THE MYTHS AND FACTS OF HOW TO GET A TENURE-TRACK ACADEMIC JOB AND HOW TO GET TENURE

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Outline

- HOW TO GET A TENURE-TRACK ACADEMIC JOB
- HOW TO GET TENURE
How to get a tenure-track academic job

- What is a faculty position and why do I want one?
- What can I do to prepare NOW?
- What am I looking for in a position?
- How do I find & apply for positions?
- What is involved in an interview & how do I prepare for one?
- What are pitfalls to avoid?
- What is involved in negotiating a position?
What is a faculty position and why do I want one?

- Faculty position - Components may include:
  - Research
    - Grant writing
    - Ph. D. supervisory role
  - Teaching
  - Service

- Choice: Academia vs. private sector
  - Pros & cons for each
  - Understand what they mean to you
  - What do you want to do with your career?
What am I looking for in a faculty position?

- Which components (Research, Teaching, and Service) at what %?
- Environment & resources
- Peers & collaboration
- Big fish, small pond vs. Small fish, big pond
- Mentoring of Ph.D. students
- Hard vs. soft money
- Tenure (does it exist & what does it mean?)
- Limiting factors? (geographic, family, etc.)
What can I do to prepare NOW?

- Build your CV with:
  - Peer-reviewed journal publications
  - Experience writing parts of grant proposals
  - Presentations at conferences
  - Teaching
  - Service
- Think about developing a line of research
  - “What have I done already?”
  - “Where am I headed?”
- Develop your teaching philosophy
- Network: conferences

Get exposure to different components of faculty job!!!
What can I do to prepare NOW?

❖ Letters of reference
  ❖ Talk to your referees about their letters early
  ❖ You must have one from your advisor
  ❖ You also need a teaching-specific reference
  ❖ You should have at least 4 references
  ❖ Should you send more if they ask for less?

❖ Schools are adopting electronic upload
  ❖ This makes referees happier (less work)
  ❖ It also avoids potential interpersonal conflicts
  ❖ Follow up with referees (easy to get lost in the email system)
How do I find & apply for positions?

Faculty search cycle:
- Positions advertised in Fall
  - Job Ads
    - The Chronicle of Higher Education,
    - Listservs (INFORMS, POMS, DSI, etc.)
  - Advisor's contacts
- Applications due in Late Fall, Winter
  - Cover letter detailing research and teaching interests
  - CV, 3 references or letters, manuscripts
  - Get feedback from mentor
- Interview
  - October-Jan: early interviews, job fairs at big conferences
  - Feb-Mar: most interviews occur.
- Negotiate/Accept by late Spring /Summer
What is involved in an interview & how do I prepare for one?

- The phone interview
  - Question #1: What is it about our institution that attracted you to us?
  - Research, Research, Research
  - Know details of faculty you could work with
  - Know details of any special or interesting programs they have
  - Prepare questions to ask (tenure process)
  - You will be talking to a group of people and won’t be able to judge reactions or even how many people are listening
  - Follow up after interview
What is involved in an interview & how do I prepare for one?

- Campus Interview: 2 days
  - Meet MANY people
  - 1 hr. talk with questions
  - 30 min-1 hr. meetings; lunches & dinners
  - Search committee meeting
  - Meet with students or teach class
- Grueling vs. Fun
  - Dep. on personality, preparation, & confidence
- Logistics: airfare, hotel, dinner
- Follow up after interview
Prepared (Research) = Confident

- Rehearse your talk
  - Make it interesting & get plenty of feedback
- Have different versions of your research prepared:
  - the cocktail party version
  - the elevator conversation
  - the round-table quizzing
- Tailor your talk
  - Know your audience
  - Know your interviewers
  - Pull & read bios, key papers
  - You want to get them talking about their research
- Ask to meet with specific faculty members
Prepared (Teaching) = Confident

- Be enthusiastic
- Do not trash your students
- Teaching is as important as your research
- Anyone who makes it to the interview will be a good researcher, but teaching is where you can make the difference
- If you have teaching experience as a TA, say so (some TAs only mark and proctor)
- Teaching is the lifeblood of the department
Tips for interviewing

- Be there on time
- Dress to impress (you cannot overdress)
- Breakfast, lunch, dinner...
  - Don’t drink alcohol
  - Don’t order spaghetti
- Ask questions!
  - Teaching load
  - Interdisciplinary opportunities
  - The tenure process
  - Don’t ask about maternity leave or salary
- Need a “sound byte” describing your research
- Self-confidence
- Be yourself -- no dating behavior!
- Relax – it puts them at ease too
What are pitfalls to avoid?

- Allowing enough time
- How will you deal with illegal questions (married, kids, politics, etc.)?
- How will you deal with a hostile interviewer? (don’t take it personally)
- Don’t ask about salary... ...and dodge if you are asked
- Don’t tell them about other interviews
- Too many limitations on job search = no job
- Offering controversial opinions
  - Happens if you don’t know your audience
- Over-confidence = egotism & naiveté
What is involved in negotiating a position?

- The dean or the department head will call you
- Don’t “just say YES”
- Consider what you really need to hit the ground running
  - Office space & Equipment
  - Grant support, & Admin support
  - Startup $
  - Moving expenses, parking (?)
  - How much you teach right away
  - Salary/ Summer support
- Partner hire
- Usually an iterative process
  - By phone or formal letters
- At end: everyone signs a “letter of offer”
  - You formally accept the offer
You’ve made your decision and have been hired to a tenure-track faculty position

HOW DO YOU GET TENURE?
What does tenure mean to you and why do you want it?

- **What:**
  - Promise of lifetime employment made by your university.
  - However, there is no guarantee of respect, money, or happiness.

- **Why:**
  - Lifetime employment
  - Research independence - you can fully explore your field
  - Chance at making a difference in the world
  - Peer recognition
  - Lifetime of interaction with some of the brightest minds
Faculty carrier path

Annual probationary reappointment or dismissal (possible to skip 3rd & 5th reviews)

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Hired as Assistant Professor

Tenure and promotion to Associate Professor, or contract ends

Promotion to Professor (optional)

Employment year
Myths about P&T

- When I was your age....
- I just got tenure, so here’s how to do it...
- They don’t read it, they just count stuff...
- Just keep pumping out stuff from your dissertation...
- Extension/engagement doesn't count, just research (and maybe teaching)....
- Administrators want to deny tenure whenever they can ...
External myths about P&T

- Public believes that “tenured faculty do not work very hard”
  - Legislatures,
  - Business entrepreneurs
As a faculty member, your responsibilities will include:

- Teaching, and possibly developing, courses at graduate and undergraduate levels.
- Conducting scholarly research in your field.
- Developing significant external funding.
- Collaborating effectively with other faculty members in the department.
- Service to the university and outside community.
Expect to:

- Write proposals for research grants and special projects.
- Develop notes and review text books to teach your students as effectively as possible.
- Publish journal articles, reports, papers, and books.
- Keep up-to-date in your field.
- Serve on councils, boards, and committees.
- Produce qualified Masters and Ph.D. students.

In short, produce relevant knowledge and bring prestige to the university.
So what is of primary importance in gaining tenure?

- *Favorable external reviews.*

Such reviews depend upon recognition, which comes from:

- Refereed journal publications (journals highly ranked in your field)
- How many and where?
- Citations. Self citations do not count!
- Research grants (NSF)
- Graduate student supervision

You are just expected to do well in the other criteria.
Suggested strategies for tenure (1)

- Know your school tenure requirements
- Solicit advice from senior faculty and those recently promoted
- Publish journal articles immediately! You can get at least three articles from your dissertation.
- Convert conference papers to journal articles.
- Diversify your research portfolio
- Avoid too many research collaborations
- Avoid department politics
- Choose your enemies wisely
Suggested strategies for tenure (2)

- Become active in your professional organizations (INFORMS, POMS, DSI).
  - Organize conference sessions
  - Review paper & grant proposals
- Apply for grants
- Apply for teaching and research awards
- Apply for summer faculty research fellowships
- Volunteer for university committees involving a manageable level of effort (better to volunteer than be drafted).
Suggested Strategies for tenure (3)

- Start your tenure portfolio now
  - Keep everything! Make a tenure file and put any student, university, or outside organization thank you letters, certificates, best paper awards, etc.
  - This will be your paper trail showing accomplishments and service.
  - Keep track of your research citations (Google Scholar)
  - Keep teaching evaluations and careful track of teaching/committee work
  - Use the interim (three-year) review wisely
What is on your tenure portfolio?

**Documentation of performance**
- Teaching evaluations (students, peers, administrators)
- Research record (publications, grants, creative work)
- Service (U. committees, statewide service, professional organizations)

**Evidence of progress**
- Job description and expectations
- Record of previous years’ recommendations at all levels
- Written evaluations by candidate, peers, and administrators

**External evaluations**
- Letters from outside experts (T&P cases)
- Letters from former students (optional, but...)

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The review process

A

- External peer review
- Department faculty review
- Department head’s recommendation

B

- College-level faculty review
- College dean’s recommendation

C

- University-level faculty review
- Review by Academic Affairs
- Review by Provost (on appeal)
- Trustees’ action
The tenure process: What can go wrong?

- **Weak tenure case**
  - A downward sloping publication record
  - Low citation count
  - Quality of publications
  - Quality vs. quantity
  - Poor funding record
  - Ethical concerns
  - Poor teaching

- **Bias**
  - Multidisciplinary research
  - Cooperative rather than independent investigations
  - Type and place of publication
  - Composition and representation of your tenure review committee
  - Selection of your external reviewers
  - Department politics
Life after the tenure process

- What does happen if you get tenure?

- What does happen if you don’t get tenure?
Conclusion

- Stay organized
- Stay positive
- Enjoy the ride
- It can be done!
Thank You!!!!