Making the Leap to Professor

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Recording date of this workshop is
March 10, 2015
Some of the rules and procedures
discussed in this workshop are subject
to change.
Please check university resources
before relying exclusively
on this recorded presentation.

Themes
- The faculty review process is detailed
  and thoughtful, not arbitrary and
capricious.
- No surprises – In most cases,
promotion should follow from prior
  annual reviews.
Probability of Success

- The probability of success is high.
  - 94% of candidates over the years 2000-2008 were promoted.
  - Some faculty members never stand for promotion.

Resources

- Faculty Manual – University web page
- Provost’s Instructions for Tenure and Promotion – Provost’s web page

More Resources

- Provost’s Instructions for Annual Review – Provost’s web page
- A Guide to WSU’s Policies and Procedures for Evaluating Faculty Members – Provost’s web page
Still More Resources

- Your department chair
- Your department & college guidelines
- Your mentors
- E-mail (fkmcs@wsu.edu) or call (5-5581) me.

Key Points

- Procedures and standards vary across departments, colleges.
  - Get the appropriate guidelines.

Mentoring

- Having a mentor(s) aids success.
- Number and function of mentors depends on culture and your needs
- Work with your chair to appoint one or more.
Timing

- Date for promotion is usually 6 years after promotion to associate professor.
  - That means that consideration occurs after 5 years.

Responsibility

- "Candidacy for promotion to Professor may be initiated by the faculty member, one or more departmental Professors, or the department chair."
  - Faculty Manual

Responsibility (continued)

- In an ideal world, the chair would contact you when you’re ready.
- Our world is not ideal.
  - You may have to ask your chair if you’re ready.
  - You may need to bring your own case forward.
The Dean’s Role

“... the Academic Dean will decide which promotion cases are to be forwarded to the Provost and Executive Vice President [and] will notify each candidate of the decision, in writing, within ten working days.” (Faculty Manual, p. 65)

The Candidate’s Rights

“... the faculty member will be given a minimum of five working days to exercise the right to have the packet forwarded to the Provost and Executive Vice President, regardless of the Dean’s decision.” (Faculty Manual, p. 65)

The Procedure

- Exact procedures vary by department and college
- Decision should be consistent with prior reviews when possible
Procedure (continued)
- Faculty member assembles a file (May?)
  - Curriculum vitae
  - Teaching portfolio (limited to 5 pages)
  - Context statement (limited to 2 pages)
  - Exhibits

External Letters
- At least 4 external letters are solicited (summer?)
  - The candidate submits a list.
  - The chair adds names.
  - The candidate cannot veto names.
  - All letters received on time by the department go forward.

External Letters (continued)
- External letter writers are distinguished professors (e.g., editors, chairs of study sections).
  - No personal relationship with the candidate.
  - Writers receive the file prepared by the candidate.
External Letters (continued)

- External reviewers:
  - Evaluate the quality and quantity of the candidate’s work
  - Compare the candidate’s work to the unit’s requirements
  - State whether the candidate would be promoted at his (her) institution

The Department Considers the File (August – September?)

- The file now contains:
  - The candidate’s curriculum vitae
  - Teaching portfolio
  - Context statement
  - External letters
  - Annual reviews since the last promotion
  - Exhibits

Faculty Recommendations

- Each professor makes a recommendation.
  - This is part of shared governance.
  - Recommendations should be consistent with past reviews when possible.
  - At least 5 faculty recommendations
Exceptions to Recommendations:

- Anyone who will participate later in the process (e.g., chair, dean, chancellor).
- Anyone who has a personal relationship with the candidate.

The Chair’s Summary

- Interprets the case for those outside the field.
- Addresses disagreements in the faculty recommendations.
- Consults the branch campus if needed.
- Makes a personal recommendation on promotion.
  - A recommendation that is inconsistent with the faculty should be explained.

The Dean’s Summary (October – November?)

- The Dean consults his (her) Advisory Committee (and the Regional Campus Chancellor).
- The Dean makes a recommendation and interprets the case for those outside of the college.
  - A recommendation that is inconsistent with the department should be explained.
The Provost Considers the File (December – January?)
- Consults Vice Provosts
- May ask the Deans for additional information
- Can disagree with the prior decisions, but rarely does

If Promotion is Granted
- The candidate receives a letter and a 10% raise effective in the fall.
- The candidate is recognized at the Celebration of Excellence Banquet.

If Promotion is Denied
- Appeal to the Faculty Status Committee (FSC) within 30 days.
  - Inadequate consideration
  - Violations of academic freedom
  - Substantial procedural irregularities
  - Not: Merits of the case
Appeal to FSC

- A subcommittee investigates.
- FSC makes a recommendation to the President.
- The President accepts or rejects the recommendation.

Standards for Promotion

- Standards must be met in teaching, scholarship, and service.
  - Weight depends on job description
- Judgment of professors is important.

Faculty Manual

- “Attainment of the rank of Professor is an indication that, in the opinion of colleagues, an individual has made, and continues to make, outstanding contributions to a major area of the individual’s work assignment.” (p. 66)
Faculty Manual (continued)

- “Satisfaction of minimum criteria at the unit level is not sufficient to ensure promotion.”

- “…some successful faculty members will complete their careers without being promoted to the rank of Professor.” (p. 66)

Faculty Manual (continued)

- “Candidates for promotion to Professor must show clear and convincing evidence of persistent high levels of attainment in the criteria appropriate to their work assignment and to the mission of their units, including increasing service to the institution, professional organizations, and/or society.” (p. 66)

Faculty Manual (continued)

- “Documented evidence that the quality and quantity of the accomplishments of the candidate are at a significantly higher level than that expected of an Associate Professor is required.” (p. 66)
Faculty Manual (continued)

“National, and preferably international, prominence must be demonstrated through some form of recognized achievement reviewed by appropriate professionals for promotion to Professor.” (p. 66)

Standards (continued)

“Criteria for promotion to ... Professor are to be articulated and supplemented by criteria developed at the department, school, and/or college level to emphasize goals and objectives.” (Faculty Manual, p. 65)

Standards (continued)

- Time in rank is not sufficient.
- Administrative service is not sufficient.
- National or international prominence is required.
Standards for Regents Professor

- Tenured full professor
- Served WSU for at least the preceding 7 years
- National or international prominence
- No more than 30.
- No more than 2 nominations per year per College

Promotion Myth 1

- Promotion is a right. I will be promoted if I do a reasonable job.
  - "...some successful faculty members will complete their careers without being promoted to the rank of Professor." (Faculty Manual, p. 66)

Promotion Myth 2

- Getting promoted is tough. Most faculty will never be full professors.
  - Faculty are hired on the assumption that they will become full professors.
  - 94% of candidates over the years 2000-2008 were promoted.
    - Some faculty members never stand for promotion.
Promotion Myth 3

- Only research and grant funding count.
  - Performance in teaching, scholarship, and service all count.
  - The exact factors and their weights vary by department.
    - Learn about your department.

Promotion Myth 4

- Being promoted to professor is a license to retire.
  - Regents professor
  - Professors can be fired.
  - Raises are based on performance.

Promotion Myth 5

- A majority "vote" leads to promotion.
  - Faculty recommendations are advice, not really votes.
  - Promotion is based on many factors (e.g., external letters, summaries of dean and chair).
  - A simple majority does not yield promotion.
    - Thoughtful recommendations carry more weight.
    - Some faculty recommendations count more than others.
    - Faculty members may write negative recommendations while "voting" positively. These recommendations are counted as negative.
Promotion Myth 6
- If one professor “votes” against me, I won’t be promoted.
  - Negative recommendations may not be decisive.
  - Many successful faculty members receive negative “votes”.

Promotion Myth 7
- If you’re well liked, you’ll be promoted; if not, you won’t.
  - Academics tolerate eccentric behavior.
  - You will not be promoted if your behavior interferes with the functioning of your unit.
  - Faculty members who are well-liked may have an easier time.

Promotion Myth 8
- I’ll be promoted if I have x papers.
  - Teaching and service count.
  - Quality counts.
  - Level of contribution counts.
  - Other factors contribute to scholarship (e.g., grant funding).
Promotion Myth 9

- If Professor X was promoted, I’ll be promoted.
  - Cases are judged on their merits relative to standards, not in comparison to others.
  - You do not know everything about Professor X.
  - Standards change over time, etc.

Frequently Asked Questions

- Can a candidate withdraw his (her) case?
  - Candidates for promotion may withdraw at any time.

FAQs (continued)

- What should be in the context statement?
  - Explanations of any unusual challenges or opportunities
FAQs

- Is early promotion permitted?
  - “Only under extraordinary circumstances will a person be recommended for promotion to Professor when he or she has served as Associate Professor for fewer than 6 years.” Faculty Manual (p. 66).
  - Only with the Provost’s prior approval.

FAQs (continued)

- Can excellence in one area mitigate lesser performance in another area?
  - Yes, but no faculty member can omit one of the areas teaching, scholarship, and service.

FAQs (continued)

- Can a candidate add to his (her) file after the file leaves the department?
  - Only minor modifications are allowed (e.g., full citation of a paper listed as in press).
  - If a submitted paper (grant) is accepted, the candidate can request reconsideration of the file by the department.
The End

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