

CAL POLY HUMBOLDT

University Faculty Personnel Committee

April 15, 2026

TO: The General Faculty, Cal Poly Humboldt

FROM: The University Faculty Personnel Committee (UFPC)
Hyun-Kyung You, Chair/CPS Representative
Vince Biondo, Member-at-Large
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SUBJECT: 2025-2026 Annual Report & Open Forum

The UFPC provides the last level of faculty review of candidates seeking reappointment, tenure, and/or promotion (RTP). Additionally, the UFPC is the only faculty committee that has the perspective of seeing *all* files in the RTP process. Consequently, the UFPC helps ensure consistent implementation of RTP standards and identifies areas to improve the RTP process for candidates and review committees alike. The UFPC's work is integral to maintaining and improving 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 RTP at Humboldt, the UFPC appreciates the effort of all levels in preparing and reviewing candidates' WPAFs.

UFPC Open Forum

The annual end-of-the-year open information meeting with the UFPC is scheduled for Wednesday, April 22, at 9 am in Goodwin Forum, with [remote access provided via Zoom](#).

Following an executive summary of this report, the UFPC provides a summary and overview of recommendations and concerns emerging from the committee's work during AY 2025-2026. In striving to maintain a transparent and supportive RTP process, this report focuses on the following five areas with specific action items.

- [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 Tenured Faculty for Continued Excellence](#)
- [Supporting and Valuing International Faculty](#)

Executive Summary

Report Overview

- **Committee Membership:** The UFPC consists of five members from across the university, including Child Development, History, Mathematics, and English.
- **Files Evaluated:** A total of 35 candidates were reviewed during the academic year.
- **Early Tenure Trends:** Notably, 86% of Group V candidates sought early tenure and promotion this year, a significant increase compared to previous years.

Key Findings & Recommendations

1. RTP Standards and Criteria

- **Outdated Standards:** Several departments are utilizing RTP standards that have not been updated in over five years. The UFPC urges programs and departments to collaborate with the RTP Criteria and Standards Committee to review their standards.
- **Early Tenure Policy:** While a new policy was approved by the University Senate in Spring 2025, departments are encouraged to explicitly define what "early tenure" means and to include this definition in their RTP criteria and standards.
- **Scholarly/Creative Activities and Service Metrics:** The UFPC continues to recommend that departments clarify definitions for peer-review (Scholarly/Creative Activities) and to include fulsome descriptions of breadth, depth, and leadership (Service).

2. Evaluation of Teaching, Scholarly/Creative Activities, and Service

- **Student Evaluations:** The committee identified significant limitations in current class climate surveys, including unconscious bias against women and faculty of color, survey fatigue, and low response rates (often below 50%).
- **Observation Methods:** The UFPC asks collegial letter writers to make multiple direct classroom observations. Additionally, observations should address specific guidelines for asynchronous online courses and the evaluation of Canvas courses.
- **Self-Assessment:** Candidates are encouraged to use a summary table in their Personnel Data Sheet (PDS) to explicitly align their achievements with departmental standards.

3. Supporting Faculty

- **Tenured Faculty:** The report emphasizes that teaching excellence must remain the priority for tenured faculty seeking promotion to Professor, even as they take on more leadership roles.
- **International Faculty:** The UFPC highlights the "onerous immigration visa challenges" that can disrupt the tenure clock and isolate international faculty and implores the university to identify better resources and support systems for these members.

4. Critical Action Items

- **Departments:** Update standards older than five years and clarify expectations for peer-reviewed scholarship.
- **University Senate:** Develop more valid and reliable instruments for student evaluations and strategies to increase response rates.
- **Candidates:** Follow the Academic Personnel Services (APS) templates strictly and reflect deeply on student evaluation patterns rather than just raw scores.
- **APS:**
 - Update the WPAF guidelines with clearer instructions.
 - Support new faculty to connect with mentors (within and outside the department).
 - Maintain, update, and publish membership lists of the personnel committees across units and levels (i.e., IUPC, CPC, LFPC).

Annual Report 2025/2026

UFPC Membership and Files Reviewed

The UFPC, consisting of the five members from across the university listed below, reviewed 35 candidates in AY 2025-2026 (See [Appendix A: Files Reviewed](#)):

Hyun-Kyung You (Child Development) - Chair

Vincent Biondo (History)

Robert Cliver (History)

Walden Freedman (Mathematics)

Nikola Hobbel (English)

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

Early Tenure Trend and Policy

In AY 2025-2026, six out of seven candidates (Group V) sought early tenure and promotion. The UFPC recognizes that the proportion of probationary faculty submitting their WPAF for early tenure and promotion has varied considerably over the past eight years. In any given year, an average of half (50.3%) of candidates seek early tenure and promotion (See [Appendix B: Group V Early Tenure & Promotion 2018-2026](#)).

In Spring 2025, the Senate approved an early tenure policy change for Appendix J. The UFPC commends the Faculty Affairs Committee for accomplishing this change. The early tenure policy will be applied to newly appointed faculty in AY 2025-2026. However, for faculty appointed before AY 2025-2026 who use earlier versions of RTP standards, early tenure and promotion cases can remain challenging due to the lack of clarity in the previous version of Appendix J. The UFPC encourages initiating units (schools, departments, and programs) to discuss what early tenure means and looks like for them, and to then describe these details in their RTP standards. This work can provide equity for candidates across the university.

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 C: Outdated Departmental Standards](#)).

Currently, Appendix J does not clarify whether standards older than five years can be used in the RTP process. In addition, Appendix J states that units can waive updating their standards if they do not feel review is necessary; nonetheless, the UFPC urges departments to work with the RTP Criteria and

Standards Committee to update standards older than five years. In particular, attention can be paid to the following in revising standards:

- What does excellence in teaching look like in your department or unit?
- What is meant by peer review in your discipline(s)?
- What criteria should be used to evaluate service?

Application of Departmental RTP Standards and Criteria

During AY 2025-26, the UFPC observed several instances in which the candidate or review bodies did not consistently apply the same set of RTP standards. When the department or program RTP standards are newly approved, the candidate can choose which standards to apply within the following two years. In any case, the IUPC, candidate, and department chair should all apply the same standards to the file. All levels of review, including both faculty committees and administrators, should specify the standards being applied and should compare the data in the candidate's PDS with those standards explicitly in their letters.

Some standards were unclear in specifying peer-reviewed dissemination as an integral part of scholarship. Initiating units, in composing their RTP Standards and Criteria, should provide specific descriptions of what constitutes peer review in their discipline(s). This description should be written in a manner that makes it straightforward for subsequent levels of review to apply.

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. The UFPC recommends that Service standards require descriptions of breadth, depth, and/or leadership activities rather than merely counting hours. However, departments that prefer to use an accounting of service hours can continue to do so.

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 or modify the counting of hours for Service. If used, hour counts should be accompanied by a description of breadth, depth, and leadership actions taken.

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

Teaching: Student Class Climate Survey

Evaluation of teaching effectiveness includes, in part, a review of anonymous student course evaluations. The UFPC recognizes significant limitations of the current class climate survey and strongly recommends its revision.

The current survey consists of ten Likert-scale questions along with opportunities for written feedback. Administered at the end of the term, students are typically asked to complete multiple surveys during a period when they are already managing final projects and preparing for final exams. This raises concerns about survey fatigue, which may affect both response rates and response quality (Adams & Umbach, 2012).

Several survey items also lack clarity or alignment with instructional practice. For example, the item “I felt encouraged to explore materials outside of class to improve on what I was learning” measures student perception rather than instructor actions. Moreover, in some pedagogical approaches—such as inquiry-based learning (e.g., the Moore Method in mathematics)—independent exploration of outside materials may be discouraged, rendering such items inappropriate.

Some CSU campuses use a smaller number of items focused on overall student experience. Research on student evaluations clearly shows that student bias, both unconscious and conscious, directed at instructor identity and disciplines (e.g., lower-division GE courses tend to receive lower scores than upper-division major electives) renders conclusions regarding instructor effectiveness based on anonymous student evaluations difficult and even compromised. Climate surveys may measure students' feelings rather than student learning (Stark & Freishtat, 2014).

In addition to concerns about individual items, the UFPC cautions against inappropriate aggregation of student evaluation data. Candidates should not average mean scores across courses, as such averages obscure variability and may misrepresent teaching effectiveness. Similarly, it is not appropriate for IUPCs, CPCs, or Deans to report “means of means.” Instead, review committees are encouraged to consider the range and distribution of item scores, along with qualitative comments, in order to form a more accurate assessment.

The shift from in-class paper evaluations to online evaluations has introduced additional issues, including lower response rates and changes in the tone of student comments (Adams & Umbach, 2012). Response rates vary widely across courses and instructors; rates below 50 percent raise concerns about representativeness and may skew results toward more favorable respondents.

Departments should monitor response rates, [follow best practices](#), and work with candidates to address low participation. This concern is particularly salient in evaluation of candidates for promotion

to the rank of Professor, where no intermediate (i.e., retention) review occurs after promotion to the rank of Associate Professor.

A substantial body of research demonstrates that student evaluations are influenced by instructor identity. Women and faculty of color, especially in STEM fields, are more likely to experience bias affecting perceptions of their knowledge, authority, and pedagogy. Although the University Senate passed a resolution in AY 2022–2023 acknowledging these concerns, student evaluation data continue to reflect such biases. As a result, numerical scores may systematically disadvantage certain faculty.

Teaching/Librarianship: Direct Classroom Observation

Teaching/librarianship effectiveness is primarily evaluated through direct observation by faculty colleagues, as stated in Appendix J [Section IX.B.1.a.4] and [Section IX.B.1.b.3].

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 can be made more valuable by routinely including a review of syllabi, course 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 2021 Appendix J update regarding the nature and quality of inclusive instruction. They can be found at: [Evaluations | Cal Poly Humboldt](#)

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].

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 offer only online classes, and some faculty teach only online classes. However, no specific online, asynchronous course evaluation standards have been established in the departmental RTP Standards and Criteria, making it challenging to assess asynchronous teaching effectiveness. In the absence of such standards, collegial evaluations of Canvas courses can follow this [APS Instructional Observation Guide](#).

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 report hours in a cohesive table, 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.

Scholarship/Creative Activities: Collegial Evaluations

As noted in Appendix J Section IX.B.2,

Faculty are expected to engage in an ongoing program of scholarly/creative activities and be guided by their department/unit criteria and standards... *Collegial/peer review appropriate to the discipline is required and shall be defined in the department/unit RTP criteria and standards* [emphasis added].

Peer review must be conducted by colleagues in the same specialty area as candidates and “where appropriate, from peers outside the university” (Appendix J. 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 in the PDS (and ideally, corroborated via collegial letters from collaborators).

Service: 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 circumstances of the community service performed (e.g., volunteering at one's own child's school), these activities should be reported in the PDS. However, 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 often well-positioned to address Service as many 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.

Scholarship/Creative Activities and Service: 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 explicitly confirms 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 Activities, do not carry the same weight as completed activities such as forthcoming works. 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 the following to candidates:

- Candidates should use the Personnel Data Sheet (PDS) template provided by Academic Personnel Services (APS) and address *all sections* of the PDS.
- Candidates should respond to and reflect on student course evaluations of their teaching/librarian performance in their teaching philosophy and/or course descriptions in the PDS. In particular, candidates should comment on or contextualize low mean item scores, or patterns of negative student comments.
- Candidates should analyze the individual mean item scores from student evaluations, rather than the "instructor rating," for insight into specific areas for reflection and growth.
- Candidates should summarize their Scholarship/Creative Activities and Service, along with self-assessment.

The UPFC recommends the following to collegial letter writers:

- Faculty letter writers should explicitly 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: [Evaluations | Cal Poly Humboldt](#). Such usage can help make collegial letters objective and consistent.
- Faculty conducting peer observations for RTP purposes are strongly encouraged to do multiple observations, when feasible, to provide evidence of a sustained pattern of teaching excellence or areas for improvement.

The UPFC recommends the following to other university committees:

- The University Senate and Faculty Affairs Committee are encouraged to identify and develop more valid and reliable instruments and questions for student 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 are encouraged to develop a process to increase response rates on student evaluations for all faculty.
- APS is encouraged to publish aggregate data for the past 10 years (to protect confidentiality in personnel matters) that reports the total number of faculty awarded early tenure and promotion by college, gender, and ethnicity.
- APS is encouraged to 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 general, 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 urges candidates to accurately and clearly present the list of collegial letters, organized by the three subareas of Teaching, Scholarly/Creative Activities, and Service, in the letter registry spreadsheet in Section 6. This is a new feature, and IUPCs need to provide support to candidates in creating the registry spreadsheet. Naming conventions still apply and should be followed according to guidelines from APS.

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.

Supporting Tenured Faculty for Continued Excellence

The UFPC has recognized that a sustained pattern of teaching excellence, significance, and quality of Scholarly/Creative Activities and Service should continue for tenured faculty seeking promotion to the rank of Professor at Humboldt. Diverse patterns exist in how tenured faculty concerted their contributions across teaching, scholarship, and service. Some placed greater emphasis on leadership roles in their department, college, university, or profession, teaching fewer courses, while others expanded their teaching repertoire, trying new strategies.

While the UFPC values the range of expertise and contributions that tenured faculty bring to the campus, teaching excellence should be the most important area which all faculty at Humboldt, regardless of tenure status, must continue to demonstrate through continuous refinement and reflection.

Many programs and departmental units offer collegial support and opportunities for tenured faculty seeking promotion, but the UFPC finds inconsistent practices across units for tenured faculty. For example, teaching observations were primarily conducted just prior to the review cycle rather than across multiple time points. Additionally, candidates should address and reflect on negative patterns identified in student evaluations and develop strategies to improve their teaching effectiveness. Participation in and reflection on professional development activities are encouraged.

Supporting and Valuing International Faculty

The UFPC recognizes that international faculty have encountered onerous immigration visa challenges despite the recent effort to support international faculty with visa applications in [Administrative Memorandum VPAA 25-04](#). These challenges may also include:

- Prolonging the tenure clock when international faculty must be rehired after a delay in extending their immigration visa,
- Facing limited funding and professional travel opportunities for Scholarly/Creative Activities due to their immigration status, and
- Experiencing 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 promote resources and practices to make Cal Poly Humboldt known as a place where international faculty are welcome and able to thrive.

Appendix A: Files Reviewed

During the 2025-2026 academic year, 37 files were scheduled for review, but two were not submitted to the UFPC.

Group	Type of Review	AY 2025-2026	AY 2024-2025
III	Retention (Reappointment) for Probationary Faculty	14	16
IV	Spring Schedule Retention (Reappointment) for Probationary Faculty*	2	0
V	Retention with Tenure/Promotion	7 (6 early)	13 (6 early)
VI	Promotion of Tenured Faculty	14	11 (3 early)
	Total	37	40

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. In response, the committee included a statement regarding the impact of the pandemic on the RTP process at the beginning of each of the recommendation letters for faculty whose review period overlapped with it.

Appendix B: Group V Early Tenure & Promotion 2018-2026

Academic Year	Early Tenure and Promotion	Total Group V Candidates	Percentage of Group V Candidates Seeking Early Tenure/Promotion
2025-26	6	7	86%
2024-25	6	13	45%
2023-24	7	16	44%
2022-23	6	12	50%
2021-22	5	16	31%

Academic Year	Early Tenure and Promotion	Total Group V Candidates	Percentage of Group V Candidates Seeking Early Tenure/Promotion
2020-21	9	19	47%
2019-20	8	12	67%
2018-19	5	15	33%

Appendix C: Outdated Departmental Standards

- Communication (last approved May 2016)
- Computer Science (last approved April 2018)
- Economics (last approved March 2017)
- Environmental Science & Management (last approved May 2019)
- History (last approved May 2020)
- International Studies (last approved May 2020)
- Native American Studies (last approved April 2017)
- Philosophy (last approved May 2016)
- Physics & Astronomy (last approved December 2020)
- School of Applied Health [formerly Kinesiology & Recreation Administration] (last approved October 2018)
- School of Education (last approved November 2019)
- University Library (last approved February 2019)
- World Languages & Culture (last approved October 2018)