

**Recommended Best Practices in  
Reappointment, Promotion and Tenure Processes**  
Updated and revised by PTAC, *Georgia Institute of Technology*  
October 2003

**I. INTRODUCTION**

As stated in a best practices report issued by the ad hoc committee of the Institute's Executive Board in 2000, Georgia Tech aspires to be considered among the very best technology-oriented universities in the world. That lofty ambition cannot be achieved unless Georgia Tech's faculty members are accomplished in their disciplines at a high level of recognition. However a faculty candidate chooses to focus his/her energy, the goal should be to achieve national and international recognition that elevates the Institute.

As for any institution with such high aspirations, there is little question that there are significant opportunities for improvement in RPT procedures. Almost universally, untenured faculty members are apprehensive about the process. Fewer than 40% of faculty members at Georgia Tech less than six years claim they understand the process very well, compared to just over 60% of faculty with more than 20 years of service<sup>1</sup>. Their apprehension may result from an incomplete understanding of the process, uncertainty regarding the expectations of them, a lack of faith in the process, or other related concerns. Few untenured faculty members express satisfaction with the nature of feedback regarding their reviews or the outcomes of the process for other candidates. In many regards, even tenured faculty members who face a promotion decision have similar feelings. The process itself can vary significantly among units, and there may be concerns about the potential for inequities or abuses arising from these differences.

In 2000, the Executive Board of the Institute commissioned the aforementioned ad hoc committee to examine procedures, but not policies, related to reappointment, promotion, and tenure (RPT) decisions. The committee concluded that there are a number of opportunities to enhance the RPT process by changing the way faculty are counseled how the RPT process is conducted at the unit-level. The ad hoc committee identified, and in some cases elaborated upon, a number of these "best practices" from various units. These best practices were presented in a December 2000 report entitled "Recommended (Best) Practices in the Reappointment Promotion and Tenure Process,"<sup>2</sup> made available to academic units and colleges for consideration.

In August 2002, the Promotion and Tenure ADVANCE Committee (PTAC) was charged by Provost Jean-Lou Chameau to examine all relevant aspects of academic faculty development, support, and perceptions at Georgia Tech, along with the range of practices among units related to tenure and promotion evaluations. In addition, PTAC was charged to provide guidance to faculty candidates in preparation of cases, as well as guidance for

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<sup>1</sup> PTAC academic faculty survey, 2003

<sup>2</sup> Available at <http://www.facultysenate.gatech.edu/zrtppractices.html>

unit RPT committees in terms of appointment, composition, and unbiased evaluation of faculty candidates. This updated best practices report builds on the earlier work of the Executive Board's 2000 ad hoc committee, adding insights gained from:

- A comprehensive canvass of unit-level practices in RPT committee structure and method of appointment across campus, including written and unwritten guidelines, as well as information on mentoring and development/tracking of PhD students
- Comprehensive studies of various forms of bias that can enter into faculty development/mentoring as well as RPT committee evaluations
- Survey of academic faculty perceptions of various factors, administered in spring 2003, including:
  - resource allocation and success
  - mentoring and networking
  - perception of evaluative methods and procedures
  - interdisciplinary collaborations
  - entrepreneurship
  - environment/culture of GT
  - demographic information
- Development of a web-based instrument *Awareness of Decisions in Evaluating Promotion and Tenure* (ADEPT) for use by RPT committee members and reviewers at all levels of the promotion and tenure process to explore forms of potential bias, dealing with committee dynamics, and other issues related to faculty development and evaluation.

## **II. OVERVIEW OF THE RPT PROCESS**

The following overview of the faculty evaluation process is in large part summarized from the Georgia Tech Faculty Handbook<sup>3</sup>, a document that includes the Statutes of the Georgia Institute of Technology and Faculty Governance.

### **A. Policies**

Board of Regents' policies require that the President of each institution of the University System, "recommend to the Board of Regents, through the Chancellor, the initial appointment of faculty members and administrative employees of each institution, the salary of each, and all promotions and tenure awards. Thus, it is the Board of Regents who has the authority to promote and grant tenure. All other reviews leading up to the action by the Regents are in the form of a recommendation. All recommendations for appointment, reappointment, promotion, or tenure originate in the individual instructional unit and proceed through several levels of review prior to the President's recommendation to the Regents. The individual faculty member is responsible, with the assistance of the program director or unit head, for the preparation of a dossier for the purpose of

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<sup>3</sup> Available at <http://www.academic.gatech.edu/handbook/>

documenting their performance in relation to the criteria stated in Section 3.2, of the Faculty Handbook<sup>4</sup>.

## **B. Types of Reviews**

At Georgia Tech, there are two types of reviews related to reappointment, promotion, and tenure: "administrative reviews" and "full reviews". All decisions on promotion and tenure are "full" reviews. This means that the review occurs at all levels of the program, school, college, and Institute. Normally, the third year review (often referred to as a "critical" review) is also a full review. All others are deemed to be "administrative". Administrative reviews are internal to the college, but can involve a full review if deemed necessary by the dean, or requested by the candidate. In addition to these reviews, the administrative officers of the program, department, or school, and the college are responsible for providing all faculty members with a written review of their progress. This shall occur on an annual basis.<sup>5</sup>

### **1. Administrative Review**

For the first three reappointment cycles, the unit head(s) shall review the credentials and work of the individual faculty member and make a recommendation regarding reappointment. If the recommendation is positive, the dean(s) (where not the unit head) shall review the recommendation and documentation. If the Dean's recommendation is positive, then the president shall review the recommendations and make a decision. The stages in this process are illustrated in Figure 1.

### **2. Full Reviews**

#### **a. Third Year "Critical" Review**

In the spring of the third year, a complete review of the faculty member's credentials and intellectual contributions shall be conducted by the appropriate committee at the unit-level (or in the case of a joint appointment, the appropriate joint committee), the unit head(s), the Dean's committee and the Dean (in those units having organizational elements such as schools or departments), and then by the Provost's committee. The stages in this process are illustrated in Figure 1. Each recommendation will specify one of four outcomes:<sup>6</sup>

Reappointment: A reappointment recommendation signifies a positive performance of the faculty member toward promotion and/or tenure.

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<sup>4</sup> University System of Georgia and Board of Regents, Academic Affairs Handbook, Section 4.04.01;1. <http://www.usg.edu/admin/accaff/handbook/section4/4.04/4.04.01.phtml> and Georgia Tech Faculty Handbook, Section 3.2 Promotion and Tenure of Instructional Faculty at Georgia Tech, Subsection 3.2 <http://www.academic.gatech.edu/handbook/handbook3.html#s3p2>

<sup>5</sup> Faculty Handbook, Section 3.3.2.2. Georgia Tech Procedures on Reappointment

<sup>6</sup> Faculty Handbook, Section 3.3.2.2.(e) (see <http://www.academic.gatech.edu/handbook>)

Reappointment with Counsel: A reappointment with counsel recommendation signifies that while the faculty member's performance is regarded as positive overall, improvements in one or more categories of activity are needed to ensure the candidate's successful progress toward promotion and/or tenure.

Reappointment with Warning: A reappointment with warning recommendation indicates that significant problems exist in one or more categories, such that continuation of the existing pattern of activity is likely to result in a failure to achieve either promotion or tenure.

Non-Reappointment: Non-Reappointment signifies that the faculty member's performance is such that there is no possibility of the candidate to meet the promotion and/or tenure requirements of the college and the Institute. Non reappointment would extend the contractual obligations of the Institute and the candidate one year beyond the current contract year.

## **b. Promotion and/or Tenure Review**

The purpose of this review is to provide an independent assessment of the intrinsic merit of the creative work of the individual, its value to the professional and academic communities, and to the public at large. Letters of recommendations from appropriate individuals outside the Institute must be obtained for any decisions related to tenure or promotion. The individuals from whom letters are sought should be clear leaders in the field. Along with the letters, brief biographical sketches of these individuals should be included in the materials submitted for consideration as well as the letters received.<sup>7</sup>

The list of individuals from whom letters are to be obtained should be jointly developed by the candidates for promotion and/or tenure and the unit head(s). The final decision regarding who shall be selected to provide recommendations from the list shall rest with the unit head(s) and the faculty committee. It is appropriate to use the same letter for two consecutive years of the process.

External evaluations from outside the Institute shall be solicited by the unit head(s) and supplied to the office of the dean. These letters shall be solicited with the understanding that, insofar as possible, access to them will be limited to persons involved in the promotion/tenure decision. The letter of solicitation sent by the unit head shall be worded to request an evaluation of the quality of contributions to the fields, not of the quality of the individual. A copy of the individual's resume and other relevant materials should accompany the letter of request. The referees should be asked to be specific and to comment on particular aspects of the candidate's creative contributions and provide an assessment of impact on the field, and where possible, to provide a comparison of the candidate's work to that of others in the field at the same stage of their career. At least four such letters must be included (two from persons named by the candidate and the other two from individuals named by the program director), and up to six such letters (three from persons named by the candidate and three persons named by the program

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<sup>7</sup> Faculty Handbook, Section 3.3.1.1

director) may be included. The unit head(s), or the dean should convey the letters with an explanation of why those persons were selected in terms of their general qualifications in the field, as well as their specific contributions to this review. To preserve confidentiality, the letters themselves should be conveyed with the dossier to the RPT committee via the office of the unit head, or the dean, and subsequently to the dean and then to the Provost's committee. The letters of evaluation shall be retained in the office of the dean.

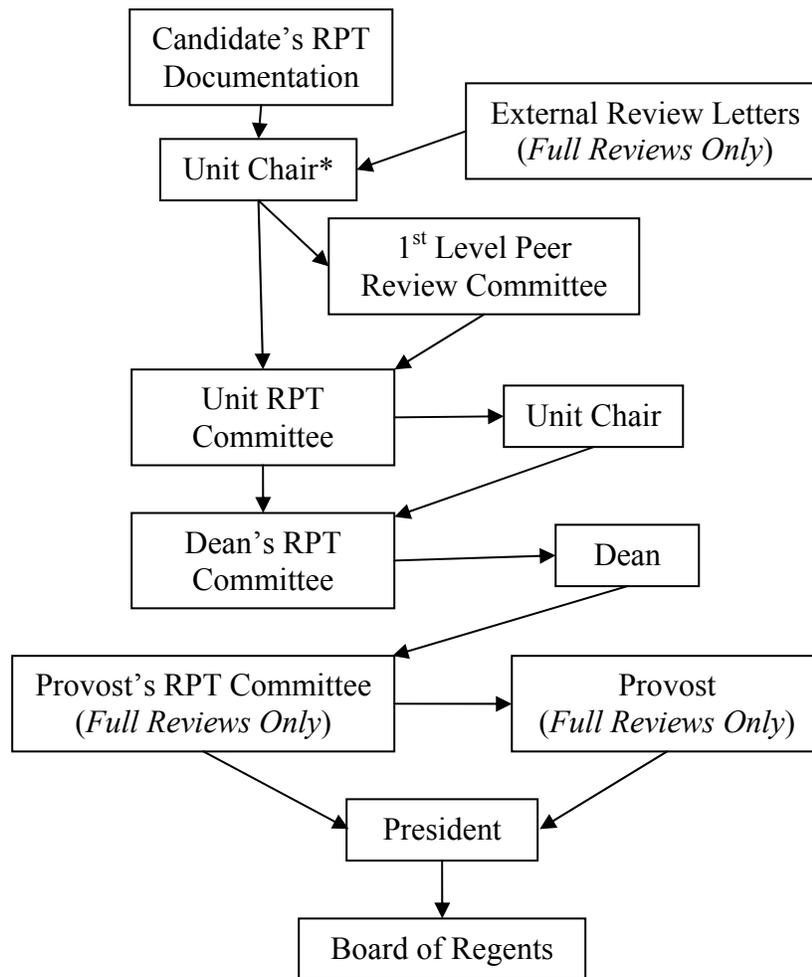


Figure 1. Stages of the RPT Process (\*In some colleges, the dean solicits external review letters).

The external reviewers shall not render a judgment as to the question of promotion or tenure, but rather on the value of the work itself. All promotion and tenure cases shall include an external review process. Third-year full reviews may or may not include external review at the discretion of the dean, or at the request of the individual faculty member. Evaluations from the external review process are to be collected by the unit head(s) who shall forward them to the dean through the college reappointment, promotion, and tenure committee.

### **III. THE IMPORTANCE OF AN OPEN AND TRANSPARENT PROCESS**

#### **A. Background**

The performance of Georgia Tech faculty is expected to be consistent with the Institute's aspirations to be among the very best in the world. The Faculty Handbook summarizes the criteria by which faculty performance will be evaluated in the RPT process. Faculty candidates in the RPT process are expected to maintain a personal plan for success, a plan that should recognize the particular aesthetics of their discipline, their current appointment level, and their own strengths, interests, and commitments. That being said, faculty morale and performance are enhanced when expectations for faculty performance, guidelines and rationale for setting up committees, and guidelines for operation of these committees are clearly written and widely disseminated. Hence, faculty members deserve to hold certain expectations of the evaluation process as well. Stanley Fish put it as follows:<sup>8</sup>

*“This means, first of all, laying down the tenure procedures and requirements with a clarity that approaches the condition of transparency. These procedures and requirements should not only be published; they should be explained to each junior faculty member at least once a year; and, given that the explanation will be necessarily general and even abstract, its annual repetition must be supplemented by a candid written assessment of the progress the aspiring assistant professor has or has not made.”*

According to research conducted by Georgia Tech’s Mary Frank Fox<sup>9</sup>, there are three principal factors that enhance the equity of evaluation of cases for promotion and tenure:

- ***More information on candidates***

Evaluation committees are more likely to make subjective judgments when information is “low.” Social bases for assessment are more likely to enter in when information content of a candidate’s case is low.

- ***Clarity of criteria/standards***

When criteria are clear and specified, factors of gender, ethnicity, etc. are less likely to be an issue. Written guidelines are important. Individual departments with written guidelines for doctoral study, for example, produce higher numbers of women doctorates. Guidelines should include expected progress from year to year.

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<sup>8</sup> S. Fish, “Somebody Back There Didn’t Like Me,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, September 13, 2002

<sup>9</sup> M.F. Fox, Georgia Tech ADVANCE Conference, Stone Mountain, GA, April 23, 2003.

- ***Evaluation processes should be open/transparent***

Open processes tend to increase the amount of decision-making based on performance (due process). When processes are less systematic, social contacts, networking, etc. tend to play a more important role. Openness does not mean that the deliberations are in any way public or known to the candidate at intermediate stages, but that information related to the method of appointment of each committee, operating guidelines, timing and progression is available to the candidate at each stage. Moreover, the number of committees at all levels, the rationale for their existence, specification of their charge and method of assignment/composition should be clear in the form of written guidelines.

## **B. Clarity of Expectation Guidelines**

Clarity of expectations demands that the following three forms of written guidelines be developed:

### **1. Clarity of Contributions as Expressed in Documentation**

Candidates should be advised regarding preparation of documentation with “high” information content, i.e., ensuring that they put their “best foot forward” by clearly explaining their role in co-authorship of scholarly articles, their role in collaborative research efforts, entrepreneurial activities, development of new innovative educational programs or research initiatives, involvement in societies and other leadership opportunities, and so on. It is a good practice to consider how one’s resume will be read by those unfamiliar with his/her case, rather than assuming that every evaluator will either have first-hand knowledge or be led by another to understand nuances that inevitably arise when faculty omit additional information to clarify the significance of their work. Moreover, (i) selection of top five intellectual products and (ii) suggested list of references by the candidate are absolutely crucial elements in each case, not only by virtue of their particular content, but perhaps just as importantly by virtue of what these choices convey regarding the sense of the candidate’s understanding of what quality means and whether this resonates with the faculty at large. On this basis, selection of unpublished manuscripts/reports or obscure, incoherent materials for top five intellectual products can generate unnecessary negative “vibes.” Similarly, selection of prior advisors, co-authors, collaborators as references does not necessarily convey a sense of independent acknowledgment of scholarly potential or achievement.

### **2. Clarity of Criteria/Standards for Advancement as Expressed by Unit/College**

Research confirms that written guidelines reduce bias and support equity.<sup>10</sup> It is strongly recommended that clearly written guidelines be produced regarding the range of expectations for successful advancement at each stage: assistant to associate professor,

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<sup>10</sup> Mary Frank Fox. "Gender, Environmental Milieu, and Productivity in Science." In *The Outer Circle: Women in the Scientific Community* (pp. 188-204), edited by H. Zuckerman, J. Cole, and J. Bruer. New York: W. W. Norton, 1991.

associate to full professor. Furthermore, a clear sense of common understanding of the unit regarding requirements for successful awarding of tenure should be communicated in writing. The College of Sciences website offers a good example.<sup>11</sup> Every college should publish written standards available to faculty, with the units within that college adhering to these or establishing their own more specific guidelines that are fully consistent with those of the college. Likewise, standards specified by colleges, although likely more specific in detail, should be fully consistent with those expressed by the Institute.

### **3. Clarity of Rationale, Expectations and Operating Guidelines for Evaluation Committees**

All levels of the faculty tenure/promotion process, from first-level peer review committees to unit RPT committees, to unit head evaluations, to Dean evaluations, to the Provost's level committee, should be constituted and operated on the basis of clear written guidelines, along with rationale for formation and expectations for conduct of review processes.

### **4. Consistency in the Application of Criteria**

Even when criteria are clear, it is necessary that they be applied consistently from year to year and across all levels of review. This does not imply that reasonable minds should not differ in the evaluation process. Rather, it means that the evaluation and feedback process should be clear and unambiguous for the faculty member. Put another way, if the tenure decision is a surprise to the candidate, then the process of evaluation and feedback has been inconsistent and opaque.

## **IV. MENTORING AND FACULTY DEVELOPMENT**

The 2003 PTAC survey considered the perceived importance of faculty mentoring in early career development. Academic faculty in-service at Georgia Tech between 7-12 years reported the highest perception of mentoring as "very helpful", with just under 40% of respondents in this category. The great majority of respondents at all lengths of service viewed mentoring as being "slightly helpful" or "moderately helpful" in career progression, roughly 50%. A steady 10-20% of respondents in all categories listed such mentoring assistance as "not available." A canvass of unit practices showed that very few institute any kind of formal mentoring program. This perhaps reflects the view that mentor selection, willingness of the mentee to accept guidance, and other related aspects are important, coupled issues that serve to complicate the mentoring process.

Effective advising and mentoring should be a concern at all levels of the institution. At the Institute- and college-level the emphasis should be on communication. This translates into being sure that the requirements for tenure and promotion are clearly stated and well understood by everyone who is evaluating candidates and by the candidates themselves. It is at the School level where the most critical issues arise. Young faculty should be well advised from the start of their careers about the tenure and promotion process, and it is

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<sup>11</sup> See <http://www.cos.gatech.edu/criteria.html>

here that appropriate mentors should be available. Who is responsible for ensuring that effective advisement and mentoring occurs? The answer is that the unit head, the senior faculty in the School, the RPT committee of the school, and the candidate for tenure and promotion are responsible. The unit head and senior faculty should be proactive in offering advice and mentoring, the RPT committee should give frequent feedback to the candidate on their progress, and the candidate should seek advice and counsel from the very beginning of his or her career. It is not necessarily effective for mentors to be appointed by unit heads; there is no “recipe” for prescribing effective mentoring – sometimes, it just happens that an individual faculty member will become an effective mentor to a willing colleague.

Clearly, advice is good only if it is informed and given with the best interests of the candidate in mind. Bad advice can be very harmful. A policy of no formal advisement is not neutral, because some are naturally more willing and capable of seeking advice. Bias can also enter into the process when some candidates benefit from better advice and support than others. Not everyone feels that mentoring should be a standard practice in academic departments. Some feel that as long as the process is clearly defined, the burden should fall on the tenure candidate to figure out the system. As previously noted, Stanley Fish offers a stark view of mentoring:<sup>12</sup>

*“Mentoring, I learned, is an intense form of the summer camp buddy-system premised on the bizarre assumption that presumably adult persons who freely choose to go into a profession are under no obligation to find out for themselves how things work.”*

Yet Fish’s point is valid in that it does point out that the candidate must ultimately stand on his or her own merits.

As outlined in the 2000 RPT best practices report of the ad hoc committee of the Executive Board, a **personal development plan** is a tool for individual faculty to guide their goal setting and allocation of effort. A personal development plan could be developed independently by the candidate, or in collaboration with colleagues or unit heads. Each untenured faculty member should draft a personal development plan, delineating specific areas in which the candidate plans to make recognizable creative contributions, outlining a research plan, identifying the major conferences and professional meetings targeted for attendance, identifying journals appropriate for the candidate's publications, suggesting a set of courses to be taught, innovative educational materials to be developed, and setting goals regarding student advising, publication, and proposal development. This personal plan should serve as a “roadmap” for the individual to assist in prioritizing activities and setting timelines and benchmarks.

The 2000 ad hoc committee of the Executive Board recommended that each faculty member execute a personal development plan reviewed annually by the unit head and the unit RPT committee, regardless of when the case formally comes up for evaluation for

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<sup>12</sup> “Somebody Back There Didn’t Like Me,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, September 13, 2002; <http://chronicle.com/jobs/archive/advice/game.html>

reappointment, tenure or promotion. There is relatively little evidence in our canvass of unit practices in 2003 to suggest that this recommendation has been put into practice, likely due to its rather involved, time-consuming nature. Here we build upon these concepts to present some guidelines for faculty development prior to formal evaluation, but also shed light on tangible, practical goals for unit administrators, colleagues and RPT committees, asserting certain fundamental responsibilities of the candidates themselves.

To prepare his/her case for evaluation, faculty should begin in their first year to draft a "three-page narrative" for reappointment and tenure documentation. Of course, the initial version of this narrative is likely to be somewhat skeletal. This documentation package will be updated each year and will become part of the third-year reappointment documentation, and the promotion and tenure documentation for the faculty member. The three-page narrative should contain information about the faculty member's "five most important intellectual accomplishments" as is currently the practice in most units. In the early years, it should not be expected that the candidate will necessarily list five significant accomplishments – this exercise should assist the faculty member in identifying areas of strength and weakness to be addressed. However, it should be broadened to discuss the goals and objectives in creative contributions to teaching and research that the faculty member has for their academic career at Georgia Tech as well as a brief summary of the candidate's plan for achieving these goals. As in the case of the lists of publications, etc., this document should be updated from year-to-year. Faculty should seek feedback on this three-page narrative and on their selection of top creative contributions from colleagues, mentors and unit heads. According to Section 3.2.5 of the Georgia Tech Faculty Handbook, examples of creative contributions that may be appropriate at this institution include:

- Publications: Research papers in scholarly journals, literary publications, and books.
- Unpublished Writings and Creative Work of Limited Circulation: Technical reports, engineering and architectural designs, grant applications, inventions leading to patents, and presentations at conferences and meetings.
- Creative Educational Contributions: Innovative teaching methods, research in instructional techniques, and textbooks.
- Artistic Creations: Paintings, sculpture, and music.
- External Recognition of Creative Work: Prizes and awards, invited presentations, and consultancies.

At all levels, the candidates' creative accomplishments throughout their entire careers should be considered and special attention given to those that occurred at Georgia Tech.

Faculty should construct lists of references early in their careers, well in advance of formal evaluation, to assure that their references will be knowledgeable in their field, will appreciate the intellectual products in the candidate's vita, and will also be viewed as "arms length" evaluators (see comments in earlier section on *Clarity of Contributions as Expressed in Documentation*).

Each candidate should discuss development plans at an early stage with a trusted mentor(s) and the unit head. But, just as important, the plan should be constructed and revised in accordance with clear written guidelines for faculty expectations made available by departmental units, Colleges and the Institute. It is the responsibility of the unit to provide appropriate feedback via individual faculty mentoring, whether formal or informal, annual unit head evaluations, and *particularly* through dissemination of clear written guidelines regarding performance expectations. Close communication on a plan among unit head, mentor and candidate could effectively provide a kind of first-level peer review as part of administrative evaluations prior to formal RPT evaluations.

## **V. FORMAT FOR RPT DOCUMENTATION**

The "recommended" format for the documentation is necessarily flexible, recognizing that faculty in some disciplines, for example, may file patents, while faculty in other disciplines may hold public exhibits or performances. The variability of profile of academic performance from field to field offers no particular difficulty in the evaluation process at higher levels (e.g. Institute) if clear written guidelines for expectations exist for faculty within each unit. To this end, each unit should either publish written guidelines regarding required format or clearly identify an appropriate college or Institute-level source for the format. It is not wise to depart from specified format in view of the many reviewers who have to efficiently cull through this information.

## **VI. RESPONSIBILITIES FOR CANDIDATE'S PREPARATION OF CASE DOCUMENTATION**

Reappointment, promotion, and tenure (RPT) decisions are based on criteria spelled out in the Faculty Handbook and summarized in Section II of this report. To be successful, a faculty candidate should:

- assemble a portfolio of accomplishments, relative to the criteria described in the Faculty Handbook; and
- prepare documentation that concisely and accurately describes those accomplishments in a format that allows them to be recognized and evaluated by the various committees and unit heads involved in the RPT process.

RPT candidates must understand that while the process is intended to be as fair as possible, its primary purpose is to protect and enhance Georgia Tech. Thus, if there is an irresolvable ambiguity in the package, the process is likely to make the decision that maximally protects and enhances Georgia Tech. RPT committees and unit heads are likely to be reluctant to give the benefit of the doubt to candidates whose documentation is ambiguous.

Although there are no guarantees in any evaluation process involving human judgment, some approaches and practices may help faculty candidates navigate the process. Candidates are advised to provide "high" information in their documentation. The case

should be presented in a manner that minimizes the possibility of subjective interpretation of contributions. The most common areas of subjective judgments concern:

### **A. Choice of Top Five Intellectual Products**

These choices convey the candidate's views on scholarship, sense of originality and concepts of intellectual leadership. Unpublished manuscripts/reports, obscure materials, or incoherent topics noted as top five intellectual products can create the perception of a floundering research program.

### **B. Narrative of Goals, Accomplishments, and Impact on Field:**

The impact of a well-conceived, concise, clear description of philosophy, goals, and noteworthy achievements is beyond measure; many evaluators will read this section in detail and scan the rest of the vita for supporting records and overall assessment. Hence, incomplete sentences, lack of convincing or well-justified or – supported statements, grammatical errors, or incoherent thread of the presentation can all get the case started on a negative trajectory. Candidates should not hastily compile their narratives, but rather should revise drafts with feedback from trusted mentors, colleagues and unit heads. The candidate's personal narrative should be limited to three pages with one-inch margins, standard single-spaced, 10 pt minimum font with standard kerning and leading.

### **C. Listing of Scholarly Publications in Vita**

- *Clarification of contribution to co-authored papers* - the 2003 survey of faculty perceptions of the order of listing of authors on co-authored papers revealed a range of faculty views regarding attribution of relative contributions in co-authored papers; effectively, the results of this survey suggest that most faculty view the first listed author as key to the intellectual contribution, with the exception of a faculty member publishing with students or junior colleagues, in which case it is more common for the senior faculty member(s) to be listed last. It may therefore be wise for listings of order of authors that run counter to these commonly held perceptions to provide a brief explanation of the underlying philosophy.
- *Lack of clarity in listing papers in preparation or submitted for review with those that are in press or already published* – papers in preparation should not be listed; papers submitted should be listed in another section, with papers accepted (in press) or already published in yet a separate, distinct section. Contributions to books should be clearly identified as "contributed chapter," "edited/co-edited," or "authored/co-authored."
- *Relative importance of conference proceedings* – the 2003 survey of academic faculty perceptions showed wide variation in the value of the number of conference proceedings as a measure of research productivity among colleges, with only the College of Computing considering them to be “very effective”; of

the remainder, only 40% viewed conference proceedings as even “slightly effective”. On the other hand, quality of conference articles (however judged) was deemed much more effective as a means of gauging research productivity.

- *Lack of clarity in listing papers appearing in refereed proceedings versus those appearing in refereed archival journals* – many evaluators, perhaps even at the unit-level, will not be intimate enough with a given field or sub-field to judge the rigor of the review process in refereed proceedings relative to widely recognized archival journals; written unit-level guidelines can clarify this issue by cataloging respected venues for publication by sub-field, as well as by invoking first-level peer review committees comprised from faculty experts in the particular sub-field of relevance to each case. However, the candidate should presume that reviewers will want to clearly distinguish refereed proceedings from refereed archival journals and therefore should clearly distinguish them in the vita.

#### **D. Research Sponsorship**

Candidates should take care to clarify involvement and responsibility for funding in large projects, particularly those that are interdisciplinary in nature and involve faculty in other units. Interdisciplinary research is of increasing importance as basic research problems become more complex; this is widely recognized by consistent trends in federal funding towards interdisciplinary research. Each faculty member on any interdisciplinary team should have an identifiable, disciplinary expertise that contributes in highly complementary fashion to the overall effort. The faculty candidate should therefore clarify these contributions and the fraction of project funding by which they are supported. If this information is left out, evaluators may either assume uniform contribution of all involved faculty on the team, or, more commonly, make assumptions of level of contribution based on their limited knowledge of certain team members or their perception of that particular research area or program. For example, research shows that female faculty members involved in interdisciplinary research teams are typically assumed to have contributed less than male counterparts.

#### **E. Teaching Effectiveness**

Inclusion of letters or other commentary from students, other faculty, supporting documentation and letters of references regarding truly innovative advances in teaching, development of pedagogical methodologies, etc. should augment existing CIOS teaching survey results. Since there is an expectation of effective teaching on the part of all academic faculty, any kind of substandard rating, review or lack of substantive supporting information regarding improving performance (e.g. taking advantage of seminars and short courses from CETL to improve of teaching with documented evidence of same) tend to be taken seriously by RPT committees at all levels. Ongoing development of methods/tools for formal evaluation of teaching effectiveness is a matter of concern for the Institute.

## **F. Balance of Creative Contributions in Research, Teaching and Service**

At all appointment levels, creative scholarship is considered essential. As individuals develop in their disciplines, the balance between creative contributions in research and other activities may change, with research playing a less prominent role, for example, and other activities playing a larger role. But all Georgia Tech faculty should aspire to continually contribute to the body of scholarly and creative work in their discipline.

Every faculty member is expected to provide evidence of competent, effective teaching. Research is typically emphasized in performance reviews because it is an aspect of creative intellectual endeavor that most faculty choose to emphasize in building the foundation of their reputation and that of the Institute. But creative innovations in teaching are another vehicle through which faculty can build reputation and elevate the Institute. As in research, however, the standards for innovation in teaching go well beyond typical expectations of classroom performance, i.e., engaging lectures, use of teaching tools, etc. Scholarship in teaching must be evidenced by archival journal articles or other highly regarded, referenced and persuasive instruments that portray exceptional innovation and significant impact on the U.S. and international educational enterprises.

Service activities can become a significant component for supporting the case for promotion of senior faculty, but again the standards are very high – editorships, presidencies of important professional societies, etc. These kinds of service opportunities are not typically available to junior faculty. Good citizenship in terms of committee service within the Institute is an expectation of faculty, not a measure of distinction in its own right with regard to favorable consideration for tenure or promotion. Since women and minority faculty are often drawn into service duties at early stages of their career in an effort to achieve diversity of perspectives, it is important to identify excessive service as a potential pitfall for them in terms of diverting energy from building their reputation through creative intellectual contributions.

## **G. Research Profile**

In a dynamic environment emphasizing computer and internet technologies, interdisciplinary research, and new hybrid research areas and academic programs, we frankly think it unwise to advise on such matters as forums to emphasize in publication, whether breadth or depth of coverage is prudent, and other issues that area highly field dependent. Rather, it is the role of mentoring and written guidelines in each unit to provide this kind of guidance and of review committees to clearly reflect such principles in consonance with published guidelines for their units.

Assessment of quality is often a subjective issue, depending on the “eye of the beholder”; however, review committees can more directly discern impact on a field. Presumably, there is a strong relation between quality and impact within a given field. The candidate’s impact on development of human resources in the process of intellectual innovation, e.g. graduate students, is often of primary importance to the mission of the

Institute; placing graduate students in high visibility positions is a clear path to elevation of the Institute's reputation.

## **H. External References**

Faculty must understand the importance of gaining the attention of the leaders in their chosen fields, because those are the people who will be solicited for letters of recommendation in the RPT process. In addition to publishing excellent papers, participation in major research conferences and colloquia is expected. Refereeing papers and serving on proposal review panels also are good ways to come into contact with leaders. Selection of prior academic advisors, business partners, personal friends or relatives, funding agents either in government or industry, frequent co-authors or collaborators, or faculty or colleagues at other institutions with no clear evidence of authority in the field of the candidate, in general, does not convey a sense of independent assessment of scholarly potential or achievement.

The candidate should give considerable thought to the matter of suggesting references, with full understanding that the RPT committee and unit head will cull through this list and add additional references to discern external perception of potential and impact on the field. Moreover, the case may start out being perceived as "weak" if the suggested list of references is so perceived.

## **VII. RESPONSIBILITIES OF UNIT HEAD AND UNIT-LEVEL RPT COMMITTEES**

The promotion and tenure procedures specified in the faculty handbook call for evaluation committees in each unit. For most faculty members, this means at least two levels of faculty review committees, one at the unit-level and one at the college-level. The implementation of the faculty review may further refine the process to invoke two distinct committees—one whose charge is to evaluate only the creative or intellectual contributions, and one whose charge is to provide a comprehensive evaluation and recommendation regarding the specific reappointment, promotion, or tenure (RPT) decisions under consideration. Herein, we refer to the former as the first-level peer review committee and the latter as the unit RPT committee.

Whenever a committee of faculty provides input or a recommendation in the RPT process, the committee should clearly understand its three distinct responsibilities:

- The committee is obligated to treat the candidate with respect, and to strive to reach an accurate and wise conclusion in evaluating the candidate's credentials;
- Recognizing its obligation to the candidate, the committee is obligated to act in a way that is consistent with the beliefs, goals, and best interests of the unit; and
- The committee is obligated to ensure that its every action, including the presentation of its conclusions, reflects honorably upon the Institute.

A note on timing: failure of unit administration to begin the RPT process early enough in the calendar creates stress for candidates, and can damage their cases if recommendation letters are not received in timely fashion for consideration of unit-level peer review and RPT committees.

### **A. Unit-Level Review Committees**

When reviewing candidates from different sub-disciplines or specializations, committee members are obligated to set aside any biases, and to examine the evidence on its merits. In many cases the unit RPT committee either does not have sufficient representation to evaluate all technical areas within the unit, or must evaluate a faculty member in the unit whose creative contributions cannot be judged objectively and appropriately based on the range of expertise on the unit RPT committee. Moreover, with increasing multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary efforts, it is often the case that experts who should judge the caliber of top five intellectual products selected by the candidate are outside the candidate's unit, and sometimes outside the university. Yet the objective evaluation of the quality of intellectual achievement is absolutely foundational to each case. For any or all of these reasons, it is recommended practice to constitute a first-level peer review committee tailored for each candidate. The unit head typically appoints this committee in consultation with the unit RPT Committee. Such a committee need not be formed from full professors but rather tenured faculty of all ranks and from various units/colleges that constitute a representative peer group for the candidate.

Some smaller units do not follow this practice of assigning a distinct first-level peer review committee, and assume that the RPT committee as constituted is capable of conducting a technical peer review. While this may be the case, it is likely that an objective perspective requires that intellectual products of faculty having interdisciplinary interactions with other units warrant evaluation performed by an additional peer group constituted from several other units.

This first-level peer review committee should confine its consideration to the quality and impact of the top five intellectual products listed by the candidate, directing its letter to the unit-level RPT committee for advisement. The first-level peer review committee, if constituted, should not vote up or down on the case, nor should it be concerned with teaching, service or issues related to collegiality per se. The peer review committee letter goes into the overall file case and is transmitted to all levels of the process.

### **B. Ethics and Integrity of the Evaluation Process**

As the Executive Board ad hoc committee states in its "best practices report" in 2000, "In all of its procedures and recommendations, the committee must act honorably and with dignity. Not only is this the behavior one expects from a first-rate academic institution, it is the behavior that is imperative in today's litigious society. Every committee member must clearly understand what is inappropriate for deliberation because it violates either law or administrative rules regarding various forms of discrimination. Every committee member must clearly understand that all evaluative information received by the

committee and all deliberations are to be held in confidence and not communicated inappropriately outside of the committee. Faculty members (and others providing inputs to the process) have a reasonable expectation that their input will be treated confidentially, except as otherwise provided for by law, particularly the Georgia Open Records Act.”

The web-based *ADEPT* instrument deals directly with bias and other issues that relate to the integrity of the evaluation process, and is recommended for use as a calibration and exploration instrument for all reviewers involved in RPT processes.

Reappointment, promotion, and tenure decisions are major events in the professional and personal lives of the candidates considered. Any faculty review committee is obligated to resolve any ambiguity or lack of clarity that it may find in a candidate’s documentation. If there is doubt, for example, regarding the significance of the candidate’s contribution to a publication or a research project, a unit-level committee must obtain specific clarification via communication with the unit head rather than directly with the candidate or making assumptions regarding the candidate’s contributions. First-level peer review committees provide an independent assessment of intellectual products for the unit-level RPT committee that helps to address some of these considerations.

*Collegiality:* Cumulative reappointment, promotion, and tenure decisions determine the future directions that the unit will take, and to a large extent, the nature of the work environment within the unit. Thus, faculty review committees have an obligation to the consider impact of decisions on a stable, supportive work environment. The review committee must carefully consider both the intellectual contributions the candidate is likely to make in the future and the impact the individual’s presence will have on others in the unit. However, if an individual’s personality is factored into an evaluation, it should be done so explicitly, rather than implicitly affecting the assessment of other objective performance measures. In addition, such considerations of “collegiality” should enter into the process broadly on the basis of peer committee reviews, rather than reviews of individual unit heads, in order to decouple potential personal conflicts from best interests of the Institute. There are differing views on the consideration of collegiality as a criterion for tenure and promotion, as reflected in these websites:

- Collegiality: we are a community of scholars  
<http://www.infotech.monash.edu.au/aimsvalues/values/collegiality.html>
- Academe - Does collegiality count?  
<http://www.aaup.org/publications/academe/01nd/01ndcon.html>
- AAUP: Collegiality as a criterion for faculty evaluation  
<http://www.aaup.org/statements/Redbook/collegia.html>

*Dealing with Rumors:* It is common for individuals of unit-level RPT committees and sometimes unit heads to bring into consideration information beyond that specified in the written documentation. The significance of tenure decisions as an institutional commitment cannot be overstated in terms of financial and programmatic impact, so the

level of responsibility in dealing with quality of information is daunting. While information beyond the candidate's documentation and first-level peer review committee may provide information the unit-level RPT committee deems as pertinent, it also often rests on a foundation of secondary sources, and occasionally can manipulate, intentionally or not, committee deliberations. This is as much a matter of professional ethics as procedure. As a matter of principle, information that cannot be confirmed by other individuals on the committee, based on *independent sources* of the information, should be considered as rumor and should not be woven into the tapestry of a discussion that affects job performance and career advancement.

*Advocacy:* Several units employ an advocacy system in which a unit RPT committee member in the area of major creative contributions of the candidate is selected as an advocate, charged with presenting the case for a given faculty member. Following discussion of the case, the advocate typically resumes his/her role as a voting member of the committee. Such an approach has positive and negative aspects with regard to potential for bias. It should not be interpreted as unconditional support for a case – “successful until proven unsuccessful.” Advocacy should not be considered as license to stretch reason or factual content of the case to argue for a positive outcome. Instead, it should seek to present a balanced and objective view of the strengths and weaknesses of the case. Hence, advocacy is essentially synonymous with intense preparation of and intimacy with the case. The advocate should develop a detailed understanding of the documentation, letters of reference, annual letters of review, etc., and present these in organized fashion. An advocacy system should not encourage division of effort of the RPT committee, leading to less effort by reviewers on cases on which they do not advocate. Advocates should not seek to pursue or clarify second-hand information or rumors beyond the written documentation, and any disclosure of personal knowledge or related ancillary information should be verifiable by additional member(s) of the RPT committee in order to be considered.

*'Two-Body Problems':* Increasingly faculty recruiting involves interviewing both members of a couple, typically within different units of the Institute. Although not always a simple matter, information related to the performance of the companion should not affect the deliberation of tenure and/or promotion of the other. Ideally, RPT committees should carefully review supporting documentation to project the likelihood of success of each member of a couple at the recruiting stage. The longevity and gravity of impact on programs is too large in a given tenure decision to compromise deeply in one component of a so-called “two-body problem”.

*Communications of RPT Deliberations:* Finally, to ensure the integrity and confidentiality of the evaluation process, as well as the independence of all pertinent channels of review, the RPT committee members should not discuss deliberations or recommendations before, during, and after the evaluation process with parties outside the committee. The chair of the RPT committee should call and conduct the meetings, without involvement of the unit head. As reviews make their way upward through the levels of the process, both the written text and vote should be considered as the form of

advisement, and interactions with the unit-level RPT committee chair should be limited to clarification of information contained in the unit-level RPT review report.

### **C. Committee Letters**

Unit RPT committees prepare a letter that is included with the candidate's materials that is considered by the unit head and at subsequent committee levels, i.e., the Dean- and Provost- levels. To assist these higher levels in interpreting contributions in multiple disciplines, it is expected that both the first-level peer review committee and the unit RPT committee letters should clarify the candidate's performance according to expectations for each discipline or sub-discipline. The committee letter should state, for example:

- If refereed conference proceedings or refereed journals are the "norm" for archival publication.
- If a particular journal is among the top journals in the discipline or sub-discipline.
- If the level of research funding is above or below average for the discipline.
- If the number of conferences attended or performances given and their venue is above or below the standard for that field.
- If some award is a premier award in the field for a faculty member at a given career stage.

In other words, the first-level peer review and unit RPT committee letters should go beyond general comments and compliments to provide estimates of normative measures of performance to assist in interpretation and comparative discussions further along in the process. It is essential for these unit-level committees, however constituted, to engage in a discussion that explores the variation of "norms" held by the individuals on these committees. Particularly in larger units, there can be significant variability in views regarding successful profiles of candidates according to sub-field within the discipline. It might be advisable to engage in a broader faculty discussion (beyond review committees) of these norms and standards, particularly in the process of drafting clear written guidelines for performance expectations. Moreover, views on bias should be explored on an individual basis by each committee member and unit heads using the web-based ADEPT instrument (PTAC, 2003) and then discussed in committee meetings used to review procedures, best practices, guidelines, and to calibrate expectations and "norms".

Nothing is more confusing than an evaluation report from a committee in which the vote seems strangely disconnected from the tone of the letter. This can go either way; for example, an effusively positive description of the faculty member's intellectual products, contribution to the unit and the profession in general, followed by a split vote leads one to question whether thought was given to the text of the letter. Likewise, a series of negative comments in a letter, combined with either a unanimously positive vote or only 20% dissenting vote, can convey that the individual(s) who cast the dissenting vote may have had too large a role in drafting the letter. Ultimately, consistency of the tone of the letter with the committee vote conveys an important message regarding the integrity and quality of the process undertaken by the committee for review.

Of course, it is recommended practice for all RPT committee members in an evaluation process to read the committee's evaluation letter and provide feedback for further discussion and editing and prior to signing.

#### **D. Request for External Letters of Reference**

The purpose of external review is to provide an independent assessment of the intrinsic merit of the creative work of the individual, its value to the professional and academic communities, and to the public at large. Great care should be taken in selecting external reviewers, and in preparing the letter of solicitation sent to them. The solicitation may state that, insofar as possible, access to the recommendation letters will be limited to persons involved in the promotion/tenure decision.

The 2003 PTAC canvass of unit practices demonstrated significant variation of information being requested by unit heads of references for promotion and tenure cases. In addition to requesting a general impression of the candidate, best practices suggest that letters requesting references should specifically target the following information:

- Candid assessment of the creativity, impact, productivity, and promise of the candidate's creative contributions, based on top five intellectual products included in the package, along with any knowledge of other contributions.
- Comments on particular aspects of the candidate's creative contributions in research and scholarship and an assessment of impact on the field.
- Comparison of the candidate to the leaders, by name, in their field of creative contribution at a similar career stage.
- Brief vita of the referee.

A copy of the individual's vita, three-page narrative, publications and other relevant materials should accompany the letter of request. For most units, five or six external reference letters should be expected. The unit head should provide a brief explanation of why the particular external references were selected, presumably in consultation with the unit RPT committee, and provide some biographical material for each reference for use by both unit- and higher-level review committees.

External references should not have an obvious close tie to the candidate, such as thesis advisor, funding agents either in government or industry, co-PIs on recent research projects, frequent co-authors, Georgia Tech colleagues or close colleagues in prior university or business associations, business partners, or former students. Candidates should have an opportunity to recommend external reviewers, and also to request that specific individuals not be solicited. It is, of course, the prerogative of the unit-level review committees, in collaboration with the unit head, to determine who will be solicited. The set of reviews should typically include individuals beyond the list suggested by the candidate. External reviewers may be informally contacted by the unit head or chair of the faculty committee (not the candidate) to determine their willingness to provide reviews within the time available. Unsolicited recommendation letters should not be included in the RPT documentation package. If a solicited letter arrives after the

unit RPT committee has completed its work, the letter can be included in the package, but with a note that it was not received in time to be considered. Once a letter has been solicited and received, it is inappropriate to exclude it on the basis of a negative tone or for any other reason. The RPT committee may choose to frame its own perspective on viability of letters or comments received in its evaluation letter.

If letters from a previous year's promotion and/or tenure evaluation are considered for use, the unit head should contact the reference to obtain permission to use the same letter, owing to fluidity of opinion and timeliness of the evaluation.

External review letters are not required as part of the critical-review process, and should be requested only in rare circumstances.

### **E. Interpretation of Letters of Reference**

Given the relative "sameness" of many letters of reference, it is important that the references be asked by unit heads to provide substantive feedback that reflects contemplation on the case at hand. In academia it is often the case that certain individuals serve as references on many cases and become deadly efficient at writing politically correct blurbs with little real information content. In this atmosphere, RPT committee members and other evaluators operate by "reading between the lines", i.e., attempting to find nuances of statements or omissions which can be taken to cast any doubt whatsoever on a case. To address this, guidelines on clarity of information requested of references in the previous section should be followed. The request for letter of reference should not leave a "vacuum" to be filled by vacant phrases and faint praise.

Naturally, refusal to write a letter of reference in the first place may convey a bluntly negative opinion, so faculty candidates and committees should take care in constructing their lists to ensure that competent responses can be obtained (sufficient lead time, positive record of responsiveness, etc.).

The weight given to external references varies considerably from unit to unit. In the College of Architecture, for example, the RPT committee depends almost exclusively on external reviews because there are no first-level peer review committees below the college-level. A first-level peer review committee composed of local (e.g. Georgia Tech and regional) authorities in the sub-discipline could provide an objective assessment of the top five intellectual products, moderating the degree of reliance on external reviews to some degree.

Another issue is how to treat negative letters of reference. On occasion, a single negative letter of reference may be received along with a number of positive references, in the midst of an otherwise favorable committee discussion and vote. Even in such cases, the negative letter must still be included in the package – it is the duty of the RPT committee to convey this letter along with the committee's reason for de-emphasizing its impact on their decision. In general, all letters of reference entertained and received by the stated due date should be included in the package; it is always the responsibility of the

committee to synthesize its own views and deliberations into the candidate's evaluation letter, factoring in the letters of reference.

## **F. Feedback to Candidates**

As stated above, annual performance reviews conducted by unit heads are a very important mechanism by which faculty advancement cases are documented. It is essential that such reviews provide substantive guidance for faculty development, along with feedback from peers and mentors. Inconsistency of either unit head letters in P&T cases or unit-level RPT committee letters with the trail of annual performance reviews conducted by the unit head may raise "red flags" regarding the credibility of annual evaluations and feedback provided to the candidate.

When the unit RPT committee renders a negative decision on tenure and/or promotion, the associated letter should contain sufficiently clear guidance regarding how the candidate might redirect his/her efforts to achieve a successful outcome in future evaluations. It is the responsibility of the unit head to transmit this feedback to the candidate at the appropriate time when the process has concluded at all levels. The unit head should review with the candidate the recommendations from each committee and administrator, and counsel the candidate appropriately. If desired, the candidate should be able to obtain feedback in sufficiently useful and detailed fashion from all higher levels as well, particularly from any level that may have weighed in negatively in the case.

It also may be useful for the unit head, perhaps together with the chair of the unit RPT committee, to meet with all untenured faculty members in the late spring to review the RPT results for the year, and provide a forum for questions and discussion of the process. Of course, discussion of specific individual cases would not be appropriate.

## **VIII. DEAN'S AND PROVOST'S COMMITTEES**

First and foremost, all levels of the faculty tenure/promotion process, from peer review sub-committees to unit RPT Committees, to unit head evaluations, to Dean's committee evaluations, to Dean's evaluations, to the Provost's level committee, should be constituted and operated on the basis of clear written guidelines, along with the rationale for the committee's composition and methodology for selecting members. These guidelines should be openly published, for example, on the college and institute websites. These higher-level committees should also communicate results of deliberations to unit heads in a manner sufficient to provide useful and constructive feedback to candidates at the conclusion of the process.

After the unit RPT committee votes on a Critical Review, Tenure, or Promotion package, and after the School Chair independently votes on the package, the package is forwarded to the Dean's Office. It is common practice for the Dean of a college with several academic units to form an advisory committee that meets to entertain additional discussion and perspective concerning each case. The purpose of this committee is to advise the Dean in a setting in which college-wide perspectives can be shared. Some

colleges engage unit heads among the membership of the Dean's committee. In such cases it is recommended that in addition to unit heads, who already have a vote in the process prior to this stage, a representative set of academic faculty without administrative appointment also serve on the Dean's committee.<sup>13</sup>

In the College of Sciences, for example, the Dean's committee members are given the opportunity to review all the packages under consideration for several weeks prior to the meeting (communicated by M. El-Sayed and A. Smith). Two members of the committee are assigned to each case. A primary reviewer (someone from outside the candidate's School) summarizes the case and makes a recommendation to the committee. The secondary reviewer (the committee member from the candidate's School) then adds comments and also makes a recommendation. There is then a discussion by all committee members. The Dean and Associate Deans sit in on the discussion, but do not participate in the decision-making. The vote of this committee is recorded in the package.

Following the Dean's committee deliberations, the Dean then independently makes a recommendation, taking into account the votes of the first-level peer review committee (if constituted), the unit RPT committee, the unit head, and the Dean's advisory committee.

The package is then forwarded to the Provost's office for consideration by the Provost's Committee. According to Robert McMath, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies and Academic Affairs and Chair of the Provost's Committee, after a tenure or promotion evaluation, the files go through the College committee and receive either positive or negative recommendations (unless the candidate withdraws his/her file after talking to the Dean), after which they are sent to the Provost's Committee. The Provost's Committee is composed of the six Deans, the Provost, the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies and Academic Affairs and eight senior members of the faculty representing the different colleges. Each college has a voting representative on the committee. The College of Sciences and College of Engineering have two representatives each, while the other four colleges have one senior faculty representative each. The Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies and Academic Affairs and the Vice Provost for Research and Dean of Graduate Studies may participate in the discussion, but do not vote. Similarly, the college Deans participate in the discussion but do not vote on the candidates from their colleges nor do representatives from a specific unit vote on faculty members from that unit. The candidate has no input regarding the composition of the Provost's Committee.

The term of committee membership is for three years. The Provost's Committee:

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<sup>13</sup> A model employed by some universities includes an additional college-level committee appointed by the Dean for each tenure case. The committee is comprised of four members from related units within the college and one from the candidate unit. The report of this committee is sent to the Dean (or the Dean's committee) as input into the decision.

- Determines if the process has been followed correctly in each case.
- Determines if the three important functions – research, teaching and service - have been documented and balanced in each case; the three do not have to be equally weighted, but each candidate must have a balanced contribution to the three functions and show evidence of creative scholarly contribution as judged by peers.
- Examines cases involving leave of absences to make sure that the rules are interpreted and applied justly.

The Provost sits in and listens to discussions at the annual Provost’s Committee meeting. The files, along with the recommendations from various committees and administrators, are then forwarded to the Provost, who (i) considers all the information submitted and sends all the documentation along with his/her recommendations on each candidate to the President, and (ii) notifies the college Deans of the recommendations concerning faculty within their colleges. The Provost and the President discuss special or complex cases. The President then forwards his/her recommendations and the documents to the Board of Regents, which makes the final decision, and also notifies each faculty member by letter. All changes in status, such as promotion and tenure, are awarded by the Board of Regents. The President notifies each faculty candidate of the Board's decisions.

## **IX. GUIDELINES FOR OFFERING TENURE UPON INITIAL HIRE**

Georgia Tech is among the nation’s elite universities in terms of faculty quality and productivity. At the same time, attracting established, well-recognized individuals to faculty positions at Georgia Tech in a competitive recruiting environment may require offering tenure at rank upon initial appointment, without a probationary period. Indeed, this practice has recently become more common at Georgia Tech. In view of the accelerated timeframe in which these decisions need to be made, detailed peer level reviews are sometimes compromised. Hasty assessment and/or missed steps/levels of input into the evaluation process increase the risk of making a substantial investment in personnel who might not succeed at GT. Additionally, compressing the initial evaluation increases the possibility that GT faculty who are subject to the regular process of evaluation might perceive inequitable differences between their treatment and that of new hires.

The following best practices are recommended:

- Input should be obtained from a first-level peer review committee, in addition to the unit-level RPT committee, unless the latter has qualification to judge creative contributions of the candidate
- All levels of the normal process should be followed, albeit in accelerated fashion, to the extent practical given time constraints; steps should be taken to ensure that time constraints do not compromise thoroughness of the review or integrity of the process
- Any “two-body problem” (e.g. spouse or partner) should not affect deliberations on the merit of any specific individual case

## **X. OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON OBSERVED BEST PRACTICES AT THE UNIT- AND COLLEGE-LEVELS**

### *Clarity of Expectations*

- Research is unambiguously emphasized by almost all units as a measure of productivity and creativity. Clarity at the unit-level in expectations for levels of intellectual products, even if expressed in terms of ranges of papers, funding, students advised, etc. for successful cases in recent years, would be very helpful to candidates.
- Colleges should provide information about P&T on websites and in documents for all faculty members. This information should go beyond administrative forms and formats for documentation to include expectations of faculty performance. The CoS maintains a fairly detailed listing of RPT procedures and an explicit statement of performance expectations.<sup>14</sup> The College of Architecture also posts written guidelines on-line.<sup>15</sup> These should serve as models for clear written publication of procedural issues and expectations of faculty performance at the college level for others to emulate and further improve. In general, even more specificity and clarity of written guidelines for the evaluation process and faculty performance expectations is desirable.

### *Mentoring*

- Only a few units within the Institute reported a formal system in which mentors are assigned. Units should foster some form of mentoring for junior faculty, even informal.

### *Evaluation of Intellectual Products*

- Appointment of a first-level peer review committee that reports to the unit RPT committee to assess intellectual products of candidate, with 3-4 members selected by the unit head in consultation with the unit RPT committee. This first-level peer review committee may have membership from outside the unit, in the candidate's area(s) of creative contributions. This committee provides detailed assessment of intellectual products for candidates at all career stages, and offers capability to assess even highly interdisciplinary and/or collaborative cases. For units that rely on external references and citations to provide input on intellectual achievement, a first-level peer review committee can provide valuable assessment of intellectual products for cases of tenure and promotion from assistant to associate professor, in view of the limited applicability of external measures such as citation indices for early career decisions.

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<sup>14</sup> See <http://www.cos.gatech.edu/criteria.html>

<sup>15</sup> See [http://www.coa.gatech.edu/fs\\_resources/handbook](http://www.coa.gatech.edu/fs_resources/handbook)

- All committees should recognize that a rather broad range exists among units at Georgia Tech in interpretations given to the order of listing authors in co-authored articles, with the most significant differences existing between the College of Sciences and the rest of the Institute.

#### *Independence of Evaluation Process*

- The unit head should have no communication with the unit RPT committee during its deliberations, unless the committee requests clarification of information regarding the candidate. The unit head should not serve on the RPT committee as a regular or ex-officio member.

#### *Role of Service*

- Units and colleges should give more thought to the role of service in faculty development or performance as a function of career stage and consider guidelines for faculty development in this regard.

#### *Graduate Student Development*

- To further enhance the Institute's reputation, units should offer programs for PhD students to develop their background and vitae in preparation for academic careers. Units should also track PhD students in their careers after graduation.