

SAN JOSÉ STATE UNIVERSITY  
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SS-F13-8, Sense of the Senate Resolution, Endorsing a  
Proposal to Reform the SJSU Policy on Retention, Tenure,  
and Promotion by Adopting the “Flexible Achievement” Plan

Legislative History: At its meeting of December 9, 2013, the Academic Senate approved the following Sense of the Senate Resolution presented by Senator Peter for the Professional Standards Committee.

SENSE OF THE SENATE RESOLUTION  
ENDORING A PROPOSAL TO RE FORM THE SJSU POLICY ON  
RETENTION, TENURE, AND PROMOTION BY ADOPTING THE  
“FLEXIBLE ACHIEVEMENT” PLAN

Resolved: The Academic Senate of San José



committee by committee. Under the proposal, committees would simply judge the level of achievement a candidate has attained in the separate categories of teaching, of scholarly, professional, or artistic achievement, and of service. Provided a candidate meets the minimum expectations for each of the three categories, it would not be the role of any committee to deliberate over the balance of achievements between the three categories.

To give structure to this system, the plan outlines five separate levels of achievement. The policy will provide generic definitions of what will be required for each of the five levels in each category, but departments will be encouraged—especially in scholarship—to craft their own written expectations for achievement that are customized to their disciplines. For example, a department would specify the number and quality of professional accomplishments that would be minimally expected, what greater number and quality of accomplishments would normally be expected to be credited with higher levels of performance, and finally what even higher level of accomplishments would be regarded as truly outstanding.

Approved: December 3, 2013

Vote: 10-0-0

Present: Green, Maldonado-Colon, Brown, Peter, Bros-Seeman, Kauppila, Gottheil, Cara, Kallis, Du

Absent: None

Financial Impact: A sense of the senate resolution has no financial impact; should the



The committee has not set the numerical level for the various attainments of tenure and the two levels of promotion—that level of detail will be left to the policy itself. However, to help the Senate understand the way in which the basic flexible achievement plan would work, an appendix is provided with an example of how the system would allow for various profiles.

5. Early decisions.

Early decisions will be handled by requiring higher levels of overall achievement for a positive early decision than would be required at the “normal” time. For example tenure a year early might require a score somewhat higher than that needed for tenure after the normal review period, representing the need for a higher level of confidence in a lifetime decision that is made after an abbreviated review period.

6. Distinguishing Professor from Associate.

Promotion to Professor can be distinguished from tenure and promotion to Associate by requiring a somewhat higher overall level of achievement.

7. Establishing clear expectations of achievement

In lieu of the current system of “Department Guidelines,” the new policy will establish “expectations for achievement” which will more specifically define what is required to attain the various ratings in each of the three categories.

- a. The new policy will prepare university-wide expectations for achievement for all three categories. These expectations will apply to a candidate unless the department elects to create its own “Department expectations for achievement.” Department expectations, similar to department guidelines, must be approved through a process that will be specified in the policy.
- b. To craft the university-wide expectations for Scholarship, the Professional Standards committee will solicit suggestions from all departments, and will attempt to codify the most commonly held expectations. Generic expectations, however, will not work for many departments and programs—which will need to craft their own expectations as they currently do with department guidelines.
- c. The university-wide expectations for Teaching and Service will be drafted by the Professional Standards Committee and circulated for comment before incorporation into the proposed policy. The policy will provide for



faculty by allowing them to choose whether to be evaluated under the old or the new expectations.

10.     Appealing unique cases of achievement

The policy will provide a means for candidates to request special consideration if their achievements were not adequately addressed by the applicable “expectations of achievement.” In short, there will still be a role for committees to examine individual cases and to apply judgment when achievements are unique or otherwise not covered by normal expectations.

11.     Appointment letters

- a. As under the current policy, all appointment letters will need to conform with the requirements of the new ARTP (Appointment, Retention, Tenure and Promotion) policy.
- b. The Policy will provide a means for appointment letters to alter the basic range of flexibility permitted by the policy in designated situations.
- c. The policy will also provide a mechanism for the renegotiation of appointment letters.

12.     Phase-in period and implementation timeframe.

The policy will provide for a phase-in period, with faculty “caught in between” allowed choice between the old and the new policies.

APPENDIX: Hypothetical examples to illustrate the flexible achievement system.

If the level of attainment needed for tenure and promotion to Associate Professor after a normal review period were set to “8”, then candidates could achieve the minimum score with six different profiles, given that a “2” represents the minimum in each category.

Profile 1:

2 Teaching

2 Service

4 Scholarship

Profile 2:

2 Teaching

3 Service

3 Scholarship

Profile 3:

2 Teaching

4 Service

2 Scholarship

Profile 4

3 Teaching

2 Service

3 Scholarship

Profile 5

3 Teaching

3 Service

2 Scholarship

Profile 6

4 Teaching

2 Service

2 Scholarship