

CAL POLY HUMBOLDT

University Faculty Personnel Committee

April 18, 2025

TO: The General Faculty, Cal Poly Humboldt
FROM: The University Faculty Personnel Committee (UFPC)
SUBJECT: 2024-2025 Annual Report

The UFPC provides the last faculty-level review of candidates seeking reappointment, tenure, and/or promotion. Additionally, the UFPC is the only faculty committee that has the perspective of seeing *all* files in the RTP process. Therefore, the UFPC helps ensure consistent implementation of RTP standards and helps to identify areas for improving the RTP process for candidates and review committees alike. Importantly, the UFPC is thereby able to both advocate for faculty candidates and improve the integrity of the RTP process.

Cal Poly Humboldt's outstanding faculty continue to impress and even humble with their exceptional quality of teaching/librarianship, scholarship/creative activities, and service. Recognizing the faculty-focused process for Retention, Tenure, and Promotion (RTP) at Humboldt, the UFPC appreciates the effort made by all levels in preparing and reviewing candidates' WPAFs.

In this report, the UFPC provides a summary and overview of recommendations emerging from the committee's work during AY 2024-2025.

In striving to maintain a transparent and supportive RTP process, this report focuses on the following four areas. Each area includes specific action items for different university programs and committees.

- [Departmental RTP Standards and Criteria and Appendix J of the Faculty Handbook](#)
- [Evaluation of Teaching/Librarianship, Scholarship/Creative Activities, and Service](#)
- [File Preparation and Support](#)
- [Supporting and Valuing International Faculty](#)

UFPC Open Forum

The annual end-of-the-year open information meeting with the UFPC is scheduled for Monday, April 28, at 9 am in Goodwin Forum with remote access provided via Zoom:

<https://humboldtstate.zoom.us/j/86538472922?pwd=6kCJAq5U2a5c1JQVa5FEMtlehC9CXT.1>

UFPC Membership and Files Reviewed

The UFPC, consisting of five members from across the university, reviewed 40 files in AY 2024-2025 (See [Appendix A: UFPC Membership](#), [Appendix B: Files Reviewed](#)).

Departmental RTP Standards and Criteria and Appendix J of the Faculty Handbook

Early Tenure Trend and Policy

In AY 2024-2025, six out of 13 candidates (Group V) sought early tenure and promotion. The UFPC recognizes that the proportion of probationary faculty submitting their WPAF for early review has varied considerably over the past seven years. In any given year, including the present one, an average of slightly under half (45%) of candidates seek early tenure and promotion (See [Appendix C: Group V Early Tenure & Promotion 2018-2025](#)).

In Spring 2025, the Senate approved an early tenure policy change for Appendix J. The UFPC commends the Faculty Affairs Committee's (FAC's) work in this regard. This early tenure policy will be applied to newly appointed faculty in AY 2025-2026. However, for faculty appointed before AY 2025-2026 who use the earlier version of Appendix J, early tenure and promotion cases remain challenging for several reasons.

As the earlier version of Appendix J does not provide clear guidance on early tenure and promotion, and few departmental standards offer explicit criteria, the UFPC is concerned that the absence of clear criteria for awarding early tenure and promotion results in arbitrary decision-making. For example, in the previous version of Appendix J, there were neither clear standards regarding what constitutes sufficient "length and breadth" of teaching experience for excellence during the probationary period nor specific definitions of the levels of achievement necessary for early tenure beyond stating that candidates must "meet the standards and level of performance for tenure...." This issue is compounded, as noted below, when we consider faculty hired with considerable amounts of assigned time or service credit.

Outdated Departmental RTP Standards and Criteria

The UFPC continues to identify departmental standards being utilized in RTP decisions that were last approved more than five years ago (See [Appendix D: Outdated Departmental Standards](#)).

Though Appendix J does not clarify whether standards older than five years can be used as part of the RTP process, the UFPC again urges departments to work with the RTP Criteria and Standards Committee to update standards older than five years. The UFPC further urges the deans and the provost to support the RTP Criteria and Standards Committee in ensuring that departments adhere to timely reviews of their standards.

Key Issues Noted in Departmental RTP Standards and Criteria

Some standards were unclear in specifying peer-reviewed dissemination as an integral part of scholarship. Whereas conference presentations and publications are often peer-reviewed and

disseminated (through presentation), the UFPC questions whether this is the intended application of the standard and urges departments to revisit these expectations, especially in the context of the polytechnic transformation.

Several standards were also unclear in their use of scholarship presentation styles. For example, several standards distinguish between two types of conference presentations. Category I contributions require presentations where “Peer review and dissemination are an integral part of the process (for example, when papers are circulated in advance).” Category II contributions are “Participating in academic conferences or forums by presenting original work, workshops, or acting as a discussant on a panel or roundtable.” This distinction is confusing; one solution could be for candidates to include the conference submission process in Section 9 to provide evidence of peer-review for presentations.

Counting hours for Service can be messy and vague for both candidates and reviewers. For example, recording minutes spent when enacting Service commitments by email is onerous and inefficient. Instead, the UFPC recommends that Service standards reflect general breadth, depth, and/or leadership activities.

Application of Departmental RTP Standards and Criteria

In its work during AY 2024-25, the UFPC noticed several instances in which the department, candidate, chair, and other levels of review did not apply the same set of RTP standards consistently. When the department or program RTP Standards are newly approved, the candidate can choose which standards to apply. In any case, the IUPC, candidate, and department chair should all apply the same standards to the file.

Action Items Related to Departmental Standards and Criteria

The UFPC recommends:

- Departments and the RTP Criteria and Standards Committee work together to update standards older than five years.
- The deans and the provost support the RTP Criteria and Standards committee in ensuring that departments adhere to timely reviews of their standards.
- When revising RTP standards, departments specify their expectations regarding peer-review and quality of scholarship.
- When revising RTP standards, departments eliminate the counting of hours for Service and points for Scholarship and Service. Counting hours can be messy and vague for candidates.

Evaluation of Teaching/Librarianship, Scholarship/Creative Activities, and Service

Teaching/Librarianship: Student Class Climate Survey

Teaching and librarianship are evaluated, in part, based on a review of student evaluations. The UFPC recognizes several challenges in using the current student climate survey to assess teaching. First, the subject position and identity of the candidate affect how students perceive the instructor's approach, knowledge, and pedagogical skills. Research clearly shows that women and People of Color (particularly in STEM fields) consistently face resistance, hostility, and diminishment of their expertise from both colleagues and students.¹ The UFPC notes that while the University Senate passed a resolution in AY 2022-2023 to address bias in student evaluations of teaching,² issues remain with using student evaluation data.

Several evaluation items warrant revision. For example, what does the following item measure? "I felt encouraged to explore materials outside of class to improve on what I was learning." In contrast, other CSU campuses merely offer one or two Likert-scale questions about the student's overall experience.

In addition to problematic evaluation items, the shift from in-class paper evaluations to online evaluations completed outside of class has had a negative impact on response rates as well as the tone of student comments regarding individual faculty. Response rates on student evaluations vary considerably from class to class and candidate to candidate. Low response rates, defined here as below 50 percent, likely advantage faculty who benefit from receiving evaluations from students who already view them and their teaching more favorably. Conversely, faculty who are already disadvantaged by student evaluations imbued with gender and racial biases see negative numeric scores driving down mean item scores. Departments should monitor student course evaluation response rates, follow best practices (<https://cebs.humboldt.edu/instructors>), and work with candidates to address low response rates. This is particularly an issue for evaluation for promotion to the rank of professor, as there is no intermediate (i.e., retention) review following promotion to the rank of associate professor.

The UFPC also notes inconsistent practices regarding the evaluation of lab sections. Although a distinct lab evaluation survey is available, it is not consistently administered. The UFPC encourages the FAC as well as relevant academic programs in CNRS and CPS, to ensure consistent practice, if not a specific policy, regarding student evaluations of lab sections.

¹ A. Bavishi, J. M. Madera, & M. R. Hebl, (2010) "The Effect of Professor Ethnicity and Gender on Student Evaluations: Judged Before Met," *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education* 3 (4), 245–256, <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0020763>;
B. Smith & B. Hawkins, (2011) "Examining Student Evaluations of Black College Faculty: Does Race Matter?" *The Journal of Negro Education* 80 (2): 149-162. Retrieved February 19, 2021, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41341117>;
D. Williams, (2007) "Examining the Relation between Race and Student Evaluations of Faculty Members: A Literature Review." *Profession*, 168-173. Retrieved February 19, 2021, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25595863>.

² Faculty Affairs Committee, (2022) "Resolution to Address Bias in the Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness Process," Cal Poly Humboldt. December 13, https://senate.humboldt.edu/sites/default/files/12-22.23-sets_second_reading.pdf.

Teaching/Librarianship: Direct Classroom Observation

Teaching/librarianship effectiveness is primarily evaluated through direct observation by faculty colleagues. The UFPC reminds faculty that Appendix J [Section IX.B.1.a.4] states:

Teaching effectiveness is assessed primarily through collegial evaluation of classroom teaching and summary analysis of student evaluations by peers. Evaluations of teaching effectiveness shall be based primarily on written statements from colleagues within the candidate's academic discipline(s). The statements should be supported by direct observation of the candidate's performance. Such observation can take place in a variety of ways, such as classroom visitations, team teaching, guest lecturing, etc. Multiple observations, conducted over a period of time, are preferable to a single observation conducted solely for personnel purposes.

In regard to evaluations of librarianship, Appendix J [Section IX.B.1.b.3] states:

Evaluations of effectiveness in librarianship shall be based primarily on written statements from faculty members within the candidate's area of service. The statements should be supported by direct observation of the candidate's performance. Such observation can take place in a variety of ways such as classroom visitations, team teaching, mutual service on department and library committees, etc. The library shall organize and promote a system of peer evaluation which will aid in developing the written statements of the candidate's colleagues.

Having numerous colleagues observe the same class session is less effective than having multiple class sessions observed by different faculty members over time. Collegial evaluations of teaching/librarian performance should include a review of syllabi, materials, Canvas pages, etc.

The UFPC directs evaluators to the APS website, which offers teaching observation guides for evaluating synchronous and asynchronous online courses. These guides were developed by the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council's Subcommittee on Inclusive Teaching and reflect the 2019 Appendix J update regarding the nature and quality of inclusive instruction. They can be found at:

<https://hraps.humboldt.edu/faculty-evaluations>

The UFPC reminds IUPCs of their responsibility to secure collegial observations of teaching (Appendix J, Section IX.B.1.a.5) and "ensure that there is adequate substantive peer evaluation of candidates" (Appendix J, Section VII. A.1.a). The UFPC continues to find an insufficient number of collegial observation letters in some departments given the number of faculty at the rank of professor. Given that such observations are the primary source of evidence for evaluating teaching effectiveness, it is imperative that all departmental colleagues be invited to provide teaching observations, though only faculty at the rank of professor are required to do so. Appendix J (Section VIII.B.3.a) states:

The IUPC shall invite written statements from all available members of the unit at the rank of professor to ensure that there is adequate substantive collegial evaluation of candidates. Other faculty members of the unit will be notified of the deadline for receipt of these written statements, but are not required to provide such a statement.

Teaching/Librarianship: Asynchronous Class Observations

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, many courses have been offered in an online asynchronous format. The UFPC notes that some programs only offer online classes, and some faculty only teach online classes. However, no specific online, asynchronous course evaluation standards have been established in departmental RTP Standards and Criteria; it is therefore challenging to assess asynchronous teaching effectiveness. Considering the current circumstance, collegial evaluations of Canvas courses can follow this [APS guideline](#).

Scholarship/Creative Activities and Service: Self-Assessment

Candidates are strongly encouraged to summarize their Scholarly/Creative Activities and Service contributions in the PDS. They should explicitly self-assess contributions based on departmental standards, highlighting how they meet standards for Minimum Essential, Good, or Excellent across Scholarship/Creative Activities and Service.

A summary table that lists achievements in the contribution areas of Scholarship/Creative Activities and Service aligned with departmental standards is an effective way to illustrate how a candidate meets RTP criteria. In the area of Service, if departmental standards require listing hours completed, candidates are encouraged to consistently report hours (by week or month, or semester, but consistently), so review committees can identify whether candidates meet annual Service expectations. The UFPC asks IUPCs to encourage and help candidates to include such tables in the WPAF.

Appendix J [IX.B.2] notes,

Faculty are expected to engage in an ongoing program of scholarly/creative activities and be guided by their department/unit criteria and standards. Scholarly/creative activities may be defined using the five interrelated dimensions of scholarship proposed by Ernest Boyer in *Scholarship Reconsidered*: Discovery, Integration, Application, Teaching, and Engagement. Scholarly/creative activity shall be characterized by clear goals, adequate preparation, appropriate methods, significant results, effective presentation, and reflective critique. *Collegial/peer review appropriate to the discipline is required and shall be defined in the department/unit RTP criteria and standards* [emphasis added].

Scholarship/Creative Activities: Collegial Evaluations

Peer review must be conducted by colleagues in the same specialty area as candidates and “where appropriate, from peers outside the university” (VII.A.1.b). External reviews of Scholarship/Creative Activities are beneficial for tenure and promotion evaluations and represent standard practice in higher education. IUPCs, in consultation with candidates, should work to secure such letters well in advance of the file's due date.

For collaborative work, the candidate's role and responsibilities should be clearly described (and ideally, corroborated via collegial letters from collaborators). Similarly, the UFPC urges candidates to clearly describe activities and responsibilities in Service roles.

Service Activities: Self-Assessment and Collegial Evaluation

The UFPC encourages faculty to report all Service activities. The UFPC observes wide variation in faculty reporting practices concerning community service activities. Of particular note are volunteer activities with local schools, preschools, and other youth groups. Regardless of the reason for the community service (e.g., volunteering at one's own child's school), these activities do constitute important community service. Appendix J (IX. B. 3.g) states, "Community service contributions which relate directly to one's discipline or position will be given greater weight." Documenting how community service contributions relate to the candidate's discipline lends additional significance to the activity, however, Service not directly related to the discipline is also valued.

Colleagues should also address and evaluate candidates' Service. Departmental colleagues are well-positioned to address Service as most serve on departmental committees together. In some cases, review committees discounted Service activities that received assigned time. The UFPC finds that such Service should count toward departmental RTP standards, particularly because the time invested in such activities generally exceeds assigned time. In making the case for including such Service, candidates should clearly detail all activities and discuss time commitments for such activities in relation to assigned time. For tasks leveraging assigned time, candidates should detail contributions over and above the assigned time compensation.

Provision of Evidence

The UFPC notes that including non-evaluative evidence in candidates' WAPF is important. For example, if a work is to be considered a forthcoming publication, candidates should include correspondence from editors, publishers, jurors, etc., that confirms explicitly the acceptance of the candidate's work and provides a targeted publication/exhibition/performance date.

Though numerous departmental RTP standards expressly acknowledge forthcoming publications/exhibits/performances as carrying the same weight as published/completed works, forthcoming *works should not be* confused with works in progress. Works in progress, while important elements of a candidate's Scholarly/Creative Activity, do not carry the same weight as completed activities. Similarly, candidates are encouraged to provide non-evaluative evidence (such as simple acknowledgments of service) of their Service activities.

Independent Reviews

The UFPC reminds all levels of review that parallel concurrent reviews must be independent. *There should be no consultation between department chairs and IUPCs nor between deans and college*

personnel committees. Not only is this independence essential for the integrity of the RTP review process, but it also affords each level of review the capacity to provide its own unique recommendation independent of other recommendations.

Action Items Related to Evaluation of Teaching/Librarianship, Scholarship/Creative Activities, and Service

The UPFC recommends:

- Candidates should respond to and reflect upon student course evaluations of their teaching/librarian performances in their teaching philosophy and/or course description in the Personnel Data Sheet (PDS). In particular, candidates should comment upon or explain low or otherwise unusual student evaluations or patterns in evaluations.
- Candidates should summarize their Scholarship/Creative Activities and Service, along with self-assessment.
- Faculty letter writers should evaluate the *quality and significance* of candidates' contributions when writing about Scholarship/Creative Activities and Service.
- Faculty conducting peer observations for RTP purposes are strongly encouraged to use the teaching observation guides available at the APS website to help them write evaluative letters for their colleagues: <https://hraps.humboldt.edu/faculty-evaluations>.
- The University Senate and Faculty Affairs Committee identify more valid and reliable instruments and questions for students' evaluations of teaching effectiveness. Existing research on the validity and reliability of SETs (Student Evaluations of Teaching) can guide both process and content.
- The University Senate and Faculty Affairs Committee develop a process to increase response rates on student evaluations for all faculty.
- The Academic Personnel Services publish aggregate data for the past ten years (to protect confidentiality in personnel matters) that reports the total number of faculty awarded early tenure and promotion by college, gender, and ethnicity.
- The Academic Personnel Services publish aggregate statistics summarizing student response rates on Class Climate Surveys.

File Preparation and Support

The UFPC urges Group III candidates and all prior levels of review to address the detailed "Notes on File" preparation included in their evaluation letters. College Personnel Committees (CPC) also provide valuable notes on file preparation to candidates, and in such instances, the UFPC concurs with such recommendations. Whether such advice comes from the UFPC or CPC, candidates and IUPCs should carefully address these comments when preparing the WPAF for subsequent review cycles.

The UFPC refers candidates to the "Guidelines for Preparation of the Personnel Data Sheet," available

from the APS website. These guidelines are separate from the directions embedded in the blank PDS form and are particularly useful for faculty undergoing their first review.

The UFPC urges both candidates and IUPCs to carefully review the WPAF before file submission to ensure all required documentation and relevant activities are included and placed in the correct sections. As noted above, numerous files failed to include complete documentation of previous reviews. Others did not include all candidate activities for the review period. Further, all previous review letters from every review cycle need to be in the WPAF. Probationary faculty files should consist of all materials from all prior review cycles until tenure and promotion are awarded.

Supporting and Valuing International Faculty

The UFPC has reviewed files submitted by international faculty who have encountered onerous immigration visa challenges that, at worst, lead to the loss of outstanding faculty members. These challenges also include:

- Prolonging the tenure clock when international faculty must be rehired after a delay in extending their immigration visa;
- Reducing the Scholarly/Creative Activities of international faculty who may face limited funding and professional travel opportunities on account of their immigration status; and
- Isolation from the general faculty or lack of support during the review process.

Regardless of the source of these challenges, the impact on international faculty must be acknowledged, and the UFPC implores the FAC to work with Academic Personnel Services and Human Resources to identify resources and practices such that Cal Poly Humboldt becomes known as a place where international faculty are welcome and able to thrive.

Appendix A: UFPC Membership 2024-2025

Hyun-Kyung You (Child Development) - Chair
Vincent Biondo (History)
Robert Cliver (History)
Walden Freedman (Mathematics)
Nikola Hobbel (English)

Appendix B: Files Reviewed

During the 2024-2025 academic year, there were four fewer files reviewed by the UFPC compared to 2023-2024:

Group	Type of Review	AY 2024-2025	AY 2023-2024
III	Retention (Reappointment) for Probationary Faculty	16	22
V	Retention with Tenure/Promotion	13 (6 early)	16
VI	Promotion of Tenured Faculty	11 (3 early)	6
	Total	40	44

Although the campus community has returned to face-to-face instruction, meetings, and other professional obligations, the legacy of the global COVID-19 pandemic has left an indelible mark on our personal and professional lives. For the UFPC, all meetings continued to occur fully online during AY 2024-25, and there continued to be discussions of how to account for the myriad impacts associated with the COVID-19 pandemic in reviewing RTP files. In response, the committee composed and continued to add the following statement at the beginning of each of the recommendation letters for faculty whose review period overlapped with the global COVID-19 pandemic starting in early 2020:

The UFPC recognizes that AYs 2019-20 and 2020-21 generated unprecedented challenges for the entire campus community. In Fall 2019, campus closures stemming from Public Safety Power Shutoff events disrupted course schedules, research and creative activities, and engagement in Service. In Spring 2020, the public health response to COVID-19 required all face-to-face instruction to move online following Spring Break and the cancellation of all non-essential university travel. The UFPC appreciates how these events had a cascading effect on the capacity of Cal Poly Humboldt faculty to achieve teaching/librarianship excellence from Spring 2020 through AY 2021-2022. Moreover, shelter-in-place orders led to the cancellation or postponement of research and creative activities as well as Service opportunities through AY 2021-22. Therefore, the UFPC recognizes activities such as presentations canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic as carrying the same weight as completed presentations. It is with these ongoing circumstances in mind that the UFPC reviewed candidate files in AY 2024-2025.

Appendix C: Group V Early Tenure & Promotion 2018-2025

Academic Year	Early Tenure and Promotion	Total Group V Candidates	Percentage of Group V Candidates Seeking Early Tenure/Promotion
2024-25	6	13	45%
2023-24	7	16	44%
2022-23	6	12	50%
2021-22	5	16	31%
2020-21	9	19	47%
2019-20	8	12	67%
2018-19	5	15	33%

Appendix D: Outdated Departmental Standards

- Anthropology (last approved June 2019)
- Child Development (last approved May 2019)
- Communication (last approved May 2016)
- Computer Science (last approved April 2018)
- Critical Race, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (last approved May 2016)
- Economics (last approved March 2017)
- English (last approved February 2016)
- Environmental Science & Management (last approved May 2019)
- Mathematics (last approved May 2019)
- Native American Studies (last approved April 2017)
- Philosophy (last approved May 2016)
- Religious Studies (last approved August 2019)
- School of Applied Health [formerly Kinesiology & Recreation Administration] (last approved October 2018)
- School of Education (last approved November 2019)
- School of Engineering [formerly Environmental Resource Engineering] (last approved February 2018)
- University Library (last approved February 2019)
- Wildlife Management (last approved February 2017)
- World Languages & Culture (last approved October 2018)