Thriving in the Tenure System II:
Transitioning From Associate to Full Professor

February 12, 2019
B106/107, The Henry Center
Thriving in Mid-Career at MSU: Administrator Perspective

June Youatt
Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs
Thriving in the Tenure System II
Agenda

The View from the Provost Level
Role of the Reflective Essay
Navigating the “Mid-Career” Faculty Terrain
Options and Opportunities for Development
What do Deans, Chairs and College Tenure Committee Members have to say
APPOINTMENT, REAPPOINTMENT, TENURE, AND PROMOTION RECOMMENDATIONS

• ...academic administrators have the special obligation to build academic units strong in scholarship, teaching capacity, and public service.
• To discharge this responsibility, academic administrators must apply rigorous standards in making RPT recommendations.
• The achievement and performance level required must be competitive with faculties of leading research-intensive, land-grant universities of international scope.
A recommendation for promotion from associate professor to professor in the tenure system should be based on several years of sustained, outstanding achievements in education and scholarship across the mission, consistent with performance levels expected at peer universities. A reasonably long period in rank before promotion is usually necessary to provide a basis in actual performance to permit endorsement of the individual as an expert of national stature and to predict continuous, long-term, high-quality professional achievement.

Bearing in mind the University's continuing objective to improve its faculty, the unit and college must refrain from doubtful recommendations .... The dean must evaluate carefully each recommendation to ensure that it is well grounded and fully justified.
Average Time in Rank
When Promoted to Professor

![Line graph showing the average time in rank when promoted to professor from 2008 to 2018. The x-axis represents the years from 2008 to 2018, and the y-axis represents the average time in rank, ranging from 0 to 10. The graph shows fluctuations in the average time, with peaks in 2012, 2013, 2016, and 2017, and a general trend of increase from 2008 to 2018.]
THE REVIEW PROCESS

Department level committee makes recommendation to chair or school director

Chair independently makes a recommendation to the dean

The dean is advised by a college review committee

The dean independently makes a recommendation to the provost
THE REVIEW PROCESS (Continued)

Representatives of the provost meet with each dean – Associate Provost AHR, VPRGS, and a distinguished MSU faculty member -- to review each case

Provost meets with representatives and formulates recommendations for President and Board of Trustees
University Level Peer Review Committee for Tenure

Faculty Role in the Process

Brian T. Pentland
Main Street Capital Partners Endowed Professor
Department of Accounting and Information Systems
Broad College of Business
Faculty Committee Make-up

12 faculty members
   “all distinguished”

4 sub-committees

My sub-committee had members from:
   Business, Social Science, Education

We reviewed Business, Com Arts, Education, James Madison, Law, and Social Science
Faculty committee

We review and discuss all materials provided by the Dean to the Provost:
• Form D (includes faculty advisory votes)
• Annual Performance Reviews
• External Letters and related information

We participate in tenure system process only
The Big Meeting

One faculty representative joins the meeting with
• College Dean (Associate Dean may also attend)
• Associate Provost for Academic HR
• Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies

Each candidate for promotion to Associate or Full Professor is discussed

Faculty thoughts are shared, but we are advisory
The Faculty Role

- Seek to have a progressively stronger faculty
- Seek to maintain integrity of the process
- Independent Faculty Review
  - Faculty voice outside a candidate’s community
- Impact on decision making?
  - Not likely on any one candidate
  - Over time...?
- Promote a broader, university-wide understanding of the process and the standards
Reflective Essay

Juli Wade
Academic Advancement Network
The Reflective Essay Should:

• Describe how you contribute to the missions of MSU and society more broadly
  • Impact and broader context of your scholarship and teaching/mentoring should be explained

• Highlight scholarship, research, and creative activities; what you have done and where you are going
  • Make a cohesive trajectory clear
  • Tell a story about your vision and progress toward it

• Include information on leadership in your discipline and at MSU, and how these contributions will advance in the future
The Reflective Essay Should (slide 2):

• Make the strength of your reputation clear
• Be a polished document that includes some specific examples
• Communicate at a level appropriate for knowledgeable people who are not in your discipline
The Reflective Essay Should Not:

- Simply summarize what is in CV or Form D (or be a list of what you’ve accomplished)
- Use a lot of jargon
Questions to Ask:

- Why do you do what you do? And why does it matter to people other than you?
- What do you want to be known for, and why?
General Advice:

• Get information from senior colleagues and unit leaders about the culture in your department and college regarding style and content of the document

• Highlight (and strive for) integration across your duties; focus on scholarship while making clear how all aspects (teaching, research, creative activities, service) impact each other
Questions?
Navigating the Terrain of the Mid-Career Faculty Experience at MSU

- Roger Baldwin
  Erickson Professor, Higher, Adult & Lifelong Education
Topics

• Experiences and Challenges of Mid-Career Faculty
  • Mid-Career in context
  • Study of Mid-Career Faculty at MSU
    • Key Findings and Recommendations
    • For full discussion of design, sample, and findings, see CHANGE (2008) article

• Initiatives at MSU to Support Mid-Career Faculty
Mid-Career Faculty in Context

• Midlife and mid-career are transition periods with distinctive challenges
  • No longer a novice professor
  • Gradually moving into the senior ranks
  • Mastered basics of the job (e.g., teaching) but often are confronted with new challenges (e.g., service and leadership expectations)
Mid-Career Faculty in Context (slide 2)

- Short career ladder, extrinsic motivators (tenure, promotion) can diminish in mid-career
  - MC faculty can reach a plateau when growth and advancement slow or stop
  - Opportunities for learning, new challenges, growth opportunities needed to keep mid-career faculty engaged and productive
Mid-Career Faculty in Context (slide 3)

• Limited research on mid-career faculty—Many assume faculty at mid-career know how to succeed, can fend for themselves
Mid-Career at MSU

• Conducted a study of mid-career faculty issues at MSU
  • Interviewed associate professors 1-5 years post-tenure, 6+ years post-tenure
  • Interviewed department chairs who work with mid-career faculty
  • Questions concerned mid-career experiences, challenges, expectations, how to support mid-career faculty
Common mid-career challenges at MSU

• **New expectations & demands:**
  • Higher or enhanced performance (especially in publications and grants)

• **New roles and duties** (especially service, administration, leadership)

• **Negotiating competing roles, finding balance**
Common mid-career challenges at MSU

• **Feeling Neglected or Invisible:** Less attention and support from department chair, colleagues

• **Unclear Goals:** Now what do I do? Without tenure to aim for, what do I want to accomplish? How do I identify my own targets?
Strategies Used by High Performers at Mid-Career

- Network, collaborate, build teams
- Exhibit adaptability, flexibility
- Strive to obtain external grants (particularly in STEM disciplines)
- Move from shorter to longer range projects
Enlist your department chair as an ally

- Help MC faculty **balance roles**
- **Identify new goals**
- **Locate resources:** Funding, time, linking M-C faculty to other forms of support
- **Annual reviews** are good times to assess progress, identify goals, discuss what types of support is needed to move toward goals
Resources available at MSU

• Academic Advancement Network (AAN)
  • Supports colleagues in developing productive careers reflective of their individual aspirations
  • Helps colleagues connect their aspirations to institutional priorities.
AAN Nodes (areas of focus)

- **Teaching & Learning**
  - Supports academics in developing & achieving goals for teaching & learning
    - Adams Academy Fellows (scholarly teaching practice)
    - Lilly Fellows (scholarship of teaching & learning)
    - Learning Communities

- **Research & Scholarship Node**
  - Supports building & sustaining impactful research and scholarly programs
    - Support for interdisciplinary research and creative activities (in collaboration with OVPRGS and other units)

- **Academic Career Paths**
  - Supports meaningful & productive professional & personal lives across the arc of the career
    - Facilitation of department/college level mentoring workshops

- **Leadership Development Node**
  - Facilitates learning opportunities for current and future leaders
    - Exploring Academic Leadership Lunches
    - AAN Leadership Fellows
    - Big Ten Academic Alliance Academic Leadership Program (ALP)
Looking Forward

• See the mid-career as a time for reflection, refining, refocusing
• Be strategic in making choices
• Be proactive in setting directions, selecting opportunities, and seeking mentors
Options and Opportunities for Development at the Mid-Career

- **Ann Austin**
  Professor, Higher, Adult & Lifelong Education
  Associate Dean for Research, Education
  Assistant Provost for Faculty Development—Career Paths
Mid-Career and Mid-Life as Time of Transition

• This period can be challenging and also exciting
• A time to reflect, reconnect, recharge, retool, redirect, renew
• An opportunity to be purposeful about one’s career and goals
• A time for conscious reflection, analysis, and planning
Consider your Options and Opportunities

• Take the time for a mapping process:
  • Consider your goals and values
  • Identify qualities, abilities, and skills of interest
  • Assess contextual factors of importance as you make decisions
  • Identify resources
  • Brainstorm possibilities
  • Talk with colleagues
  • Consider your overall trajectory—strengths, emphases, connections across elements of your work
What are your goals and values as you look forward?

• What are you good at? What do you enjoy?
• What would you like to be doing differently? What have you not done yet that you would like to do? What have you done that you would like to do more of (or less of)?
• How has and how might your work fit with your broader life commitments, goals, and interests?
• What do you want your accomplishments at the end of your career to be?
• How do you see your work in relation to the university, your field, and the national/international contexts?
• What is the overall trajectory you are creating?
What qualities, skills, or abilities do you want to develop or expand?

• Disciplinary/content/interdisciplinary expertise
  • New or extended topical expertise
  • New or expanded methodological areas

• Professional, personal, and process skills
  • Leadership abilities
  • Organizational knowledge and skills
  • Communications skills
  • Interpersonal strengths
  • Team management skills
  • Negotiation and conflict resolution skills
  • Financial management skills
What contextual factors are relevant to your mid-career planning?

• Changes and directions in your field
• The situation in your department or college
• Personal responsibilities, constraints, goals, opportunities
• Feedback or conversations with your colleagues and friends
• The trajectory you are creating across your career
Identify Resources for Advice, Ideas, & Support

• AAN (noted in Roger’s comments)
• Office of VP for Research
• Work/Life Office
• College and institutional grants, fellowships
• Scholarly associations
• Foundations and federal/state agencies
• Colleagues whom you admire
Brainstorm the Possibilities

• In Teaching
  • New courses, study abroad teaching, online teaching
  • Team teaching, special topics

• In Research
  • New collaborators or new work with established collaborators
  • Shifting to larger-scale projects
  • Opportunities with national agencies, scholarly associations

• In Service
  • Leadership roles—within MSU
  • Leadership roles—editorships, professional societies
Talk to Colleagues about their Experiences

- **My own case:**
  - 1998: Fulbright to South Africa
  - 2015-2016: Two-year leave to work at the National Science Foundation

- **Benefits and Outcomes**
  - New research directions
  - New teaching opportunities
  - Collaborations for my department and college
  - National and international connections
  - Family benefits
Mid-Career as a Time of Options and Opportunity

• Map and plan (with your overall trajectory in mind)

• Talk with colleagues, seek advice, use resources

• See this as a time for recharging, retooling, refocusing, rejuvenating

• Make strategic decisions based on reflective mapping
Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure Process from the Vice President of Research and Graduate Studies

Stephen Hsu
Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies
Break

Please take a 15 minute break.
Panel Discussion

• Charles L. Cox, Professor and Chairperson, Physiology
• Rachel Croson, Dean, College of Social Science
• Gemma Reguera, Professor, Microbiology and Molecular Genetics
• Cary Roseth, Professor and Chairperson, Counseling, Educational Psychology, and Special Education
• Narayanan Parameswaran, Professor and Associate Chair, Physiology, and College of Human Medicine Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure Committee Member
Thank you.

Please take a minute to provide feedback by filling out the program evaluation that will be emailed to you.

Please visit the resource webpage of the Academic Advancement Network website at: