Research Expectations for Regular-Title Assistant Professors
Department of Integrated Strategic Communication
October 4, 2021

I. Introduction

Regular-title assistant professors in the Department of Integrated Strategic Communication typically work under a distribution of effort allocating 45 percent of their time to scholarship, 45 percent of their time to teaching and advising, and 10 percent of their time to service. Teaching and advising responsibilities include teaching two courses each semester, office hours availability to students enrolled in those courses.

Assistant professors in the regular-title series are expected to have an energetic research program that leads to promotion and tenure. Faculty members in the Department undertake a variety of research activities that utilize an array of methods, and the Department recognizes that research projects will vary depending on the discipline in which the faculty member is working and the interests of that faculty member. Although this document will identify goals to which a regular-title faculty member should aspire, it is not a checklist of requirements that must be met for a faculty member to be considered for promotion and tenure.

No single document can cover all of the potential research endeavors and publication or distribution outlets that might appeal to a faculty member. Instead, with this document, the Department is demonstrating its commitment to encouraging high-quality research, while recognizing the wide range of interests that faculty members might pursue.

One point should be made at the outset: Although this document recommends a minimum level of research output that a regular-title faculty member should have before being considered for promotion and tenure, it is the quality of the research and the prestige of the outlets where it is published or otherwise distributed that are the most important factors.

II. Research Output

The Department expects that an assistant professor will have made steady progress toward producing the equivalent of 8-9 publications over the probationary period, which may include any extensions granted by university policy.
Accordingly, the Department expects that candidates for tenure and promotion to associate professor demonstrate a sustained, substantial, and significant research record that reflects national and/or international recognition. Quantity of publications may vary by discipline, by methodological approach, and data collection cycles, but the general expectation for candidates seeking tenure and promotion to associate professor should accord with the standards expressed in the preceding paragraph. This expectation acknowledges that the relationship between the quantity and quality of research is imminently interrelated; therefore, candidates should address this relationship specifically in their statement of research philosophy and dossier documentation.

In each individual case the evaluation is based upon the contents of the dossier in total and how well the case for promotion and/or tenure is made in the candidate’s research statement. Publications in peer-reviewed outlets that apply a revise-and-resubmit process (e.g., journals, select conference proceedings) are highly valued and help to build and maintain a national and/or international reputation. The following can serve as a general guideline for indicators of quality. Evaluating research always entails an element of judgment; allowing for differences among various subject areas, methodological approaches, and interdisciplinarity. An ordinal scale (not to be followed rigidly) would be as follows for each of the following types of publication:

**Articles**
- Single-authored, first authored, and equally authored (when publicly acknowledged) articles in peer-reviewed journals, taking into account the ranking of those journals and the nature of the subject matter.
- Secondary author of a multi-authored work peer-reviewed journals, taking into account the ranking of those journals and the nature of the subject matter.
- Single-authored or first (primary or equally) authored papers in refereed conference proceedings.

**Chapters**
- Single-authored, first authored, and equally authored (when publicly acknowledged) chapter in an edited book published by a quality press that follows a review process;
• Secondary author of a chapter in an edited book published by a quality press that follows a review process.
• Single-authored, first authored, and equally authored (when publicly acknowledged) chapter in an edited textbook or professional book.
• Secondary author of a chapter in an edited textbook or professional book.

Books and Monographs
Books and monographs are valuable but not required for tenure and promotion to associate professor. Peer-reviewed, scholarly books are highly valued in certain disciplines. However, since books usually take much longer to press than articles, books should be judged (in comparison to articles, conference papers, and book chapters) commensurate to their scope, size, and contribution of original scholarly work. One scholarly book may be equivalent to multiple articles. As with all scholarly endeavors, it is incumbent upon the candidate to make the case in the research statement for the venue, authorial contribution, quality, and impact of the book(s) in the research. In this context, the following ranking is a guide for books:
• Single-authored, first authored, and equally authored (when publicly acknowledged) scholarly monographs published by a quality press (e.g., university, scholarly-scientific, or major commercial) that have undergone one or more rounds of peer-review and a revision process.
• Secondary author of a multiple-authored scholarly monograph published in a high-quality press that have undergone one or more rounds of peer-review and a revision process.
• First (primary) editor of an edited book published by a high-quality press.
• Secondary editor of an edited book published by a high-quality press.
• First (primary) author of a textbook or professional book.
• Secondary author of a textbook or professional book.

Other
• Single-authored, first authored, and equally authored (when publicly acknowledged) top-tier conference proceedings that follow a revise-and-resubmit process;
• Conference presentations and posters may be either contributions to service, or products of research; as the latter they are best viewed as stepping-stones to publications, which are the main evidence considered in the review.
• Due consideration will be given for preparation of “white papers” and reports that disseminate findings from international, national, and state-level research studies
• Due consideration will be given for the use of electronic media (e.g., websites and blogs) for enhancing dissemination of research-based, professional knowledge and improving policy and practice.

III. Quality of research publications

Quality judgments are partially dependent upon the (a) venue of publication, (b) authorial contribution, and (c) impact of the research. For example, conference proceedings are often perceived as less rigorous than journal articles, for a variety of reasons (e.g., journals typically have a longer history of publication, a more stable editorial board, and more comparative data for ranking); however, this perception varies by discipline and by individual venue.

The relative importance of single- versus multiple-authorship varies among disciplines. In a mentoring role, experienced scholars sometimes grant first or second author position to junior faculty and/or graduate students; however, candidates seeking tenure and promotion to associate professor are expected to demonstrate an established program of research. Within the research statement, the candidate should provide a compelling case for authorship choices made.

**Indicators of research quality include:**

• Venue of publication
• Rigor of the publishing outlet
• Authorship (see above; based on order and/or level of contribution)
• Collaborative nature
• Impact (e.g., evidence based on awards, reviews, citations, expert evaluations, dissemination to, and adoption by, appropriate practitioners, etc.)
IV. Grants and Contracts

While grant awards are not required for appointment, reappointment, or promotion to associate professor, submissions of applications—especially awarded applications—for external funding serve as evidence of a socially, methodologically, or theoretically significant and problem-driven research program that is coherent and focused.

Appendix – Recommendations for assistant professors

I. A sustained program of research

It is important that regular-title faculty members get started immediately on research projects in order to produce the output consistent with tenure and promotion to associate professor, as time goes by quickly. Some outlets, such as refereed communication journals, have long lead times. It can take several months for an article to be evaluated by referees, and depending on the comments, several more months to revise and resubmit. The article, if accepted, will then be published after an additional period of time.

Assistant professors must also recognize how much competition there is among those submitting articles to journals. If their submission is rejected, they must be prepared to revise the article and submit it elsewhere or move on to the next project. Furthermore, because of time constraints, pursing books instead of journal articles entails significant risk related to editorial delays.

The promotion and tenure committee needs to see a sustained effort over the probationary period. Assistant professors, although busy with classes, advising, committees, and other work, cannot afford an extended break from research activities. Summers can be particularly important for research, and new faculty members should be discouraged from teaching then.

Faculty members should also take advantage of the various grant programs that the University offers in providing money to help fund research. Those programs are at both the College and University level.

II. Coherence of the Research Program
Faculty members are granted substantial discretion to pursue the research efforts that most interest them. Research articles or other projects do not need to be on the same subject. But the overall program needs to reflect some coherence. Within a fairly broad outline, Statements of Research Objectives need to be clear about what research questions the faculty member is investigating and what methods are being used to pursue those questions. In order to have an impact on the discipline, demonstrate the likelihood of continued publication after tenure, and reflect positively on the Department and the University, the faculty member must develop a high level of knowledge and research skills in a particular area. The research projects must have some relation to each other, even if they employ different methods and are distributed through a variety of outlets.

III. Mentoring

It is in the best interest of the Department for regular-title faculty members to be encouraged to pursue high-level research and to be supported in those efforts. A mentoring system for assistant professors can help, but it cannot replace the initiative and hard work that must be undertaken by the faculty member. No assistant professor can justifiably argue that his or her tenure bid failed because of inadequate mentoring. The faculty member is responsible for pursuing a successful research program.