Tenure and Promotion Guidelines

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PREAMBLE

The Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE) fully endorses the tenure system in colleges and universities. In the theatre, academic freedom and responsibility may overlap with issues of public taste, public tolerance, and public consumption. All of these issues increase the pressures on academic theatre to teach truthfully and to present and perform work with ethical and pedagogical rigor. The considered and even-handed application of tenure guarantees the freedom to teach and perform in our students’ best interest.

ATHE serves as a strong advocate for maintaining that system through the establishing and sustaining of tenure-track and tenured positions for faculty in the field of theatre and performance studies. Tenure, when awarded with discernment and according to the highest standards of the discipline assures the long-term quality of the institution and its units. The quality of an academic institution depends directly on the diversity and quality of the faculty and curriculum. Tenure is an important incentive and the policy that promotes the long-term residency at the institution of the very best faculty.

These guidelines should be helpful for all systems considering promotion and/or tenure cases for faculty within a theatre and performance context.
HISTORY OF ATHE’S TENURE AND PROMOTION GUIDELINES

As Vice President of ATHE’s Professional Development Committee, Dr. Gail Humphries Mardirosian established a task force in 2008 to develop the ATHE Guidelines for Tenure and Promotion. Dr. Richard Helldobler chaired the task force, which worked through meetings at ATHE conferences, via email communication, and in two meetings held in Washington, D.C. to develop the guidelines over two years.


The original version of ATHE’s Guidelines for Tenure and Promotion incorporate a series of documents developed by ATHE focus groups over more than twenty years, modeled closely after the USITT Tenure and Promotion Guidelines with permission from USITT. Dr. Jeannie Woods drafted an initial document that was revised and edited by the members of the task force in May 2010. Additional input was provided for the specialist pages by Rodger Sorensen (Brigham Young University), Ron Gingerich (Dickinson State University), Mary Jo Lodge (Lafayette College), Meg Savilonis (University of New Haven), Rick Simas (San Diego State University) and Deborah Robertson (Northern Illinois University).

In 2021, Vice President for Professional Development Noe Montez revised the tenure and promotion guidelines, reviewing suggested adjustments from Rick Jones, Barbara Parisi, P. Gibson Ralph, and Lionel Walsh in addition to surveying over 100 tenured theatre professors across a variety of fields and institutions.

The initial version of this document addressed the working conditions of theatre faculty including expectations about academic activities and professional standards. The expectation should be that the document will be revised every five years, or when members of the organization feel that immediate action is required. In this revision, I have tried to address methods for assessing emergent fields such as Intimacy Direction and Community-Based Performance Making, as well as ways of noting diversity, equity, inclusion, justice and empowerment (DEIJ) work. This document also includes an appendix speaking to the need to ensure that our colleagues who are coming up for promotion in the coming years are unhindered by the COVID-19 pandemic whose effects on the academy will have impact well beyond the 2021-2022 academic year.

The following scholars provided additional insights:

Julio Agustin (Elon University), Patrick Anderson (University of California, San Diego), Paul Allain (University of Kent), Michael Barnes (Wayne State University), Jane Barnette (University of Kansas) Ashley Bellet (Purdue University), Robin Bernstein (Harvard University), Henry Bial (University of Kansas), Mary Black (Millikin University), Rhonda Blair (Southern Methodist University), Kate Bredeson (Reed College), Lisa Brenner (Drew University), Rich Brown (Western Washington University), Faedra Chatard Carpenter
The document borrows language with permission from the USITT Tenure and Promotion Guidelines, VASTA tenure and promotion guidelines, and institutional guidelines from Emerson College, Hobart and William Smith College, Loyola Marymount University, Millikin University, Purdue University, and Western Washington University.

ATEH's Governing Council ratified the revised Tenure and Promotion Guidelines, offering comments and suggested edits before approving this document at the 2021 conference. Thanks to Josh Abrams, Jane Barnette, Chase Bringardner, Carla Della Gatta, Suzanne Delle, Christin Essin, Ann Haugo, Megan Geigner, Monica White Ndounou, Dassia Posner, Emily Rollie, Jon Rossini, Jennifer Scott-Mobley, and Lionel Walsh.
INTRODUCTION

The Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE) is a comprehensive non-profit professional membership organization. Founded in 1986, ATHE serves the interests of its diverse individual and organizational members, including college/university theatre departments as well as administrators, educators, graduate students, and theatre practitioners. An advocate for the field of theatre and performance in higher education, ATHE serves as an intellectual and artistic center for producing new knowledge about theatre and performance-related disciplines; cultivating vital alliances with other scholarly and creative disciplines; linking with professional and community-based theatres; and promoting access and equity in partnership with the Black Theatre Network (BTN), Latinx Theatre Commons (LTC), Consortium of Asian American Theatres and Audiences (CAATA) and other organizations who represent theatre artists of the global majority. ATHE aspires to support and advance the study and practice of theatre in higher education.¹

This document strives to impart to its readers a general understanding of tenure and promotion in theatre departments, as well as establishing clear professional standards for evaluation.² ATHE recognizes that institutions vary in their expectations for granting tenure and promotion, and that the evaluation process differs across individual colleges and universities. These guidelines do not attempt to suggest a uniform level of achievement or single set of procedures for evaluating faculty. Rather, the document suggests several possible means of assessing an individual's case for tenure or promotion in collaboration with institutional standards. It is incumbent upon candidates to be informed about their institution’s expectations. It is also incumbent on department chairs and tenure case preparators to know the institution’s expectations and communicate those to the candidate for advancement.

ATHE hopes that this document will serve several constituencies including 1). tenure-stream candidates seeking tenure and promotion to Associate Professor or Professor; 2). full-time lecturers seeking promotion or renewal; 3). external reviewers who are evaluating the standards by which individuals may be granted tenure and promotion; 4). department chairs who may need a set of guidelines that encompass a comprehensive range of activities for those teaching and creating theatre in higher education; and 5). university administrators who are charged with evaluating the accomplishments of faculty members.

ATHE’s Tenure and Promotion Guidelines begin with Part I: The Tenure Process, an overview of the tenure and promotion progression from hiring to the tenure review. Information in this section will hold resonance for those seeking promotion from Associate Professor to Full Professor as well as for others seeking advancement in rank. The section also offers some general ways of documenting achievement in the four common criteria for evaluating tenure and promotion — Research/Creative Activity, Teaching, Service, and DEIJE work. Part II: Theatre Specialist Pages focuses on disciplinary-specific benchmarks for assessing the various specialists who work within theatre departments.³ This includes

¹ From the ATHE website, www.athe.org/page/about
² ATHE recognizes that theatre and performance study may be conducted in a department, school, college, program or other institutional unit and may be found under many headings, such as “theatre,” “drama,” “performance studies,” and/or be combined or subsumed under other disciplines such as humanities, English, speech, communication studies etc. For the purposes of these guidelines, “theatre department” is used as a generic term to apply to any academic institution’s program where theatre studies are conducted
³ In order to create a comprehensive document, we have, with permission from USITT, incorporated sections of their guidelines into the ATHE Tenure and Promotion Guidelines.
strategies for evaluating a tenure dossier and suggested questions that evaluators might seek to answer when reviewing the work of tenure candidates. Finally, ATHE’s tenure and promotion guidelines conclude with an acknowledgement of the converging pandemics affecting the globe, the challenges that they created as related to tenure and/or promotion, and recommendations that will aid those who are currently tenure-stream or seeking promotion.
PART I: TENURE AND PROMOTION PROCESSES

Given the diversity and uniqueness of institutions of higher learning from across the globe, there are endless variations in the tenure and/or promotion process, the materials required to apply for tenure and/or promotion, and the process of evaluating candidates. What follows is a description of common practice in the United States. It is the prerogative of the institution to establish the requirements for the tenure/promotion file and its evaluation.

The theatre professor needs to be cognizant of the academic and professional expectations of the position. Whether at a large research-centered university or a small teaching-centered college, each campus will have a formal — and often informal — definition of a faculty member’s expectations based on the institution’s mission. Candidates should begin to examine that definition, and the strategies for meeting those expectations, as soon as possible. Historically there have been three areas of concern to a tenure and promotion committee: research, teaching, and service. However, in recent years, in recognition of the need to address historical barriers; amplify People of the Global Majority’s contributions to the academy; and reflect the nation’s changing demographics, colleges and universities have begun to make diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice work a criterion for tenure and promotion. Each individual college or university may give differing weight to the importance of these areas — a candidate should understand their institution’s ratio.

College and university handbooks are evolving into elaborate procedural guides and are often supplemented by departmental guides. A proactive candidate will seek out these guides and should schedule regular meetings with their department chair when and where possible. As candidates prepare tenure and promotion materials, they are obligated to understand the impact of relevant bodies such as the Board of Trustees, the faculty union, as well as the political winds in a state and region on the mission of their campus. While theatre faculties wish to freely pursue their art and craft, it must be recognized that candidates for tenure and promotion are subject to the unique culture and requirements of their institution.

Tenure and promotion require documented evidence of a candidate's abilities in the areas of teaching, scholarship, service, and DEIJ work. The candidate undergoes review and each of the areas is assessed according to the tenure and/or promotion policies of the institution. Candidates must provide evidence of sufficient quality and quantity of achievement in each of these areas as well as show potential for sustained achievement in their field.

The scholarship of theatre professors is rendered in one or both forms of traditional academic endeavor: research leading to publication and/or creative production. Research and publication scholarship is traditional to theatre historians and performance studies scholars. Research and creative production scholarship is traditional to those involved in the production process and includes acting, directing, playwriting, dramaturgy, theatrical design, and the execution of those designs by specialists in technical production, theatre management, and stage management. Theatre departments also recognize and value practice

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4 Although some universities consider collegiality as a criterion for tenure, and promotion, ATHE takes the position of the American Association of University Professors that this is a criterion that should be discouraged because of its potential to chill faculty discussion and debate, and to discriminate against women and non-binary people, People of the Global Majority, and LGBTQIA+ folks. [https://www.aaup.org/report/collegiality-criterion-faculty-evaluation](https://www.aaup.org/report/collegiality-criterion-faculty-evaluation)
as research. Practice as research might denote a research process that leads to an arts-related output, an arts project as one element of a research process drawing on a range of methods, exploring methods of teaching performance in the classroom, or a research process entirely framed as artistic practice.

This document presumes that preparation of theatrical events for public performance allows the production-oriented theatre professor a viable opportunity for demonstrating artistic achievement required for promotion and tenure decisions. The production of plays and performances and the study thereof constitute the discipline of theatre. In recognition of the artistic component of theatre, institutions of higher education often include creative achievement as an official component for promotion and tenure consideration.

In addition, ATHE’s guidelines for tenure and promotion are congruent with the National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST) accreditation guidelines, which state that "creative activity must be regarded as being equivalent to scholarly efforts and publication when the institution has goals and objectives for the preparation of theatre professionals in practice-oriented specializations." Although the NAST guidelines are most specific in their application to practice-oriented theatre programs, as demonstrated above, research and creative production scholarship is a traditional element of theatre programs, regardless of whether the focus is on liberal arts training or preparation of theatre professionals.

The USITT Guidelines also state that:

It is the position of USITT that creative activity & research—including designing scenery, costumes, lighting, sound, and projections, as well as the technical execution of those designs by specialists in technical production, stage management, and production management—are appropriate forms of creative activity & research for faculty teaching within the disciplines, generally, of theatre, opera, or dance. These creative activity & research efforts require substantial analysis, historical, and technological research, and the synthesis of information; they result in the creation of new works of art that are widely disseminated through public performance.

In consonance with USITT and NAST, ATHE affirms that research and creative production is an appropriate form of scholarship for all theatre professors. Such activities incorporate the process of research, creation of new work, and dissemination through public performance.

Evaluation of faculty theatre professors should also be conducted in the context of the mission of the department’s theatrical production program. Production programs can have vastly different missions. For example: 1). to provide a cultural resource to the community and

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5 Practice as research may also be referred to as “performance as research” or “practice-based research.”

6 Many institutions, adopting the 1990 Boyer model for evaluating scholarship, have placed creative achievement as one component of the “scholarship of discovery” or “scholarship of application.” For more information, see Ernest Boyer’s Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities for the Professoriate, The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

7 USITT Guidelines, revised March 2021.
academic institution; 2). to develop new or experimental work; 3). to train theatre artists for
the profession or to teach; 4). to allow theatre students to experience all phases of theatrical
production; 5). to credential future teachers; 6). to provide a rich liberal arts experience; 7).
to promote the values of diversity, equality, inclusion and racial justice.

Whatever the mission, the individual professor should be evaluated according to his/her
effectiveness in fostering and promoting those aims. The evaluation of the artistic product and
the individual artist’s work must be conducted within the context in which it was created.

A. The Academic Job Search and Navigating an Offer

The hiring process varies considerably across institutions. However, a search typically begins with a
college or university’s administration granting approval to open a search based upon a position
description provided by the department. Then a search committee is formed, and the job
announcement is created and distributed through professional publications and on-line. Applicants
submit materials requested (usually a cover letter, CV, names of references and/or reference letters and
other documents detailing research, teaching, service and DEIJ credentials). The committee reviews all
the materials and then selects candidates for the next phases of the hiring process, which may include
1). calling references; 2). telephone or video interview; 3). an invitation to interview on campus.
Following this process, the committee sends forth its recommendation for hire to the administration,
occasionally with a second or third choice named as well.

Candidates for tenure-stream or promotable positions should carefully review the job description in the
position announcement, noting the preferred and required qualifications as well as the position’s duties
and responsibilities. When the candidate is placed on the short list or invited for the campus interview,
the candidate should inquire about the expectations related to tenure and ask about workloads. For
example, a candidate may want to ask:

• What are the expectations regarding creative work inside and outside of the university? Do
  both types of productions count as creative activity and research?
• How is creative work assessed?
• What types of publications are expected prior to probationary reviews and reviews for
tenure/promotion?
• Does the institution provide time off or teaching releases for working professionally off-
campus?
• Are there course releases available to support research?
• What are the number of publications expected at the time of probationary reviews or
tenure reviews?
• What are the expectations for advising and mentoring students at the graduate and/or
  undergraduate level?
• What are the service expectations required for the position? Are they specified at the
departmental level, the university level, and in service of the field and one’s local
  community?
• What is the university’s DEIJ plan? What is the department’s DEIJ plan? How is DEIJ work
  noted in probationary reviews and the tenure review? How are external evaluators asked to
  evaluate DEIJ work?
• What are the teaching requirements for tenure in terms of quantity and type of courses and
  the ways that teaching is assessed?
• What role do anonymous teaching evaluations play in probationary and tenure/promotions reviews? How does the institution regard studies on institutional bias and anonymous student review? How does peer evaluation affect the tenure and/or promotion process?

If the candidate receives a job offer, the tenure or promotion process often begins at the time of hire. In the offer letter, the candidate should read for detailed information about:
• the position description, outlining duties and responsibilities
• the length of the appointment
• the contract period
• credit for prior employment, if any
• pre-tenure sabbatical time, if any
• salary and benefits
• equipment of startup funds
• conditions for renewing or terminating the contract
• any other negotiated terms of employment

Once a candidate has accepted an academic position, they should ask the department chair for the department and institutional criteria for tenure and promotion, talk to other faculty in the department or institution to learn about their tenure/promotion process, inquire about a mentoring program and learn what they can about institutional climate through networks of colleagues in and outside of their institution. Fellow ATHE members, students, and alumni may also be useful sources of information. The eventual tenure decision will be based on how the candidate meets the expectations set forth at the time of hire. Therefore, at the time of appointment, both the institution and the candidate should come to an understanding about clearly defined institutional expectations concerning research/creative activity, teaching, service, and DEIJE work. If there are any questions about expectations, the candidate should request written clarification at the time of the offer or shortly after. The institution's expectations should not change after this date.

B. Pre-Tenure or Probationary Reviews

Entry-level, tenure line positions are typically Assistant Professorships. Assistant Professors serve a predetermined time in rank, typically going up for tenure in the sixth or seventh year.\(^8\) The timeframe for promotion and/or tenure should be specifically set forth in the offer letter. Most institutions have a process that includes a pre-tenure review that occurs at various points throughout the probationary period. Other times, it can happen at the midway point of the probationary process. In most instances the candidate prepares a dossier, and a review committee is established, but the pre-tenure review will not usually require external evaluators to write about a candidate’s portfolio. Rather the portfolio will be assessed by the department and university administration. This evaluation is often very specific, and it should identify areas where expectations are not on track for tenure. Such early evaluation is intended to help the candidate address those shortcomings in the time remaining before the actual tenure or promotion review. ATHE encourages candidates who undergo a probationary review to confer with their chair and university administration to candidly discuss the findings of the pre-tenure/promotion review in order to assess how a candidate may improve or frame themselves better within the stated goals, objectives, and desires of the university.

\(^8\) ATHE recommends that the tenure clock pause during family and medical leaves, and in support of junior faculty whose research agendas were halted due to the COVID-19 pandemic
Probationary reviews can be structured and initiated at the department level or the institutional level. The review process and scope of the evaluation should be clearly established, both at the department level and at the upper levels of administration.

C. The Tenure Dossier

Typically, the tenure and promotion file consists of several elements including a curricula vitae, a tenure statement/narrative self-evaluation, publications and documentation of creative activity, a teaching portfolio, evidence of service, and written evaluation by internal or external reviewers. These documents will be reviewed by your tenure committee and department head. In many instances, the department head will synthesize the portfolio into a tenure report that will be sent to the university’s tenure and promotion committee along with review letters and some teaching materials. Following the recommendation of the tenure and review committee, the dossier may be reviewed, either in part or in totality, by the dean, provost, and university president.

C.1. The Tenure Statement/ Narrative Self-Evaluation

The tenure statement is a narrative self-assessment that contextualizes the candidate’s achievements. The narrative provides an opportunity for candidates to demonstrate their growth during the review period, as well as to demonstrate potential for future accomplishment. Institutions vary with respect to the achievements that count towards tenure and promotion if those achievements pre-date the start of the review period. This document should also be legible across disciplines since it will likely be read by a tenure and promotion committee and university administrators who may have little to no disciplinary knowledge. Depending on the institution there may be specific word length and formatting requirements.

C.2. Documenting Publications and Creative Activity

Institutions of higher education require faculty to provide evidence of achievements in scholarship, which is defined as research leading to publication or research leading to creative production. The assessment of research and creative activity is not only complicated by the fact that it may appear in traditional (i.e., published) forms, as creative work, or as a combination of the two, but it is further complicated by the fact that it may occur in any of a variety of subfields (performance, directing, designing, playwriting, applied theatre⁹, etc.) and often requires collaboration with other artists or scholars.

Creative and scholarly work often count equally toward tenure and promotion in theatre departments, although the means of documentation and evaluation differ. Faculty within theatre departments may characterize their work as exclusively residing in one realm or the other, or they may articulate a hybrid profile comprised of both creative and scholarly work. There is no hierarchical or adversarial relationship between creative and scholarly work: they are both recognized as equally valid and valuable ways of knowing that complement rather than compete with each other. Any given candidate may do the

⁹ In her book *Applied Drama: The Gift of Theatre*, Helen Nicholson defines applied theatre as “forms of dramatic activity that primarily exist outside conventional mainstream theatre institutions, and which are specifically intended to benefit individuals, communities and societies. [...] In other words, applied drama and theatre are interdisciplinary and hybrid practices” (2).
majority of their work in one of the two areas, and the work overall should give a sense of focus, but the nature of work in theatre will often lead to some work in both areas: creative work and traditional scholarship.

Scholarly work is often, but not always, the chosen area of endeavor for faculty members holding a DFA or Ph.D. in Theatre, while creative work often dominates the portfolios of those holding an M.F.A. However, in many smaller departments and programs, faculty members are often called upon to act as generalists, rather than specialists, in which the broader context of theatre as a liberal art takes precedence over professional training. In all instances, a faculty member’s review portfolio may include various combinations of both scholarship and creative work.

Theatre departments also recognize and value practice as research. The term ‘practice as research’ carves out a territory for arts practice in academic environments and refers to a broad range of research activity. Practice as research might denote a research process that leads to an arts-related output, an arts project as one element of a research process drawing on a range of methods, exploring methods of teaching performance in the classroom, or a research process entirely framed as artistic practice. Research might start or end in arts practice, draw on arts practice as a part of its process, or be wholly integrated into the shifting forms and outputs of an arts project. Practice as research is therefore not a ‘method’ as such. Arts practices draw on a variety of creative methodologies that might be incorporated into interdisciplinary research projects as methodological innovations, providing new perspectives on and extending existing knowledge as well as materializing a different kind of knowledge practice.

Finally, theatre departments recognize the importance of research and publication centered on pedagogical research examining the teaching of theatre, explorations of approaches to teaching performance and its related fields, and research into best classroom practices for the arts as being a significant part of and contribution to an individual faculty member’s research and creative work.

Demonstration of successful academic research may include records of scholarship and/or evidence of the quality of the work. These materials vary by institution, but may include:

- Publication of single-authored or co-authored book
- Publication of articles in juried scholarly journals and edited collections
- Publication of a chapter in a scholarly book
- Editing or Co-Editing academic journals and published collections of scholarly essays
- Presentation of papers and in roundtable discussions at academic conferences
- Panels curated and chaired at academic conferences
- Invited lectures or workshops presented at colleges and universities
- Awards, external grants and/or fellowships for research
- Translation of plays, essays, interviews, etc. from other languages into English
- Adaptations of plays, screen plays and other original works
- Reviews of the candidate’s writing published in academic journals
- Citation of one’s work by other scholars or professionals in the field
- Reviews of books and performances in scholarly journals
- Reviews of books and performances in popular newspapers and magazines

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10 ATHE takes the position that co-authored and co-edited essays should not be held in lesser esteem than solo-authored work.
- Serving as dramaturg in professional or equity-waiver productions or established new play development organizations
- Writing articles or notes for professional or equity-waiver production programs
- Lecturing to audiences for professional productions
- Leading discussions in performance-related talkbacks
- Serving as a scholarly consultant for a film or television program
- Authoring an accreditation audit report as a Site Evaluator for a national arts accreditation association
- Interdisciplinary contributions that yield practical applications of research
- Founding or leading institutions, centers, platforms, or related organizations that contribute to the field.

Demonstration of creative practice may include records of scholarship and/or evidence of the quality of the work. These materials vary by institution, but may include:

- Writing an original play which is published and/or produced in a professional venue
- Acting, directing, designing, dramaturging, technical directing, playwriting, or other appropriate work on a creative team with professional, semi-professional, community, or affinity-based theatre companies
- Receiving an award of a significant grant and/or fellowship for the production of an original artistic work or theatre production
- Conducting or performing in workshops and guest lectures at academic or artistic conferences
- Speaking about one’s art in academic or artistic conferences
- Providing interviews for publication or for the media
- Applying for significant external grants and/or fellowships for the production of original artistic work or theatre productions. (“Significant” is here defined as meeting the criteria of peer review and recognition within the field, as well as competitiveness)
- Developing and sustaining applied and community-based theatre programs (e.g., Drama in Education or Theatre for Social Change) which substantially address the needs of a particular community on a national, regional, local, or campus level.
- Devised work of an ensemble-based nature and collective collaborations on (non-curricular) or off campus
- Invited artistic work (acting, directing, designing, dramaturging, playwriting, etc.) at off-campus venues, such as festivals, performance series, and professional conferences
- Reviews of work in periodicals, newspapers and/or media outlets
- Written evaluations by qualified adjudicators of work submitted for competition.
- Evaluations by directors, designers, cast members and other artists who were collaborators on creative projects
- Virtual Museums
- Critical Slideshows
- Multimedia

When documenting creative work, information about the complete production process should be supplied to reveal the approach to the production and the solutions found by the faculty member. This includes information on the production and production team such as the title of the play, playwright, venue and nature of the producing theatre, names of the director, dramaturg, musical director (when applicable), and members of the design team as well as the dates of the production. Moreover, ATHE
recommends that the documentation of each theatrical production include a brief statement on the production concept, and how the candidate’s work was used to illustrate the concept, approximate time available for research, design, and execution, and identification of artistic or technological innovations associated with the production.

Other forms of documentation for creative work vary. For designers and technical directors, working drawings, photographs, renderings, and light plots of productions are examples of acceptable documents. Playwrights may submit scripts. Dramaturgs and directors may submit production books, study guides, and program notes. Awarded grants, invitations to lead workshops for other artists, and participation in advanced theatre workshops are all considered forms of creative scholarship and may be documented through things such as acceptance letters, invitations, and photographs. Video documentation, when not in violation of copyright law, is also acceptable for creative artists. Quality of artistic scholarship may be measured by published reviews, evidence of grants and awards, and publication and production of plays. Further evidence of the weight and merit of the work may be contextualized through documents that help define how the work and its venue are viewed in the immediate community and the greater theatrical profession. Letters from colleagues with a background in the performing arts and have viewed creative work may also provide further evidence of quality. For all artistic scholarship, letters from collaborators and published reviews are also acceptable supporting material for both purposes: contextualization and evaluation.

We advise tenure candidates, department chairs, and tenure case preparators to converse about the best forms of documentation for their institutions.

C.2.A. Evaluating Creative Artists’ Production

The discipline of theatre is also distinct in that the individual practitioner (actor, director, designer, etc.) cannot always choose the artistic project or control the working conditions of the project. Theatre is a collaborative process where artists work together to create the artistic product - which may complicate the ability to assess the work of the individual’s contribution. Theatre artists must come to a shared vision or interpretation of the artwork and must adapt their work to the resources available - from venue, to timeframe, to budgets, to artistic personnel. The context of a theatre artist’s creative work must be considered in any evaluation.

Unlike the scholar who submits only successful publications for promotion and/or tenure (i.e., research that has been published), theatre professors submit the total corpus of creative activity to some level of evaluation, because all the creative work is made public. Given this distinction and given the subjective nature of artistic evaluation, the candidate for promotion

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11 Theatre productions are not only subject to the copyright of the text, but also subject to rights of performance. Standard rights of performance explicitly prohibit recording of productions of any kind, and failure to comply with these rights not only can lead to the denial of future rights to production from publishing houses, playwrights, etc., but is also punishable by law. Even when production rights do not prohibit the recording of performances, other professional artists involved in the collaboration hold the rights to their own work and may deny collaborators the chance to share video, audio, etc. Finally, it is worth remembering that theatre is a live art form that loses much of its depth, clarity, and power in the flat translation to recorded media and photographs. With these ideas in mind, it is understood that, when reasonably possible, colleagues within the Department will view each other’s artistic work.
or tenure, as well as the department personnel committee and department head face unique challenges to provide a framework for assessing the overall artistic contribution of the artist. Departments should insist upon expert documentation of a fair sample of the artist's work. Moreover, theatre professors, like any other scholars, should have the right to select the work to be evaluated by external reviewers and the right of reasonable refusal of names on the potential juror list.

C.2.B. Evaluating the Significance of a Theatre or Publication Venue.

Theatre in the United States today is highly varied in its organizational forms and the old-fashioned division between ‘professional’ and ‘amateur’ theatre has been rendered problematic. What follows relies on contemporary US taxonomies, but similar challenges exist throughout the globe. Many highly respected experimental companies cannot, in the current desperately underfunded climate, afford to pay their actors, and would therefore not be considered ‘professional,’ even though their work is highly regarded in the theatre community, sometimes even more highly than companies that pay union wages. Other companies, specifically those who have historically served People of the Global Majority and others who are marginalized because of their identity, do not have the financial resources to qualify as a LORT theatre. As such, though a theatre that hires Actors’ Equity Association or other union personnel is clearly considered professional, failure to do so is not necessarily an indication the company is not of professional caliber. There is currently no simple equation between salaries and artistic prestige, or between size of theatre and length of run with artistic excellence. Because of this, contextualization provided by the department, committee, and external reviewers discussing factors such as the artistic merit of the work, reputation of the producing company, reputation of the other artists involved with the project, impact on the community, and professional union affiliations associated with the work, is of primary importance when assessing the work.

ATHE encourages theatre departments, chairs, university administrators, and external reviewers to avoid creating arbitrary hierarchies of venue, whether in reference to journals, publishing houses, academic conferences, or places of creative activity, that do not take into account the social, cultural, and political importance of developing research and productions in venues that serve and speak to traditionally marginalized communities. To only focus on theatre budgets or to more strongly consider journals, conferences, and publications with larger circulation at the expense of those venues that engage in affinity-based research and creative production is to do a disservice to the field. The organization recommends consultation with organizations such as BRN, LTC, and CAATA in such matters in order to contextualize work with affinity-based theatres and conferences.

C.2.C. Workload and its Relationship to Creative Activity

Workload structures and definitions vary greatly between institutions, colleges, and departments. It is typical for a university, college, school, or department to have a defined teaching load for its tenure track faculty. This workload policy should include teaching assignments, production assignments, research and scholarship, and service-related duties such as participation in faculty governance, advising, or other assigned duties. Workload should be adjusted to accommodate the institution’s expectations of a faculty member’s creative and artistic production in balance with expectations about teaching and service assignments. In most academic institutions, a major production assignment is considered the equivalent of teaching a single two or three credit hour course.

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12 LORT is the League of Resident Theatres
When the location of a college or university may have a significant bearing on a faculty member’s ability to conduct creative activity off-campus, ATHE encourages colleges and university administrations to give on-campus creative activity equal weight to off-campus creative activity. If off-campus professional design and/or production work is a mandatory expectation for tenure or advancement in rank, ATHE encourages institutions to provide candidates with time and resources to reasonably achieve this expectation. Likewise, tenure-stream faculty must plan their probationary years carefully to provide adequate time to complete the required quantity and quality of achievements, especially in research creative activity. It is therefore incumbent on the university and the faculty member to negotiate a reasonable workload that takes into account departmental, college, and university expectations for tenure and promotion.

C.2.D. Online-Only Publication

The explosion of new digital formats for dissemination of creative and scholarly research points to the need to update criteria to recognize a broad range of digital publications as significant contributions to theatre and performance studies.

An increasing volume of research and publication in theatre and performance studies substantively integrates and even relies on technologies that—from video to network analysis to GIS to augmented reality headsets—require explanation and circulation with digital platforms. Broadly speaking, ATHE recognizes two types of online-only publications: online-only textual articles that include multimedia material and born-digital scholarship where textual communication is secondary.

Online-only textual articles in our fields could be published in one of two contexts — an online version of a print journal, because the article contains enough multimedia elements to require the affordances of a website, or a journal that appears only online, without a print version. A journal should make clear on its website whether online-only articles have gone through the same peer-review process and have been held to the same standards of scholarly rigor as the journal’s print articles, or if they are editor-reviewed. The article should then be evaluated accordingly in a tenure file.

Born-digital and new media publications most often encountered by our committee members include non-traditional formats such as: Collaborative Teaching Dossiers – assemblages of multimedia teaching materials; Artist Portfolios, such as multimedia publications focusing on a body of work. photo/video essays and videographic criticism; virtual museums; critical slideshows; multimedia databases

There are at least two important rationales for these updates:

1. Creation as Research. The types of online publication formats described above provide a set of immersive, media-based tools for capturing and transmitting the specificities of live performance—sensory aspects of artmaking that often cannot fully be described or experienced in the two-dimensional space of print publication. Further, these online digital outputs often do more than simply disseminate research-based performances via documentation—performances are creatively adapted or specifically designed for digital spaces. In turn, the digital spaces become resonant sites for research inquiry.

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13 Information in this section comes from analysis created by ATHE’s online working group subcommittee’s recommendation on tenure and promotion guidelines.
audience interaction, and critical engagement. Put differently, born-digital research outputs are a vital site of artistic creation, i.e., performance here is not only a vehicle for disseminating research, but digital creation can be viewed as research, as a form of critical inquiry.

Further, digital publications enable the intermingling of artistic and scholarly analysis that is promoted in the tenure and promotion criteria of many fine arts schools and helps re-frame scholarly essays as creative output. As Jason Mittel argues in his article, “Videographic Criticism as a Digital Humanities Method,” “Creating scholarship with moving images and sounds forces critics to engage with the aesthetic and affective dimensions of their expression far more than do typical written works; they must draw on artistic practice as well as scholarly analysis” (229).

2. Knowledge Mobilization and Impact. Following from the previous point, it is important for tenure and promotion assessment to approach media-rich online publications as an expression of scholarly ideas in audiovisual form. These modes of digital expression provide opportunities to illustrate complex ideas in ways that make them legible to broader audiences (and especially those outside of the academy); their multimedia features also promote affective engagement with sometimes inaccessible theoretical concepts and research data. Demonstrating how knowledge has been mobilized beyond university contexts is increasingly important in the assessment of professional contributions in Canada, the UK, and beyond (e.g., “knowledge mobilization” is a central component in evaluating all major research grant applications in Canada and the UK has recently highlighted “knowledge exchange” as central to both individual grant applications and university metrics). The potential of online publications to reach multiple audiences thus makes it an especially significant indicator of a faculty member’s commitment to public engagement. Finally, digital publications often provide concrete tools for gauging research impact, as they provide information about downloads, views, and other kinds of public response via comments and social media shares.

C.3. The Teaching Portfolio

Colleges and universities require faculty to provide evidence of excellence in teaching as defined by the institution. In the theatre department teaching includes both formal and informal teaching. Formal teaching encompasses traditional lecture and studio classes, seminars, laboratories, independent studies, and thesis/dissertation supervisions. Informal teaching encompasses interaction with students in production studios, rehearsals and performance, advising, coaching, designing, directing, mentoring, and advocating for marginalized students.

ATHE considers that an artist, when working on a theatrical production for the academic institution, has the responsibility to teach and coach students by exemplifying artistic excellence, collaboration, ethical integrity, and pedagogical effectiveness. It is important to provide evaluation of both the formal and informal teaching experience.

It should be noted that the college or university defines how to classify on-campus creative work in theatrical production. In some institutions, directing, acting, or designing for a campus production is part of the instructor’s workload and therefore considered teaching. In other institutions, the creative work may be considered scholarship. In some cases, the aspects of the creative work may be split between teaching and scholarship. How the activity is characterized determines the appropriate matter of evaluating the activity. It is incumbent on both the institution and the candidate to clarify which aspects of a project should be categorized as service, teaching, or research and creative activity.
Faculty should be evaluated for their teaching performance in a timely and ongoing process in accordance with institutional guidelines.

Demonstration of teaching excellence varies by institution, but may include:

- A teaching statement that outlines the candidate’s philosophical and pedagogical approaches to teaching as well as providing evidence of growth and success as a teacher
- Statements from colleagues who have observed the candidate’s teaching in the classroom, workshop, rehearsal hall or studio space
- Statements from colleagues who have engaged in team teaching with the professor
- External peer evaluations of teaching
- Letters of recommendation from current and former students
- A teaching portfolio
- Syllabi, including multiple syllabi of the same course in order to demonstrate how the professor’s development of the course has evolved
- Learning outcomes and assessment documents
- Documentation of pedagogical workshops/teaching certifications
- Documentation of advised independent studies/capstones/theses/dissertations led to completion.
- Documentation of new courses developed and/or curricular updates initiated
- Documentation of supervised student activity accepted into specialized programs or pre-professional experiences (e.g. internships, graduate school, juried exhibits or performances)
- Awards/grants garnered for teaching
- Student evaluations of a course or a production process
- Presentations of pedagogy at conferences, invited talks or within the university
- Books, juried articles, and/or teaching manuals on pedagogy
- Instructional materials including video, websites, and other forms of communication.
- Documentation of study abroad programs initiated.
- Examples of assignments, exams, and student work
- Evidence of a classroom space that is safe and welcoming
- Evidence of multidisciplinary teaching

C.3. A Comment on Anonymous Student Evaluations of Teaching

Most faculty in North America are evaluated in part through anonymized student evaluations of teaching that ask students to assess instructor performance using a rating scale. These are the most common methods used to evaluate faculty teaching for tenure, renewal, promotion, hiring, and merit raises. However, a growing body of literature suggests that these are weakly related to teaching effectiveness and student learning, and biased against women and people of color. Given these limitations, ATHE encourages student evaluations only be used to produce written feedback rather than formal ratings of teaching effectiveness. Even this should only be part of a holistic assessment of teaching efficacy that uses peer observation, reviews of teaching materials, and instructor self-reflections.

ATHE is an endorser on a 2019 letter written by the American Sociological Association that encourages institutions to step away from using anonymized student evaluations in favor of evidenced-based
methods of evaluation that holistically assess excellence in teaching.\textsuperscript{14} We support models such as the one used at Ryerson University that no longer uses anonymized student evaluations for tenure or promotion decisions, instead relying on faculty observation and teaching dossiers.

C.4. Documenting Service

Institutions of higher education usually require faculty to provide evidence of service for tenure and promotion. The expectation for service and its value in relations to research/creative activity, teaching achievement, and DEIJE work will depend upon the institutional mission. Service is often evaluated in three areas: the institution, the community, and the profession.

It is not unusual for theatre faculty to have an inordinate number of hours devoted to service to students. In addition to the long hours of rehearsal and production (as many as 150 hours a production), theatre faculty prepare students for auditions, advise student directors, designers, dramaturgs, actors, and playwrights, and mentor students in their professional development as well as their academics. Women and People of the Global Majority often carry significantly higher service loads which must be accounted for in tenure and/or promotion decisions.

Service at the university varies at each institution, but can include advising or recruiting activities, participation on committees, faculty senate, or other activities on campus. The institution should define the expectations for service within the department (and its relative value to service outside the discipline of theatre). Some kinds of community-based and outreach activities may be regarded as service as well. In such cases, it is incumbent on the candidate and the department chair to clarify which aspects of a project should be categorized as service, scholarship work or teaching.

Service to the community may include engagement in civic and charitable activity. This element of service may or may not be a factor in tenure and advancement in rank. Again, the institution sets forth its expectations.

Other off-campus service includes work on behalf of the profession, which generally is a factor in tenure and promotion decisions. This service includes leadership in professional organizations, serving as a reviewer for journals and book projects, external program review, external tenure and promotion review, external production peer review, and consulting.

Demonstrations of commitment to service vary by institution, but may include:

\begin{itemize}
  \item Participation in department or institutional committees or task forces
  \item Serving on faculty senate
  \item Serving on a university search committee
  \item Professional consulting work
  \item Participation in professional and academic theatre organizations such as USITT, ATHE, ASTR, KC/ACTF, IFTR, PSI, BTN, LTC, CAATA, DSA, CAA, MLA
  \item Judging and critiquing student theatre competitions
  \item Serving as a union representative for a professional production
  \item Serving on a Board of Directors of a theatre company
\end{itemize}

- Serving as an external reviewer for other universities’ tenure and promotion candidates.
- Serving as a Grant/Fellowship evaluator for a government or national arts organization
- Serving as a site evaluator (but not authoring the evaluation report) for a national arts organization
- Acting as a managing or artistic director of a professional company
- Consultation in new play development, film, productions, or television work
- Serving as department chair or director of graduate/undergraduate studies
- Authoring departmental documents for accreditation
- Participation in university advising events
- Volunteering for community-based projects
- Serving as a departmental peer reviewer
- Mentoring student organizations
- Serving as an editor or on the editorial board for an academic journal or book series
- Peer reviewing book proposals and journal articles
- Web content management for departmental webpages
- Serving as a panelist for a theatre production
- Organizing an academic conference
- Serving in a leadership role of a nonprofit aiding the field.

C.5. Documenting Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice, and Empowerment (DEIJ)¹⁵

A growing number of colleges and universities are beginning to focus on DEIJ initiatives as an understanding of the need to amplify People of the Global Majority’s voices in order to transform the field and promote a diverse range of theatrical experience. In recognition that the field must actively work to create meaningful change in spite of the history of injustice that has marginalized underrepresented groups within the organization, ATHE believes that DEIJ pedagogy, creative practice, scholarship, teaching and service should be valued in and of itself as part as the work of our discipline. It should be held in high regard as contributing to a faculty member’s tenure and promotion portfolio.

DEIJ work may take place in formalized ways through labors in lecture and studio classes, seminars, laboratories, independent studies, and thesis/dissertation supervision that center constituencies of color or ethnic studies frameworks. It may also take place in informal settings such as interaction with students, faculty, administrators and an individual’s community. DEIJ work may be part of an organized body like a university committee, or it may be ad hoc. It can be a singular instance of advocacy on behalf of someone from a marginalized positionality or it may be an ongoing action. DEIJ work can take place on and off-campus.

Institutional DEIJ work creates additional work for faculty that must be accounted for in the tenure and promotion process. When this work is unrecognized and unrewarded, it increases the chances of burnout, decreases productivity, and erects substantial barriers to tenure and promotion. Numerous studies have demonstrated that faculty of color, queer faculty and faculty from working class or first-generation backgrounds together spend a disproportionate time doing DEIJ work with inadequate acknowledgement from the department chairs and administrators at predominantly white institutions.

¹⁵ While many institutions use the term DEI, many People of the Global Majority believe that the acronym centers whiteness at the expense of empowering and equipping People of the Global Majority. Consequently, ATHE choose to add justice and empowerment as components of this work.
Demonstrations of commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and justice work varies by institution, but may include:

- Serving on DEIJ related committees
- Establishing or supporting the creation of new academic initiatives (e.g., an ethnic studies program or a Black Studies research initiative
- Creation of a new academic program, courses, or graduate specialization focused on equity
- Creation or leadership role in a new program serving community constituencies. (e.g., a mentoring program for high school students of the global majority)
- Participation in a disciplinary mentorship program for graduate students and junior faculty of the global majority
- Teaching courses grounded in ethnic studies scholarship and de-centering whiteness
- Mentoring students of color and other students who are interested in working on DEIJ work
- Leading or participating in a research group on campus, within the field, or in one’s community that addresses DEIJ
- Incorporating texts, theories and other forms of knowledge produced by People of the Global Majority in course readings, assignments, and other classroom materials
- Working with diverse groups of students on or off campus
- Mentoring students and faculty who are not familiar with race/ethnic studies literature, conversations on inequities, and educating majority culture faculty administrators, and students about DEIJ concerns
- Participation/Certification in workshops on Anti-Racism, DEIJ, and serving marginalized student constituencies
- Serving as a faculty advisor for affinity-based theatre organizations on campus
- Publication of monographs, articles, and chapters in edited collection that advance knowledge on marginalized identities or pedagogical approaches for teaching ethnic studies and theories for decentering whiteness in the theatre and performance studies classroom.
- Panels curated and chaired for affinity-based academic conferences, focus groups, or working groups
- Leading lectures or workshops about Anti-Racism, DEIJ, and serving marginalized student constituencies at colleges and universities
- Engaging in creative work with theatre companies that have historically served underrepresented communities or productions that are grounded in DEIJ work
- Developing and sustaining applied and community-based theatre programs for People of the Global Majority on a national regional, local, or campus level.
- Writing a DEIJ statement that outlines the candidate’s philosophical and pedagogical approaches to racial justice / decentering whiteness and provides evidence of success as a teacher
- Statements from colleagues who have observed the candidate’s teaching in the classroom, workshop, rehearsal hall or studio space and who can speak to the candidate’s efforts to scaffold DEIJ into their teaching
- Statements from colleagues who have engaged in team teaching with the professor, and who can speak to the candidate’s efforts to scaffold DEIJ work into their teaching
- External peer evaluations of incorporating anti-racist materials
- Letters of recommendation from current and former students
- Syllabi, including multiple syllabi of the same course in order to demonstrate how the professor’s development of DEIJ worldmaking, theorizing and practice has evolved
- Learning outcomes and assessment documents
- Examples of assignments, exams, and student work
- Documentation of advised independent studies/capstones/theses/dissertations centered on DEIJ work led to completion.
- Serving on a Board of Directors of an affinity-based theatre company that has historically served People of the Global Majority
- Acting as a managing or artistic director of an affinity-based theatre company that has historically served People of the Global Majority.
- Authoring departmental/university documents as part of a DEIJ-focused strategic plan
- Participation in university advising events
- Serving as an editor, on the editorial board, or as a peer reviewer for an academic journal or book series that produces scholarship on People of the Global Majority’s theatre and performance
- Peer reviewing book proposals and journal articles for an academic journal or book series that produces scholarship on People of the Global Majority’s theatre and performance
- Serving on a season selection committee and/or audition process to include representation of marginalized voices.
- Working in a leadership role of an affinity-based nonprofit that has historically served People of the Global Majority

C.6. Internal and External Review for Tenure

Many research-intensive universities and liberal arts colleges rely on anonymous external reviewers as an integral part of the tenure and/or promotion process. Other institutions may invite the candidate for tenure and promotion to solicit external review letters or may only require support letters. At all institutions, but especially those institutions that use anonymous external reviews, these letters take on significant importance, as they help your institution’s tenure and promotion committee contextualize your work.

Typically, tenured faculty in the department will generate a list of names of tenured professors who can properly frame and assess your work to your institution’s tenure and promotion committee. The candidate for tenure may also provide a list of names to the department or institution. From these lists, the tenure preparator will create a final list of names and send out either the entire tenure packet, or a selection of materials from the tenure packet (typically research related) to the external reviewers.

As a candidate for tenure, you will want to recommend names for review who are not collaborators or co-authors. Oftentimes the institution will require that the letter writer is at an “arm’s length” of remove form the candidate, although what this term means varies across institutions. You will ideally want to select full professors from higher ranked or peer universities in relation to your specific institution. Ideally you will want to find reviewers who carry a national reputation and who can speak to your specific field or subfield. Note that as a person who specializes in some emergent fields or research areas underrepresented in the academy, that you and your tenure case preparator may not always be able to find full professors. In this case, the preparator should provide some context about this to your institution’s tenure and promotion committee.
In an internal reviewer process, or a process where external reviews are solicited by the tenure candidate, similar advice applies.

In all instances, ATHE encourages external reviewers who are only sent research materials to try to infer information about the tenure candidate’s teaching, service, and commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, and empowerment work, particularly if they are writing on behalf of a Person of the Global Majority or someone from a marginalized identity. As subject matter experts, members of BTN, LTC, CAATA, and other affinity-based organizations may provide additional support regarding peer reviews in their area of specialization.

C.6.A. External Review of Creative Activity

Scholarship in the form of creative production requires independent (non-departmental, non-institutional) peer review. It is the responsibility of the academic unit/institution to articulate in writing the mechanisms of that review.

Although it is appropriate in most disciplines to send out vitae and supporting documentation to a number of external reviewers for comments, for theatre professors who rely on creative activity, this form of external review does not provide the context of the production including support personnel, budget, facilities, time constraints, and the existing talent pool. Although documentation of the performance experience is possible, the portfolio cannot replace the experience of seeing the live performance of the work. While portfolio review by external reviewers is an important part of any process, whenever possible the peer reviewers should have the opportunity to see the candidate’s work in live performance so they may understand the context or circumstances under which the work was created.

External peer review of creative productions encompasses a range of activities, including, but not limited to:

- Being hired to be a part of a professional theatre production
- Receiving a commission to write a play or create a production
- Winning an award or honor for one’s creative output
- Review of a production by a recognized theatre critic or professional journal
- Review of production(s) by independent professional peers

External peer review of creative activity may be used to evaluate a particular theatre production, or it may be used to evaluate the creative production of an individual over a period of years. Such reviews are based in part on a portfolio of materials provided by the candidate which documents the candidate’s research leading to creative production and any other aspects, according to the requirements for peer review set by the institution. When external peer review of creative activity is required, the candidate’s evaluation file should include the referee solicitation letter outlining the scope and type of evaluation required. Some institutions may require that a vita of the referee or a brief statement indicating the appropriateness of the referee be included in the candidate’s file to give context to the outside peer review. ATHE recommends that theatre departments maintain a list of potential external evaluators who might be solicited to produce written responses to creative work. This list of names should be agreeable to the department and the institution. Depending on institutional policy, the tenure candidate may be able to provide the department chair or tenure case preparator with a list of potential reviewers.
When external peer reviewers of creative activity cannot be brought in to see live theatre performance, the candidate can and should incorporate technology to put together video and interactive media compilations that demonstrate a wide range of skills and achievements. Such evidence can be made readily accessible to a wide variety of reviewers through digital media. Such technology also makes it possible for multiple reviewers to evaluate creative production as demonstrated by the actor’s “professional reel” or video of designers’ interactive online exhibitions, real time displays in virtual worlds, videoconferencing, and archival video recording as legally permitted.

ATHE recommends that committees or departments responsible for preparing tenure cases invite outside referees to evaluate the work of potential candidates on a regular basis — at least one production a year. In this way, there can be a significant body of material to include in the final tenure evaluation package. It should be the work of the department to inform the institution of the importance of this regular ongoing review and to obtain permission for the inclusion of such regular review material at the time of tenure. Where on-campus evaluation of creative production is required, institutions should be prepared to underwrite the cost of bringing external evaluators to campus for the on-campus production.

C.6.B. A Note on KC ACTF and Peer Review

The Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival (KC ACTF) is a national organization that serves over 600 institutions and 20,000 students across the United States. As part of the festival, productions may have a respondent see shows staged as part of a college or university’s theatre season. Theatre faculty involved in production (directors, designers, playwrights etc.) often wish to use the KC ACTF response as documentation for creative achievement. However, KC ACTF has a long-standing policy stating that the response to the production is not intended to be used for tenure and promotion. It also makes clear that any parts of a response that creative team collaborators do not want shared with the head of a tenure committee should be redacted.

Sometimes department heads and candidates ask KC ACTF respondents to write separate professional peer review responses for specific use as documentation for tenure or promotion, focusing that response on the faculty’s achievement in teaching or scholarship. It then becomes the individual respondent’s opinion and has no official link to the Kennedy Center or the Festival.

Just as theatre professors may want to use the KC ACTF response in their dossiers, they may also want to document the achievements of their students in the Festival as a part of their program’s outcomes assessment. The individual theatre program must determine the weight or value of such achievements.

D. Mentorship

An increasing number of campuses have developed formal faculty mentoring programs for faculty seeking tenure or advancement in rank. Regardless of whether this is true at one’s particular institution, ATHE encourages candidates for tenure and promotion to develop a network of senior and junior colleagues inside and outside of one’s place of employment as part of their strategy for tenure and promotion. Good mentorship helps a candidate know the expectation at all levels of the tenure and promotion probationary process. If an individual is a women or non-binary, Person of the Global Majority, or LGBTQ+, it may be worthwhile to find mentors with similar identity positionality to offer
guidance on navigating the systemic and institutional biases that such individuals often face while working in the academy.

E. Tips and Suggestions for Faculty Navigating Tenure and Promotion

In this section, you will find tips and strategies for navigating the tenure and promotion process from several professors working across theatrical disciplines and at various-sized institutions. While some of the pieces of advice and strategy will serve all of your needs, we do hope that in totality, they are of service to candidates seeking tenure and promotion.

- Know your university and department’s specific guidelines for tenure and promotion from the moment you begin your position — both the actual documents and the lived experience of other colleagues at the institution who have gone through the process. Knowing the specifics allows you to streamline your work and not get bogged down in things that are required in other places, but not your own.

- Use the language of the institution’s official documents (departmental, college, university tenure guidelines, faculty handbook, diversity and pedagogy statements) in the annual reviews, probationary assessments, and tenure narratives that you write. Always use the institution’s language to define and explain your activities so it echoes back to the reader. If you engage in creative practice, you have to translate that to the institution in institution-speak.

- Fold things that the institution does value — external grants, publications, awards — into work that would not otherwise be legible.

- Make a concerted effort to contextualize the work and the creative venues where you produce scholarship or creative activities? Who does the journal serve? Is it peer reviewed? Are you working at a historically Black theatre with a tradition of serving a Black community? A LORT-B? Explain to your university why this context matters.

- If you have access to the most recent internal and external reviewers for your department, read them so that you can understand how previous colleagues who have been up for tenure in your institution have framed themselves. Don’t be afraid to ask tenured colleagues to share their materials.

- Document your service obligations. Develop a logical filing system for your portfolio and a specific one for your service obligations. Let it be more granular than what you will need in an annual report, but track all of the labor. Print it out annually for a meeting with your chair and be in constant communication about whether the service load is appropriate for someone in your rank. Enlist your chair if it is too much but print it. It is more powerful to see on paper.

- Read Robert Boice’s Advice for New Faculty members and consult performance studies scholar Robin Bernstein’s page of links for academic advice: https://scholar.harvard.edu/robinbernstein/pages/grad-students

- Your job and career responsibilities in a creative program may not look like the ones documented in advice books for academics. Cultivate relationships with mentors and colleagues outside of your department and institution. In addition to providing career and emotional support, these colleagues may eventually become external reviewers, letter writers and advocate on your behalf. Find a mentor who will help you say no to asks that are not in service of your tenure and promotion.
Assess for yourself what you plan to do with tenure and promotion. Is this a means to stay where you are, or do you hope to have “portable” tenure that might allow you to apply elsewhere? If you aspire to eventually leave your institution, you might wish to align your work with a different standard than your own institution guidelines.

- If you are a Person of the Global Majority on the tenure-track, be wary of expectations (from within and beyond) that you must transform your department.
- Realize that similar disciplines (such as dance, art, or music) have similar expectations of balancing creative activity with research, so colleagues from those disciplines may have insights into university expectations.