




MEMORANDUM

**To:** Academic Deans

**From:** Elizabeth A. Graddy   
Vice Provost for Academic and Faculty Affairs

**Date:** January 5, 2018

**Subject:** Continuing Appointment Guidelines

In his 15 September memo to the faculty, Provost Quick outlined a series of policies taking effect this academic year designed to provide opportunities to promote and appropriately recognize excellence in our full-time teaching faculty. These policies were developed with the advice of the Academic Senate Executive Board, drawing on the work of the Senate RTPC Committee and the support of the RTPC Promotion Committee.

To implement these policies, the following guidelines have been developed regarding continuing appointments. Please feel free to direct any questions on these guidelines to me.

**CONTINUING APPOINTMENT GUIDELINES<sup>1</sup>**

The award of *continuing appointment* to a full-time RTPC teaching professor is a significant honor bestowed by the University to exceptional teachers who have made a significant and demonstrable impact on student learning and who have provided leadership in support of the University's educational mission.

***Timeline for Promotion***

A full-time RTPC teaching faculty member can be considered for this honor after the individual has been promoted to full Professor (or equivalent lecturer rank), and if the dean can demonstrate continuing programmatic need and financial support for the position. All full-time RTPC teaching faculty are eligible for this status; however, it is not intended to be a routine or expected promotion, but rather a recognition for exceptional performance.

Continuing appointment can be granted by the President of the University, through the Provost, after review and recommendation by the school's faculty and dean, and the University Committee on Appointments, Promotions and Tenure. Teaching faculty members achieving this status will have a unique title. One option is to add the modifier "with Distinction" to their official title (e.g., "Professor (Teaching) of <Discipline>, with Distinction"). Each school, however, may propose to the Provost its own Continuing Appointment title so as to ensure consistency with the approved faculty titles currently in use within the School.

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<sup>1</sup> For implementation of Provost Quick's 15 September 2017 memo on Teaching Faculty Policies. These policies apply to full-time RTPC faculty who continually teach for at least 75% of their full-time effort, whether they have a teaching, clinical, or practitioner title.

## ***Standards for Promotion***

University expectations for this honor include demonstrated teaching excellence, pedagogical impact and innovation, and educational leadership, as well as the expectation of continued excellence and growth in performance and expertise.

The criteria for demonstrating that these expectations are met will vary by school and field. Therefore, each school will need to produce a document outlining the criteria by which the school defines excellence in teaching and pedagogical impact.

A University-level definition of *Excellence in Teaching at USC*<sup>2</sup> has been developed by CET through consultation with multiple faculty groups, and includes criteria that apply to most types of pedagogies. Schools may wish to consult the criteria in this definition as they develop their own discipline-specific definition of excellence in teaching. Schools may also wish to consult CET for measures to assess these criteria.

It is recognized that schools employ different modalities of teaching from lectures in the humanities to laboratory oversight in the sciences, and from studio reviews in fine arts to one-on-one instruction in music, and from rounds in the medical school to seminars for graduate-level education. The different pedagogies used should be explained and the metrics of what constitutes excellence in each should be detailed. Once this document has been reviewed by the school's appropriate faculty bodies, and approved by the dean, it will be submitted to the Provost for his approval.

This document must also delineate the types of *external* validation by which excellence and impact in teaching will be measured, e.g., arm's length review of teaching practice and course design; University-level impact on teaching practices, support, or course design; adoption of faculty pedagogical practices by outside programs or professional associations; leadership in the student or teaching components of externally-funded grants; recognition by professional associations for pedagogical work; publication of pedagogical contributions; letters from external experts. Once the Provost has approved the document, the school can elect to nominate exceptional full-time RTPC teaching full professors for the award of continuing appointment.

## ***Process for Promotion***

When a school identifies an outstanding teaching faculty member for nomination for continuing appointment, the process should follow the school's internal guidelines for promotion of RTPC faculty, utilizing departmental or school review procedures that would involve both tenured and RTPC faculty.<sup>3</sup> Detailed assessments from department chairs and a faculty review committee will summarize how the faculty member meets the standards set out above.

Evidence of external validation, including external letters, should be collected in a timely fashion in order to provide enough time for faculty review groups to include them in their deliberations and discussions before proceeding to the dean.

As with all promotions, both faculty and decanal assessments must provide a balanced evaluation of the candidate's qualifications, not merely build a positive case. The assessments most useful to UCAPT and the Provost are those that carefully analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the case.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1r3npe4IyeMmakeurrJQY6FOw5-EgtF3MXqSYQcm85jg/edit?usp=sharing>

<sup>3</sup> Once an individual has been awarded a continuing appointment, that faculty member should vote on the awarding of the distinction to other members of the department or school.

Once the dossier has reached the decanal level, the dean shall provide an independent assessment of the merits of the case for promotion. In addition, the dean will provide a detailed statement demonstrating the continued programmatic need and financial support for this position.

If *either* the faculty or the dean's recommendation is positive, the Dean's Office will submit the entire dossier to the Provost's Office in the form of one hard copy and one electronic copy. The dossier will then be reviewed by UCAPT, which will make a recommendation to the Provost, who makes the final decision on behalf of the President.

A negative decision does not preclude a new submission in a later year. The same rules on confidentiality apply as with tenure dossiers and discussions.

### ***The Dossier***

The dossier should resemble those developed for promotions of tenure-track faculty, but focused on teaching achievements – providing evidence that the candidate:

- Has a record of demonstrated excellence in teaching, and contributes significantly to the department/school's curriculum and academic program growth and development,
- Has made a significant and demonstrable impact on student learning,
- Uses effective research-based teaching strategies and makes pedagogical innovations,
- Provides leadership in support of the University's education mission, and excellent service to the department, school, University and profession,
- Is expected to continue to excel and grow in performance and expertise.

The faculty committee report should discuss the evidence and provide a balanced appraisal of how the candidate meets the standards for continuing appointment. Administrative assessments should explain the nature and extent of the faculty member's accomplishments, and how these compare to the norms of the field, as well as the department or school.

The faculty member should provide a personal statement (no longer than five pages) of teaching philosophy. The dossier should include a chronological list of classes taught with contact hours and enrollment size for each, along with a list of courses created, developed, or substantially revised. *If* Ph.D. or post-doc supervision is in the faculty member's profile, placement information on those supervisees should be included. Any awards for teaching should be detailed and the importance of each award and the society or group that awarded the distinction explained.

Schools should follow the guidance provided in the UCAPT Manual about evidence of teaching effectiveness (Section 8.8.2). In order to establish teaching excellence, the dossier should include observation of the faculty member's teaching by faculty peers, demonstrated application of effective teaching strategies, syllabi review, and a discussion of impact on student learning from the department chair or appropriate school official. Other materials in accordance with the school's approved criteria may be included.

Student ratings provide useful information about the classroom experience, but careful research shows they are only loosely correlated with teaching effectiveness. Therefore, data of student ratings should not be a central consideration in these appointments. If the school finds them useful, evaluation letters from a sample of former students may be included, but only if solicited by the department/school review committee (see 8.8.2(c)).

*If* the faculty member has also conducted disciplinary research, those contributions and metrics of impact should be included, as well.

The dossier should detail significant mentoring by the faculty member of students and other faculty. Department and University service and leadership roles should be described and their importance explained.

Finally, the dossier should include indicators of external validation (such as those described above) of the excellence and impact of the candidate's contributions to teaching.

cc: Michael Quick  
Deans of Faculty  
UCAPT Chairs