

BOYCE THOMPSON INSTITUTE

POLICY: REVIEW FOR PROMOTION –Tenure Track

ELIGIBILITY FOR TENURE AND PROMOTION

The Boyce Thompson Institute (BTI) maintains a rigorous process for faculty promotion. In the tenure track, promotion to Associate Professor is accompanied by the award of tenure. This promotion will normally not be considered prior to completion of five years as an Assistant Professor. Typically, the process will be initiated within the first three months of the sixth year, and will be completed within nine months after initiation.

If a candidate's promotion to the rank of Associate Professor is denied, (s)he must leave the Institute within a period determined by the President, normally within 12 months and no longer than 24 months.

An Associate Professor may apply for promotion to full Professor after completing five years at the Associate level, unless special circumstances warrant accelerated consideration, determined at the discretion of the President. If promotion to full Professor is denied, the candidate may not reapply within two years.

The importance of balancing family and career responsibilities necessitates flexibility in the timing of promotion applications under circumstances such as the individual's serious illness, birth or adoption of a child, or caring for a critically ill family member. An individual in such circumstances may request extension of the tenure clock, usually for up to one year, to be approved at the discretion of the President. The extension must be requested in writing within six months of the specific event. The receipt of an extension does not change the criteria for promotion.

CRITERIA FOR PROMOTION

The successful candidate for tenure and promotion will demonstrate excellence in performance of the responsibilities of the position, and high promise for continued excellence and achievement in research throughout the candidate's career at BTI. The general criteria for promotion and tenure are:

- Excellence in performance since the initial appointment or the last promotion;
- Indications that the candidate is among the most able and promising individuals the Institute could expect to attract to a position at the level being evaluated;
- For promotion to Associate Professor, the potential to achieve eminence among peers;
- For promotion to Professor, evidence that the candidate has achieved prominence and is considered a leader in her/his field.

The following considerations will be given particular significance in determining whether the criteria for promotion have been fulfilled: productivity, service and funding. Impact and visibility will also be considered. Candidates for promotion should have produced a

substantial body of scholarly work and have attained a reputation among leaders in their field for significant and creative contributions in research. In addition to success during the prior period of appointment, there should be substantial promise of continued growth and productivity. The ability to acquire extramural funding in a sustainable manner is one such indicator of positive external peer recognition of a candidate's research and scholarship, and the viability of her/his research program. The breadth and amount of service on campus, both at BTI and Cornell, and within the external community will also be evaluated, as will the quality and quantity of the candidate's collegial interactions. In research and publications, peer-recognized quality is essential. Impact is more important than the number of papers published: a smaller number of high-impact publications is valued more than numerous incremental and less definitive publications. Cross-disciplinary and collaborative research efforts are encouraged and recognized, as long as the candidate's own individual research prowess and substantial contributions are clearly discernible and documented.

INITIATION OF PROMOTION REVIEW PROCESS

The review process for tenure and promotion to Associate Professor is initiated by the President's office by notification to the candidate after completion of the candidate's fifth year as Assistant Professor. Normally, the candidate's application for promotion, with supporting materials, is submitted to the President's office within 3 months of notification. A target date for submission will be established by the President after discussion with the candidate.

The review process for promotion to Professor may be initiated by an Associate Professor at any time after completing five years at the Associate level by submitting an application and supporting materials to the President's office. Associate Professors who believe special circumstances warrant accelerated consideration for promotion to Full Professor may seek leave from the President to apply for early promotion, which may be granted or denied at the President's sole discretion.

Upon receipt of a properly constructed application for promotion, the President establishes an *ad hoc* promotion review committee, normally chaired by a tenured Professor of the Institute, within 30 days after receipt of materials. The committee will include one additional tenured BTI faculty member at the Associate or full Professor level and two tenured faculty members from Cornell University or another appropriate external organization. The Vice President for Research may also sit on the committee. The names of the committee members will remain anonymous to the scientist being reviewed, and all promotion documents will be managed by the President's office.

APPLICATION MATERIALS

The candidate is strongly encouraged to seek guidance from the President, VP for Research, and/or senior faculty in preparing promotion application materials. It is incumbent on the candidate to initiate and facilitate this process by providing draft copies of promotion materials and arranging meetings to discuss any issues arising, and obtain feedback and advice.

The candidate's application should clearly delineate the following sections:

1. **Publications:** These should be presented in the following order, and within each grouping listed chronologically from oldest to most recent.
 - a. Refereed journal publications.

- b. Non-peer-reviewed publications such as reviews, books, book chapters, and technical notes.
 - c. Patents (pending or issued). If applicable, the candidate may include estimates of license fees received by the Institute during the period of review.
 - d. Other products such as computer programs, databases, reference collections, video and other media presentations, and other significant contributions to the infrastructure of science.
 - e. Most significant publications. The candidate should provide a list and PDFs and NCBI or journal links to approximately five publications that (s)he considers representative of the most significant achievements during the evaluation period. A brief statement of significance should accompany each publication.
2. **Funding:** Identify all sources of research funding sought or received externally, indicating amounts awarded as direct costs, the duration of the awards and annual level of support. For grants with multiple investigators, the principal or co-principal investigators should be identified, and the portion awarded to the candidate clearly indicated separately from project totals. The candidate's role in preparing the proposal and conducting the research should be briefly delineated. Include in this section competitive internal funding, as well as funding from alternative sources, such as industry partnerships or foundation funding.
3. **Invited seminars and significant meeting presentations:** Provide dates and locations of all invited seminars and meeting presentations of at least 20 minutes.
4. **Short research presentations:** List presentations under 20 minutes and posters presented at meetings, providing conference names, locations and dates.
5. **University interactions and teaching:** List all academic, research, or service contributions and interactions with Cornell and/or other universities. Indicate the nature of each major interaction and/or contribution, department(s) or units involved, collaborators, and dates and/or periods of activity, as follows:
- a. **Teaching and mentoring.** Include specific information on any training of graduate and/or undergraduate students, including names, universities, degree programs, and the role of the candidate (such as "major advisor"). Contributions to formal teaching in Cornell University (and/or other university) courses should be detailed in terms of curriculum development, course numbers and number of lectures and/or labs given in each year. Student evaluation data should also be included. Informal interactions such as journal clubs and regular discussion groups should also be listed.
 - b. **Research interactions.** Formal and informal research interactions such as collaborations on research projects should be listed and briefly described, indicating the contributions of the candidate.
 - c. **Other contributions and interactions.** List all Cornell University and other university-related appointments, activities, and committees.
6. **Professional Accomplishments.** List awards and honors, professional panels and committees, professional organizations and offices held. List BTI and external items separately.

7. **Research:** State the goals and objectives of the research program, adhering to a five-page limit. Explain how the research is original, where the research program is intended to be positioned in five years, and how the research relates to the overall direction of the Institute. The statement should highlight substantive research accomplishments and may present information not immediately evident in publications or other products, including a long-term vision. The overall objective of this statement is to make a compelling case for the candidate's present or potential stature in the research discipline through discovery and creative synthesis.
8. **Peer Evaluators:** Provide the names of up to ten potential external evaluators. Evaluators should be leaders in the research field who do not have a conflict of interest.

PROMOTION PACKAGE

The following documents comprise the completed promotion package:

1. **Application:** The candidate's application.
2. **Position Description:** The appropriate position description should be provided to the committee by Human Resources.
3. **Annual Reviews:** Copies of the annual performance reviews from either the time of appointment or the last promotion should be provided to the promotion review committee by Human Resources.
4. **Peer Letters:** Letters will be solicited by the President from leaders in the research field who do not have a conflict of interest, within 30 days of appointment of the promotion review committee. The request letter should state the criteria for promotion, and stress that the letters should provide evaluation of the candidate, not support. Evaluators may be identified by the promotion review committee and the candidate, but the choice of an evaluator must meet the conditions of the first sentence of this paragraph. If the candidate is aware of individuals who, in her/his opinion, cannot provide an unbiased evaluation, the candidate should so inform the President and give the reason. Peer letters should include one to three from tenured Cornell University faculty, including one letter from the chairperson of the department of the candidate's adjunct appointment, and one or two letters from tenured faculty in that or other departments with which the candidate is most closely associated. At least five and up to ten letters will be obtained.
5. **Other Letters:** The President will solicit letters from 3-5 former students, postdoctoral associates, or other trainees from the candidate's laboratory. These evaluations should address the candidate's interactions with the trainee, and skills and ability as a mentor. Additionally, letters may be solicited from co-authors on publications and co-investigators on research projects.

These evaluations should address the candidate's contributions in terms of conceptualization, implementation and preparation of publications.

6. **Faculty Letters:** Each tenured faculty member at the Associate or Full Professor level at the Institute will receive a copy of an Assistant Professor's promotion

package (except annual reviews); only tenured Full Professors will be involved in promotion reviews for Associate Professors. These faculty will meet as a group to discuss the candidate's application for tenure and each will provide a letter evaluating the candidate with respect to the general criteria above, concluding with a recommendation regarding promotion. These letters should be addressed to the President and provided to the promotion review committee.

All letters are confidential documents available only to the members of the promotion review committee and BTI faculty involved in the evaluation process. All request letters shall state this confidentiality requirement.

PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION AND DECISION

All documents in the promotion package, including faculty, peer and other letters are to be compiled and forwarded to the promotion review committee within 150 days after the committee is appointed.

The committee shall review the complete promotion package, and deliberate as a committee over the candidate's promotion. Committee deliberations will be held in strict confidence. After the committee completes its deliberations, it will summarize its findings and make a recommendation in writing to the President. Dissenting views, if any, may be included. The committee's findings and recommendation will be transmitted to the president within 180 days after the committee is appointed.

The President will carefully consider the complete promotion package along with the findings and recommendation of the review committee, and make the final decision regarding promotion. A decision to promote a candidate to Associate Professor is accompanied by an award of tenure. A written decision will be transmitted to the candidate within 30 days of the President's receipt of the review committee's recommendation.

APPEAL

An unfavorable tenure decision may be appealed pursuant to BTI's Policy and Procedure for Appealing a Negative Tenure Decision. Unfavorable review of promotion to Full Professor is final and cannot be appealed.

DOCUMENTATION:

The promotion package will be maintained in the President's Office during the review process. Copies of the candidate's annual reviews will be maintained in a separate folder with access limited to the promotion review committee.

Upon conclusion of the process, complete documentation including the committee's recommendations and President's decision will be maintained in a separate file in the Human Resources Office. Promotion review materials are not maintained in the individual's personnel file.

TIME LIMITATIONS:

The time limitations set forth in this policy are to be strictly construed, but may be extended for good cause at the discretion of the President.