she meets the applicable standards for rank?
and
- b) Is there evidence that the faculty member will continue to advance the long-term goals of the department, school, and University in the future?

In order to receive a positive recommendation for tenure, candidates holding the rank of Assistant Professor shall demonstrate that over the duration of the renewal periods they have:

- a) satisfied the standards for promotion to Associate Professor and
- b) established a pattern of performance sufficient to justify the expectation of continued performance at a level satisfying the standards for Associate Professor in a way that advances the long-term goals of the department, school, and University, with the promise of sufficient improvement to meet, in time, the standards for promotion to Professor.

In order to receive a positive recommendation for tenure, candidates holding the rank of either Associate Professor or Professor shall demonstrate that over the duration of the probationary period they have:

- a) maintained or exceeded the standards for the rank to which they were appointed and
- b) established a pattern of performance sufficient to justify the expectation of continued performance at a level satisfying the standards for the rank appointed in a way that advances the goals of the department, school, University, and University.

Tenure-track faculty members who fail to satisfy the standards for tenure, as determined through the process of faculty review, will receive notice of non-renewal. Since a decision to deny continuing appointment may result in a right to appeal, the onus is upon the University to be able to demonstrate that deficiencies in performance have been documented throughout the previous renewal cycles and that the deficiencies have not been corrected or addressed by the tenure-track faculty. (Please note that continuing appointment can also be denied for matters of program.)

5.3 To merit promotion from Assistant Professor/Senior Assistant Librarian to Associate Professor/Associate Librarian, a faculty member must present documents, as specified in this document and Section 7 of the RTP Policy (2025) "Preparation of the Professional Development Portfolio, supporting the following professional activities:

a) For teaching faculty, excellent performance in teaching across the range of assigned courses. To merit promotion to Associate Professor, teaching faculty members should show that they have become effective teachers who can perform their share of departmental and/or programmatic teaching (either alone or in collaboration with others) without the need for substantial assistance or intervention by colleagues. Such persons will also display the promise of continued growth as teachers. Candidates seeking continuing appointment and/or promotion are required to have at least two peer observation of teaching letters in their portfolio. For library faculty, effectiveness in teaching and librarianship as demonstrated by such things as judgment of colleagues, development of teaching or library materials, practices, or new courses, and student or library reaction. Additionally, competence in assigned functions within the library, which might include supervision, administration of programs or functions, collection development, instruction, reference services, or technical services.

b) A record of involvement with their discipline(s) through ongoing scholarship, with evidence of success in advancing some aspect(s) of an established scholarly agenda beyond the dissertation (or work completed to satisfy the terminal degree). Such evidence will involve products or performances of sufficient quality to have received favorable peer review. Appropriate products of scholarly activity will be defined by the candidate's department. To merit appointment as Associate Professor, candidates must also display the promise of continued growth within their field(s). For library faculty, scholarly ability as demonstrated by such things as developing and carrying out significant research work in librarianship or subject field, contribution to the arts, publications and reputation among colleagues.

c) A record of effective contributions in service, including but not limited to documentation supporting effective performance as an advisor regarding departmental or programmatic curricula and the ability and willingness to advise students as they plan their academic careers. To merit promotion to Associate Professor, faculty members must also demonstrate active participation and should be able to point to contributions in service. For library faculty, effectiveness in university service-as demonstrated by such things as University and SUNY public service, committee work, administrative work, and work with students, library users, or community members in addition to formal librarian-student relationships.

d) Improvement in any area(s) of performance that have been identified as needing attention during previous renewals, as applicable.

- e) Accomplishments in any other areas identified in the faculty member's profile.
- f) For faculty seeking promotion, continued growth as demonstrated by increased professional responsibilities, as well as awards, honors, etc.

5.4 To merit promotion from Associate Professor/Associate Librarian to Professor/Librarian, a faculty member must present documents as specified in this document and Section 7 of the RTP Policy (2025) "Preparation of the Professional Development Portfolio", supporting the following professional activities:

- a) Sustained effective performance in teaching across the range of assigned courses so as to show mastery of the craft of teaching and to serve as resources for other faculty members in their own teaching. Even so, Professors are expected to remain committed to their own continuing growth as teacher-scholars. Candidates seeking promotion are required to have at least two peer observation of teaching letters in their portfolio. For library faculty, promotion or appointment to this rank shall require evidence of outstanding achievement in librarianship. A person appointed or promoted to this rank must meet all of the qualifications for the rank of Associate Librarian and have demonstrated leadership in their primary position of responsibility and mastery of a particular area of librarianship. They will have shown evidence of planning ability, leadership, and sound judgment. They must possess a level of expertise which makes them a resource person for the other library staff and/or patrons.
- b) A record of sustained engagement with their discipline(s) that indicates continued growth as a scholar beyond their accomplishments at the time of promotion to Associate Professor/Associate Librarian, with evidence of success in completing some substantial aspect(s) of their scholarly agenda. Such evidence will involve products and/or performances of sufficient quality to have received favorable peer review. Evidence of continued development as a scholar may comprise more products, better products, or products indicating success in moving into a new area of inquiry or creative work. Through their scholarship, Professors/Librarians are expected to have developed a mature perspective on their field(s) that enables them to situate both their own work and the work of their students in the landscape of their discipline(s). Professors/Librarians are also expected to continue their engagement with their discipline(s).
- c) A sustained record of effective contributions in service based on thorough knowledge of the departmental or programmatic curricula and the ability and willingness to advise students as they plan their academic careers. Faculty members must document substantial contributions in service that have advanced some area of the program, department, school, and/or the University.
- d) Improvement in any area(s) of performance that have been identified as needing attention during previous renewals, as applicable.
- e) Accomplishments in any other areas identified in the faculty member's portfolio.
- f) Continued growth as demonstrated by increased responsibilities at the University, leadership positions, as well as awards, honors, etc.

Appendix A: Guidelines for Peer Observations of Teaching

The principles described below apply to faculty teaching face-to-face courses (undergraduate and graduate). Equivalent processes should occur for peer observations of online and hybrid courses.

During each review period, peer observations should be conducted in two different courses by two faculty members (selected by the faculty member being observed). When possible, at least one of the faculty members should come from within the same department as the faculty member being observed. To the extent possible, a representative range of activities that constitute teaching for an individual should be observed. The candidate should make an effort to have colleagues observe a variety of courses taught (e.g., one upper and one lower-division course, seminar vs. lecture vs. lab/performance, etc.). When possible, the rank of each observer should be above the rank being sought by the candidate. When not possible, the rank of observers should at least be equivalent to the rank of the candidate.

The following guidelines should be considered when conducting a peer observation of teaching:

- **AAHE Guidelines:** Peer observations should be conducted using the principles of a quality observation (established by the American Association for Higher Education) for guidance:
 - Avoid casual, unannounced observations;
 - Make observations part of a consultation process with the employee, including pre and post meetings;
 - Link observations to reviews of teaching materials;
 - Conduct observations;
 - Observers must be open to learning; and
 - Inform students of the process
- **Consultations:** Ideally, there should be two consultations in addition to the official class observation. These consultations should include:
 - An individual pre-conference to discuss the specific nature of the class to be observed, sharing expectations, clarifying any ambiguity, and establishing the observation schedule;
 - A post-visit conference after the observation to provide reflective feedback, constructive criticism, and specific advice based on the observation and review of course materials. It is important this discussion be generative in approach, providing the candidate with feedback and mentoring which will assist in further development. The post-visit conference should be conducted within a reasonable amount of time following the observation.
- **Syllabus Review:** The syllabus for the courses should be reviewed and constructive criticism should be provided during the post-visit conference and in the observation letter. University-specific requirements and best practices should be considered in this review.
- **Peer Observation Guidelines:** The SUNY Oneonta Peer Observation Guidelines provided below should be used to guide the observation, feedback, and letter written for the candidate's file.

- a) Provide context or background information: Describe the setting in which the lesson took place, relevant information about the makeup of the class, and any other descriptive characteristics that would provide appropriate context to the observation.
 - b) Instructor Goals/Intentions for Class Session: Focus your comments on whether the goals were: 1) clearly stated or portrayed in an obvious fashion, 2) appropriate to the focus of the course, 3) explicitly connected to the flow of previous or future classes.
 - c) Significance of class activities, topics, or issues: Focus your comments on whether the tasks performed by students or the topics being discussed 1) are relevant to the focus of the course, 2) require an appropriate investment of student time or effort.
 - d) Instructor prepared and organized: Focus your comments on whether the instructor 1) appeared well-prepared for the class that day, and 2) effectively organized the material for the day within the class time.
 - e) Student engagement with the subject matter: Examine the degree to which student engagement occurred 1) over a substantial portion of the class meeting time, 2) by a broad segment of students attending the class, 3) in appropriate forms such as discussion, listening/processing, performing, reading, reflecting, speaking, or writing.
 - f) Examination of student goals: Focus your comments on how the instructor developed an understanding of student achievement of goals by methods such as 1) questioning students on course material, 2) observing student performance(s), 3) student-student discussion, 4) formative assessments (such as ungraded work), 5) summative assessments (such as quizzes), or 6) other methods.
 - g) Fostering an inclusive classroom: Focus your comments on how the instructor encouraged student participation and supported the diverse needs of the students.
- *The Observation:* Once the observer is in the classroom, the Peer Observation Guidelines should be followed and detailed notes should be taken. Comments and suggestions should be provided as appropriate during the post-visit consultation and in the observation letter.
 - *Observation Letter:* The official letter which is included in the candidate's file should provide meaningful information germane to the teaching performance of the faculty member that was gleaned from the official observation, or the pre- and post-observation conferences. Based on the Peer Observation Guidelines above, the peer observation letter should develop a narrative which effectively summarizes the observer's comments and reactions to the quality of the candidate's teaching performance and approach.

Appendix B: Guidelines for the Development of Quality/Rigor Expectations

The purpose of the *Guidelines for the Development of Quality/Rigor Expectations* is to provide a platform for departments in the creation of Tenure and Promotion criteria that aligns with the expectations of their discipline.

The responsibilities of professors in the State University of New York derive from their membership in a learned profession whose members, within a faculty, perform the dual function of cultivating areas of knowledge as coherently structured intellectual disciplines, and of educating students in these areas. Professorial responsibilities are thus dedicated primarily to this profession, to students, and to colleagues.

Effective Teaching/Librarianship

A demonstration of teaching effectiveness that encompasses an understanding of connections across disciplines is achieved through student and peer review of the components of teaching as delineated in the RTP Guidelines and Criteria. Clarity regarding the faculty's contributions in teaching/librarianship that meets the mission of the institution must be incorporated.

Effective Scholarship

Scholarly activities must be juried/peer reviewed and in public outlets and must demonstrate a robust review process. Publications in peer-reviewed scholarly journals may be print or electronic. Publications requiring payments must have justification as to the quality of the journal in which the scholarly publication appears, including scholarly reputation and discipline specific appropriateness.

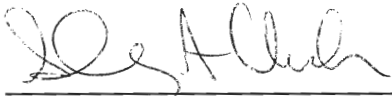
Effective Service

The components of service as defined in the RTP Guidelines and Criteria are demonstrated through student, peer and community engagement. Internal and external documentation that identifies the service contribution/impact should be distinguished by each department to establish rigor.

This "Faculty Renewal, Continuing Appointment, and Promotion" document may be signed in counterparts which together will form a single document and may be transmitted and signed digitally.

As agreed to:

For United University Professions



Shirley A. Clark
President – Oneonta Chapter

1/29/2025

Date



Dr. Mark Ferrara
Vice President – Academics

1/29/2025

Date

For State University of New York at Oneonta



Dia M. Carleton
Chief Human Resources Officer

01/29/2025

Date