



The Promotion Process

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VSoE Appointment, Promotions &
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What is the APT?

- VSoE Appointments, Promotions and Tenure committee
 - 1 member (full professor) chosen by each department
 - 5 at-large (associate professor) members, elected by whole VSoE faculty
 - 2 Research-track faculty, 2 Teaching-track faculty
- Responsible for making recommendations on appointments, promotions and tenure decisions to Dean of Engineering & Vice Dean for Faculty Affairs
- APT's decisions are advisory not obligatory, but a strong recommendation for or against a candidate is “typically” adopted at higher levels
- APT's role is to provide
 - A uniform standard across VSoE departments
 - A 2nd opinion that might offset unusually critical or lenient Department decisions
 - Independent check on accuracy & completeness of Department's information

Promotion process – candidate's role

- For tenure-track faculty, starts in summer at end of 5th year of full-time service (or earlier by request, but generally cannot be later)
- Candidate provides information to departmental committee
 - CV
 - Statement of research and teaching accomplishments & plans
 - Mentoring record (e.g. Ph.D. students)
 - Service (Department, School, University, external) – external shows that you are known & respected by your peers
 - Examples of key publications (≈ 5)
 - Sometimes candidates are invited to recommend names of persons to write letters of recommendation, more often Department selects all referees
- All information goes into a “black box” – no further input from or discussion with candidate
- Suggestion: study UCAPT manual (this is the **rule book** for the promotion evaluation process):
https://policy.usc.edu/files/2014/02/appointments_promotion_tenure.pdf

Promotion process – Department role (1/2)

- Department chair appoints Departmental committee – 3 members (for Research or Teaching Track promotions, will include such faculty members)
- Departmental committee duties
 - Recommend referees (subject to approval by Dean's Office)
 - » 'Arms length' – no formal relationship – most important
 - » Mentors & collaborators – not arm's length – lesser 'weight'
 - » More 'weight' given to referees from top-10 US universities and NAE members
 - » Referee letters describe the impact of your work and your stature within the field – **most important single set of information**
 - Collect quantitative information
 - » Web of Science and/or Google Scholar (papers, citations, H-index)
 - » Research / teaching funding
 - » Teaching evaluations
 - Identify peer group for quantitative comparison – may include peers mentioned by referees
 - Prepare report and provide recommendation to Department

Promotion process – Department role (2/2)

- Department's tenured faculty (plus research-track or teaching-track faculty, as appropriate) discuss report / recommendation & votes
- Department Chair prepares memo
 - Candidate's fit with the Department
 - Summary of Department's discussion and result of vote
 - Chair's personal recommendation

Promotion process – APT role – tenure-track

- APT Chair (elected by APT committee) appoints subcommittee for each candidate – 3 members
- Evaluates dossier prepared by Department
 - Candidate's input
 - Department Subcommittee report & supporting information
 - Department Chair's memo
- APT does not collect additional information, but may ask for clarifications or corrections to data in dossier
- Prepares report and provides recommendation to full APT
- APT discusses report / recommendation & votes
- APT Chair prepares memo for Dean
 - Summary of discussion
 - Result of vote

APT role – Research & Teaching Tracks

- Evaluated by APT “Executive Committee” only
 - APT Chair
 - 1 other tenured APT member
 - 2 Research or Teaching faculty members as appropriate
- Executive Committee discusses dossier prepared by Department & votes on candidate
- APT Chair prepares memo for Dean
 - Summary of discussion
 - Result of vote

What's next?

- Dean prepares recommendation based on outcomes of Department and APT actions + his/her own opinion
- For Research- or Teaching-Track faculty, the VSoE Dean's Office is the last step
- For Tenure-Track faculty, University-level APT committee (UCAPT, within Provost's office) evaluates information and provides yet another recommendation
- Board of Trustees has the last word!

Expectations for promotion

- Be recognized by leaders in your field as a 'likely future leader'
- Continue your Ph.D. and/or postdoc work, but have at least one identifiable new area of strength started at USC
- Collaborations are fine, but have work that is uniquely yours
- Be at least in the middle of your peer group in terms of quantitative metrics
- More funding is always better, but key factor is, "is the candidate's funding (past, current and forecasted) sufficient to support his/her agenda?"
- Have at least average teaching evaluations
- Show some 'presence' in your community

Associate to full professor promotion

- Unlike Assistant → Associate promotion, no set timeline but typically 5 – 6 years later
- Process essentially same as Assistant → Associate
- Expectation is that you have established yourself as a leader in your field, rather than just showing that potential
- Also expectation of considerable service record

Suggestions

- Attend as many conferences as possible; present any quality work you have, shake hands, network – **establish yourself as a ‘player’ in the field** (and don’t annoy people...)
- Ask officers in relevant professional society (IEEE, ASME, ASCE ...) to appoint you to conference program and technical subcommittees
- Volunteer to be your department’s seminar coordinator and **invite people who may be good referees for you**
- Ask relevant NSF (or other funding agency) program officers for invitation to be a panel reviewer – **learn how panel review system works and what ‘sells’**
- Come to my workshop on ‘Writing Compelling NSF Proposals’ – Sept. 15, 12:00 noon – 2:00 pm, location DML 240