I. Introduction

The primary mission of the School of Computing (SoC) is undergraduate and graduate education, research and outreach. The SoC strives to combine excellent faculty, state-of-the-art research laboratories and well-funded research programs to provide opportunities for a stimulating academic environment that nurtures leading edge research and innovative education in Computer Science, Engineering, and Technology. The complementary spectrum of computing disciplines offered by SoC is unique and allows the SoC to offer a strong, diverse series of programs. The SoC policies for both tenure and promotion are designed to enhance the SoC's ability to meet the overall goals.

The criteria for tenure and promotion are the same for each faculty rank within the SoC. However, the assessment of performance will be weighted towards the criteria which are consistent with each program’s emphasis on teaching or research. The assessment varies dependent upon to which of the following programs a faculty member is assigned:

- Science-based program
- Technology-based program
- Hattiesburg-based program
- Gulf Park-based program

When evaluating faculty performance, the SoC expects sustained quality performance in the three areas of teaching, research, and service, while recognizing that the central criteria for tenure and promotion in rank are teaching and research productivity. In this Tenure and Promotions Policies document, the SoC both defines the criteria for quality performance in teaching, research and service, and outlines the measures for assessing performance that is consistent with the criteria.

The SoC policy regarding faculty evaluation for promotion and tenure is comprised of the policies of The University of Southern Mississippi, the College of Science and Technology (CoST), and the School of Computing. The University policy is outlined in the University of Southern Mississippi Faculty Handbook. The specific college policies are detailed in the tenure and promotion guidelines of the CoST. The Tenure and Promotion Policies document establishes the SoC policies regarding promotion and tenure within the SoC and is intended to apply only to the years in which the document is in effect and is not retroactive.
II. Criteria for Promotion and Tenure

The criteria for appointment and/or promotion to Associate Professor, Professor and Tenured Professor are listed below.

A. Criteria for promotion to Associate Professor

For promotion to the rank of Associate Professor, a candidate is expected to:

- Hold a doctorate or terminal degree in the discipline
- Be a recognized teacher
- Be a recognized researcher
- Participate in the professional work of the discipline
- Participate in service to the SoC, the CoST and the University

A recognized teacher would typically:

- Teach at least two courses each semester at the undergraduate or graduate level
- Offer undergraduate or graduate courses in his/her field of expertise
- Develop new undergraduate and graduate courses to reflect the growth of knowledge in program-related fields and/or to reflect industry needs and trends
- Revise existing undergraduate and graduate courses to reflect the growth of knowledge in fields relevant to those courses and/or to reflect industry needs and trends
- Guide and supervise undergraduate and graduate research activities
- Advise students academically as well as professionally
- Earn an average or better rating in student evaluations in most of the courses taught compared to peers within the SoC
- Receive positive student feedback in most of the courses taught

A faculty member who is a recognized researcher would typically:

- Be active in an area of research or technology that is current, as exemplified by funding opportunities and/or publication opportunities
- Submit, on average, one or more single-investigator or collaborative proposals per year
- Attract sufficient funding to support senior personnel, if any, and one or more graduate and undergraduate students involved in research activities on an ongoing basis. Even though technology funding opportunities are typically limited, faculty members assigned to a technology-based program are expected to demonstrate a sustained pattern of proposal submissions
- Publish, on average, one or more articles, either reporting original research or performing literature review, in peer-reviewed journals per year. Faculty members assigned to a Technology-based program may meet this expectation by publishing significant technical articles
• Present original research results or technological innovations, as appropriate, in one or more peer-reviewed conferences, on average, per semester
• Encourage and engage one or more graduate and/or undergraduate student research presentations in conferences on an annual basis
• Participate in technology transfer, industrial contracts and/or industrial internships. Faculty members assigned to a Science-based program are exempt from this expectation.

A faculty member who participates in professional work would typically:

• Be a member and participate in discipline-specific professional organizations
• Be a reviewer for conferences and journals or technical publications, as appropriate.
• Serve in organizing conferences
• Obtain professional licensure, registration or certification. Faculty members assigned to a Science-based program are exempt from this expectation.

A faculty member who participates in service to the SoC, the CoST and the University would typically:

• Serve on SoC, CoST and/or University committees
• Chair SoC committees
• Participate in SoC faculty meetings
• Participate in SoC outreach activities including recruitment, new student previews, and alumni relationships
• Participate in SoC assessment and accreditation activities

B. Criteria for promotion to Professor

For promotion to the rank of Professor, a candidate is expected to:

• Hold a doctorate or terminal degree in the discipline
• Be an accomplished teacher
• Be an accomplished researcher
• Mentor junior faculty members
• Participate significantly in professional work of the discipline
• Participate significantly in service to the SoC, the CoST and the University
• Exhibit collegiality in professional participation, collaboration and involvement

An accomplished teacher would typically:

• Offer undergraduate or graduate courses in his/her field of expertise
• Develop new undergraduate and graduate courses to reflect the growth of knowledge in program-related fields and/or to reflect industry needs and trends
• Revise existing undergraduate and graduate courses to reflect the growth of knowledge in fields relevant to those courses and/or to reflect industry needs and trends
• Guide and supervise undergraduate and graduate research activities
• Advise students academically as well as professionally
• Earn an above average rating in student evaluations in most of the courses taught, compared to his/her peers within the SoC
• Receive positive student feedback in most of the courses taught

A faculty member who is an accomplished researcher would typically:

• Be active in an area of research and/or technology, as appropriate, that is current as exemplified by funding opportunities and publication opportunities
• Submit, on average, one or more single-investigator or collaborative proposals per semester
• Attract sufficient funding to support senior personnel, if any, and one or more graduate and/or undergraduate students involved in research activities on an ongoing basis. Even though Technology funding opportunities are typically limited, faculty members assigned to a Technology-based program are expected to demonstrate a sustained pattern of proposal submissions.
• Publish, on average, two or more articles, either reporting original research or performing literature review, in peer-reviewed journals per year (averaged over the number of years in the associate professor position). Faculty members assigned to a technology-based program may meet this expectation by publishing significant technical articles.
• Present original research results in one or more peer-reviewed conferences, on average, per semester
• Encourage and support one or more graduate and/or undergraduate student research presentations in conferences on an annual basis
• Participate in technology transfer, industrial contracts and/or industrial internships. Faculty members assigned to a Science-based program are exempt from this expectation.

A faculty member who participates significantly in professional work would typically:

• Be a leader in discipline-specific professional organizations
• Be an editor for conference proceedings and/or journals
• Serve in organizing conferences
• Obtain professional licensure, registration or certification. Faculty members assigned to a Science-based program are exempt from this expectation.

A faculty member who participates significantly in service to the SoC, the CoST and the University would typically:

• Chair SoC, CoST and University committees
• Take an active lead in SoC faculty meetings
• Take an active lead in SoC outreach activities including recruitment, new student previews, and alumni relationships
• Take an active lead in SoC assessment and accreditation activities

A faculty member who exhibits collegiality would typically:
• Interact with faculty and students in a constructive and professional manner
• Share committee assignments
• Participate in SoC, CoST and University functions
• Provide advice in areas of research and teaching to faculty and students
• Collaborate with colleagues as appropriate

This level of accomplishment of a Professor candidate must be supported by at least three letters of recommendation from nationally recognized experts in his/her area of research who agree to serve as external referees. The Tenure and Promotion Committee determines the referees who are acceptable. The chair of the Tenure and Promotion Committee solicits and receives the recommendations.

C. Criteria to receive Tenure

Criteria for tenure are similar to those required for promotion in rank to Associate Professor. In addition, collegiality in professional participation, collaboration and involvement is considered. The SoC formally evaluates progress towards tenure through a pre-tenure review process. The pre-tenure review process is a cumulative review that generally occurs during the third year of University employment as a full-time, tenure-track faculty member. Additionally, the tenure review normally occurs during the sixth year of University employment as a full-time, tenure-track faculty member. All SoC tenure procedures including criteria are aligned with the policies of the CoST and the University.

A faculty member who exhibits collegiality would typically:

• Interact with faculty and students in a constructive and professional manner
• Share committee assignments
• Participate in SoC, CoST and University functions
• Provide advice in areas of research and teaching to faculty and students
• Collaborate with colleagues as appropriate

III. Activity Offset Guidelines

The SoC recognizes that the nature of each discipline within the SoC, as well as the mandate of the different campuses necessitate dissimilar responsibility and workload assignments to similarly-ranked faculty.

For example, the primary mission of the Engineering Technology programs is undergraduate education, including provision for graduate education and applied research and/or scholarly activities. In accordance with national norms, Engineering Technology programs incorporate heavy teaching emphasis and faculty members typically receive limited opportunities and funding for research activity. Traditional research funding is generally limited or not available to Engineering Technology programs. However, faculty members in Engineering Technology programs are expected to identify with an area of professional growth and scholarship relating to their primary teaching assignment and engage in activities that ensure continued
development in the fields associated within the discipline. Consequently, evaluation of Engineering Technology faculty members is typically weighted toward teaching with appropriate levels of relevant scholarship and professional service.

The primary mission of the SoC on the Gulf Coast campus is undergraduate education, including provision for undergraduate research. As a result, evaluation of faculty members in SoC program on the Gulf Coast campus is weighted more toward teaching excellence.

Some sponsored research is expected at each level of promotion. Therefore, the SoC recognizes that the requirements for tenure and promotion must also take into account increased responsibility and workload assignments. Faculty members who receive a reduced teaching load are expected to provide clear evidence of increased research and scholarly activities and productivity. In addition, for any SoC programs or campuses, a faculty member who is extraordinarily successful in one area, but weak in another, may present a case for offsetting activities and responsibilities when the faculty member applies for either promotion or tenure. However, in all cases the collegiality requirement remains in effect.

IV. Procedures for Evaluation of Faculty for Promotion and Tenure

A SoC faculty member who is applying for tenure and/or promotion must follow the guidelines and policies of the University of Southern Mississippi (http://www.usm.edu/provost/Faculty_Handbook.pdf), the College of Science and Technology (http://www.usm.edu/cost/cost_bylaws_070104.doc), and the School of Computing. The SoC policies are written to be consistent with all other higher authorities. In any conflict with policies of the higher authorities, the department defers to the higher authority. The timeline for consideration of a candidate’s eligibility for tenure and/or promotion must follow the guidelines stated in the most current version of the CoST bylaws. The SoC process for tenure and/or promotion is outlined as follows.

- Faculty who apply for promotion or tenure shall prepare their dossier in accordance with the format set by the Provost, taking into account any additional departmental and/or college guidelines that must be met.
- The faculty dossier for promotion to associate professor or full professor or for tenure shall be submitted to the school before the school’s deadline.
- For tenure consideration, a personnel committee of all tenured faculty meet to evaluate the applicant.
- For promotion, a personnel committee of faculty members within the school who have the same professorial rank or higher as that requested by the applicant meet to evaluate the applicant.
- The personnel committee elects a chair for the committee, evaluates the applicant’s dossier, and then prepares a letter listing the committee’s perceived strengths and weaknesses of the applicant.
- The applicant receives the committee’s preliminary evaluation and is given one week in which to respond in writing. The applicant is not under obligation to
respond but must notify the committee in writing if he/she will not submit a response.

- The personnel committee then meets again to consider any applicant response submitted and votes on the applicant’s request for tenure or promotion.
- In consultation with the committee members the committee chair prepares a letter that expresses the findings of the committee and the result of the vote.
- The letter is signed by all committee members and included in the applicant’s dossier.
- The school director prepares a separate evaluation letter that is also placed in the candidate’s dossier. The school director then forwards the complete dossier to the Dean and provides copies of both evaluation letters to the candidate, and for the school file.