
APPOINTMENTS, PROMOTION and TENURE GUIDELINES
SCHOOL of JOURNALISM and STRATEGIC MEDIA

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

Approved by a faculty vote of: **9** – *Yes*, **0** – *No*, **0** – *Abstention*

on **May 2, 2026**

The following School of Journalism and Strategic Media Appointments, Promotion, and Tenure Document is a supplement to the Scott Borchetta College of Media and Entertainment guidelines.

INTRODUCTION

The School of Journalism and Strategic Media (SoJSM) is committed to excellence in teaching, scholarship, and service to the university, profession, and community. To achieve this goal, the School requires a faculty with an appropriate balance of academic credentials, professional experience, teaching excellence, and a commitment to extend knowledge beyond the campus through scholarly publication, creative endeavors, and service to the media and public. Therefore, the School seeks to appoint, promote and tenure candidates whose quality and diversity of talents best serve this mission.

FACULTY REVIEW

Faculty members are evaluated on their record of teaching, scholarship (research and/or creative activities), and service. Faculty are expected to participate in the life of the College and School, attend faculty and committee meetings, use college facilities appropriately, be available to students, and carry out reasonable assignments in a professional manner with integrity, consideration, and respect for colleagues and students.

Appointments, Promotion and Tenure, (APT) Committee

MEMBERSHIP: The Appointments, Promotion and Tenure (APT) Committee will consist of all tenured faculty members of the School of Journalism and Strategic Media. The Director of the School of Journalism and Strategic Media shall not serve on the APT Committee. Faculty on leave shall not be eligible to serve on the APT Committee. Absentee voting shall not be permitted during in-person meetings of the committee. However, the committee may agree by a majority vote to hold discussions and votes via online methods, including asynchronous ones,

provided the methods used ensure confidentiality and follow the same procedural rules as in-person meetings.

COMMITTEE FORMATION: The Committee shall elect a new Chair before the conclusion of each spring term. It is the responsibility of the Committee Chair to convene and conduct meetings. The Chair will convey the decisions of the Committee in writing to all candidates for promotion, tenure, and reappointment, as well as the Director of the School of Journalism and Strategic Media. The Chair will also be responsible for uploading letters to the faculty activity software of record. The Director should also notify the Provost's Office of the committee composition.

VOTING: A simple majority of the APT committee shall constitute a quorum for scheduled meetings and shall be authorized to conduct business on behalf of the APT committee. Vote tallies will be based on the number of members voting. To pass, motions require a majority of members voting.

Members of the Committee shall vote by secret ballot. The vote is binding. After consideration, the committee will consult with the Director. If the recommendations of the Director and Committee are in concert, separate reports will be filed by the Director and by the committee to the Dean. If the recommendations of the Director and Committee are in conflict, they will meet in an attempt to resolve the conflict prior to submitting written recommendations to the Dean. As part of this conflict consultation, the Committee may vote to reconsider its original recommendation. If the conflicts cannot be resolved, reports submitted to the Dean by the committee and by the Department Chair/Director will each describe the points of conflict.

Decisions on reappointment, promotion, and tenure shall be made without regard to race, color, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, age, or disability. In conducting its business, the committee will ensure that all individuals are treated fairly and with dignity, regardless of background or identity. Members of the Committee may vote only on motions involving candidates of their own rank or lower. In other words, an Associate Professor who is a member of the APT Committee may not vote in cases where a candidate is being considered for Professor.

For reappointment: If a candidate receives a majority vote in favor of reappointment, no specific number shall be reported to the Director, the Dean, or the candidates. However, if a candidate receives a majority vote recommending non-reappointment, the specific number of yeas and nays will be reported. Results will be uploaded to the faculty activity software.

For tenure and/or promotion: When a candidate stands for promotion and/or tenure, the specific number of yeas and nays will be reported in the letter from the APT Committee Chair to the candidate and copied to the Director and uploaded to the faculty activity software.

Procedure for candidate review

INITIATION OF TENURE/PROMOTION EVALUATION

In most cases, tenure and promotion to Associate is determined by the candidate's tenure clock in keeping with the university's policies. It is the responsibility of the Director of the School of Journalism and Strategic Media to notify the chair of the APT Committee of all pending cases for tenure and/or promotion in a timely manner.

A faculty member who wishes to be considered for promotion to Professor should initiate that conversation with the Director and the Office of the Provost as designated by the university, preferably by March 1 or, if that date falls on a weekend, the Monday following. It is the responsibility of the faculty member under consideration to submit documentation and relevant materials through the university-approved faculty activity software for review by the APT Committee, Director, external reviewers, Dean, and the College of Media and Entertainment Promotion and Tenure Committee. Additional pertinent materials, including external reviews, will be prepared and submitted by the Director of the School.

Faculty seeking discretionary promotion should contact the Office of the Provost via e-mail (copying their dean and director) by the date specified in the annual faculty assessment calendar.

EXTERNAL REVIEW

The Director will provide documentation of quality performance in scholarship and public service to three independent reviewers in the candidate's specialty or specialties, along with instructions on assessment of the quality of scholarship and public service under review. These reviewers shall be outstanding scholars in the candidate's field or established faculty members in journalism/media communication programs comparable to MTSU's or higher. Reviewers should hold the rank sought by the candidate or higher. While the candidate shall provide the names of potential reviewers, the selection (which may include names not on the candidate's list) will be decided by the APT Committee Chair, in consultation with the APT Committee and Director of the School of Journalism and Strategic Media. External reviews received by the School as part of an application for promotion of a tenured associate professor to the rank of professor shall be considered valid both for the entirety of that application cycle and for the entirety of the subsequent application cycle unless the applicant requests new reviews and a majority of the APT Committee approves the applicant's request.

Candidates seeking tenure and/or promotion must submit their suggested reviewers to the Director during the preceding spring semester, preferably by March 15 or, if that falls on a weekend, the Monday following. Candidates should then follow the university's schedule of deadlines for submitting their materials listed in the Annual Faculty Assessment Calendar. Upon receiving the list of suggested reviewers, the Director will share documentation of quality performance, and via dated, written communication, will provide notification of the forthcoming tenure and/or promotion application to all MTSU external officials who require such notification under current university policy. As a courtesy, the Director should provide the applicant with a copy of the notification.

TEACHING

Teaching is the foremost duty of a faculty member. Accordingly, the School places strong emphasis on instructional excellence and makes it a foundation for awarding tenure and promotion. Teaching involves communicating knowledge to students, developing an intellectual base for lifelong learning, and preparing students for entry into professional fields. Effective teaching is based on professional experience, effective communication, sound scholarship, continued intellectual growth, and concern for students.

In addition to excellence in classroom instruction, every faculty member is expected to provide careful and thorough academic advising and career guidance to students who major or minor in journalism-related areas.

Among items to consider in assessing a faculty member's teaching performance are the

following:

- confidential student evaluations documenting teaching competence, classroom visitations, and evaluations by other faculty
- teaching awards
- academic advising and career counseling
- course materials (syllabi, reading lists, examples of class activities, etc.)
- enrollment size, contact hours, course complexity
- the supervision of graduate theses, independent studies, honors projects
- the development of new courses and/or revision of established courses
- the integration of new technology into teaching methods and course content
- correspondence from former students and professionals related to teaching grants and awards for course or teaching development
- leadership roles in teaching-related activities for professional organizations
- work in professional media during summers or leave time that enhances teaching
- reviewing textbooks and proposals for publishers
- accomplishments of a faculty member's students
- conference presentations, webinars, and published articles related to the scholarship of teaching and learning (SOTL)

RESEARCH and CREATIVE ACTIVITY

Scholarship is an essential element of the academic environment. Every faculty member in the SoJSM is expected to contribute consistently to scholarship through research, creative activity, or both. Furthermore, every application for tenure and promotion must include evidence of some form of peer review of some elements of the candidate's scholarship, which may include born-digital scholarship and creative activity (e.g., digital tools, software for teaching and research, websites, journalism, media, and communication projects, and grant-writing to support such activities).

Research

Research consists of academic publications, academic presentations, and applications for internal or external research funding, with publication carrying the most weight. Examples of research may include, but are not limited to:

- Original scholarship published in double-blind, peer-reviewed academic journals, including highly regarded online journals.
- Books that are based on original scholarship and published by highly regarded academic presses that address important issues in media communication.
- Chapters in books that are comprised of original scholarship and published by highly regarded academic presses that address important issues in media.
- Double-blind, peer-reviewed scholarly papers presented at national conferences.
- Double-blind, peer-reviewed scholarly papers presented at regional conferences.
- Other research publications, including articles, monographs, books, edited book chapters, digital media, and other published works, that are subject to a formal review process by recognized scholars in the field.
- Editorship of scholarly books or other scholarly material subject to peer review.

- Textbooks, educational articles, and instructional technology resources in one's own discipline and innovative contributions to teaching, if published or presented in a peer-reviewed forum or by reputable publishers.
- Funded internal grants from the University or external grants from public or private sources.

Research will be evaluated in terms of its quality, quantity, impact, and originality, as well as in terms of the reputation of the forum or channel through which the research reached its audience. In evaluating these aspects of an applicant's research record, the APT Committee will consider assessments offered by external reviewers who have expertise in the topics and methodologies the submitted materials involve. Such assessments, plus the blind peer review requirements typically associated with academic publication, constitute "peer review" for research.

Creative activity

Creative activity consists of the creation, production, exhibition, performance, or publication of original work. Such activity should demonstrate originality in design or execution and should reflect, comment on, or otherwise contribute to the forms and practices of any endeavor represented by the disciplines in the School of Journalism & Strategic Media. Materials created to improve faculty success in teaching, scholarship, and other facets of an academic position are also considered creative activity. The product of creative activity may be communicated through print and digital media, photographs, film, video recordings, audio recordings, graphic design, digital imaging, live performances, or other technologies. Examples of creative activity may include, but are not limited to:

- Journalism, in any form and on any platform, that reaches a substantial professional or general audience.
- Public relations, advertising, visual communication, and strategic communication materials of any type, such as media kits, campaign plans, design and advertising materials, collateral, training materials, and web pages, produced for, and accepted by, a client or clients.
- Juried graphics, visual materials, photographs, video productions, web and app design, interactive graphics, multimedia productions, or other visually-oriented media that reach a substantial professional or general audience.
- Audio and/or audio-related productions for film, video, or other media that reach a substantial professional or general audience.
- Published professional or consumer books that reach a substantial professional or general audience.
- Print or digital media content used to advise, evaluate, or train a group of educators or media professionals, such as handbooks, professional development guidelines, or diversity materials that reach a substantial professional or general audience.
- Online publications, such as websites, blogs or apps that cover professional topics and that reach a substantial professional or general audience.
- Performances or exhibitions of creative works before substantial professional or general audiences.
- Data analyses or databases published, cited, or used by a substantial professional or general audience.
- Software development, multimedia authoring, and/or unique and innovative applications thereof that reach a substantial professional or general audience.

- Funded internal grants from the University or external grants from public or private sources.

Creative activity will be evaluated in terms of its quality, quantity, impact, and originality, as requirements for creative activities may be satisfied in one or more of the following ways:

- Acceptance for exhibition, publication, or performance in popular or professional media, where submissions are judged by independent referees who are respected practitioners of the creative activity.
- Acceptance for publication or distribution by an editorial staff or someone who is charged with a selective review process.
- Published review of performances or productions by recognized critics, scholars, or industry professionals.

In evaluating an applicant's creative activity record, the APT Committee will consider assessments offered by external reviewers qualified to judge the creative activity.

SERVICE

The University values a faculty member's service to the public, University and the profession. To be promoted, candidates must demonstrate, at a minimum, sustained, quality service for promotion to Associate Professor, and sustained, high-quality professional productivity in service for promotion to Professor.

- University service refers to work other than teaching and research/scholarship/creative activity performed at the department, college, and/or University level. University service includes, but is not limited to, meaningful participation on department, college, and University committees. University service also includes taking a role in shared governance, such as service as a Faculty Senator, on a specially appointed task force, and/or on a University search committee. It also includes activities that contribute to the recruitment, retention, progression, graduation, and post-graduation career placement of students as well as professional development of faculty.
- Professional service refers to the work done for disciplinary professional organizations or for the teaching profession generally. Service to the profession includes, but is not limited to, association leadership, accreditation review, journal editorship, article/manuscript/grant proposal review, guest lecturing on other campuses, and other appropriate activities. Examples of significant service would be that done by an officer of a professional organization or a member of the editorial staff of a journal.
- Public service, the University's outreach to the community and society, involves sharing professional expertise and should directly support the goals and mission of the University.

Evidence of high-quality service may include, but is not limited to:

- An evaluation of the effectiveness of the service, as judged by its impact. This evaluation should consider indices of the success of the service activities, in terms of improvement of communities, programs, operating agencies, production processes, or management practices; of satisfaction with the service provided by the candidate; and of the magnitude and complexity of the work.
- An external appraisal of the candidate's local, regional, national, and/or international stature.
- Evidence of submission of applications seeking internal and external funding for service activities, funded internal and external grants, and University submitted proposals.

CRITERIA FOR PROMOTION, BY ACADEMIC RANK

In accordance with University policy, the minimum criteria for promotion to the rank of Associate Professor are as follows:

Associate Professor

- Earned doctorate or terminal degree from an accredited institution in the academic discipline or related area, or a combination of educational and professional achievement approved by the Provost at the time of appointment to assistant professor rank.
- Six (6) years of full-time collegiate experience in the academic discipline or related area as an assistant professor. Thus, a typical candidate is eligible to apply for promotion to associate professor at the beginning of his/her sixth (6th) year.
- Evidence of high-quality professional performance in teaching.
- Evidence of continuing direct participation in research/scholarship/creative activity and in service;
- Evidence of high-quality professional productivity in either research/scholarship/creative activity or service and quality professional productivity in the other area.
- Evidence of professional integrity that will ensure cooperation with colleagues and commitment to the programs and students of the department, the college, and the University.

Professor

Since there is no higher rank, promotion to professor will be considered with great care and requires a level of superior achievement within the discipline with every expectation of continuing contribution to the University and larger academic community.

- Earned doctorate or terminal degree from an accredited institution in the academic discipline or related area, or a combination of educational and professional achievement approved by the Provost at the time of appointment to assistant professor rank.
- Four (4) years of full-time collegiate experience in the academic discipline or related area as an associate professor. Thus, a typical candidate is eligible to apply for promotion to professor at the beginning of his/her fourth (4th) year as an associate professor.
- Evidence of professional integrity that will ensure cooperation with colleagues and commitment to the programs and students of the department, the college, and the University.
- Evidence of sustained excellence in teaching throughout, at minimum, the three years preceding the year of application.
- Evidence of sustained high-quality professional productivity in both research/scholarship/creative activity and in service throughout, at a minimum, the three years preceding the year of application.
- In either research/creative activity or service, the candidate will demonstrate a level of excellence that is recognized at the national level.
- Evidence of national-level excellence in research/creative activity may include, but is not limited to:
 - A sustained publication record that reaches a national audience in one's specialty
 - Creative work that has been distributed nationally
 - Creative work that has been juried or curated nationally
 - National-level awards

- Evidence of national-level excellence in service may include, but is not limited to:
 - A sustained service record of leadership in at least one national academic or professional organization relevant to the applicant's area of expertise.
 - A sustained record of service on the editorial staff of a nationally circulated scholarly or professional publication relevant to the applicant's area of expertise.

Date of Ratification: May 2, 2026

Approved by:

Appointments, Promotion and Tenure Committee chair



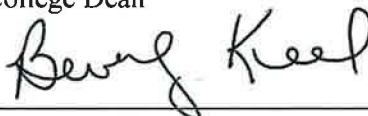
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SoJSM Director



Signature Date 7/29/2026

College Dean



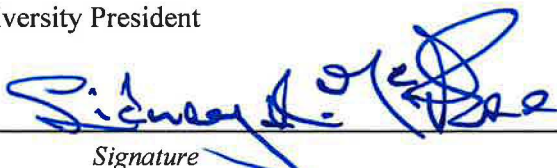
Signature Date 7/29/2026

University Provost



Signature Date 7/29/2026

University President



Signature Date 7/29/26