Each year, the UD ADVANCE Institute and the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs jointly host 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 these panels.

Overview and Summary

The 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 especially the need to familiarize yourself with your departmental P&T guidelines, 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. In this regard while peer reviews at the assistant professor level are in year two and year four, they are “every three to five years for tenured associate professors.” If you feel you’d like a review in year four, ask. Panelists recommended that faculty look through the documents of at least two other dossiers for the same level promotion. It is important at this stage to be proactive in searching for faculty in your area who have been through the process and can provide you with feedback.

While the factual and quantitative information and results are primary and must be clearly listed and identified, panelists highlighted the importance of narrating your intellectual story. Do not underestimate the importance of the narration, as it is your best opportunity to frame the details that follow in your dossier. Narrate your candidate statement about the impact and high quality of your work. The critical component of the dossier that everyone will be looking for is impact: what has been the impact and value of your work to your department, your college, the university and the profession? Impact is measured in different ways in each unit, so it is important to make sure you know the metrics and culture within your own department (i.e. grants, books, referred articles, etc). Be able to articulate the significance and innovation of the research. When it comes to teaching – are you being effective? These are the kinds of questions that will help you focus the narrative of your dossier. Identify your “brand” and weave it into all aspects of your dossier: who are you as a scholar? a researcher? a member of the University community? This is your collective narrative and your “brand” will help focus how you present yourself. That said, realize that committees and faculty may not read and absorb a long statement and will not “dig out” the details. Be clear and concise.
Panelists acknowledged that the process is a source of stress and anxiety. However, starting early to work on your dossier documents, keeping track of activities regularly in a folder, 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 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 that can help with the development of dossier documents. Panelists discussed changing your perspective 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 panels in which they were discussed; however, many of them are useful for both promotion levels.

**Useful tips from the Assistant to Associate Panels:**

- Keep your audience in mind as you prepare your dossier. The P&T committees do not know details or culture of your department nor of your specialization area. Communicate what you do and why it is important in a way that contextualizes your work.
- It is important to have some evaluation of teaching beyond student evaluations. Think about having senior colleagues come to your class to evaluate your teaching, or have CTAL come work with your teaching, 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. You can share why those that the department put forth might not be a good fit (and provide insight, i.e. historical background). The pedigree of the evaluator is generally not as important as their status as an expert in the field and their ability to speak to your work and your influence in the field.
- Feedback is only helpful if it is constructive and honest -- do not be afraid to ask opinions of faculty members who are known for giving such feedback!
- 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. invitations to speak, a letter from someone saying thank you for being on a committee, a letter from a student, etc). It was encouraged that you document as much as you can, save letters, event flyers, photocopy of the conference schedule, etc. You can also include
invitations that you declined as a means of speaking to your impact and reputation.

- If you submitted a grant that was not successful, you may choose to include this information in your dossier narrative because it may speak to your efforts.
- You may add something to your dossier after it has been sent to the next level (i.e. a grant, new publication), with written permission sent to the committee. If you choose to do this be sure it is clear that this is material added after the previous opinions/decisions and external review letters were written.
- The format of your dossier narrative is up to you (i.e. structuring it chronologically or by research-teaching-service). Structure it in a way that best tells your story, and consider using graphics like a chart, when helpful.
- Work at rank is considered towards promotion even if at another university. Include that work in your dossier, but be sure to show that you have continued on an upward trajectory since arriving at UD.
- There were 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.
- 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.

Useful tips from Associate to Full Panels:

- The faculty handbook states that you are judged under the guidelines in place on the date you declare your candidacy. Those guidelines are the ones that will govern your process. Spend time getting to know 4.4 in the Handbook, as well as your departmental documents.
- Panelists felt that having an international reputation in your field is an important component of the promotion to full professor, but how do you build this? Starting early and building your resume with these criteria in mind is important. One panelist suggested marketing yourself at conferences by making connections (ultimately, that could lead to being invited to give seminars or colloquium talks).
- Your dossier will be full of evidence, so be sure that your summaries are very clear! Make sure the P&T Committees do not have to dig for information. Remember that the P&T committee does not know details of your discipline or of your department culture. Communicate what you do and why it is important in a way that contextualizes your work.
- Engaging in service to the profession 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 a few leadership roles instead of multiple committees.

• Focus on consequentiality and be able to clearly articulate the impact of your work. Consider using h-factor or citation counts (if applicable for your field) or find other ways to provide analytic data to document that your work has impact in the field and beyond. You do not need to include these factors if they are not applicable for your field, but be able to contextualize this for the committee since they will not be familiar with your field. Your mentorship of students is another way to speak to your impact. How have you been helping students succeed? How has your research stimulated new research from your students?

• Work at rank is considered even if at another university. Include that work in your dossier, but be sure to show that you have continued on an upward trajectory since arriving at UD.

• The question of “When should I go up?” is much more amorphous for promotion to full professor than it is for tenure decisions. 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. Additionally, explain how your research and productivity will continue beyond promotion.

• If you feel you are ready to go up “early”, discuss this with others in your department and in your field. You should clearly be exceeding the standards if you want to go up early. Get mentorship and guidance from others, but ultimately you know the guidelines and are the only person who knows when you’re truly ready.

• Is there a “too late” to go up for promotion? Continued productivity does not mean that all years at rank have to be stellar, just ensure the gap can be explained. Be sure to show evidence of an upward trajectory in excellence and productivity.

For more information about these panels, please contact UD ADVANCE at www.udel.edu/advance or 302-831-3028.
Thank you to our faculty panelists!

2015 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

2015 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

2016 Panel 1: Promotion from Assistant to Associate Professor
- **John Ernest**, Professor and Chair, English
- **Jennifer McConnell**, Associate Professor, Civil & Environmental Engineering
- **Mary Ann McLane**, Professor, Medical Laboratory Sciences (University P&T Committee)
- **Barret Michalec**, Associate Professor, Sociology & Criminal Justice
- **Yvonne Ou**, Associate Professor, Mathematical Sciences
- **Rhonda Prisby**, Associate Professor, Kinesiology & Applied Physiology

2016 Panel 2: Promotion from Associate to Full Professor
- **Jack Baroudi**, Professor, Accounting and MIS, Interim Deputy Dean and Associate Dean for Graduate & MBA Programs, Lerner College
- **Patricia DeLeon**, Trustees Distinguished Professor, Biological Sciences
- **Dallas Hoover**, Professor, Animal & Food Sciences (former member of University P&T committee)
- **J-P Laurenceau**, Professor, Psychological & Brain Sciences
- **Jung-Youn Lee**, Professor, Plant & Soil Sciences
- **Kent Messer**, Unidel H. Cosgrove Chair for the Environment, Professor, Applied Economics and Statistics