

Senate Document SD 25-27  
Amended and Approved,  
3/16/2026

Senate Document SD 18-15  
(Supersedes SD 17-11)  
Approved, 4/8/2019  
Amended and Approved, 1/9/2023

MEMORANDUM

TO: Jeffrey Nowak, Chair  
Senate EC

FROM: Jay Johns, Chair  
Faculty Affairs Committee (FAC)

DATE: February 20, 2026

SUBJ: Guiding principles of promotion for Clinical Faculty and  
Professors of Practice at PFW

WHEREAS, the Purdue Fort Wayne Senate approved guiding principles and procedures for promotion of clinical faculty (SD 18-15) at PFW in the spring of 2019; and

WHEREAS, the Faculty Affairs Committee was notified that the current policy document (SD 18-15) does not accurately reflect the responsibilities of this rank; and

WHEREAS, the Faculty Affairs Committee determined that the previous guiding principles and procedures require revision; and

WHEREAS, to resolve these issues with PFW's guiding principles and procedures for promotion of clinical faculty, the Faculty Affairs Committee, reviewed and recommended updates to the current policy document (SD 18-15); and

BE IT RESOLVED, the Faculty Affairs Committee is requesting the Purdue Fort Wayne Senate to adopt the revised version of SD 18-15 as the guiding principles for promotion of Clinical Faculty and Professors of Practice at PFW.

Attn: Jay Johns  
Chair, Faculty Affairs Committee

Dear FAC,

I am writing to outline the proposed revisions to SD 18-15 for FAC's review and consideration. These changes are intended to ensure alignment with current campus definitions and practices and to provide greater clarity regarding expectations for Clinical Faculty and Professors of Practice.

The proposed revisions include the following:

- **Addition of Professors of Practice** to the document to ensure their inclusion alongside Clinical Faculty where appropriate.
- **Incorporation of Purdue West Lafayette's definition of Clinical Faculty and Professors of Practice**, ensuring consistency with campus-level terminology and policy.
- **Clarification of evaluation expectations**, specifying that Clinical Faculty and Professors of Practice must demonstrate **excellence in one category and competence in one category**, with **Teaching required to be either the category of excellence or the category of competence**. This change is intended to remove ambiguity and reinforce the central importance of teaching in these roles.
- **Revision of the minimum number of external review letters**, reducing the number from six to three. This adjustment reflects current practice and has already received approval from the Provosts at PFW and PWL.
- **Clarification that Clinical Faculty and Professors of Practice** likely focus on teaching and professional practice in their job duties as faculty and may not have traditional research expectations.

These revisions are intended to improve clarity, ensure consistency with campus standards, and appropriately reflect the roles and expectations of Clinical Faculty and Professors of Practice.

Thank you for your time and for FAC's careful review of these proposed changes. I would be happy to provide any additional information or clarification as needed.

Sincerely,

Kimberly O'Connor  
Associate Vice Chancellor For Teaching and Learning

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**GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR PROMOTION OF CLINICAL FACULTY AND  
PROFESSORS OF PRACTICE**

(Information regarding promotion and tenure guiding principles for tenure track and tenured faculty can be found in SD 14-35)

PFW is a comprehensive university that is committed to maintaining a standard of excellence for teaching, scholarship and/or creative endeavor, and service in its diverse programs, departments, and schools/colleges. Maintaining this standard can be accomplished only by employing and promoting clinical faculty and professors of practice who share this mission.

Clinical Faculty and Professors of Practice are promotable, but non-tenure track, faculty classifications. These individuals provide education and/or supervision of students engaged in clinical and professional practice. Each college or school may choose the appropriate title for their faculty in these classifications.

Clinical Faculty and Professors of Practice focus principally on excellence in instruction and engagement. In addition to their instructional responsibilities on campus, Clinical Faculty and Professors of Practice also may be professionals in a practice site and provide clinical supervision of students; collaborate and develop professional relationships with industry and governmental agencies; and/or supervise internships, co-ops, service learning and other student activities outside the classroom.

The most important decisions in the academic profession, for clinical faculty, for professors of practice and for the institution, regard the awarding of promotion. Because clinical faculty and professors of practice do not typically receive releases that provide them time for other pursuits, the expectations for their primary job responsibilities and accomplishments should be more focused on practice rather than on scholarship and/or creative endeavor. Therefore, clinical faculty and professors of practice should be considered for promotion differently than tenure-track faculty, whereby promotion is recognition of their ongoing contributions, consistency, and longevity, in addition to past achievement.

Clinical Faculty and Professors of Practice provide invaluable contributions to the University community, its students, and the community at-large. These faculty members are essential to fulfilling the University's educational mission by teaching students how to apply what they learn in professional settings. It is through promotion that the University rewards such contributions.

Significant diversity exists with respect to the needs and goals of programs, and the ways in which Clinical Faculty and Professors of Practice contribute to the university. Such diversity is essential to the intellectual health of the university and its success in meeting its mission. At the

same time, pursuit of the university's mission and goals unifies all programs and gives a sense of shared purpose while preserving and fostering diversity of work. This document lays out guiding principles that are reflective of the university's mission, vision, goals, and values.

The awarding of promotion is the university's recognition that individual clinical faculty members and professors of practice have successfully met their department's criteria, and in so doing, have worked to advance the university's mission and goals. Promotion criteria are the standards for summative judgment, and as such, there must be guidelines for clinical faculty and professors of practice development. Departments must develop their own promotion policies, defining criteria for excellence and competence in teaching, scholarship and/or creative endeavor, and service at all levels. Within these policies and within each rank, the standard for excellence should exceed the standard for competence and should be appropriate for their respective disciplines. Furthermore, while departments may choose to set standards that increase when considering promotion from one rank to the next, it is not required. Demonstrating competence and/or excellence must include input from outside the department which might be on or beyond the campus. A department's policy should define what the department means by "teaching," "scholarship and/or creative endeavor," and "service," and list activities and achievements properly associated with those terms, along with qualitative standards by which they may be evaluated and how the activities and achievements should be documented. The evaluation of the candidate's work should primarily be qualitative and not be reduced to quantitative formulae. In general, the widely accepted evaluation practices within the discipline should determine what evidence a candidate includes in a promotion case.

The promotion policies developed by each department must be clear and meaningful. They must be consistent in content with the guiding principles laid out in this document and must be used uniformly as the only standards by which to evaluate cases for promotion from that department.

Candidates in the Clinical Faculty and Professor of Practice tracks must demonstrate excellence in one—and only one—of the following categories: teaching, scholarship and/or creative endeavor, or service. Unlike Non-Clinical Faculty, Clinical Faculty and Professors of Practice may select service as their area of excellence for promotion to any rank. Each candidate must also demonstrate competence in one additional category. Teaching must be either the category of excellence or the category of competence.

Accordingly:

- Although the document recognizes three categories (teaching, scholarship/creative endeavor, and service), candidates are not required to demonstrate excellence in all three.

- Each candidate must show:
  - Excellence in exactly one category, and
  - Competence in exactly one other category,
  - Teaching must be included in at least one of the above two categories.

The minimum number of external letters for Clinical Faculty and Professors of Practice is three for the category of excellence, regardless of which category is selected.

Clinical Instructors, Assistant Clinical Faculty and Associate Clinical Faculty, Instructors of Practice, Assistant Professors of Practice and Associate Professors of Practice may seek promotion after five years in-rank at each level.

## TEACHING

PFW faculty are expected to demonstrate a significant and ongoing commitment to advancing student learning and fostering student success. Such a commitment is reflected, in part, by remaining current in the content and pedagogy appropriate to one's discipline but is also reflected in the continual consideration of one's own teaching effectiveness. This expectation extends to all faculty who teach, regardless of rank.

Teaching by Clinical Faculty and Professors of Practice occurs in a variety of contexts including, but not limited to, credit courses, non-credit programs and workshops, seminars, and continuing education programs, and the supervision of the clinical work of students / interns / practicum students. A range of activities that affect student learning – directly and indirectly – should be considered when documenting and evaluating one's teaching effectiveness. Documentation and formative evaluation should take place over time and be informed by multiple measures that represent multiple perspectives (e.g., students, professional peers, self-evaluation).

## PROFESSIONAL PRODUCTIVITY OR SCHOLARSHIP AND/OR CREATIVE ENDEAVOR

PFW Clinical Faculty and Professors of Practice are expected to maintain currency in their discipline. One way to do so is to engage in professional productivity or scholarship and/or creative endeavor. The specific forms of this work and its reach must be defined by department criteria.

While assessing the professional productivity or scholarly and/or creative contributions of a candidate, some of the factors which may be important in establishing excellence are consistency, originality, significance, depth of consideration, contribution to the discipline, and relevance to the candidate's teaching. The evaluation of professional productivity or scholarly and/or creative contributions by authorities in the field is accomplished by a variety of means.

Documentation concerning the frequency of opportunities for such work within the discipline, the stature of the publication, conference / meeting, the selection process (e.g., refereed), as well as sources of funding may also be important in establishing excellence. Depending upon the discipline and area of endeavor, some combination of several or all of these aspects may be involved in building a case. The quantity of professional productivity or scholarship and/or creative endeavor is evidence of productivity; however, its quality is more important.

## SERVICE

PFW faculty at all ranks are expected to take an active role in the campus beyond teaching and scholarship and/or creative endeavor; they are encouraged to contribute their expertise on a department, college, university, community, regional, national, and/or international level and/or to participate in professional organizations. For Clinical Faculty and Professors of Practice, this can be a significant, and maybe even primary, part of their appointment.

Department criteria should distinguish between professional activities (those related to the faculty member's discipline or assigned university duties, or to the mission of the university) and non-professional activities (those not so related). If a candidate wishes to introduce evidence of service beyond the scope of the department criteria, it is the responsibility of the candidate to demonstrate the relevance of such service to their profession, disciplinary area, and/or role as a faculty member at PFW.

The specific standards of competence and excellence, as well as how they are to be determined and evaluated within each category of teaching, scholarship or creative endeavor, and service shall be established by the department and articulated clearly in their promotion and tenure criteria.