Taking the Myths Out of Tenure and Promotion

Frances K. McSweeney
Regents Professor
Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs

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Recording date of this workshop is April 7, 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

- Having a world-class faculty is the key to having a world-class university.

- The goal of all faculty review processes is to develop that world-class faculty.
Themes (continued)

- The faculty review process is detailed and thoughtful, not arbitrary and capricious.

- The probability of success is high.
  - More than 90% of those who stand for tenure receive tenure.
  - Approximately 45% of those hired drop out before tenure consideration.

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

- Tenure and promotion is one part of a system of performance reviews
- In most cases, tenure and/or promotion follows logically from prior reviews.
  - No surprises

Key Points

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

- Pre-tenure (pre-professor?) faculty should have a mentor(s).
- Number and function of mentors varies with department
- Ask your chair to appoint one or more.

Initial Appointment Letter

- Date for tenure consideration usually
  - 6 years for assistant profs
  - Within 3 years for associate profs
  - One year for profs
- Date for intensive pre-tenure review (usually 3 years)

Appointment Letter (continued)

- Specific job responsibilities
  - If unspecified, assume 40% teaching, 40% research, and 20% service.
- A lead department for joint appointments
Annual Review
- Responsibility of the (lead) department chair
  - The chair can use a committee
  - Conducted yearly for all faculty
  - Performance during the last calendar year

Annual Review (continued)
- Rated on a 5-point scale
  - >3.0 = exceeds expectations
  - 3.0 = meets expectations
  - <3.0 = falls short of expectations

Annual Review (continued)
- Used for raises
- Faculty sign to indicate they read the review.
- Faculty may write a response.
Annual Review (continued)
- Should be accurate
- Should be developmental and evaluative
- Faculty report activities on a standardized, web-based, form (WORQS).

Progress Towards Tenure Review
- Yearly for pre-tenure tenure-track faculty.
- Responsibility of the (lead) department chair

PTT Review (continued)
- Differs from annual review
  - Cumulative
  - All of the senior faculty must be involved.
  - The chair must discuss the results with the faculty member.
Faculty sign to indicate that they read the review.
Faculty may write a response.

Intensive Pre-tenure (Third-year) Review
- Usually in spring of third year
- Dry run for tenure
- Procedure the same as tenure except no external letters

Third-year Review (continued)
- Results in one of four evaluations:
  - Progress
  - Satisfactory
  - Some Improvement Required
  - Substantial Improvement Required
  - Unsatisfactory – Usually leads to non-renewal
Appeal of Non-renewal

- To the Faculty Status Committee within 30 days
  - Inadequate consideration
  - Violation of academic freedom
  - Substantial procedural irregularities
  - Not: the merits of the decision

Tenure

- Very thorough review
- Consideration usually after 6 years (really 5)

Tenure (continued)

- Decision should be consistent with prior reviews when possible
- Exact procedures vary by department and college
Tenure Procedures

- The 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 (during the 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).
  - No personal relationship with the candidate or other conflict of interest.
  - 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 receive tenure 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
  - Past progress-towards tenure and third-year reviews
  - Exhibits

Faculty Recommendations

- Each senior faculty recommends whether to grant or deny tenure.
  - This is part of shared governance.
  - Recommendations should be consistent with past reviews.
  - 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 or other conflict of interest.**

The Chair's Summary

- **Consults with the Academic Director for Regional Campus faculty.**
- **Interprets the case for those outside the field.**
- **Addresses disagreements in the faculty recommendations.**
- **Makes a personal recommendation to grant or deny tenure.**
  - 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 for Regional faculty).**
- **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 the Provost's Advisory Committee and some Vice Provosts
- May ask the Deans for additional information
- Can disagree with the prior decisions, but rarely does

If Tenure and/or Promotion is Granted

- The candidate receives a letter (February?)
- The candidate receives a 10% raise effective in the fall.
- The candidate is recognized at the Celebration of Excellence Banquet at Showcase.

If Tenure is Denied

- Resign within 90 days with no record of the denial and (usually) one more year at WSU.
- 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.
- The President does not usually grant tenure. The case will be reconsidered.

Standards for Tenure

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

Standards for Full Professor

- Time in rank is not sufficient.
- Excellent performance in teaching, scholarship, and service over many years.
- National or international prominence
- Administrative service counts little.
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

Tenure Myth 1
- Tenure is a right. I will receive tenure if I do a reasonable job.
- Tenure is a long-term commitment for the University.
- The University expects better than average performance.

Tenure Myth 2
- Getting tenure is tough. Most faculty will not receive tenure.
- Faculty are hired on the assumption that they will receive tenure.
- More than 90% of those who come up for tenure receive it.
- Some faculty members leave the University before standing for tenure.
Tenure Myth 3
- The administration prefers to deny tenure (to save money, because they’re evil)
  - Denying tenure is very costly in terms of time, energy and money
    - Recruitment time and cost
    - Start ups
    - Mentoring
    - Threat of a law suit

Tenure Myth 4
- 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.

Tenure Myth 5
- Tenure is a license to retire. Tenured faculty cannot be fired.
  - Tenured faculty can be fired.
  - Raises are based on performance.
Tenure Myth 6
- A majority “vote” leads to tenure.
  - Tenure is based on many factors (e.g., external letters, summaries of dean and chair).
  - Majority does not rule.
    - Thoughtful recommendations carry more weight.
    - Some faculty recommendations count more than others.
    - Faculty members may “vote” positively while writing negative recommendations. Their recommendations are counted as negative.

Tenure Myth 7
- If one faculty member “votes” against me, I won’t get tenure.
  - Negative recommendations may not be decisive.
  - Many successful faculty members receive some negative “votes”.

Tenure Myth 8
- The faculty opinion alone should decide tenure cases.
  - The process would terminate at the departmental level if that were true.
  - Most Provost’s prefer that the faculty make the decision.
    - Provosts step in when the faculty abdicate.
  - Retaining an unsuccessful faculty member does him/her no favor.
Tenure Myth 9

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

Tenure Myth 10

- I’ll get tenure if I have x papers.
  - Teaching and service count.
  - Quality counts.
  - Level of contribution counts.
  - Other factors contribute to scholarship (e.g., grant funding).

Tenure Myth 11

- If Professor X got tenure, I’ll get tenure.
  - Cases are judged on their merits relative to standards, not in comparison to others.
  - You may not know everything about Professor X.
  - Standards change over time, etc.
Frequently Asked Questions

- Can a candidate withdraw his (her) case?
  - Candidates for promotion (but not tenure) may withdraw at any time.
  - Candidates for tenure may resign before the case goes to the Provost.
    - Resignation must be in writing.
    - The effective date may be the same as from a tenure denial.

FAQs (continued)

- Can the tenure clock be stopped?
  - Yes
    - by giving birth (up to 2 years)
    - by serious illness
    - by family emergency
    - by taking leave without pay
  - All requests must be made to the Provost by September 1.

FAQs (continued)

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

- Is early promotion and/or tenure permitted?
  - Performance must be exceptional, not just meet our standards
  - Only with the Provost’s prior approval

FAQs (continued)

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

FAQs (continued)

- Can a job offer be made with tenure?
  - Yes if the offer is at the senior level.
  - The entire tenure process is completed before the offer is made.
FAQs (continued)

- Can part-time faculty be tenured?
  - Yes if the appointment is 75% or more
  - Under unusual circumstances for a 50% appointment

FAQs (continued)

- Can a candidate add to his (her) file after the file leaves the department?
  - Only minor modifications are allowed (e.g., the 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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