RTP Policy and Practice Recommendations

This document contains recommendations from the AY20-21 URTPC to improve RTP processes at CSUCI for all who play a role overseeing or carrying out the processes. A separate document contains our recommendations for faculty submitting RTP portfolios.

Recommendations for <mark>Senate or a Senate committee</mark>, <mark>administrators in the Division of Academic Affairs</mark> and those for <mark>programs and/or program chairs</mark> are highlighted in yellow, green, and aqua, respectively. A separate compilation of recommendations is provided for **faculty submitting portfolios**; where a recommendation pertains to such faculty the phrase is boldfaced in this document.

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Clarifications Needed

Clarify evaluation of guiding student research

We have observed substantial disparities in compensation and evaluation standards across programs (and even within the same program) with respect to faculty mentoring of student research. Some faculty supervise students as part of their regular teaching assignments, while some faculty mentor students as teaching overloads. Additionally, some faculty engage in student research as part of their service activities without additional reward, while other faculty receive compensation (such as course releases and/or grants/stipends). As a result of these disparities, mentoring of student research may be associated with multiple performance areas. URTPC has observed that the same mentorship is placed in multiple categories in some faculty portfolios. Moreover, differing treatment among programs of faculty guiding of student research has resulted in inequitable situations on campus.

Actions: The URTPC recommends the following:
1. Senate (via the Faculty Affairs Committee, aka FAC) and the Provost develop policy that provides clear guidelines for categorizing and rewarding faculty who invest in student research.
2. Programs provide clarification and expectations in their PPS and guidance in helping faculty prepare their RTP portfolios.
3. **Faculty submitting portfolios** clearly identify a single performance area in which student research supervision belongs and provide a brief explanation for the categorization in the narrative. If the mentorship is potentially associated with more than one evaluation category, we recommend placing it under the most appropriate category to avoid redundancy.

Clarify service contributions

Portfolios generally include service activities that fall into two categories: services performed as part of the standard service obligation (for which TT faculty receive 3 WTUs per semester), and special service assignments (for which they are generally selected or elected) which come with reassigned time to compensate for the workload. The latter are very common on our campus, from common leadership positions (Chair, Senate officers, etc.) to program tasks (Program Advisor, self-study, etc.) to temporary positions or tasks undertaken for other parts of the university (leading initiatives, etc.). Service roles and tasks need to be assessed differently if they are compensated because they represent a different part of faculty workload from the 3 WTUs of routine service – and because doing otherwise can lead to significant inequities across evaluations when reassigned time effectively allows normal workload to account for service. That is not to diminish or disregard the significant service that occurs in reassigned roles, but to suggest that we need to come to collective understandings about how they will be evaluated. Is it sufficient if nearly all of a faculty member's service is completed under reassigned time? Our campus has never had any clear policy about how to evaluate compensated/reassigned services – and that can lead to variability across levels of review, etc.

Action: We recommend that ==Senate== RTP policy address this issue specifically.

Clarify work and roles in newer publication formats

Venues for publication are proliferating with the creation of online journals. Given the ease of entry into publication, that creates a very uneven terrain for publication, which can lead to significant inequities as faculty choose to publish in different venues. (The challenges aren't *solely* related to the onset of digital publications, but certainly multiplied by them.) The URTPC has seen credit given for publication in peer reviewed research journals that are arguably (or demonstrably, in some cases) neither peer reviewed nor research journals in any academically accepted sense of the terms. (The default is to use any venue's own definition of its status, which is neither dependable nor sound policy in the RTP context.)

Action: The URTPC requests that ==Senate== revise RTP policy to give clear and effective guidance in the evaluation of research publications that specifically defines the parameters of "peer review" as well as "research journal." That will not only allow reviewers to match that definition against the venues that are evident in a file, but (more importantly) will enable faculty to select venues that fit our <u>collective definition</u> of peer reviewed research journals.

Clarify accounting for WTUs

One of the unnecessary challenges faced by the URTPC is the informal accounting of workload to make sure that we have accounted for all of the activities of faculty members under review. Sometimes that occurs when there is reassigned time that is unaccounted for, or when the number of WTUs for courses is uncertain, among other situations.

Action: The URTPC recommends that for every portfolio submitted, **the faculty member** include a simple accounting of the 15 WTUs for each semester under review. That brief accounting could simply take the form of a list of courses with WTUs indicated, as well as the standard 3 WTU for service, along with any additional reassignments, buy-outs, etc. That very brief accounting will avoid confusions at all levels of review and save the URTPC the time it takes to try to clarify those confusions. The URTPC further recommends that ==FAC== consider enshrining this recommendation in policy.

Clarify what constitutes "widespread recognition" for early promotion and tenure

Under SP 17-08, Section P "Requirements for Promotion" Number 3, it is stated that "early promotion is normally reserved for those whose accomplishments have brought *widespread recognition* to the individual and the University from the academic community and/the general public." The URTPC recommends that the university adopt a policy that defines what "widespread recognition" means. This will help faculty who are considering applying for early tenure and promotion evaluate their standing in this respect, while ensuring that reviewers, at every level of review, evaluate each portfolio with a clearly defined set of criteria.

Action: The URTPC recommends these actions:
1. Senate adopts a policy that clearly defines "widespread recognition" for all faculty and reviewers.
2. Faculty Affairs includes any new definition in their RTP workshops for probationary faculty and all reviewers.

Clarify the role of non-stateside teaching in RTP considerations

Faculty occasionally or regularly teach courses outside of their standard CSUCI contract, whether these are courses offered through Extended University or other institutions. Earlier levels of review sometimes cite this teaching as part of their evaluation. URTPC clarified with the Faculty Affairs Office that only stateside teaching is within the scope of the RTP review.

Action: The URTPC recommends these actions:

1. FAC includes a line in RTP policy reflecting the fact that non-stateside teaching is outside the scope of RTP evaluations.
2. Programs consider adding a similar line to their PPS documents.

Remove the scoring system from RTP reviews

The scoring system currently associated with evaluations in RTP review processes present several problems for clear and consistent reviews, in spite of offering an illusion of objectivity:
- *Unclear metrics & inflated scores:* Distinctions between scores of 3, 4, and 5 for the three areas of review are at best poorly articulated. Some Program Personnel Standards do not attempt to articulate the difference, and some Program Personnel Committees use the lack of clarity to dramatically inflate scores. The result is little to no consistency in assignments of scores across various levels of review, or within the same level of review across departments.
- *Lack of clarity in retention reviews:* There are also issues stemming from scores of 3 or above in a retention review as these are sometimes interpreted as "ready to apply for tenure" when reviewers mean "on a trajectory to obtain tenure if the actions and achievements are sustained," potentially leading to ill-advised applications for early tenure and promotion.
- *Fundamental illogic:* The requirement for tenure associated with the system (two 4s, with one being in the area of teaching) defies fundamental logic in that faculty must *exceed* expectations for tenure to *meet* expectations for tenure.

Problems associated with the rating system have unfortunate results – both for reviewers and for reviewees.
- *Wasted time & energy:* One result is that far too much time and energy is spent by reviewers debating and then justifying whether a portfolio merits a "4" or a "5" – time and

energy which could more productively be spent providing useful and developmental feedback to the faculty members under review.

- *Unnecessary ill will:* Those whose portfolios are

being evaluated are frequently disgruntled upon receiving a "4" although a "4" should convey the message of "you're doing fine and have more than met the standard." More problematically, merely meeting expectations (3) is generally seen as a negative review and can generate substantial ill will.

From the perspective of the URTPC, the rating system serves no useful purpose in either evaluating or developing faculty and leads to counterproductive results for both reviewees and reviewers.

Action: The URTPC recommends that FAC change policy to eliminate the numerical system, and to give reviewers two options for tenure and/or promotion reviews (e.g., "meets the standards" and "does not meet the standards"), and another two options for retention reviews (e.g., "on a trajectory to meet the standards" and "not yet on a trajectory to meet the standards"). Beyond that, reviews should seek to recognize contributions, assess those contributions against expectations, and provide developmental feedback to lead toward deepened contributions and meaningful careers.

Ensure all faculty and all levels of review take university policy as well as Program Personnel Standards into account

Probationary faculty benefit from having a clear understanding of RTP policies while several reviews at various levels did not apply the relevant university policy.

Action: The URTPC recommends the following action that FAC consider an addition to policy requiring that all PPS documents include explicit reference to the existence of university policy on RTP together with the expectation that candidates and reviewers at all levels of review should incorporate both the PPS and the relevant university policy in their work.

Provide guidance and assistance in assembling portfolios

The inconsistencies in file organization and submissions across RTP files, even in the same program, can render an already monumental responsibility of file review into a mind-numbing one. While some faculty figured out how to make their files relatively easy access in the digital format, many clearly struggled with the submission process in ways that were detrimental to their files, with materials referenced but missing, or others mistakenly duplicated in the wrong area. This causes unnecessary anxieties and frustration at every level from faculty submitting their files to every level of review.

Actions: The URTPC recommends the following:

1. ==Senate== work with Faculty Affairs to standardize the format for everyone
2. The <mark style="background:lime">Faculty Affairs Office</mark> provide a template or templates (in Word, LaTeX, whatever other software people use) of well-organized, hyperlinked portfolios: people assembling their portfolios could import their existing files, image scans, music samples, etc. into these templates to (more easily) create an organized portfolio in which supporting evidence is clearly linked to the narratives.

Reminders for Program Personnel Committees, Chairs, and Deans conducting reviews

The URTPC offers these reminders in the belief that clarity of roles and expectations at each level of review will both create a more cohesive cycle of review for those being reviewed and potentially ease the process for further levels of review. While some reminders may seem superfluous, each arises from one or more cases encountered by the URTPC in AY20-21. With respect to Action #5, URTPC reasons that objective reviews are of more value to future levels of review than is simply promoting a candidate's case. Likewise, embellishing a review with personal or outside knowledge for which there is no evidence in the portfolio complicates things for URTPC members spend time looking in vain for absent evidence.

Action:
1. Chairs are responsible for verifying that a faculty members' portfolio is complete prior to submission (per Section L of SP 15-15 and Section K of SP 17-08).
2. Program Personnel Committees, Chairs and Deans are responsible for reviewing the portfolio and the evidence provided in the appendices (as opposed to reviewing only the narratives and/or prior letters of review).
3. Program Personnel Committees, Chairs and Deans are to make clear recommendations, especially in cases of early tenure and promotion.
4. Program Personnel Committees, Chairs and Deans are to tie their evaluations clearly to the PPS criteria and the relevant university policy.
5. Program Personnel Committees, Chairs and Deans should consider their role to be that of knowledgeable, neutral evaluators.

Avoid RTP evaluations of administrators

Twice in the last two years, faculty and deans have wrestled with reviews in which the individual applying for tenure and/or promotion was serving as an interim administrator. This can create situations in which faculty review the portfolio of an administrator who has authority over their working conditions, and/or in which faculty and deans review materials outside of their disciplinary expertise. Program personnel standards are challenging to apply, particularly in the area of service, when the portfolio submitted is that of an individual who has been serving as an administrator.

Action: The ==Provost== and ==Senate Exec== designate a small task force to research how analogous situations are managed at other CSUs and to consider making recommendations for changes in policy or practice.

Expect anti-bias and inequity training of URTPC (and potentially all levels of review)

There is a vast academic literature on issues of bias and inequity in rank and tenure decisions. These issues may occur in student evaluations of teaching as well as in faculty peer evaluations and administrative evaluations. Beginning in AY18-19, members of the URTPC began the practice of voluntarily reviewing such literature, presenting on main findings and discussing these findings as a committee prior to beginning evaluations. This year's URTPC undertook a more systematic review and created a repository of relevant literature with the intention of making the work more sustainable for future URTPC committee members. We believe that this work resulted in more equitable evaluations for faculty at the URTPC level by ensuring that all URTPC members had vocabulary for and baseline familiarity with ways that biases and inequities can creep into evaluations. Faculty submitting portfolios could benefit from having access to an overview of this literature, as it may aid their interpretations of their SRTs or their peer evaluations. All levels of review could be enhanced by a more cohesive understanding of how issues of bias play into student ratings and comments and peer evaluations. There are issues of breadth and sustainability that are beyond the scope of URTPC to address.

Action: The URTPC recommends the following actions:
1. ==Senate== (initially FAC) and ==the Provost== consider whether RTP policy should include an expectation of training on issues of bias in student and peer evaluation as part of the work reviewing faculty portfolios at any stage of the RTP process.
2. The ==Faculty Affairs Office== take on the charge of maintaining a basic library of the current literature on bias in student evaluations of teaching and peer evaluations and of providing an up-to-date overview at the beginning of each academic year. (This could be done, for instance, by building on this year's records and hiring a faculty member to update annually.)

Address the unsustainable nature of URTPC workload

The workload for URTPC is simply unsustainable given the current structures and expectations. A careful estimate of the average time per URTPC member during the 6-week review window yields a total of 189 hours, or **an average of 31.5 hours of work dedicated to these reviews each week**, on top of each faculty member's own teaching, scholarship, and service loads. The total number of reviews that must be conducted by the URTPC has grown -- due to resumption of hiring post-recession and the structure of our faculty -- and can easily be predicted to continue growing. (See samples in Figure 1.) Additional factors leading to increased average time per review include a new Senate policy that was not taken into account during submission

of some portfolios and some earlier levels of review as well as increased complexity of some program personnel standards.

The URTPC's work is not restricted to the 6-week review period. The members of the URTPC voluntarily committed themselves to a distributed review of the literature on issues of bias and inequity in rank and tenure decisions prior to beginning reviews. Since finishing reviews, they have spent many hours preparing recommendations to improve RTP processes at CSUCI for faculty submitting materials and those engaged in all levels of review. Work outside the review processes also includes reviewing new and revised Program Personnel Standards. These efforts have required the commitment of an average of an additional 25 hours (to date) outside of the review period.
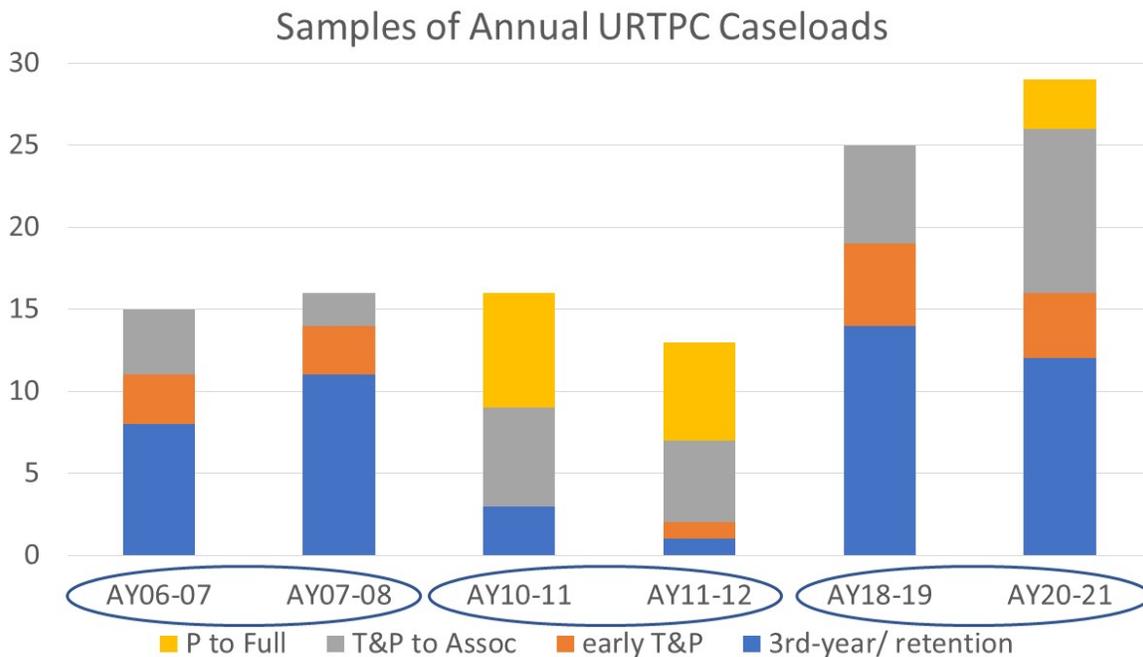

Figure 1: URTPC Workload by Types of Review. Note that all non-yellow reviews will return in subsequent years.

Faculty do not volunteer for service on URTPC. They are, rather, drafted through an election in the fall. URTPC members are generally known to many faculty, often through their prior high levels of service. This year's URTPC members comprised a chair, a center director, a Senate executive member, three members of the Equity Hiring Task Force, several who wished to become Equity Advocates, etc. -- their service loads were already quite high. The cost to these individuals constitutes not only gross overwork but also lost opportunities to engage in other activities during the review period.

Action: The AY20-21 URTPC recommends careful consideration of the following measures to alleviate the unsustainable nature of service on URTPC.
1. Administration: Provide 3 WTUs of reassigned time during the spring semester for faculty elected to URTPC

2. **FAC**: Ensure that the burden of URTPC service is shared more equitably among faculty. Modify RTP policy to include an upper limit on the number of times any individual may be elected to serve on URTPC. (Twice or three times is common at other institutions.)
3. **FAC**: Consider ways to alleviate the burden on represented units with few full faculty members. For example, should a unit have fewer than 4 (or an adequate threshold) of full professors/ librarians, consider including associate professors/ librarians from that unit among those eligible to be elected to serve[1].
4. **FAC**: Divide the work of reviews into at least two subsets, with each subset to be reviewed by a different URTPC committee (e.g., retention reviews in one subset and tenure and/or promotion reviews in the other subset).
5. **Faculty Affairs Office**: Consider moving URTPC elections to the spring semester prior to the year of service -- before all Senate elections are conducted -- so that those elected to URTPC have the option of stepping away from other service commitments.
6. **Senate/ FAC**: Consider whether faculty wish to maintain URTPC as an independent level of review. The time costs are largely associated with a thorough review of the materials in portfolios: this is essential if the will of the faculty is for URTPC to remain a faculty-elected independent body.

Communicating and following through on these recommendations

The URTPC notes that many of the recommendations spelled out in this document have been forwarded with less detail by previous year's URTPCs. Yet such recommendations due not yet appear to have received consideration, nor are candidates made aware of the recommendations for those submitting portfolios as they prepare their portfolios. We issue this final set of recommendations with the goal of enhancing communication and consideration of these recommendations.

Action: The URTPC recommends the following actions:
1. **Senate Exec** review these recommendations in September 2021 and determine whether to charge any Senate Committees with considering particular recommendations.
2. **Senate Exec** request updates from the provost regarding consideration of relevant recommendations by administrators or offices within the Division of Academic Affairs.
3. The **Faculty Affairs Office** include the recommendations for candidates with the emails notifying candidates of what they're expected to submit, the deadlines, etc.
4. The **Faculty Affairs Office** include the reminders for those reviewing files along with the instructions for accessing files and completing reviews when these instructions are sent to Program Personnel Committees, chairs, and deans.

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[1] CSUCI RTP Policy allowed for the election of associate professors to URTPC in the 2000s. Associate professors then had to recuse themselves from reviewing cases in which associate professors applied for promotion to full professor. As the number of full professors grew -- and the number of full professors on URTPC dropped as low as three one year -- this practice was changed to limit eligibility for election to URTPC to full professors. The possibility outlined here -- that of associate professors being eligible for URTPC election when the unit has a very small number of full professors -- would only apply to one or two of the seven units, thus preventing the issues that arose in earlier practice.