

College of Agriculture and Life Science (CALs) Expectations and Guidelines for Collegiate Faculty and Professor of Practice Promotions

Promotion to a higher rank is granted to faculty members who have demonstrated excellence and innovation in instructional responsibilities and who show significant evidence of related professional growth and development. This includes an appropriate level of recognition through publication, professional activities, and/or service at the unit, college, university, and/or national levels. Consideration for promotion may be requested by the faculty member or recommended by the unit.

Overview of the Promotion Process

An application for promotion receives up to five independent reviews, in the order shown:

- Unit Committee (see “Unit Committee” on page 3 of this document)
- Unit Head
- CALs Collegiate Faculty and Professor of Practice Promotion Committee
- Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
- Provost

Any application that receives a positive recommendation from either or both the appropriate unit committee (see “Unit Committee” on page 3 of this document) or the unit head; continues to the college level. An application that receives a positive recommendation from either or both the dean and the Collegiate Faculty and Professor of Practice Promotion Committee continues to the provost. The provost makes the final decision on applications reaching the final level.

An applicant is provided significant, detailed written feedback if failing to advance at either the unit or college level. Applications that fail at the unit level can be appealed, but only after having been turned down in at least two separate years (details for appeals can be found in the Faculty Handbook). A negative decision at the college provost level is final and cannot be appealed.

As stated in the Faculty Handbook, a negative recommendation on a promotion request need not translate into termination of employment. Indeed, a faculty member in the Collegiate Faculty or Professor of Practice series may remain at their current rank as long as their performance warrants continued employment and serves unit needs. In CALs, promotion and retention decisions are made separately, and being turned down for promotion does not preclude reapplying in a future year.

Specifics of the Promotion Process

The Collegiate Faculty and Professor of Practice promotion process proceeds according to a college-issued timeline, available as the last page of this document.

Contract lengths for Collegiate Faculty are three, five, and seven years respectively for appointments at the assistant, associate, and full levels. Ordinarily, Collegiate Faculty members within CALS will not be considered for promotion any earlier than in the third year of their employment at their current rank.

A candidate for promotion prepares a dossier describing their performance and accomplishments and submits this to the unit committee. This dossier is the document on which the request for promotion is judged at each of the five steps of the process. The culmination of each step is a letter containing a recommendation for or against promotion. As with other faculty promotion processes at Virginia Tech, the format for the dossier will be prescribed by the provost. Candidates are referred to the provost's webpage (provost.vt.edu/faculty_affairs/promotion_tenure.html) for the Collegiate Faculty or Professor of Practice promotion dossier template available on that page. The College of Agriculture and Life Sciences requires that full SPOT reports from courses taught by a candidate be included, to cover the length of the candidate's instructional career at Virginia Tech up to the application for promotion, though not to exceed five years immediately preceding the application for promotion. Each collegiate faculty promotion dossier must also include a unit committee and head letter and content on the faculty member's peer review experience and/or contributions.

The unit committee reviews the dossier of each candidate and prepares a letter stating its recommendation, for or against for promotion. This letter should contain a thorough summary of the candidate's qualifications for promotion, reflecting the evaluation of the credentials by the committee with an informative, individualized assessment of the candidate's activities and contributions. In the case of a mixed vote, a minority report may be written. In the case of a negative vote, the letter will explain the basis for the negative recommendation.

The unit head independently evaluates each dossier and the recommendation of the unit committee. Particulars of the candidate's professional assignment should be provided, including the percentage of that assignment to teaching, scholarly activities, service, and outreach. The unit head's letter need not repeat the information in the committee's letter, but must address the candidate's performance relative to the unit's expectations for performance in the Collegiate Faculty or Professor of Practice series, explaining those expectations and the procedures by which the candidate was evaluated. If the head's recommendation is not in agreement with the committee's, this should be more fully explained and justified. If the head concurs with a negative recommendation from the committee, then the process is ended and

the dossier does not move on to the college level; the dean provides written feedback to the candidate should this outcome occur.

The CALS Collegiate Faculty and Professor of Practice Promotion Committee will prepare a letter about each candidate whose application reaches the college level, stating its recommendation for or against promotion. Letters from the Collegiate Faculty and Professor of Practice Promotion Committee should be detailed but succinct, as they need not repeat material well summarized at the unit level. In the case of a negative vote, the committee will explain the basis for the negative recommendation. The dean independently evaluates each dossier and the recommendations of the committee. The statement from the dean is an informative assessment of the candidate's accomplishments from the perspective of the college and the dean. The dean should provide a summary of the candidate's contributions to the unit, college, and university goals. If the dean concurs with a negative recommendation from the committee, then the process is ended; the dean provides written feedback to the candidate should this outcome occur. Otherwise, the dean writes a letter with their recommendation and forwards the dossier to the provost. If the dean does not concur with the CALS Collegiate Faculty and Professor of Practice Promotion Committee recommendation, the letter will explain the basis for the lack of concurrence. Notifications about collegiate faculty promotion decisions are made by the provost according to a published calendar.

Unit Committee

Composition of the unit collegiate faculty promotion committee, and its procedures, are determined by the unit within the bounds set by the provost and the faculty handbook (Sections 5.2.4 and 5.2.4.1).

CALS Committee

The CALS Collegiate Faculty and Professor of Practice Promotion Committee reviews both Collegiate Faculty and Professor of Practice applications for promotion. The long-term goal is for this committee to be composed of faculty at the associate or professor level in the Collegiate Faculty and Professor of Practice ranks. Committee members are nominated by CALS units and appointed by the dean. The dean or their designee, serves as a non-voting member and committee chair. Minimum committee size will be five voting members. A faculty member serving on both the unit committee and the CALS Collegiate Faculty and Professor of Practice Promotion Committee may vote at only one of these levels as chosen by the committee member.

Expectations for the Collegiate Faculty or Professor of Practice Series

- Quality instruction as evidenced by such measures as student responses to supplemental questions, activities in non-classroom settings, peer reviews, and Student Perception of Teaching (SPOT) evaluations.
- Participation in unit activities as related to programs of instruction, curricular development, and their relationships and integration with other programs at the university. Development of leadership within the unit on curricular issues and on evolving goals of the unit's instructional mission.
- Pedagogical innovation in terms of course development and/or methods of instructional delivery. Promoting teaching excellence within the unit.
- Proficiency at understanding and evaluating research that applies to their field and translating it to classroom settings.
- Research and professional development in alignment with the unit's expectations for the faculty member's appointment as delivered to the employee in writing. The research program may include scholarship on teaching and learning, and/or on disciplinary topics, and must produce findings that are presented in professional venues including conferences and journal publications. There is, however, no expectation of a research program so extensive as to be appropriate for a tenure-track faculty appointment.
- Graduate advisory committee service as the committee chair and/or a committee member according to the guidelines of the specific unit and the graduate school.
- Service at the unit, college, and university level.
- Adherence to the Virginia Tech Principles of Ethical Behavior and the Virginia Tech Principles of Community, as described in section 2.7 of the Faculty Handbook.

Where appropriate to their assignment, Collegiate Faculty or Professors of Practice may interact with graduate students and interns, serve on graduate committees, and chair graduate advisory committees with the approval of the academic unit and the graduate school. They may also be expected to serve on unit, college, or university committees as contributing members of their units and the broader university community.

A faculty member in the Collegiate Faculty or Professor of Practice series should work with their unit head to clarify and detail the expectations of their position within the guidelines provided by this document. This series allows for flexibility of the emphasis placed on the various performance categories, so that positions may best be crafted to serve unit needs. It is the joint responsibility of the unit head and the faculty member to ensure that written expectations are sufficiently clear.

Criteria for Promotion to Collegiate Associate Professor or Associate Professor of Practice

Credentials for appointment or promotion to this rank must document a record of significant instructional experience with sustained excellence and accomplishments relevant to the field and type of assignment. The strongest cases will show a pattern of these activities throughout the promotion period:

- Excellent instruction, evidenced in the dossier by reference to such items as student responses to supplemental questions, activities in a non-classroom setting, peer reviews, and SPOT evaluations.
- Professional development contributions to a growing regional or national reputation, to include participation in professional conferences and publications in venues deemed appropriate for their assignment by their unit.
- Course or curricular development or development of new pedagogies. This should include (but is not limited to) contributions to textbooks or online teaching materials available to others beyond the faculty member's own classes; increasing the availability and relevance of undergraduate research experiences; introduction of active learning or flipped classroom models to courses previously employing older formats; and developing and/or teaching new courses.
- Substantial contributions to the unit's instructional program. This should include (but is not limited to) advising or mentoring students; for example, academic advising of undergraduate and graduate students, peer mentoring, or advising student organizations.
- Sustained service to the unit, college, and university
- Adherence to the Virginia Tech Principles of Ethical Behavior and the Virginia Tech Principles of Community, as described in section 2.7 of the Faculty Handbook.

Criteria for Promotion to Collegiate Professor or Professor of Practice

Collegiate Professor or Professor of Practice is the capstone rank in this promotion series and appointment to this rank requires exemplary performance across the full range of Collegiate Faculty or Professor of Practice expectations. Promotion to this rank requires distinguished professional achievement, and regional, national, or international prominence in the field. Credentials must document a record of significant and impactful instructional experience with continued excellence. There should be significant evidence of scholarly accomplishments and recognition relevant to the field and assignment and of ongoing, valuable service within and external to the university.

- Exemplary instruction, evidenced in the dossier by reference to such items as student responses to supplemental questions, activities in a non-classroom setting, peer reviews, and SPOT evaluations.

- Professional development contributions to a growing national or international reputation, to include participation in professional conferences and publications in venues deemed appropriate for their assignment by their unit.
- Continued course or curricular development or development of new pedagogies. This should include (but is not limited to) contributions to textbooks or online teaching materials available to others beyond the faculty member's own classes; increasing the availability and relevance of undergraduate research experiences; introduction of active learning or flipped classroom models to courses previously employing older formats; and developing and/or teaching new courses.
- Sustained and significant contributions to the unit's instructional program. This should include (but is not limited to) advising or mentoring students; for example, academic advising of undergraduate and graduate students, peer mentoring, or advising student organizations.
- Sustained and significant service to the unit, college, and university.
- Adherence to the Virginia Tech Principles of Ethical Behavior and the Virginia Tech Principles of Community, as described in section 2.7 of the Faculty Handbook.

College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Promotion Timetable-Collegiate Professor and Professor of Practice Series

April – May

- Units determine faculty members who will be considered for promotion in either the Collegiate Faculty or Professor of Practice series.

October

- Unit deliberations and vote; evaluation by the unit head; dossiers for candidates going forward to the college are completed.

Late November

- Promotion dossiers submitted electronically to College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

Mid January

- CALS Collegiate Faculty and Professor of Practice Promotion Committee meeting to review dossiers and issue recommendations.

Mid February

- Letters from CALS Collegiate Faculty and Professor of Practice Promotion Committee, evaluating candidates, are finalized and submitted to the dean.

Late February

- College and unit staff members complete the final dossiers for all Collegiate Faculty and Professor of Practice candidates going forward to the University Committee.
- Final dossiers submitted to the Provost's Office.