



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?

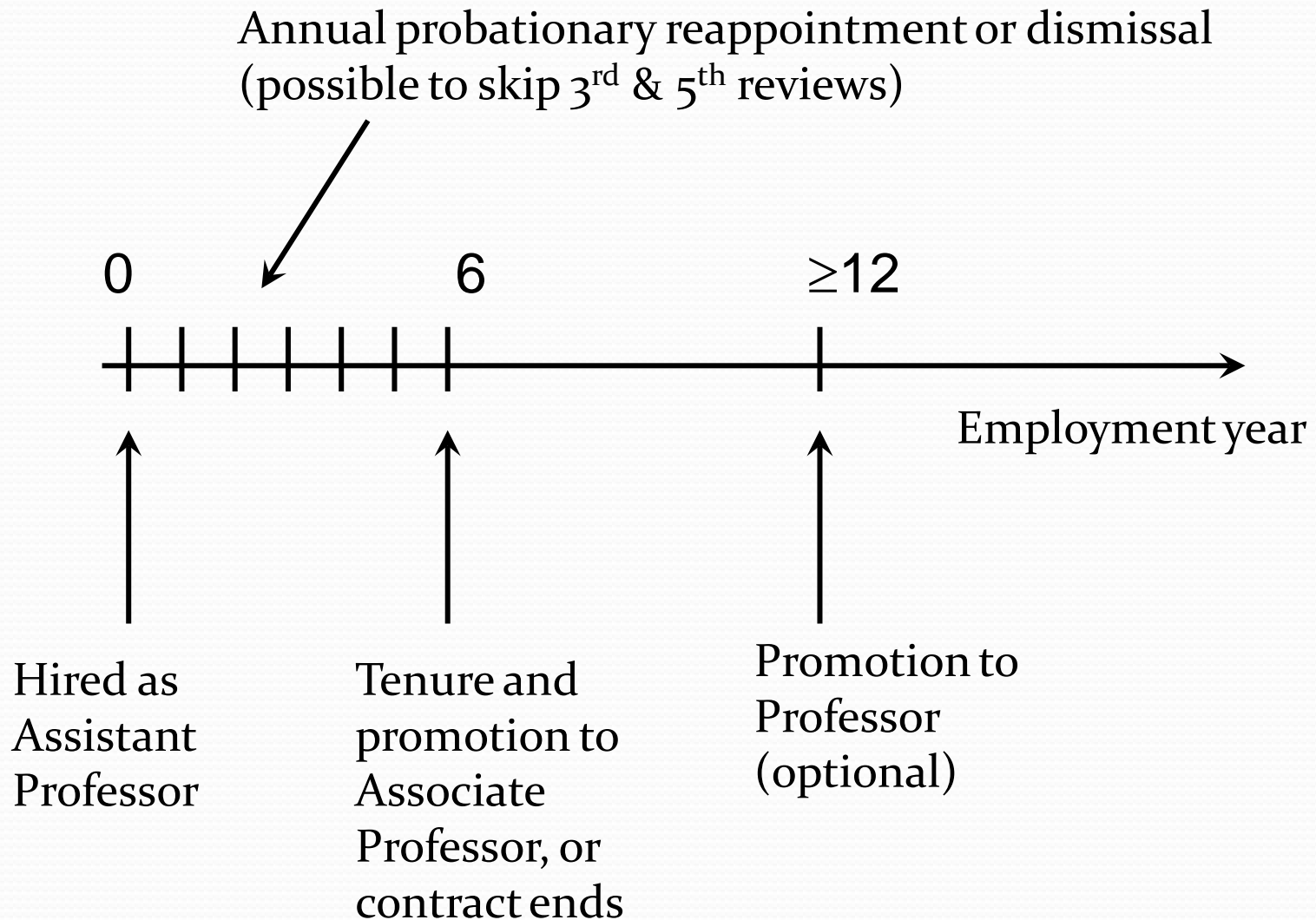
❖ What:

- ❖ 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



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)

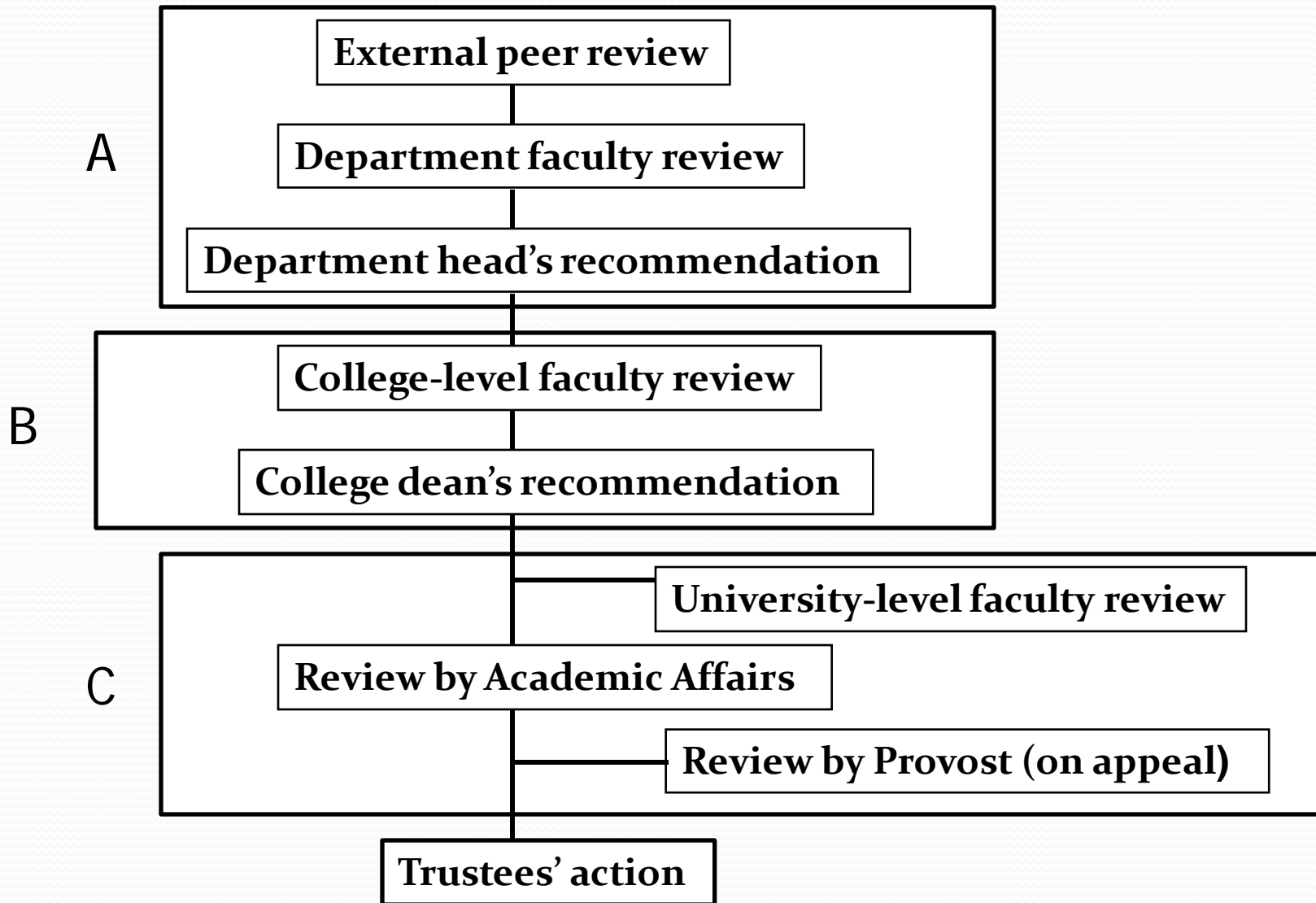
Evidence of progress

- 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...)

The review process



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!!!!

