

Advancing Faculty Equity

Promotion & Tenure Re-Imagined for Institution Building and Community Engaged Scholarship

White Paper Report
February 2024

National Science Foundation
ADVANCE Partnership Project



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Advancing Faculty Equity

White Paper Report

February 2024

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Introduction

In 2022, Saint Louis University, Seattle University, and Gonzaga University were awarded a National Science Foundation ADVANCE Partnership Grant for a 3-year program to re-imagine the professoriate and the associated implications for faculty evaluation and advancement (i.e., promotion and tenure; P & T). The aims of the project include identifying evidence-based and contextually appropriate approaches to evaluating traditionally undervalued faculty activities, such as community engaged research and institution building.

Community-engagement research: the creation of “partnerships and coalitions that help mobilize resources and influence systems, change relationships among partners, and serve as catalysts for changing policies, programs, and practices” [1] through research and scholarship.

Institution building: “an academic institution defines its purposes and establishes educational objectives aligned with those purposes. The institution has a clear and explicit sense of its essential values and character, its distinctive elements, its place in both the higher education community and society, and its contribution to the public good” [2]. Contributions to institution building include service, leadership, and other activities that sustain and grow the institution, in this case the university.

SLU’s participation in this project was motivated, in part, by a range of other institution-level discussions and efforts to advance greater equity over the last several years in faculty compensation, faculty hiring and retention, and faculty advancement. Because community engaged research and the labor of institution building often fall disproportionately to women faculty and faculty from minoritized racial/ethnic groups, the project has significant potential to bring greater equity to faculty advancement at SLU. The NSF ADVANCE project is an institution-wide effort for engaging the SLU faculty community and faculty leadership. This report provides background, method of internal data collection, summary of findings, and offers initial recommendations.

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A Guiding Question and Background

How can we best recognize, support, and reward faculty across all appointment types for the expertise and dedication they bring to achieving equitable, excellent higher education?

The answer to this question begins with creative and expansive thinking, what Kathleen Fitzpatrick has called generous thinking [3]. It is a leveraging of collective knowledge, skill, and passion to create a new higher education landscape where equity, excellence, and belonging are shared values. In the recent Boyer 2030 Commission Report [4], the report's authors emphasize the "equity-excellence imperative," where "equity and excellence are inextricably entwined, such that excellence without equity (privilege reproducing privilege) is not true excellence, and equity (mere access) without excellence is an unfulfilled promise. Both are necessary, from a world readiness point of view, for seeing liberal education, inclusive of the sciences and humanities, as career preparation for an increasingly diverse student body, and complex global interconnectedness" (p. 3; Boyer 2030 Commission Report, 2023).



The Report goes on to make clear that "the precipitous decline in the humanities comes at the very moment when the central substance of those fields—cross-cultural understanding; ethics; the pursuit of meaning; communication of complex and nuanced ideas, critical thinking—are desperately needed for providing purchase on enduring human questions so necessary for mental health, and a fulfilling life, and for effectively addressing society's most pressing problems" (p. 14, Boyer Commission Report, 2023). To re-invigorate the academy in the humanities and provide a sustainable solution, the 2023 report focuses on faculty equity as one point of intervention.

The academic world is changing, and empirical research is discovering and documenting how these old systems and practices perpetuate inequities in faculty advancement, in particular [5-7]. To learn more about the Boyer 2030 commission report and specific recommendations for reshaping academic see the full report linked [here](#).

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Method: A Participatory Action Research Approach to Engagement

The project utilized a participatory action research (PAR) methodology [8] for engaging the SLU faculty community and data collection. PAR includes both community engagement and actionable steps to be taken. Community engagement included strategic communication and discussion with university leadership, including deans and provost office about the project. Focus groups occurred in the spring of 2023 with faculty from the university rank and tenure committee, faculty from minoritized racial and ethnic groups, and faculty senate representatives provided an assessment of the culture, practices, and barriers associated with faculty advancement.



Fall 2023 Think Tank Workshop with
Seattle University

Action steps included the formation of two Think Tanks on community engagement and institution building in the fall of 2023 made up by faculty across the university (see Appendix A with members of each Think Tank). The Think Tanks met three times over the course of the fall including a workshop led by our external partners at Seattle University (SU). For a review to date (September 2022 to December 2023) of all activities this slide deck was created with updates on SLU NSF ADVANCE activities and see Appendix B for number of participants at the Seattle University campus visit in the fall 2023.

Listening to one another, recognizing that we have as much to learn as we do to teach, finding ways to use our collective knowledge for the public good. From the broadest rethinking of our political and institutional landscape, to developing new ways of working in public, to sharing our ways of reading, to focusing on the most intimate practice of listening—at each level, we must be connected to, fully part of, the world around us.

Fitzpatrick, 2021, quoted in Boyer 2030 Commission Report

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Results

The results section will review thematic findings from the 5 focus groups and a summary from each Think Tank. In addition, general observations were made based on the workshop conducted by Seattle University partners.

Focus Groups

All the focus group interviews were conducted by external partners at Seattle University. The interviews were audio recorded, transcribed, and coded inductively by the Seattle University team. Themes were shared with the SLU NSF ADVANCE team and are summarized below. No quotes or other identifying information was provided to protect confidentiality.

Theme 1. Mixed Feelings

There is evidence of hunger for change and willingness to participate. Many see the University is in a time of change and are enthusiastic about the NSF partnership that can leverage these changes to have a broader rethinking on promotion and tenure (P & T) guidelines to accommodate institution building activities and community engaged scholarship. The faculty expressed both fear and excitement about moving to R1 status. A question emerged here - will we need to move to more research-oriented faculty or be open to more equitable distribution of faculty activities to cover the needs of academic units? Finally, there is great hope that a revision of the process at the University-level will lead to a more equitable University-wide approach to rank and tenure processes in all academic units.

Theme 2. Organizational Process Concerns

Faculty expressed concerns that the current P & T Policy revision process will not address equity. There seems to be a disconnect between divisional structures and UCART related to responsibility alignment given the great variability across schools and departments. Additional concerns were shared about transparency and the lack of written documentation about the P & T process, leading to inequitable practices in some units. A suggestion was made to remove the need to go through provost for department/college level P & T, instead strengthen university standards/policy as oversight that consider variability while still setting explicit standards; must be inclusive of equity standards/boundaries for what is under each area.

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Theme 2. Organizational Process Concerns continued

Faculty observed a lack of organizationally-supported structures that help faculty from minoritized race/ethnicity and underrepresented groups through P & T process as a major concern.

Concerns were also raised about P & T for clinical and/or non-tenure track (NTT) faculty were expressed in a variety of ways including process, valuing of administrative roles and lack of UCART understanding of how scholarship may or may not play a role in a clinical / NTT faculty role. Faculty noted there are few pragmatic, standard processes at University level that brought some standard equity.

Faculty members emphasized a lack of valuing of administrative/leadership activities in the P & T process. In addition, there is a sense that service is undervalued and inequitably “counted” in the evaluation process. Faculty from minoritized racial/ethnic groups across units and levels noted inequity in the P & T process for them and others. Recommended attention to mentoring and issues of racism by unit leaders that become barriers to P & T.

Think Tanks

Two Think Tanks focused on two kinds of under-valued faculty activities:

- 1) community engaged research; and**
- 2) institution building work.**

Think Tank members were selected based on expertise (i.e., are community engaged scholars) or expressed interest in being part of institutional change (see Appendix A for list of Think Tank members). Each of the Think Tanks identified key elements for consideration for their specific areas. In addition, general observations were made based on the workshop and campus visit of Seattle University colleagues.



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Community Engaged Research Think Tank

This Think Tank aimed to define community engaged research and how it should be evaluated and rewarded. Over the course of the fall meetings, the Think Tank noted the following:

- **SLU already has a Carnegie Foundation Classification as a Community Engaged Institution** and research active university. In previous feedback about SLU's classification, it was noted by the Carnegie Foundation that SLU does not reward faculty for community engaged work. The Center for Social Action submitted a new self-study for 2023 to the Carnegie Foundation for it was successfully renewed as a Community Engaged Institution in January 2024.
- **Definition of community engaged research and best practices is longstanding.** Definitions exist with the Center for Disease Control (among other government bodies) and by the Carnegie Foundation. Scholarship defines levels of community engagement with associated ethics [9]. There is a Venn diagram when considering what constitutes community-engagement including: advocacy, public scholarship, and research [10]. A rubric for evaluating community engagement was created for looking at several different dimensions and not all would fall into the "traditional" bucket of research [11].
- **There is a lack of alignment between faculty workload policy, faculty manual, and P & T guidelines inclusive of community engaged research.** Revision of University and individual academic unit P & T guidelines is needed to meet our peer, research-intensive institutions. The workload policy offers expansive definitions of research and service that are not mirrored in the Faculty Manual sections related to P & T. Note, however, that the Manual does reference the updated workload policy. Workload and P & T policies need to offer consistent language to codify the inclusion of community engaged research and institution building as part of faculty workloads and eligibility for evaluation for advancement. Resources are available for constructing these - Engagement Scholarship Consortium and Faculty Engaged Scholarship: Setting Standards and Building Conceptual Clarity.
- **Some SLU faculty members have biases against or have limited knowledge about community engaged scholarship.** Some faculty (and those in leadership and evaluative roles) do not see community engaged research methodologies (e.g., program evaluation) as "real science," even when there is demonstrative community impact.

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Community Engaged Research Continued

- **In faculty evaluation at SLU, impact is still narrowly and traditionally defined.** Impact is defined in most academic units as “impact factors” of journals, prestige of certain journals, and impact on field of study. Definitions are not inclusive of real world or community impacts. Nor are evaluation or examples given for how to account for these impacts. In some circles, “community engaged” scholarship represents an epistemological shift in the academy, challenging the “ivory tower” view of knowledge creation and ownership (what Boyer called discovery research). Given the identities of those most likely to engage in community-based research, these conceptions of impact contribute to inequities in faculty advancement. Community engagement is time-intensive creating a slower pace for publication or grant submissions due to the need to build real and trusting relationships with various stakeholder groups. Early career scholars may have different artifacts demonstrating the impact of their scholarship that will not meet narrow and traditional definitions; yet demonstrate real world, public scholarship impacts.
- **A new faculty development and evaluation model is needed.** The new model would include the varied areas of faculty workload, specific to SLU’s mission, and draw distinctions between service, community engaged scholarship, and interdisciplinary scholarship.
- **There is a general lack of University support for community engaged research.** Service learning/teaching supports are offered through the Center for Social Action and the Reinert Center for Transformative Teaching and Learning, but community engaged research is not integrated into Office of the Vice President for Research infrastructure or support/award mechanisms, which means SLU faculty who excel in this work are not recognized or supported here in the ways they could be. For example, the Norman A. White Award for Faculty Engaged Scholarship and Service is housed in the Faculty Senate and could be moved to OVRP for inclusion alongside other research awards. University systems (e.g., Workday, IRB) are onerous and time consuming for paying subcontracts and community members who are part of research teams.



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Institution Building Think Tank

This Think Tank aimed to define institution building (IB) and how it should be evaluated and rewarded. The Think Tank worked to generate creative, “out of the box,” and expansive thinking about IB in the faculty life. The IB think tank discussions can be summarized in the following points:

- **IB work should be identified explicitly in P&T.** If we categorize IB as service, it won't gain traction. Service is marginalized in our P&T processes. In our workload policies, service is the third (leftover) group. SLU should give due importance to IB if this endeavor is to have any chance of success. For example, one form that IB can take is what has historically been construed as “service to the profession,” notably in the form of the editing of scholarly journals.
- **We need to articulate what IB work is and why it should be valued more.** Currently IB is happening in SLU, and it is important, although it is often lumped in with other service roles. For most faculty, service is only a tiny portion of their overall workload/faculty contracts that is acknowledged and visible, regardless of how much invisible labor is required in doing IB work. This allocation makes IB labor mostly invisible. Notably, much of the IB work is done by women and underrepresented minorities. We must highlight the invisible labor people are doing. We must have a better accounting of the types of such work and what are the time allocations to such “service?” We must build a case for why recognizing IB work is necessary and valuable to the institution. It will be important to clarify if the IB category is only for promotion, or would it be for tenure as well? The Think Tank saw the merits of both views, to have this for promotion only versus for promotion as well as tenure. We do not have a definitive answer but urge that this point be clearly addressed since this will have repercussions for promotion.

For example, there are some department chairs that are engaged in innovative program building, or growing enrollment, while some others are just “keeping the lights on” or even destroying value. The latter clearly can't be IB just because they are a department chair. The former clearly should be recognized for IB work so that SLU can grow as an institution.

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Institution Building Think Tank Continued

- **Document the rigor of IB work.** Emphasize the rigor of IB work (also see point 5 below), and appropriately identify, assess, and evaluate IB contributions so we can document who is doing IB work well. We do not want to perpetuate, and in fact we want to dismantle, a hierarchy in promotion pathways where IB (along with teaching-intensive workloads) are “seen” as the less rigorous pathway. For the work to be respected, it will need to be documented and evaluated appropriately. For example, other industries use a portfolio approach to assessment. A faculty portfolio of IB work may assist in telling a holistic story of their engagement and accomplishments so those evaluating can review the breadth and depth of the work and impact.
- **Provide space and instructions for personal narrative in faculty evaluation and advancement materials.** Allow evaluations to have space for personal narrative about IB work that a faculty member is doing. This would also necessitate the need for training, so faculty and faculty leaders know how to recognize truly impactful IB work, narrate it effectively (for faculty engaged in IB work), and evaluate it responsibly (for faculty who evaluate P&T dossiers and perform annual faculty performance review). Some professional organizations (Association for Languages) do that in the context of effective teaching, as does our CTL. Provide similar training for IB work.
- **Revise the Faculty Manual to include this new IB category.** Create a space in the Faculty Manual to give every Unit/School the task of identifying IB categories within their discipline, with specific examples. Emphasize rigor and differentiation here. For example, even within A&S, there is need to provide differentiated space. Push the identification of details down to the department level, with guiding principles at the College and University level. Ultimate goal is for every P&T document to have an IB category that fits the discipline that uses that document. As an example, see the recent Seattle University work along these lines ([link](#)).
- **We need to articulate how our recent (move towards) R1 fits with this effort.** Research expectations for faculty at R1 schools is higher than at R2 schools. Any proposed IB category for P&T should consider how IB work supports research-intensive faculty (i.e., excellent leadership as department chairs, recruitment of diverse graduate students for securing NIH supplement grants). It will also be necessary that it aligns with the University’s broader goals.

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General Takeaways from both Think Tanks

During the workshop conducted by our external partners at SU, the think tanks met together for discussion about faculty equity and promotion and tenure. Below are key takeaways discussed.

- **We need a culture shift toward generous, holistic thinking.** Generous thinking refers to thinking comprehensively, holistically, and seeing individual faculty as part of an academic ecosystem where we all need to do a variety of tasks to make the academic enterprise work. Institution building and community engaged research methodologies should be integrated in this socialization for culture change. Discussions included changes in how we mentor and evaluate faculty. A hierarchy exists in some units between those who predominately do research and those who teach. Teaching is seen as “easier” and for those who cannot or do not engage in research.

We sit in judgment of one another, instead of seeing each other as partners who make it possible to function as an institution. The culture change needs to start before one accepts a faculty position. We ought to socialize graduate students to the academic world, so they can see themselves as contributing to a variety of faculty roles – in research, teaching, and leadership positions, without judging these roles in hierarchies.

- **Faculty promotion standards signal the values and identity of an institution.** There is a lack of rigorous evaluation and reward for teaching, institution building, and community engaged research. This signals that what we really value is solely traditional forms of research (Boyer’s discovery research). At Seattle University, some saw community engaged faculty as being the “exception” to the rule about how faculty were supposed to behave as researchers. This is a misalignment between institutional mission and individual faculty evaluations and advancement. And it is important to note: mission-driven institutions cannot fulfill their missions without faculty members engaging in teaching, institution building, and community engaged work.

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General Takeaways from both Think Tanks continued

- **“What we count, is what counts.”** Quantifiable metrics used for evaluating faculty work (e.g., number of publications in peer reviewed journals, impact factors, student feedback on courses) was discussed as social constructs. Quantifiable items are not necessarily “fair.” It depends on who created the metric and the assumptions made about what the numbers mean. Some things are difficult to quantify yet many department chairs and faculty want clear, unambiguous P & T guidelines. Yet there are numbers we do not pay attention to like attrition of women in STEM departments at SLU. No one is quantifying what we lose as a result of these unfair systems. What other losses do we not quantify and consider? What is the cost of holding to traditional metrics in faculty evaluation and reward systems?
- **The language we use to describe faculty work matters.** Discussion about what we label or call things in faculty life suggested we could innovate language and processes to change culture. For example, moving away from “workload” and “performance evaluation” to performance expectations review will allow for self-accountability by the faculty, a clearer definition of the role for faculty, etc. Similar thoughts were raised about our current use of the term “workload” and suggestion to instead use “work assignment.” Service was discussed here as institution building and shifting to honoring excellence in leadership and service to a department.



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Summary Conclusions and Recommendations

As a mission-driven, urban, research-intensive, Catholic, Jesuit university, SLU is in a unique and promising position to bring into alignment faculty policy and practices to meet the needs of a changing higher education landscape. SLU is also in a time of change due to the move to Carnegie R1 status. While there are understandable anxieties about what this move entails for faculty P&T, we believe that this is also an opportune moment for the institution to re-examine - and reimagine - the diverse contributions of faculty members in the enterprise of educating students, creating new knowledge, and supporting our communities, and the ways in which all this work is valued.

There are perceptions of barriers to change in promotion and tenure guidelines by faculty, leadership, and deans, though this seems to be grounded in a change needed in their academic units and/or fields of study. The Faculty Manual offers guidelines about faculty advancement. Based on the reading the by this team, the guidelines offer few barriers to crafting equitable P & T guidelines that meet the needs of this cultural moment in higher education, or the needs of individual academic units (see Appendix C for table units with individual P & T policies) to achieve excellence in research, teaching, and service.

For example, some units may need a mix of research-intensive and teaching-intensive faculty workloads with institution building happening related to research (e.g., mentoring student researchers) and teaching (e.g., innovating curriculum); thus, P & T guidelines can offer multiple pathways to advancement through each of these activities that support excellence and equity for faculty and in the delivery of higher education to students.

This will be a culture shift.

We encourage generous thinking about P & T processes and we encourage academic leaders and SLU faculty to address those aspects of P&T that impede, do not facilitate, and/or do not recognize broader faculty contributions to the institution's mission and our regional community. Our recommendations are consistent with Goals and Priority Actions articulated in the University's Academic Strategic Plan.

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Recommended Actions

1. Align language in faculty policies in workload and Faculty Manual promotion and tenure section related to service and research/scholarship inclusive of institution building and community engaged research and its related approaches (e.g., public and applied scholarship [12]).
2. Provide infrastructure support for understanding, cultivating, and valuing community engaged research within existing University systems and processes (e.g., Workday data collection on faculty advancement, IRB expertise, resources/training/awards offered in the Office of VP for Research).
3. Initiate inter-departmental and inter-school/college training and development on equity and excellence in P & T practices and guidelines.
4. Develop University-level guidelines for faculty evaluation inclusive of all aspects of faculty workload. Guidelines should include rigorous definitions of “impact” and excellence for each workload category and an array of measures of impact, including - but not limited to -- traditional measures. (Note: in the area of teaching, this work is already underway as part of the Academic Strategic Plan.)
5. Create a community engaged research network for faculty and graduate students at SLU that creates community and is connected to larger networks at AJCU and peer universities.



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This report was completed by and under the advisement of the undersigned:

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- [Bidisha Chakrabarty](#), Associate Dean, Professor, Chaifetz School of Business
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- [Noelle Fearn](#), Dean, School of Social Work
- [Leslie Hinyard](#), Associate Professor, Director of Advanced Health Data Institute, School of Medicine
- [Travis Loux](#), Associate Professor, College of Public Health & Social Justice
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- [Michael Mancini](#), Professor, School of Social Work
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- [Katie Stamatakis](#), Associate Professor, College of Public Health & Social Justice
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- [Joel Mort](#), Research Strategist, Office of the Vice President for Research
- [Leah Sweetman](#), Director of Community-Engaged Learning, Center for Social Action

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Appendix A Community Engaged Research Think Tank Members

| Name | Rank | Academic Unit |
|-------------------------------|--|--|
| Alesha Durfee | Professor | College of Arts & Sciences |
| Keon Gilbert | Associate Professor | College of Public Health & Social Justice |
| Lisa Jaegers | Associate Professor | Doisy College of Health Sciences |
| Whitney Linsenmeyer | Assistant Professor | Doisy College of Health Sciences |
| Michael Mancini | Professor | School of Social Work |
| Dyan McGuire | Associate Professor | School of Social Work |
| Joel Mort | Staff | Office of the Vice President of Research |
| Rabia Rahman | Associate Professor | Doisy College of Health Sciences |
| Bryan Sokol | Associate Professor | College of Arts & Sciences |
| Katie Stamatakis | Associate Professor | College of Public Health & Social Justice |
| Leah Sweetman | Staff | Center for Social Action |
| Nancy Weaver | Professor | College of Public Health & Social Justice |
| Katie Heiden-Rootes (Lead) | Assistant Vice President; Associate Professor | Division for Diversity & Innovative Community Engagement; School of Medicine |

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Appendix A Institution Building Think Tank Members

| Name | Rank | Academic Unit |
|-------------------------------|--|--|
| Alexei Demchenko | Professor, Dept Chair | School of Science & Engineering |
| Noelle Fearn | Dean | School of Social Work |
| Leslie Hinyard | Associate Professor, Director AHEAD Institute | School of Medicine |
| Joel Jennings | Associate Professor | College of Arts & Sciences |
| Dan Kozlowski | Associate Professor, Dept Chair | College of Arts & Sciences |
| Travis Loux | Associate Professor | College of Public Health & Social Justice |
| Jane McHowat | Associate Dean | School of Medicine |
| Brian Yotheres | Professor | College of Arts & Sciences |
| Andre Zampaulo | Professor | College of Arts & Sciences |
| Bidisha Chakrabarty (Lead) | Professor, Associate Dean | School of Business |

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Appendix B

Attendees at Seattle University Campus Visit Activities November 2023

| | |
|--|----|
| Total unique attendees across all events | 63 |
| Faculty attendees | 28 |
| Faculty/Administrators | 29 |
| Administrators (non-Faculty) | 1 |
| Staff | 4 |
| Unknown Role | 1 |
| Women | 43 |
| International Faculty | 4 |
| Faculty from minoritized race/ethnicity | 6 |
| Unknown race/ethnicity | 4 |

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Appendix C

SLU P & T Document Levels (2023-2024 Academic Year)

| | |
|--|--|
| College of Arts and Sciences | College and individual department |
| College of Philosophy & Letters | College only (does not have departments) |
| College for Public Health and Social Justice | College only |
| Doisy College of Health Sciences | College only |
| Chaifetz School of Business | School only |
| School of Education | School only (does not have departments) |
| School of Law | School only (does not have departments; includes Law librarian faculty) |
| School of Medicine | School only |
| School for Professional Studies | School only (does not have departments) |
| School of Social Work | School only (does not have departments) |
| School of Science and Engineering | In the process of developing both school and department level documents following the Parks/CAS reorganization |
| Valentine School of Nursing | School only (does not have departments) |
| Center for Advanced Dental Education | Center only (does not have departments) |
| Libraries and Museums | Medical Center Library and Pius Library have a joint library-level document. |