Promotion Process at VSoE

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What is the APT?

- VSoE **A**ppointments, **P**romotions and **T**enure 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 <u>advisory</u> not <u>obligatory</u>, but a strong recommendation for or against a candidate is "usually" 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 without special authorization)
- 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, <u>external</u>) – external shows that you are known & respected by your peers
    - Examples of key publications (≈ 5)
    - Sometimes candidates may recommend names of persons to write evaluation letters, more often Department selects all evaluators
- All information goes into a "black box" – no further input from or discussion with candidate
- Suggestion: study UCAPT manual and Viterbi supplement (these are the **rule books** for the promotion evaluation process):
    - https://policy.usc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/University-Committee-on-Appointments-Promotions-and-Tenure-Manual.pdf
    - https://16mhpx3atvadrnpip2kwi9or-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/VSoE-APT-Guidelines_finalized-01-23-18.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) (committee usually not revealed to candidate)

- Departmental committee duties
  - Recommend external evaluators (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 evaluators at top-10 US universities & 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 evaluators
  - 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

- **Department faculty vote is 1 of 2 "binding" votes (not just "recommendations")**

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 <u>not</u> 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 - members of your Department will not vote at the APT level because they voted at the Department level
- 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
  - 2 other tenured full-professor APT members
  - 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-, Teaching-, or Clinical faculty, the VSoE Dean's Office is always the last step

- **For tenure-track faculty, the Dean's vote is 2nd of 2 "binding" votes**

  – If the vote is negative at both Department and Dean's levels, the process stops

  – If at least 1 of 2 "binding" votes is positive, the processs continues to the University-level APT committee (UCAPT, within Provost's office) who conducts another evaluation of the information and makes a **recommendation** to the Provost

  – **Provost makes the final decision**

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 <u>new area of strength</u> started at USC
- Collaborations are fine, but have work that is <u>uniquely yours</u>
- Be at least in the middle of your peer group in terms of quantitative metrics (papers, citations, h-index)
  - Do your own peer group comparison - faculty at top-25 US universities in your field who recently received the same promotion
- 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 Department, School or University service
- 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 <u>have</u> established yourself as a leader in your field, rather than just showing that potential
- Also expectation of considerable <u>service</u> record

Suggestions

- **Every year**, ask your Department Chair for a candid evaluation of your performance relative to expectations

- 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, AICHE, BMES, 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 evaluators 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'**

- Attend workshops on "Writing Proposals/Grants"; see Center for Excellence in Research website: https://research.usc.edu/events/