

March 02, 2012

Understanding the promotion & tenure process

ADVANCE at Northeastern University, Northeastern University

Recommended Citation

ADVANCE at Northeastern University, Northeastern University, "Understanding the promotion & tenure process" (2012). *Future Faculty Workshops*. Paper 9. <http://hdl.handle.net/2047/d20003815>

This work is available open access, hosted by Northeastern University.



Future Faculty Workshop

Understanding the Promotion & Tenure Process

Patricia Mabrouk and Tom Sheahan
March 2, 2012



Goals

- Institution
 - Tenure: life-long commitment, you + the university
 - Successful faculty – innovators, collaborators, leaders, producers
 - Research objectives need to align with institutional directions
- You
 - Faculty position: meets research & career objectives
 - Member of functional, innovative and forward-looking department and institution
 - Security offered by tenure



What Can I Do Now?

- Think about your steps all along the way
 - Constantly/consistently evaluate your own progress
 - Goals
 - Mechanisms to get there
 - Ways to learn from others and engage them
 - Keep data on all your activities (get organized!)
 - Ask for feedback: Grant writing, Papers, Teaching, Research program organization and development



This process is the accumulation of years of effort – no cramming, THINK AHEAD!

Understand the General Process

- Learn about the promotion and tenure process at your institution
 - Ask at every stage if you have questions
- Request a copy of the policy
 - When interviewing, check that policy is consistent with your personal goals
- Understand and balance of teaching, research, and service that the institution and the department will expect
- Understand the audience(s) for the materials
 - Internal: Department, College, Dean, Provost, President, Board of Trustees
 - External: evaluators (your peers)



General Process – The Dossier

- Dossier
 - Summary of your independent career at institution
 - Information on all aspects of your career
 - Research summary (pubs, grants, citations, recognitions/awards)
 - Teaching summary (courses, evaluations, awards)
 - Service summary (activities, awards)
 - Inside reviews/letters
 - Outside letters – VERY IMPORTANT!
 - Writers mostly selected by department
 - Some writers may be selected by you



Dossier Components

- CV as summary of career
 - Education
 - Honors
 - Teaching/advising/mentoring
 - Grants
 - Publications/Presentations
- Research, Teaching, Service Statements
 - Written communication is a one-way street
- Outside letters



Dude, where's my dossier?

- Department review
 - Tenured faculty generally involved in decision
 - Department chair writes letter
 - Some schools have subcommittee
 - School review
 - Often school-level committee reviews and makes recommendation to dean
 - Dean makes recommendation
 - Promotion/Tenure Committee (Provost)
 - Makes recommendation to President
 - President sometimes makes final decision



Recap – Where's my Dossier?

- Department review
- School review
- Promotion/Tenure Committee (Provost)
- President may make final decision
- Board of Trustees as final stamp



NOTE: Multiple levels of review – no one person makes the decision! MANY voices are part of the process

General Process

- Timing of preparing the dossier, what you should submit and when
 - Think carefully about names for Outside Letters
- Understand the process completely
- No last minute prep!
 - Think about your research/teaching summary
 - Ensure papers are submitted in a timely way
- Ask QUESTIONS if you do not understand



Recommendation Letters



- Outside letters
 - Highly influential in decision process
 - May have opportunity to suggest names
 - Develop relationships – create a network
 - **“MARKET” yourself!**
 - Post-decision: Ask about possibility for feedback from the letters (can be useful)
- Anticipate who you would want to write letters and get to know those individuals

Factors Considered

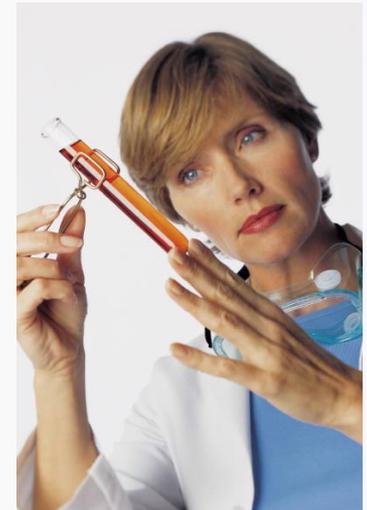
- Research
- Scholarship (publications)
- Teaching
- Service

These factors combine to reach a decision, BUT the specific combination varies widely across institutions

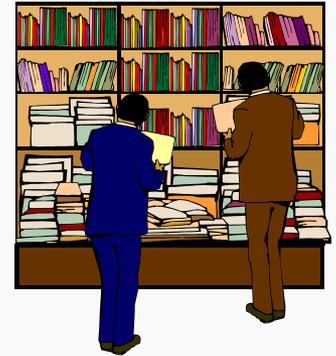


Research

- Grants – important national review of work
 - Demonstrate ability to secure funding for research
- Presentations
 - Invitations reflect status in the field
- Visibility/Engagement/Focus
 - Present at multiple conferences
 - Engage the leaders at those conferences
 - Invite leaders to your institution via department events
 - Reflect on level of focus in work and, if broad, engage multiple communities

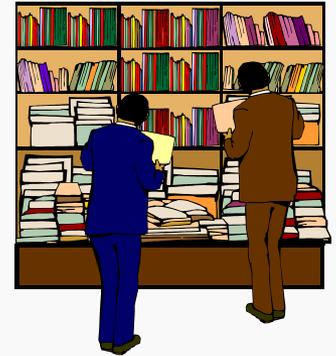


Scholarship



- Publications
 - Used to assess your productivity
 - Numbers vary widely among disciplines
 - Type of publications expected also vary widely
 - Different expectations at different promotion points
 - Used to assess the quality of work produced
 - Citations, H-index, journal Impact Factor (IF)

Scholarship



- Publications
 - Demonstrate your **INDEPENDENT** contributions; careful about papers w/advisor
 - Show evidence of your unique contributions, particularly in collaborative/cross-disciplinary activities
 - Issues of collaborators
 - How many? How much of your time?
 - Issues of cross-disciplinarity
 - Why did this matter? What did you/discipline contribute?

Teaching

- Effectiveness
 - Often evaluated by students
 - Ask assigned or selected mentor to provide review
- Innovation
 - Think about ways to do it better/more effectively
 - Engage students
- Range/breadth
 - Assignments: graduate/undergraduate, service/majors, large/small
 - Be prepared to teach beyond your comfort zone
- Enthusiasm
 - Convey why you love what you do
 - *Occasionally* volunteer for something extra



Teaching

- Develop a portfolio of your teaching
 - Syllabi
 - Handouts, other notes on courses developed
 - Problem sets
 - Other written materials
 - Computer-based materials, notes on courseware
 - Copies of software developed for courses
 - Examinations
 - Copies of graded papers where there is a significant writing component
 - Evaluation by a colleague
 - Student evaluations



Service – “Choose Wisely”

- Department
 - Help your department accomplish program goals, student outcomes
- University
 - Engage in the broad community, but **wisely** – most P&T committees are broad
- National Organizations
 - Choose wisely for visibility with minimum time
- Civic/K12/Outreach Opportunities
 - Choose wisely, but make a difference



Keeping a Complete Record

- Keep your CV up to date
 - Include students mentored at all levels (primary and secondary mentoring)
 - Undergraduates
 - Graduate Students
 - Postdoctoral Associates
 - Include advising responsibilities at all levels
 - Refereed publications
 - Some institutions request an evaluation of % effort on each
 - Citations – check your “h-index”
 - Abstracts/Conference Proceedings/ Presentations
 - Seminars/Workshops/Panels/etc.
 - Posters
 - Invited talks at meetings
 - Service within university, in community, at (inter) national level



P&T versus Performance Reviews

- Ask your institution about frequency and nature of performance reviews
 - Can be very helpful in guiding activities
 - Opportunity for mid-term feedback
 - Provide an internal view of accomplishments
 - Some may have external letters
 - Dossier can be similar to promotion dossier



Are there answers to my questions?

- How many publications do I need?
- How much grant funding?
- How many graduate students? Postdocs?
- How many committees? Which ones?
- How good must my teaching be? Does it matter?
- How do I know if I'm doing enough?

There are no “right” answers to these questions, because the process is a composite of all of these and varies from place to place:

**FIND OUT WHAT YOU CAN ABOUT YOUR
INSTITUTION – ASK QUESTIONS!!**



Questions?



Ask many, ask often...