AMERICAN UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

Criteria for Tenure & Promotion
CFA Approved 5/2022
Provost Approved 2/2023

To achieve tenure and/or promotion in the Department of Sociology, faculty must attain high standards of demonstrated excellence in scholarship; effectiveness in teaching; and consistent service, both within the Department and the discipline (and within CAS and/or AU for promotion to full). The Department places strongest emphasis on scholarship when reviewing files for tenure and/or promotion. However, all faculty must also demonstrate effectiveness as teachers to achieve tenure and/or promotion. Further, while faculty service is a crucial component of all reviews for tenure and/or promotion, service is never the primary basis and cannot compensate for weak achievements in scholarship or teaching.

Given the dynamism of our field and the academic enterprise more generally, the intellectual breadth in the Department, the different norms of our various subfields, the value we place on engagement with other disciplines, and our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), the Department supports multiple routes to achieving tenure and/or promotion. Our goal with this document is to describe the most common routes. Candidates may make a case for additional routes to tenure or promotion. These must be clearly documented and agreed to by the candidate, departmental chair, the Rank and Tenure Committee, and the CAS Dean as early as the point of hire and no later than the point of mid-tenure review. Those proposing additional routes to promotion to Full Professor must do so no later than two years prior to submission of the file for action. Candidates proposing additional routes should also confirm that these routes are consistent with the Faculty Manual and the expectations of the Committee on Faculty Actions (CFA). And, they should be clearly described in the candidate's file when sent out for review.

The Department criteria that follow are intended as one of several resources for candidates to consult regarding their progress toward tenure and/or promotion. Candidates also should consult the Faculty Manual and talk with faculty mentors—particularly the department chair and the chair of the Rank & Tenure Committee—to ensure they are on track and can build the strongest case possible for tenure and/or promotion.

Excellence in Scholarship
By establishing a goal of excellence in scholarship, the Department is not attempting to require faculty to meet a pre-established number of publications nor to prioritize specific journals or presses. Rather, we ask candidates to document a career defined by active scholarship that advances their subfield(s), the discipline, and/or multiple fields or disciplines. In keeping with our commitment to achieving diversity, equity and inclusivity goals, we recognize that such documentation can take multiple forms. These are further elaborated below.

We encourage faculty to identify high-quality peer-reviewed journals and presses in the discipline and/or their subfield(s) and/or other disciplines to which their work contributes as one important outlet for their scholarly work. With respect to book publishers, highly regarded university and trade presses with a rigorous peer-review process are key, regardless of the size of the press. The editorial market has blurred the line between scholarly monographs and scholarly books to be used in the classroom. Thus, candidates for promotion and/or tenure should explain the positioning of their work in their review materials to clarify when their work may be serving multiple functions at the request of the publisher.

For the purposes of tenure and/or promotion review, books and articles will be considered as published when the editor has accepted them in final form. Work under review, even if revised and resubmitted, does not constitute publication. Assessment of aggregate productivity will be based on work since degree completion, including evidence that the candidate is productive at AU.

Fundamentally, the Department looks for clear evidence of a sustained record of significant and impactful scholarly publications and strong evidence of a productive trajectory of scholarship that will continue with tenure and/or promotion (See Faculty Manual 2020:25 and 36). We recognize that such evidence can take a variety of forms.

A book published with a well-respected academic or trade publisher and several refereed journal articles is one way to establish excellence. Publishing a substantial number of articles in refereed, scholarly journals is another. When the editorial and refereeing processes for online-only and open access journals are commensurate with disciplinary standards, publications in them will be evaluated alongside print journals. As prominent presses move toward open access books which may require some author subsidy, candidates must account clearly for the reputation of the press.

Other types of publications will be taken into account, though may be given less value. The weight allocated to invited articles in edited books or journals will vary. For example, invited articles or book chapters may attest to the stature of a scholar and in such cases would be considered in the context of the invitation and the reputation of the collection in which it appears.

A book that is an edited collection of original scholarship may represent the cutting edge of an established or newly emerging field, or bring attention to scholars, topics, methods, and approaches that have been historically marginalized or undervalued, and would be valued as such, whereas an edited collection of previously published scholarship or conference proceedings could carry a lesser value. Other types of publications, such as articles in non-refereed journals and research reports, are valued but carry less weight than refereed journal articles and books. Non-refereed review essays, encyclopedia entries, and book reviews have the least weight in evaluations and will be assessed in the context of their respective contributions to the field.

Publications in languages other than English and in countries outside of the United States will be considered in the overall context of the faculty member's scholarship. We also value interdisciplinary scholarship, which may be published in journals outside the discipline, and scholarship that has implications beyond academia. For example, a candidate's research may

receive public attention—is cited in the "popular press"—or a candidate may publish for public audiences (e.g. educators, policymakers, community organizations) articles, editorials, commentary or relevant multi-media housed on a digital platform based on their research and analysis of ongoing events of public relevance. We will consider these different publication forms in the overall context of the candidate's scholarship, including how they signify or contribute to diversity, equity and inclusion.

Expectations for styles of authorship vary across many specialized subfields within Sociology. In many subfields, single-authored publications carry the most weight in evaluations for tenure and promotion. However, the changing nature of the discipline and the growing significance of collaboration (including across disciplines, on diverse research teams, and with community partners) have made co-authorship the norm for a growing number of areas of specialization. The Department values both single-author and collaborative publications. In determining the weight to give collaborative publication, we will assess the candidate's contribution to the published work as well as the extent to which co-authorship demonstrates meaningful collaboration–for example with students, research participants, and/or community partners.

In some coauthored papers, books, and edited books, author order is expressly noted as alphabetical, random, or reverse alphabetical, as a way of emphasizing the equal contributions of all authors. It is also common to list authors in order of their contribution to the paper or book. However, in some fields it is convention to list the Principal Investigator (PI) on the research project that gave rise to the publication as the last author, which indicates that the faculty member is the senior scholar who provided the framework for the analysis, and had significant input into the article concept, analysis, and writing.

Given the range of conventions for co-authored papers and books, it is important that a candidate detail their contributions to any co-authored publications, and, where relevant, the ways that co-authorship promotes inclusivity. In general, publications for which the faculty member is on the latter part of the list of co-authors or the last author (except as described above) will carry less value than publications for which the candidate is among the first named authors.

The Department will use a combination of criteria to evaluate a candidate's sustained history of scholarly excellence. These may include the prominence of presses; journal rankings, acceptance rates, and impact factors; numbers of citations, downloads or views; reviews of a published book; books sold; and evidence of application or use of scholarship by educators, policymakers, community-based or advocacy organizations, and other applied professionals. In tenure and /or promotion cases, evaluations of external reviewers will also be important. Professional honors or awards for scholarship, as well as awards from international, national, regional, or local organizations that recognize the scholarly or public value of the faculty member's scholarship also serve as evidence of scholarly achievement.

When looking for indicators of a strong future research trajectory, the Department will consider comments of external reviewers, articles under review at peer-reviewed journals, book manuscripts in process, and paper presentations at academic conferences. We will specifically look for evidence that the candidate's scholarship evolves over time, building new research

based on previous findings, extending previous scholarship in new directions, or contributing to a new subfield or interest.

For promotion to the rank of Professor, the faculty member's level of cumulative scholarly achievement is of crucial importance. We look for evidence that the faculty member has attained a national or international reputation for excellence in their field. Consequently, numbers of citations, downloads or views, especially for those publications on which the faculty member is sole, first, equally contributing, or senior author, are a more significant indicator of scholarly excellence for faculty seeking promotion to Professor, than for those seeking tenure and/or promotion to Associate.

The Department encourages all faculty to pursue external funding, in the form of grants or fellowships, while also knowing that fields in the discipline vary with regard to significance and sources of funding. The Department values faculty serving as PI as well as faculty inclusion as Co-Investigators on grants for which someone else is PI, insofar as the latter indicates the significance of the individual's expertise for colleagues in their field. Applying for external funding demonstrates commitment to pursuing scholarship goals. Thus, as part of the holistic evaluation of the candidate's file for tenure and/or promotion we will take into consideration demonstrations of effort to secure and, particularly for promotion to full, success in securing external funding, especially in better-funded subfields. We will also take into account that such submissions might reduce a candidate's number of publications in some years.

Vibrant scholarly engagement in the intellectual life of the discipline is a cornerstone of academic excellence. We will consider the importance of presenting original scholarship at academic conferences and colloquia. In addition, invited presentations may attest to the stature of a scholar and, if so, will be considered in the context of the invitation.

In sum, the Department of Sociology takes pride in the range of substantive and methodological expertise represented by our members, our engagement with colleagues and topics in other disciplines, and the contributions we make to non-academic domains. Beyond signaling the vibrancy of our field, these are indicators of our commitment to dismantling systemic oppressions, interrupting biases, and recognizing that diversity contributes to academic excellence. We acknowledge that documenting excellence in scholarship may vary accordingly. Whatever form this documentation may take, we urge colleagues to follow closely the guidelines for preparing Files for Action (especially with regard to placement of scholarship material in the file) which are published each academic year by the Committee on Faculty Actions.

Effective Teaching
The scholar-teacher ideal at AU combines "excellence in research with exceptional teaching." In the Department of Sociology, it is a goal toward which we strive. Excellent scholars must be able to teach effectively in order to receive tenure and/or promotion, including promotion to the rank of Professor.

The Department seeks clear evidence of effective teaching in a variety of ways. Inside the classroom, we look for evidence of the ability to teach courses, whether foundational or more specialized. A primary basis for evaluating teaching accomplishments will be the teaching

portfolio, which comprises five components; all are weighted equally in the evaluation of effective teaching. The portfolio must include (a) a teaching statement/pedagogical narrative; **at least one indicator in each** of the following three categories: (b) self-assessment of teaching, (c) peer (faculty) assessment of teaching, (d) non-numerical (qualitative) student assessment of teaching; and (e) standardized numerical student evaluations of teaching (N-SETs). Summaries of these components may be found on the Dean of Faculty website under "Teaching Portfolio" via this link: https://www.american.edu/provost/academicaffairs/faculty-resources.cfm. They are further detailed here as follows:

Teaching statement/pedagogical narrative: Candidates must prepare a teaching statement/pedagogical narrative describing their approach to and achievements in teaching.

Self assessment of teaching: The teaching portfolio must include at least one form of self-assessment of teaching. This could be an annotated syllabus describing design, innovation, purpose of assignments; examples of feedback to students; a written self-evaluation of a video of classroom teaching; or written self-evaluation of teaching outside the classroom. A faculty member also may describe their use of the resources of CTRL or other pedagogical resources to further supplement one of these forms of self-assessment of teaching effectiveness.

Peer (faculty) assessment: At least one form of peer (faculty) assessment must be included in the teaching portfolio. Faculty may request that a member of the faculty of equal or higher rank, in or outside of the Department, visit their classroom or watch a video reording of a class to offer constructive feedback for improvement. The faculty member may include this feedback in their portfolio as evidence of teaching effectiveness. Other forms of peer (faculty) assessment, such as written review of course materials, may supplement or substitute for this direct observation.

Qualitative student assessment: At least one qualitative form of student assessment (i.e., **not** the N-SETs) must be included in the teaching portfolio. The narrative comment portion of SETs for a particular course may be included for these purposes. However, if at least one narrative comment is included from a particular course, all such narratives must also be included from that course. Instead of, or in addition to, the narrative comments on SETs for a particular course, the qualitative student assessment component of the teaching portfolio could include: the report of a student committee (comprising students not enrolled in the class) that has observed the class, and/or the report of a focus group conducted by a faculty member other than the candidate with students in the course.

Numerical student evaluations: N-SETs are important, if imperfect, indicators of teaching effectiveness. For example, faculty who teach controversial topics (or some required courses), or who adopt atypical teaching modalities (e.g. team teaching), or are teaching a new or redesigned course might find that their average scores for the course are lowered by a few poor evaluations. Thus, the Department will take into consideration such things as the characteristics of the course, the distribution of N-SET responses, response outliers, and other factors in interpreting these scores.

The Sociology Department places high value on inclusivity, as indicated in course content (e.g. syllabi, course readings, course assignments) and teaching and evaluation practices. This means that in constructing the teaching portfolio, candidates should highlight ways in which their courses draw on and provide opportunities to discuss diverse perspectives, including those of communities that have been marginalized, and that highlight issues of power and privilege. They should also describe how their courses acknowledge multiple ways of learning (e.g. through use of different forms of media, community engagement, creating multiple opportunities for student participation), and utilize resources accessible to all students (e.g. open access and/or publicly available resources).

In reviewing files for tenure and/or promotion, we also value such indicators of commitment to teaching as participation in curricular initiatives, including those that focus on classroom diversity and inclusion; curriculum development grants; new course development; documented service to the profession in advancing teaching; publications and conference presentations on teaching; or innovative use of technology. The Department will also take into account teaching honors, awards, and invited guest lectures.

The demands of teaching extend to contexts beyond the classroom where effectiveness can be demonstrated by a wide range of engagements including, but not limited to: co-authoring with students; involving students in faculty scholarship; guiding independent research by graduate and undergraduate students; or mentoring students in the process of applying for prestigious awards and graduate school.

Given less weight but also recognized as important are activities that promote interaction between student life and the academic environment, such as serving as faculty advisor to student organizations, frequent and active presence at student events on campus, and participation in Alternative Break. Student advising may be evaluated as teaching or service, depending on the specific context.

In sum, demonstration of effective teaching is important for achieving promotion and/or tenure. Candidates should consult "Guidance from the Beyond SETs Task Force" (https://www.american.edu/facultysenate/upload/Beyond-SETs-Guidance-final.pdf), as well as the "Condensed Guidance for Implementing Teaching Portfolios" document of March 4, 2021 for more detailed descriptions of how these different forms of assessment may be conducted. Along with the required five elements of the teaching portfolio, and as described above, the Department will also consider various activities beyond the classroom as evidence of teaching effectiveness.

Service
If faculty find distinction in scholarship and teaching, we find community through service. All faculty members are encouraged to be active participants in AU community life by attending major campus-wide events, particularly opening convocation, graduation, and orientation activities. For pre-tenure faculty, service to the Department is crucial; this includes participation in committees and events. In some instances, pre-tenure faculty may benefit from service opportunities outside the Department, for example, as a way to gain broader recognition, meet

new colleagues, and become familiar with school or University practices and policies. However, we also recognize that some forms of extra-Departmental service can put pre-tenure faculty in difficult positions, for example, forcing them to choose among conflicting priorities. Thus, it is not required, and pre-tenure faculty who are asked to provide such service are encouraged to seek advice from faculty mentors. Service to the profession and to broader local, national, or international communities is also expected for promotion and/or tenure. The relative weight of such forms of service depends on the significance of the service itself. We encourage candidates to highlight how their service in any of these domains contributes to DEI goals and promotes the values of inclusive excellence.

The Department appreciates that the balance among service, scholarship, and teaching must vary over the course of an academic career. We look to tenured faculty to demonstrate a record of active and constructive contributions to faculty governance at all levels. A candidate for the rank of Professor should clearly demonstrate a willingness and ability to provide leadership through service at the levels of the Department, college, university, and profession. Senior faculty should participate in the mentoring of junior faculty.

The Department evaluates a faculty member's consistent service to the profession through a range of indicators. These may include: being elected to office in professional organizations; holding positions of responsibility (invited or elected) on professional committees; sitting on grant review panels; organizing or participating in professional conferences; editing scholarly journals; serving on editorial boards of scholarly journals; refereeing works by other scholars submitted for publication; and maintaining active membership in professional organizations. In addition, when a candidate draws on their scholarly work to advise or engage with the media and other non-academic institutions (e.g. think tanks, policy advocacy groups, community advocacy groups, the courts) it may also be recognized as professional service.

While faculty service is a crucial component of all reviews for reappointment, tenure, and/or promotion, it is never the primary basis for tenure and/or promotion decisions. As a consequence, it cannot compensate for weak performance in scholarship or teaching at any stage of a faculty member's academic career.