The University of Southern Mississippi
Department of Marine Science

Policy on Promotion and Tenure (approved by the tenured faculty, 7/14/09):

University of Southern Mississippi
Department of Marine Science
Requirements and Expectations
For Promotion and Tenure

The policies stated herein were originally developed and approved by the Center for Marine Science Tenure and Promotion Committee based on recommendations of the Center for Marine Science Tenure and Promotion guidelines committee as well as the CoST and USM policies on tenure and promotion from assistant to associate and from associate to professor. These policies have been reviewed and approved by the Department of Marine Science Tenure and Promotion committee (consisting of all tenured faculty). The policies are intended to provide additional guidance to those guidelines already supplied by CoST and the university.

TENURE:

In keeping with the policies presented in Chapter 9 of the USM Faculty Handbook, tenure and promotion are separate issues that are evaluated by the same process. That is, tenure and promotion evaluations and decisions are made separately, but are based upon the information submitted to the committee in the tenure/promotion dossier (volumes I and II) and on letters solicited from external reviewers. Successful candidates for tenure must have demonstrated sustained quality performance in each of the three university missions of teaching, research or creative activities, and service. In the Department of Marine Science, a typical weighting of effort for performance evaluation in each of the three areas would be teaching, 30%, research, 50%, and service, 20%. These percentages may be adjusted in individual cases through consultations between the faculty member and Chair and with the approval of the Dean of the College of Science and Technology.

Candidates can apply for tenure during their sixth complete academic year in residence at USM. For those candidates given some amount of prior credit toward tenure, application for tenure can be made during the year in which USM service and prior credit is equal to six years. In accordance with USM policies, a candidate may request that evaluation for tenure be delayed for a maximum of one year. USM policies do not allow for early application for tenure.

Promotion in academic rank does not necessarily imply that one merits academic tenure. However, in most cases requirements for tenure and those for promotion from assistant to associate professor are essentially the same. That is, successful assistant professor candidates for tenure are generally promoted to associate professor concurrently. The guidelines for promotion to associate professor are detailed below.
PROMOTION FROM ASSISTANT TO ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR:

As stated in the Faculty Handbook, "In cases involving promotions from assistant professor to associate professor and from associate professor to professor, candidates must serve at least five (5) years in the lower rank, thereby making a recommendation for promotion permissible during the fifth year of service in the lower rank and an approved promotion effective at the beginning of the following academic year." The successful candidate for promotion will have maintained sustained quality performance in all three of the categories of the university mission: teaching, research/creative activities, and service. High levels of performance must be achieved in at least two of these categories. Performance guidelines for each of the categories are provided below. Applications for tenure and promotion to associate professor are generally considered at the same time (e.g. during the sixth full academic year in residence at USM). It should be noted that CoST considers each issue separately. Candidates with exceptional records in all three of the university mission categories may elect to apply for promotion during their fifth full academic year in residence at USM. Such candidates should consult the university guidelines for this prior to submitting an application. Also, under certain circumstances, a candidate may request that evaluation for promotion to associate professor be delayed for a maximum of one academic year. Such candidates should consult the university guidelines for this prior to submitting a request for a one-year delay.

Teaching: Teaching is the effective presentation of current knowledge both in and outside of the classroom. In the classroom, effective teaching includes setting and maintaining reasonable academic goals and standards and objectively evaluating the students' success at meeting these goals and standards. Outside the classroom, effective teaching includes successful guidance and direction leading to the completion of student research and projects, publication of teaching materials that influence the academic community beyond USM and DMS and other professional activities including the development of courses and participation in curriculum development.

The Department administers both research-intensive graduate degree programs and an undergraduate B.S. degree program in marine science. Because of this, expectations for teaching loads may vary among faculty members within the department and may differ from those for faculty in other departments at USM. As such in the case of research-oriented faculty (i.e., faculty maintaining an active, externally-funded research program), the successful candidate will be expected to have taught 3-4 credit hours of formal classroom courses each semester, to have developed at least one graduate or upper undergraduate level course in his/her area of specialization, and to have maintained satisfactory ratings from student and/or peer evaluations of classroom performance conducted each semester. For teaching intensive faculty, a higher level of classroom effort would be expected. In addition, it is expected that each candidate will actively participate in advising and providing funding for graduate students and will have served as major professor for two or more students who have completed their M.S. or Ph.D. degree programs.
Research  The successful candidate is expected to have actively participated in research and/or creative activities and have a strong record in these areas. Research is the generation of new knowledge and thus, it is an integral aspect of the education and graduate student training processes. Because research transcends the boundaries of DMS or USM, research performance must be evaluated with respect to the usual standards of the national/international oceanographic community. Research performance is primarily evaluated on the candidate’s record of publication of results in the referred scientific literature and ability to obtain funds to support research (including funding of graduate students) and in.

Specifically, we expect the successful candidate to have developed an on-going research program in his/her area of expertise with opportunities and support for graduate student research, to have obtained extramural funding by the second or third year of service at USM and to have authored or co-authored an average of at least two papers per year in the peer-reviewed scientific literature, with at least one first author or corresponding author paper per year. In the case of co-authorship, there should be evidence of a substantial contribution to the science and/or writing. It is also expected that the successful candidate will present his/her research before scientific audiences on a regular basis. These expectations should be viewed as guidelines. Research quality is an important consideration which will be taken into account during the evaluation process. Teaching intensive faculty members are also expected to actively engage in research, although their performance should be evaluated in the context of greater teaching responsibilities. Research involving both graduate and undergraduate students is encouraged.

Service  There are several areas of service in which a successful candidate is expected to participate. These include service to the department, college/university, scientific community and to the public. Examples of service activities are provided in the CoST Tenure and Promotion Policies and Merit Pay Plan documents. Service to the department is mandatory and includes participation on departmental and student committees, student recruitment, and representing DMS at commencement (at least one time per year) and other official functions. Other areas of service are voluntary, but it is expected that the successful candidate will have taken advantage of a significant number of opportunities to serve as an ambassador for DMS. The area of service to the scientific community is one in which the successful candidate is expected to have participated regularly. This may take the form of reviews of research proposals and/or manuscripts submitted to the scientific literature, participation in scientific societies and/or seminar series, and participation in workshops and conferences.

PROMOTION TO PROFESSOR:

Candidates for the rank of professor are teacher-scholars with a well established national/international standing in their field of expertise and a strong record of contribution to the university and marine science community. Successful candidates will have a record of sustained high level performance in each of the three areas of the university mission discussed above. The criteria for evaluation for promotion to professor are similar to those for promotion to associate professor with the following exceptions. Candidates will be expected to have
provided funding for students and to have served as the major advisor for at least four students who were successful in earning graduate degrees, with one or more at the Ph.D. level, in their area of expertise. In addition, candidates must be recognized by their peers as having made a major contribution to their specific field of expertise, as indicated by explicit evaluation by at least five external reviewers.

TENTATIVE TIME TABLE:

Candidates for promotion and tenure should be prepared to develop their materials according to the following timetable, beginning during the academic year prior to that in which the tenure/promotion evaluation will occur. Consult the College calendar for specific dates.

Early May - Candidates for promotion and tenure should submit a letter of intent and a draft CV, in CoST tenure/promotion format, to the DMS Tenure and Promotion Committee. This is intended to be an aid to the candidate in the tenure/promotion dossier preparation process.

Early October - Final copies of the Tenure and Promotion Dossier, Volumes I and II, are due to the department for consideration by the DMS Tenure and Promotion Committee. External letters are to be requested from reviewers by the chair.

Mid-October – DMS tenure and promotion committee provides recommendation to department chair. Faculty member is notified of recommendation by department tenure and promotion committee.

November – Chair submits tenure and promotion dossier and recommendations to College Advisory Committee (Dean’s office).

January – College Advisory Committee submits tenure and promotion dossiers and recommendations to Dean.

February - Dean submit tenure and promotion dossiers and recommendations to University Advisory Committee.

April - Provost and Vice President for Research and Economic Development submit tenure and promotion dossiers and recommendations to President.