

UAS FACULTY PROMOTION & TENURE PROCESSES

Promotion and tenure for full-time, tenure-track faculty at the University of Alaska is governed by faculty union collective bargaining agreements (CBAs). Most faculty belong to one of two unions: United Academics¹ or the University of Alaska Federation of Teachers (UAFT)². The process faculty undergo leading up to consideration for promotion and tenure is different, depending upon their union affiliation. This document outlines the commonalities and differences of these processes, and is intended to help faculty understand this important framework relevant to their professional careers at UAS.

ELEMENTS COMMON TO BOTH UNIONS

Fundamentally, comprehensive faculty promotion and tenure review processes should be seen as an opportunity to affirm the work of faculty members and/or to identify areas where improvements are called for. Those processes are intended to help faculty members in the performance of their professional activities and in establishing their qualification for promotion, tenure, and sabbatical leave.

The primary resource for information on faculty evaluations is the UAS Faculty Handbook (located on the Web³). Information is presented according to faculty union. It was designed this way to make it easy for faculty to reference. Faculty only need to go to one, central place – their union-affiliated section – to find information pertaining to evaluation processes, evaluation criteria, tenure and promotion eligibility, how to organize their files, and a calendar of events. Each year the Handbook is reviewed and updated by a committee of the Faculty Senate and the Provost under principles of shared governance. After formal adoption by the full Senate (and with the Provost's and Chancellor's concurrence), the revised Handbook becomes the new standard for faculty anticipating future promotion and tenure reviews.

A substantial part of UAS' faculty promotion and tenure processes are common to all faculty, despite their union affiliation. Most significantly, they share common documentary requirements and evaluation guidelines. The UAS Faculty Handbook contains information about required and suggested evaluation file material appropriate to the action at hand (i.e., application for promotion, tenure, and/or sabbatical leave), including a Faculty Evaluation File Preparation Checklist (Appendix G).

The Handbook also contains evaluation guidelines. Below is a table identifying each faculty evaluation category and set of guidelines, as well as the specific page numbers where this information can be located in the Faculty Handbook on the Web.

CATEGORY	PERFORMANCE GUIDELINES & FACULTY HANDBOOK LOCATION
Mastery of Subject	Minimum eligibility criteria for appointment and promotion are located at the following locations in the Handbook: For UNAC Faculty – page 85-86 For UNAC Library Faculty – page 106 For UAFT Faculty – pages 118-119
Teaching/ Primary Responsibility	The UAS Teaching Guidelines and the Scholarship of Teaching & Learning (SOTL) Matrix are located at Appendix B of the Handbook. The UNAC Library Faculty Statement of Standards and Evaluation Criteria and Library Faculty Primary Responsibility are located on pages 103-105.
University & Public Service	The UAS Service Guidelines are located in Appendix C.
Research/ Creative Activity	The UAS Research & Creative Activity Guidelines are located in Appendix D.
Overall Professional Development	A statement of professional development expectations and activity examples is outlined at the following locations in the Handbook: For UNAC Faculty – page 88 For UAFT Faculty – page 121

These guidelines and the faculty-submitted evaluation file are the sole resources upon which all faculty evaluation reviews are based. Reviewers consider the total professional qualifications and experience of a faculty member and judge the relative quality of activities in light of workload/primary assignment and the particular evaluation review under consideration.

¹ United Academic CBA can be found at: <http://alaska.edu/labor/unac/UNAC-2014-2016-CBA.pdf>

² UAFT CBA can be found at: <http://alaska.edu/files/labor/Final-UAFT-CBA-on-website.pdf>

³ UAS (full-time) Faculty Handbook can be found at <http://www.uas.alaska.edu/facultyhandbook/fulltimehandbook.html>

FACULTY HANDBOOK CHANGES EFFECTIVE IN ACADEMIC YEAR 2014-15

During academic year 2013-14, the Faculty Senate approved a number of Handbook changes recommended by the Faculty Handbook Committee, including changes to the promotion and tenure processes. Changes relevant to all full-time faculty include additional references which emphasize that faculty bear exclusive responsibility for the preparation, contents, and submittal of faculty evaluation files.

New language added explains that, since faculty evaluation content is the sole resource upon which comprehensive faculty evaluation reviews are based, it is imperative for faculty under review to provide complete evaluation files. Failure to provide complete files leaves evaluations with insufficient information upon which to base their conclusions and recommendations, and could result in unsatisfactory review. Missing required material may not be added after initial file submittal.

Additionally, the revised Handbook contains changes to the United Academics section so that it includes changes recently negotiated in the new United Academic collective bargaining agreement and new language in the UAFT section further refined the post-tenure review process.

ELEMENTS UNIQUE TO EACH UNION

The promotion and tenure review processes for United Academics and UAFT faculty differ in the frequency of comprehensive evaluations, number of steps in the process, composition of evaluation committees, assignment of committee membership, and calendar of activities.

United Academics

The United Academics collective bargaining agreement (CBA) contains considerable details defining the promotion and tenure process. Among other things, it specifies that non-tenured faculty will receive a comprehensive and diagnostic review during their fourth year of service for the purpose of assessing the faculty member's progress toward promotion or tenure. Tenure-track faculty must also stand for mandatory comprehensive promotion and tenure review during their seventh year of service. The United Academics collective bargaining agreement goes on to specify that non-tenured faculty undergoing review for promotion to associate professor must also be reviewed for tenure. Promotion to associate professor cannot be made without prior or simultaneous award of tenure.

The United Academics CBA structures comprehensive promotion and tenure reviews in a five-step process, proceeding in the following sequential order: 1) peer review committee, 2) dean, 3) MAU peer review committee, 4) provost, and 5) chancellor. The peer review committee is composed of at least four United Academics tenured faculty and two faculty holding full professor rank. Traditionally, the UAS United Academics faculty representative collaborates with deans and/or the provost on the determination and appointment of peer review committees. In contrast, the MAU peer review committee has not minimum composition requirements and is appointed by the provost.

The calendar of comprehensive review activities is specified in the United Academics collective bargaining agreement. It defines the dates for each step in the process, including when evaluations are due and opportunities for faculty under review to submit comments about their reviews. For ease of reference, the Office of the Provost produces an annual planner depicting the major milestones in the United Academics comprehensive review process. It can be found on the Web at the following location: <http://www.uas.alaska.edu/provost/docs/faculty-evals/AY%202014-15%20Faculty%20Evaluations%20-%20UNAC%20Project%20Schedule.pdf>

UAFT

Unlike United Academics, the UAFT collective bargaining agreement does not contain details about the faculty evaluations process. Instead, the university and UAFT agreed that it is desirable to have evaluation policies within each MAU. For UAS, these policies are located in the Faculty Handbook. The Handbook provides that non-tenured UAFT faculty members be evaluated through a full, comprehensive evaluation process in their third and fifth years of service, prior to tenure consideration in their seventh year. The UAS Faculty Handbook also provides that non-tenured UAFT faculty undergoing review for tenure are not required to also be reviewed for promotion.

UAFT comprehensive evaluation reviews involve a four-step process, proceeding in the following sequential order: 1) dean/director, 2) faculty evaluation committee, 3) provost, and 4) chancellor. The faculty evaluation committee is composed of five tenured associate or full professor UAS UAFT faculty members, selected by the Faculty Senate President from the top of a service list of qualified faculty members to serve for staggered two-year terms. Whenever possible, committee membership is distributed to include at least one member from the Sitka and/or Ketchikan campus and one member from career and technical education.

The calendar of UAFT comprehensive review activities is specified in the Faculty Handbook. It defines the dates for each step in the process, including when evaluations are due and opportunities for faculty under review to submit comments about their reviews. For ease of reference, the Office of the Provost produces an annual planner depicting the major milestones in the UAFT comprehensive review process. It can be found on the Web at the following location: <http://www.uas.alaska.edu/provost/docs/faculty-evals/AY%202014-15%20Faculty%20Evaluations%20-%20UAFT%20Project%20Schedule.pdf>