

Best Practices for Ranked Faculty Members Writing Self-Evaluations

Overall, the Committee on Rank & Tenure looks for self-evaluations that are specific and reflective. We ask for relatively brief narratives compared to other schools, but we encourage you to be as specific as possible in describing your professional trajectory.

We are not Lake Woebegone. We do not expect faculty to be equally impressive in all three categories of professional performance. In addition, careers are long, and faculty may shift their interests and emphases over the course of years. But for all three categories (teaching, scholarship, service), it's helpful for us to get specific reflections about what your strengths and accomplishments are (and why), what you struggled with (and what you conclude from that, will do from there—the reflection is very important to us), and your best sense of next steps or goals.

Practices for Teaching

Teaching is the *sine qua non* for tenure and promotion. Regis is a teaching institution, which means that demonstrated capability for and commitment to teaching is important. Here are some suggestions for making sure you make your best case.

Specific to your first evaluation:

- It's helpful to give us on Rank & Tenure a sense of your teaching baseline (both amount and approach). Some faculty members come with very little solo teaching experience if they are straight out of graduate school, while others have years of experience at post-docs or prior institutions. And teaching styles and practices vary greatly for personalities and disciplines (and we have no pre-set preferences—students can be engaged by all sorts of pedagogies and pedagogues). You may want to re-use some of your teaching statement from your job application to give us a good sense of your pedagogical principles and commitments.
- Student populations, needs, strengths, and background experiences differ widely from school to school, and even if you came to Regis with substantial teaching experience elsewhere, you may find yourself having to adapt your teaching. It's helpful for us to hear about what choices you made, why you made them, and how they worked.
- Teaching strategies may change significantly depending on the kind of course you are asked to teach (lower-division versus upper-, single-discipline versus cross-listed or integrative, sole instructor versus team-taught). Newer faculty members often have more experience teaching lower-division courses only, so we particularly welcome and appreciate faculty attention to the diversity in their emerging pedagogical portfolio.
- Early-career colleagues are often generating a lot of course material. At any stage of a career, we do not expect everything to go well (see Lake Woebegone comment above), but it can be even less surprising for an assignment or class activity to be a mixed-bag when it is one of 20 new ones you've created that month. We welcome thoughtful commentary about an assignment or activity that didn't hit the mark, and in particular, commentary that identifies a path forward.
- There are many pieces of evidence that demonstrate care for teaching. We ask faculty members to include syllabi as attachments in their portfolios, because they give us a quick snapshot of how you organize your class. Feel free to call our attention to something you think is significant or distinctive there. Similarly, feel free to attach a copy of an assignment or activity plan that was productive for the class (even if it didn't totally succeed; see previous bullet). Student evaluations are helpful pieces of information to assess, but they are only one component. We know that many of you conduct informal midsemester evaluations; please let us know if you are doing so and what you are

learning from them. We encourage you to make use of a broad array of evidence that demonstrates your care for teaching.

- Your supervisor will observe you during your first year, but we also encourage you to seek out feedback and support from other colleagues. You may want to invite your first-year faculty mentor, or another departmental colleague, to observe a class and give you feedback. If you're struggling with an assignment or activity, we'd encourage you to ask colleagues for advice or feedback. We appreciate hearing about these sorts of conversations and activities; they are an indication that someone's taking the time to get a variety of perspectives on their teaching.

For pre- and post-tenure colleagues:

- Because Regis offers a variety of opportunities for faculty members to teach beyond their disciplinary specialization, we value colleagues who are willing to offer cross-listed courses, or courses in the first-year or integrative core. *We recognize that teaching outside one's home discipline can be challenging at first, and that student evaluations can sometimes be lower in these kinds of courses.* Feel free to discuss your challenges and what you learned.
- Regis offers opportunities for faculty development around teaching (e.g. ODEIE, ITI workshops). Your professional association may also offer these opportunities. If you participate in them, please let us know that you did so and what was helpful.

Practices for Scholarship/Research/Creative Work

Specific to your first evaluation:

- Rank and Tenure has just five members, while Regis College contains over 30 different academic disciplines/programs. As such, the members may be less familiar with the scholarly/creative norms and expectations of your discipline. You (or your supervisor) may want to give us a bit of a baseline for evaluation in that first year (does your discipline have a lot of opportunities for publication, or relatively few? does scholarship in your discipline require grant funding/equipment/institutional support/archival visits? is creative work in your field likely to be jury-evaluated? etc.).
- If you are coming from a field, or graduate program, or prior institution, that did not offer support or mentoring for scholarly or creative work, it is helpful for us to know that, *and* we encourage you to seek out support and mentoring for developing professional projects.

For pre- and post-tenure colleagues:

- We are interested in an overall trajectory of professional engagement. We are not an R-1, and do not have inflexible quotas of publications, nor do we rank journals or kinds of scholarship.
- Boyer's *Scholarship Reconsidered* describes four kinds of scholarly activity (discovery, synthesis, teaching, application/engagement). At Regis we value all four equally, and look for the external review or feedback component as the essential component of scholarship.
- Scholarly or creative work that connects either to your classroom work, or the mission of the University, is particularly valuable; we encourage people to highlight those connections where they see them.
- Professional projects sometimes have periods of failure or stagnation; a fellowship or grant application may not get funded, a manuscript or book proposal may be rejected, lab results may require a rethinking of the original hypothesis or be inconclusive. We expect these sorts of results over the course of a career. If you are consistently getting frustrating results or responses from

your professional projects, we encourage you to seek out advice and support from your colleagues (and to incorporate this in your self-evaluation).

Practices for Service

- Most faculty members will find their first-year service concentrated on service to their department or program. Overall, during the course of a faculty member's pre-tenure/pre-promotion years, we look for service contributions to a department (advising, contributing to departmental projects or AURs, major or program assessment, etc.) and to the college/university (active service on a committee, advising a student organization, participating in panels or events for the college).
- Elected committees are sometimes quite competitive, so you may put your name in nomination for a committee and not be elected. Please include the fact that you ran for committee election (and which one) in your evaluation, so that the committee is aware of your efforts. Note that there are non-elected advisory college/university committees or groups on which faculty members can participate, and Rank and Tenure does not give preference to whether participation in some committees or groups are volunteer or elected.
- Report all your service activities and be aware that it is and should remain the exception, and not the norm, for pre-tenured faculty members to serve on multiple committees. It is and should remain the exception, and not the norm, for pre-tenured faculty members to chair committees. (As a corollary, Associate Professors who want promotion to Professor should be willing to seek out and fulfill not just basic service commitments but leadership commitments, like chairing a committee. Professors who need to maintain performance for their rank likewise should be willing to take on leadership commitments.)
- Do not forget to report any formal or informal advising. Advising loads can vary greatly among faculty members. We encourage departments and programs to be transparent about service loads in general, and advising loads in particular. Faculty members who contribute regularly to the first-year writing course gain over a dozen new advisees each time they teach the course, and first-year advising, while associated with a stipend, can be particularly time-consuming. (As a corollary, we encourage faculty members who regularly teach the first-year writing course to take advantage of some of the resources for managing their advising load. If your advisees are pre-Nursing, pre-Pharmacy, Exercise Science, or planning to pursue majors in the Anderson College of Business and Computing, and are making use of those colleges' success coaches, you can have those students removed from your advising roster after the first year. Regis College also has an advising team that can take undeclared Sophomores for advising, if your load is getting too unwieldy.)
- Particularly be sure to report informal advising that takes substantial time or if you are feeling overly relied upon for service because of your particular background or perspective. Supervisors should be aware that faculty members from underrepresented groups in the academy (BIPOC, LGBTQ+, first-generation) are often asked to bear a disproportionate service burden. They can be asked for extra or additional service commitments on events or panels focused on issues for their community, they get invited or "volunteered" for committees wanting to diversify, and they can perform significant service for students or colleagues from their communities (in terms of mentoring and support). We encourage faculty members to watch for these time commitments, and to talk to their supervisors, or their faculty mentor or other supportive colleagues, if they are being challenged in their ability to turn down requests, or to fulfill their other professional commitments or passions. We want faculty to feel supported and sustained by their professional commitments.