On February 27, 2015 the UD ADVANCE Institute and the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs jointly hosted two panels for faculty on the promotion and tenure (P&T) process at the University of Delaware. UD ADVANCE compiled this summary of the primary points made during the two panels.

Panel 1: Promotion from Assistant to Associate Professor
- Joann Browning (panel chair), Professor of Theatre and Senior Associate Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
- David Burris, Associate Professor, Mechanical Engineering
- Rebecca Davis, Associate Professor, History
- Greg Hicks, Associate Professor and Chair, Physical Therapy
- Anja Nohe, Associate Professor, Biological Sciences

Panel 2: Promotion from Associate to Full Professor
- Nii Attoh-Okine, Professor, Civil & Environmental Engineering
- Arwen Mohun, Professor and Chair, History
- Lori Pollock, Professor, Computer and Information Sciences
- Michael Shay, Professor, Physics & Astronomy
- Bahira Trask (panel chair), Professor and Associate Chair, Human Development & Family Studies, former member of her College P&T committee

Overview and Summary

Both panels began with a welcome from the ADVANCE PI, Pam Cook and the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs, Matt Kinservik. They stressed that the panels were for informal conversation about the process, as every department follows different protocol. PI Cook and Vice Provost Kinservik shared that the panelists would range in discipline and committee work, and would speak to their own experiences with promotion and tenure.

All panelists pointed to the faculty handbook as the starting point for gathering information on the promotion and tenure process, and recommended talking to others in your department who have recently gone through the process. Panelists encouraged faculty to make the most of peer-review opportunities, which provide a platform for seeking out areas that may need to be addressed in order to progress. Panelists recommended that faculty look through the documents of at least two other tenure dossiers to provide structure to help them evaluate the subjective parts of the dossier. It is important at this stage to be proactive in searching for mentors who have been through the process, who can provide you with feedback, and perhaps someone who would be willing to serve as the chair on your committee.

Panelists highlighted the importance of narrating your intellectual story. Do not underestimate the importance of storytelling, as it is your best opportunity to frame the details that will follow in your dossier. Narrate your candidate statement about the high
quality of your work and your excellence performance. The critical component of the dossier that everyone will be looking for is value: what value do you bring to your department, your college, or university? Value is measured in different ways in each unit, so it is important to make sure you know the metrics for value within your own department (i.e. grants, books, referred articles, etc). Be able to articulate the significance and innovation of the research – is it pushing the department in new directions? When it comes to teaching – are you being effective? When it comes to service – are you a team player? These are the kinds of questions that a seasoned mentor will use to help you focus the narrative of your dossier.

Many panelists acknowledged that the process is a source of stress and anxiety. However, starting early to work on your dossier documents, such as written statements, is an important (albeit challenging) thing to do. The University has an institutional membership to the National Center for Faculty Development & Diversity (NCFDD), which provides many workshops on time management, stress management, building networks of mentors, etc. If you are interested in accessing this resource, send an email to pdi@udel.edu to join the mailing list. The Center for Teaching and Assessment of Learning (CTAL) is another institutional resource available to us that can help with the development of dossier documents. Many of the panelists discussed the role of viewpoint in this process; for example, shifting from a framework of the process being isolating to one of a community building enterprise where your external reviewers and department are cultivating feedback around your work.

The process has now moved from paper binders to electronic dossiers on Sakai. Each individual case has its own Sakai site, and nothing is different with regard to the process from previous years with the exception that everything is electronic.

The following tips are presented based upon the panel in which they were discussed; however, many of them are useful for both promotion levels.

Useful tips from Panel 1:

- It is important to have some evaluation of teaching beyond student evaluations. Think about having senior colleagues come to your class, a body of work you submit to evaluate, have CTAL come work with your course, etc. Show some evaluative measures of your coursework.
- Your suggestions for the external reviewers are important. Be sure you spend time thinking about the institutions that they come from, the individuals themselves, and pick the best of both. It is important that you share why that person would be a good fit to evaluate your work, and you can also share why those that the department put forth might not be a good fit (and provide insight, i.e. historical background).
- Feedback is only helpful if it is constructive and honest -- do not be afraid to ask for faculty members who are known for giving such feedback!
- If you find yourself in an appeals situation, the letters that are written all along the way are intended to give you feedback. Take a deep breath, read the letter from the perspective that the letters are there to say to you what is missing from the
dossier or is not clear, what may need to be provided, etc. The information that you need will be in those letters. It will tell you how you need to prepare for that appeal process.

- The idea of a “shoebox” came up a few times, both virtual and hard copy, that you store anything that comes up over the course of your time at the University that may be useful for your tenure process (i.e. a letter from someone saying thank you for being on a committee, a letter from a student, etc).
- If you have used the stop the clock policy, it was recommended that you note it in your dossier documents simply to account for the extra time. ADVANCE can help with this wording.
- There were a lot of questions about the logistics of the Sakai site, and it was clarified that there was no design element to the actual site itself, only to the documents that would then be added to the site.

Useful tips from Panel 2:

- Having an international reputation in your field is another component of the promotion to full professor, but how do you build this? One panelist discussed hosting an international conference here at the University as a way to get international recognition. Starting early and building your resume with these criteria in mind is important.
- Engaging in service in the field at this level presents both benefits and challenges. It can help your promotion case as you become connected to others in your field who can write letters of support. Panelists advised that you may need to be cautious about how much time you invest in other kinds of service, particularly things you may feel passionate about but your department may see as irrelevant to your work as a scholar. On the other hand, one of the luxuries of tenure is you get to choose, to a certain extent, where you want to put your time. If you’re going to do things that will take time away from research, make sure you explain in the dossier why they were worthwhile. When thinking about service, ask yourself: Which service opportunities are the right ones for you? Think about taking on leadership roles instead of multiple committees.
- The question of “When should I go up?” is much more amorphous for full than it is for tenure. Panelists encouraged the audience to look at it as one big journey, not two separate journeys, so don’t stop in between. When you put together your dossier, you are telling a story (see above paragraphs about the intellectual story), so tie together your story from assistant professor until now: where you are now and how your research has been moving.

For more information about this panel, please contact UD ADVANCE at www.udel.edu/advance or 302-831-3028.

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