For a number of reasons, it seems appropriate and necessary to review, clarify, and update the current Dornsife RTPC-track faculty guidelines for appointment and promotion. The current guidelines were last updated in 2013; since then, there has been significant development in the values and policies of Dornsife. Additionally, during this period of time, the University has committed to strengthening and improving the RTPC track in meaningful ways. Updating the promotion guidelines will support the joint goal of USC and Dornsife to offer RTPC faculty a practicable career path, and will further solidify the contributions of RTPC faculty, who make up 47% of faculty within our College.\(^1\) Finally, there are several ways in which we see the current criteria falling short in terms of clarity, consistency, and flexibility. Especially when RTPC faculty are being evaluated or recommended for promotion—by Tenure-Track faculty, by the Dean’s office, and by external letter writers—these criteria play a central role. Revising the current criteria to include up-to-date, relevant, and consistent guidelines will help foster an appropriate and informed assessment of RTPC faculty for promotion within Dornsife. In light of all this, our recommendations for revision fall into three broad categories:

1) Clarifying and increasing flexibility for promotion criteria:

The currently articulated promotion criteria for our RTPC faculty has significant room for revision. In some cases, as with the promotion criteria to Associate Professor of Teaching, lower-order criteria are evidently weighted identically with overarching evaluative criteria. As Dornsife revises the way it conceives of and uses student evaluations of courses, our promotion criteria should keep pace with this developing understanding of how best to assess our faculty. There is inconsistency in how criteria are described across type of faculty, as well as the clarity and thoroughness of criteria, especially in the very brief discussion of promotion for Faculty of Practice. Our aim is for the promotion criteria for each track of RTPC faculty to be clear and attainable, as well as sufficiently flexible to allow departments to craft positions that best suit their needs. We feel that the language could better account for the ways in which expectations can vary by department, perhaps explicitly acknowledging the need for flexibility. For example, Rossier includes the language under its Promotion Criteria “THIS IS NOT A CHECKLIST. There is no expectation that any given dossier will have all items.” In addition, we found very clear and helpful promotion tables, used within Rossier and Keck, as well as in a comparable program at UCSD, which struck us as a thorough and consistent way of organizing this information for faculty use and

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\(^1\) Figures provided in March 2018 by Associate Dean of Operations and Faculty Affairs Renee Perez, via correspondence with Dornsife Faculty Council President Trisha Tucker
understanding. Revising or supplementing how these criteria are made available could further support the goal of accurate and expressive presentation of requirements.

2) Reframing the criteria for promotion to Full Professor:

Compared to Rossier, Social Work, Dramatic Arts, and Viterbi, Dornsife’s requirements surrounding years before promotion to Full Professor seems to be particularly lengthy and inflexible. Though of course we do not want to diminish the quality of those who attain the rank of Full Professor among RTPC faculty, we would like to bring our criteria into line with the rest of USC, which would incline us to recommend reconsidering the time length articulated in the promotion criteria (i.e. normally twelve or more years for practice, typically fifteen years for research, and typically at least twelve for teaching) in light of other schools. In Marshall, for instance, “promotion to (full) Professor typically is considered after four or more years as an Associate Professor.” This is a more specific statement of rank requirements than simply a number of years served. In addition, other schools have language in their promotion criteria like “typically, although not required, will have had many years of experience” (Viterbi) or qualifications such as “however, a faculty member may request early consideration based on extraordinary performance” (Marshall). This explicit flexibility makes good sense, would allow departments and individuals greater liberty to assess readiness for promotion based on criteria beyond a fixed number of years, and would bring us into line with promotion language across USC. Given that Full Professors bring prestige to departments and schools, the fact that less than 10% of RTPC faculty within Dornsife have achieved this rank\(^2\) combined with the inflexibility of articulated criteria for promotion may hold Dornsife back from distinguishing itself further by having RTPC faculty of varied rank.

3) Further acknowledging the uniqueness of RTPC Promotion:

Recognizing that these criteria are being used to evaluate RTPC faculty up for promotion, as well as to shape choices that faculty have made with an eye toward merit review, we don’t want to overthrow established criteria by which numerous employees have shaped their careers thus far. Instead, we would like to see these criteria better express the reality of department-level life at USC for these faculty members. One way to do this, and to further support the value of this faculty for our university, would be to include language within the promotion criteria that explicitly acknowledges the uniqueness of this promotion track. Especially at higher levels of review, where tenured faculty and those most familiar with promotion for tenured faculty may review these criteria, it is imperative that there is a clear sense of the uniqueness of the RTPC-track. Language that explicitly places value on having RTPC-track faculty on the review committee, that affirms the role of the department in articulating the expectations of a given faculty member, and that creates space for the value of service for these faculty could be helpful in this way.

We are in the process of finishing up an annotated version of the current Dornsife RTPC Promotion Criteria, with comments and notes at moments that seem to lack clarity, flexibility, or consistency.

\(^2\) Figures provided in March 2018 by Associate Dean of Operations and Faculty Affairs Renee Perez, via correspondence with Dornsife Faculty Council President Trisha Tucker
In addition, we have collected sample promotion tables for review, as well as pertinent promotion criteria for full professors at other schools within USC. We are happy to share and discuss these additional materials with you. Our hope is that our own criteria will benefit from revisions that bring us into line with the University overall. We recommend refining the appointment and promotion criteria within Dornsife so that they more accurately express the dimensional roles that RTPC faculty play, as well as lay out more clearly the criteria already in place for RTPC-track faculty promotion.