Introduction

Texas Christian University (TCU) has defined five areas of faculty activities (see Faculty/Staff Handbook, p. 24, 2001-2002 edition), which are used in the evaluation of Tenure and Promotion (T&P):

A. Teaching
B. Scholarship, creativity and their equivalents
C. Service to the University and the Profession
D. Advising and related activities
E. Professional development

The School of Geology, Energy, and the Environment (SGEE) realizes that, while contributions made by individual faculty members across these five categories vary, strength in each area is required for a successful tenure and promotion decision. Faculty are strongly urged to maintain an accurate, detailed and current vita, as well as a portfolio of accomplishments (papers published, letters of appointment and commendation etc).

Guidelines and criteria are important because a certain level of performance is a minimum for holding a professional position. The guidelines offered in this document are considered additional to the general expectations of faculty that are in the Faculty/Staff Handbook and are viewed as minimal expectations. Faculty members are expected to adhere to the ethical conduct code adopted by the TCU Faculty/Senate as well as the professional ethics codes of their disciplines.

Tenure and Promotion to Associate Professor

A. Teaching

Effective teaching is expected of all faculty members in SGEE. Keys to good classroom performance are perhaps difficult to enumerate but certainly include:

- Enthusiastic treatment of subject matter
- Love of the discipline
- A desire to transmit that attitude to others

An effective instructor is expected to be organized and present the information with coherence. In addition, we believe that good teachers will constantly monitor their performance, both in the light of developments within their profession and as a response to legitimate observations made by students.

Practical requirements of importance to successful teaching include, but are not necessarily limited to:
1. A comprehensive written course outline distributed on the first day of class. This handout should give mechanical details as to the format and timetable of the course including exam schedules, format of exams, office hours, dates of field trips (where appropriate) and general teaching philosophy. Any departures from the information given in this document should be transmitted to all the students (in written form as deemed appropriate).

2. Office hours should be honored at all times; the student has a right to expect you to be available when you say that you will be.

Specific examples of unacceptable classroom performance include, but are not necessarily limited to:

1. Frequent unexcused absences from scheduled classes
2. Use of the same lecture notes year after year
3. Last minute changes in test schedules
4. Derogatory remarks about colleagues or students in any context that involves students
5. Abusive treatment of students
6. Tolerance of unruly behavior by students
7. Use of the same exams year after year

Our School believes that excellence in teaching is the single most important area of our professional activity, a stance that is in accord with the TCU concept of the Teacher/Scholar. We also believe that feedback is a significant measure of a faculty member’s teaching. In this regard, students and colleagues will evaluate the quality of teaching excellence and instructor competence. It is a SGEE convention that evaluation forms be completed by students in all classes offered in the School. This is normally done within two weeks of the end of the course, unless the University has an alternate schedule, or unless the course is being taught in a modularized form. Colleagues (tenured faculty) are appointed to an evaluation committee, which will observe classes periodically during the five-year probationary period and provide feedback to the faculty member on how to improve instruction.

The University is generally supportive of attempts to improve one’s teaching performance; Instructional Development Grants may be sought during the Spring semester and are a handy source of support to develop new teaching strategies.

B. Scholarship

Tenure-track faculty in SGEE are expected to be involved in scientific research; the key to scientific progress is the discovery and publication of new findings. Love of the discipline is closely related to one’s interest in adding to its body of knowledge.

In SGEE, we equate “being active in research” with consistent publication in scholarly-refereed forums. Examples of acceptable publication forums include peer-reviewed journal articles, monographs, books, and book chapters, but this list is neither all-
inclusive nor limiting. Journals of national and/or international reputation exist that are
preferred for publication, but the choice rests with the individual. It is our opinion that to
take a junior authorship on a student-researched study does not detract from the faculty
member’s contribution; in fact, this author relationship is encouraged. Multiple
authorship is common in many disciplines. Joint authorship with peers is also
encouraged; much important scholarship involves more than one sub-discipline. The
order of the author’s names does not necessarily reflect relative contributions, although
we expect that in the majority of the publications evaluated during the probationary
period, the faculty member be listed as senior (i.e., first or second) author. When
evaluating an individual faculty member, we will determine the faculty member’s relative
contribution to multiple-authored publications and include that information in the
evaluation. Ultimately, evaluation of scholarly endeavors is based first upon quality and
secondly upon quantity. Factors which delineate quality include the degree or rigor
employed by the peer review process of the specific publication forum (sometimes
reflected in the journals’ impact factor) and the level of publication forum, i.e.,
in international, national, regional or state. Quantity of publications is considered less
important than quality because many geological/environmental sub-disciplines are field-
intensive, and it may take two years or more to collect and analyze appropriate data.
Furthermore, open access journals without a proper peer-review process are increasingly
available research outlets, but should not be considered equivalent to more traditional,
peer-reviewed publications. In such endeavors, faculty are expected to show a clear
trajectory toward publication in a significant forum within their discipline. It is not
unrealistic, however, to expect faculty to have published, on average, one paper in a peer-
reviewed forum per year during their tenure period.

SGEE also recognizes that in today’s world, the medium of electronic publishing is an
important means of communicating research results and will be weighted accordingly as
appropriate. We also recognize the importance of what some term “secondary evidence
of scholarship or research activities”, including papers presented at scientific meetings,
participation in invited seminars, symposia, workshops, etc. Similar quality standards are
applied to secondary evidence of scholarship-research endeavors as to peer-reviewed
research. Research papers presented at scientific meetings or symposia workshops are
held in higher regard if they have been refereed prior to acceptance, are given at an
international/national meeting, and so on.

The writing of research proposals is strongly encouraged for the following reasons:
1. It may provide financial support for students. Where possible, sponsored and
unsponsored research should be planned to include students because of the
educational advantages they derive from directed studies. As in teaching,
students have chosen to be with us; therefore, the more we offer, the greater their
eventual achievement.
2. It helps SGEE fulfill our research mission.

Be assured that our School recognizes that there are inequities in the availability of
research funds to sub-disciplines with our science. Also rest assured that we are
committed to the concept of “Curiosity-Driven Research”; we do not hold that it is in the
best interest of a faculty’s career to chase money, rather than to test one’s ideas and inspirations.

One potential source of support at TCU comes from internal grants from the TCU Research and Creative Activity Fund (RCAF) or the Junior Faculty Summer Research Program (JFSRP). Faculty are strongly urged to apply for these grants; they help young faculty to get started in research careers and, in addition, may be valuable “seed money” for testing new ideas.

Although the SGEE tenure committee evaluates the scholarly activities, all faculty members seeking tenure and promotion should request evaluation of their work by peers and experts in their sub-discipline outside of TCU. For outside evaluation, SGEE recommends a list of at least three people from whom letters on the quality of the scholarly activity can be requested.

C. Service to the University and Profession
Faculty members are expected to serve on university, college and SGEE committees to the best of their ability. In addition, off-campus service may be a desirable component of one's professional career. SGEE recognizes that professional service is frequently a function of seniority. The exposure that TCU receives by this means is certainly valuable but does not rank in importance with teaching and research in our evaluation of professional activity and hence in promotion and tenure considerations.

D. Advising and Related Activities
Advising of students is a time-consuming process; it is also extremely important. In general, advising in SGEE is done by appointed Undergraduate and Graduate Advisors. All faculty are encouraged to participate any way they can in the advising and mentoring process. All tenure-track faculty members should try to actively recruit M.S. students to work under their supervision. This activity fulfills part of our mission to produce quality graduate students and also helps the faculty member in advancing his/her own science. Furthermore, recruiting outstanding undergraduate students for senior projects is strongly encouraged and considered in-line with TCU’s mission statement.

E. Professional Development
It is important that faculty recognize the learning process does not end with the award of the Ph.D. Faculty are encouraged to attend short courses and field trips in order to continue their education. Where possible, the department will provide financial support for these activities. Though an important means by which faculty may remain current and updated in their field, professional development is considered secondary to scholarship-research.

Extension of Probationary Period for Non-tenured Faculty
In the case of an extraordinary experience or event beyond the individual’s control that affects a non-tenured faculty member’s professional performance, the faculty member
may request an extension of the probationary period. Such request should be timely, but no later than one year after the event of consequence. In making request for an extension of the probationary period, the faculty member relinquishes any and all claims to defacto tenure. A faculty member may address such a request directly to the Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs for decision. Prior to rendering a decision, the Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs will consult with the Academic Dean.

**Promotion to Professor**

SGEE subscribes to the statement on promotion to Professor given in the Handbook for TCU Faculty and University Staff. Note that, in addition to accomplished teaching and competent service, the University requires evidence of sustained scholarship – perhaps most usefully measured in terms of the number, placement, and importance of publications and success in the acquisition of grants. Additionally, evidence must be available that indicates high regard of the individual’s work by peer groups outside of TCU. This evidence may be shown by letters evaluating research publications, by election to prestigious office in national and state scientific organizations, or by other means that clearly indicate evidence of scientific regard. As a general rule, promotion to Professor will not be considered before five years of service as an Associate Professor.

**Criteria for the Evaluation of Tenured Faculty in SGEE**

This document was developed in the Fall of 2011. The design of the document has been guided by two documents; the Faculty/Staff Handbook, 2001-2002 edition, and the preceding “Criteria for Tenure, Promotion and Merit evaluations in the School of Geology, Energy, and the Environment..”

One of the principal goals shared by our faculty in SGEE is to strive for excellence in all areas of performance. On a short-term basis, an individual’s successful achievement (or otherwise) of this goal is reflected in the annual evaluation of all faculty, as required by the University. In addition, however, there is a broader and longer-term perspective to a faculty’s performance *vis-a-vis* the consistency of achievement and focus of the individual’s contribution to the School’s mission. For junior faculty it is this perspective that is a major determinant in the awarding of tenure. Consistency, particularly in the area of research, is also a major dynamic in the promotion of an individual from Associate to Full Professor status, as noted earlier. In order to further assess this longer-term perspective the university has instituted a regular (five year) evaluation of the tenured faculty. In this document, guidelines governing this evaluation are offered with the understanding that they will serve as the minimum expectations of a faculty in order to ensure that the individual is in compliance with the contractual obligations that accompany employment by the university.

Within the confines of our School, faculty are generally familiar with each other to the extent that the need for tangible evidence of achievement may seem slight. However, from the perspective of the higher administrators, who have to formulate methods of assessing faculty in much larger departments, tangible evidence is required. Hence, it is
suggested that, in order to document their achievements, faculty maintain an updated vita of the conventional type, plus a portfolio of supporting materials. In addition, faculty must present a balanced statement of their individual goals, both short term and long term. This will provide a focal point for future evaluation.

I. General Criteria governing evaluation

Five areas of faculty activity are recognized by the University (Faculty/Staff Handbook p. 24, 2001-2002):

A. Teaching
B. Scholarship
C. Service to the University and Profession
D. Advising and Related Activities
E. Professional Development

The Department places more weight on teaching (40%) and scholarship (40%) than on service, advising and professional development (collectively 20%).

A. Teaching

As a practical means of monitoring teaching performance in our School, tenured faculty are asked to conduct student evaluations in all their classes throughout the year. This will provide one measure of classroom performance. We believe that structured student feedback provides a significant measure of a faculty member’s teaching performance. At the present time student evaluations are the only means by which the university attempts to measure teaching effectiveness in a quantitative fashion. As a group, we pride ourselves in scoring above the college average. Scores consistently less than the college average are considered below our expectations for tenured faculty. Letters of appreciation from students and colleagues may also be submitted as evidence of effectiveness. However, the higher administration has made it clear that, if comments gleaned from course evaluations are to be offered, all of these evaluations must be available for perusal. In addition, faculty are encouraged to preserve evidence of pedagogic endeavor, including major teaching initiatives and grants sought, as well as copies of course syllabi, in a teaching portfolio. In this way the faculty will be able to demonstrate the integrity of their commitment to the teaching mission of the School.

B. Scholarship

At a minimum, we expect tenured faculty to show a consistent pattern of both (peer-evaluated) publication and presentation of their research. This is in keeping with the University’s requirement that evidence of sustained and consistent scholarship are shown in order to merit promotion from Associate to Full professorial status. As stated previously, multiple authorship is common in many disciplines. Joint authorship with peers is also encouraged; much important scholarship involves more than one sub-discipline. The order of the author’s names does not necessarily reflect relative contributions. When evaluating an individual faculty member, a chairperson should
determine the faculty member’s relative contribution to multiple-authored publications and include that information in the evaluation.

We strongly encourage grant submission, both as evidence of sustained interest in research and, especially, to help fund graduate student research. In the latter context, faculty are expected to be actively involved in the graduate program.

In order for a competent assessment of their research endeavors to be made, faculty should assemble a portfolio of the research achievement. The contents of this portfolio should include, but are not limited to;

A. Copies of papers published and submitted
B. Copies of books published
C. Copies of abstracts presented
D. Evidence of research talks, invited and otherwise
E. A record of grant requests and success
F. Evidence of peer regard
G. A record of graduate students advised

C. Service to the University and Profession

Tenured faculty are expected to serve on university, college and SGEE committees on a regular basis. Service for tenured members also includes professional activities associated with societies, field trips, workshops and short courses. At a minimum, we expect tenured faculty to accept opportunities for service when the faculty member is either the most appropriate person to serve, or when it is his or her “turn” to serve in a rotating responsibility.

Again, faculty should maintain a portfolio of their activities, including, but not limited to:

A. Letters of appreciation
B. Letters of appointment
C. Evidences of initiatives developed

D. Advising and Related Activities

In SGEE, advising is done by the Undergraduate and Graduate advisors. Students may at times call upon other faculty for advice in academic and professional matters. While it is clearly impossible for all faculty to be involved in the formal advising process, it is our expectation that all faculty will act responsibly in an unofficial capacity where appropriate. Any advice given by tenured faculty should be consistent with University and College procedures and guidelines.

Clearly, some faculty may have no significant advising activities over a five-year period. In this case, the evaluation will recognize this in a neutral sense, balancing the absence of formal advising responsibilities against the general record of Service discussed in the preceding section.
E. Professional Development

Tenured faculty in the School are expected to further their professional expertise. Evidence of such activity may include, but is not restricted to:

A. Development of and/or participation in professional short courses
B. Participation in field trips, both as a leader and a participant
C. Development of and/or participation in research seminars

II. Evaluation Timing and General Procedure

A formal evaluation will occur once every five years for all tenured faculty in the School. Given the size of the faculty, this means that an evaluation of performance will be performed on two or three faculty per five-year cycle, in an order to be determined by the SGEE Advisory Committee on Tenure, Promotion and Grievance. This Committee will coordinate the evaluation procedure for the School. All tenured faculty will participate in the evaluation of those members being reviewed. The tenured faculty will have three weeks to review the materials and provide written evaluations to both the SGEE Director and the Chair of the SGEE Advisory Committee on Tenure, Promotion & Grievance (or alternates selected by the tenured faculty of the School if either or both are being evaluated).

The portfolio to be evaluated will be submitted by the individual faculty under review and will include (but is not restricted to):

A. Materials mentioned in previous sections
B. Previously submitted annual reports
C. Student teaching evaluations
D. Cover letter summarizing each faculty member’s activity over the previous 5 years
E. Balanced statement of individual goals, both short term and long term.

Collectively the faculty will make a determination as to whether or not an individual’s performance “exceeds”, “meets” or is “below” SGEE stated expectations. At this stage, it is the responsibility of the SGEE Director to inform the faculty under evaluation of the determination. Subsequently, the faculty under evaluation will have the opportunity to respond in writing to the evaluation. The response is expected to appear within two weeks. Subsequently, the Director and Committee Chair (or alternates) will review all the comments and provide a summary written evaluation to the Dean and to those being evaluated. The letter to the Dean may also include comments and specific plans related to increased professional effectiveness, as appropriate. In the event that the final summary letter of evaluation letter is negative (i.e., a faculty member falls below the minimum expectations in several categories) then the SGEE Director will call a meeting of all the other tenured faculty to discuss the issue and the drafting of the letter to the Dean.

(submitted Fall 2011)