Demystifying the Promotion Process
Contract Faculty Perspectives

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WHAT’S ON YOUR MIND?
Contract Faculty

- Clinical professors (assistant, associate, full)
- Instructor (instructor, senior instructor)
- Research professors (assistant, associate, full)
- Current update on ranks and titles
Themes

- Drive to 25 led by quality faculty.
- World-class faculty are crucial to a world-class university.
- The goal of faculty review is to develop and recognize world-class faculty.
- The faculty review process is detailed and thoughtful, not arbitrary and capricious.
Resources

- **Faculty Manual** – https://facsen.wsu.edu/faculty_manual/
- **Provost’s Instructions for P&T** – https://provost.wsu.edu/promotion-and-tenure/ (revised annually)
- College and Department Handbooks

READ AND STUDY!!
More Resources

- Department chair
- Department & college guidelines
- Colleagues
- Mentors
- Examples of prior reviews
- Kelly Ward (kaward@wsu.edu or call (5-5581).
Key Points

- Promotion is one part of a system of performance review.
- In most cases, promotion follows logically from prior reviews.
  - No surprises
- New annual review process ties AR and promotion.
Key Points

- Procedures and standards vary across departments, colleges.
  - Get the appropriate guidelines.
Mentoring

- Multiple mentors can help support the promotion process.
- Can provide feedback on review materials and provide suggestions.
- Ask chair to appoint a mentor to support the promotion process.
Promotion Process

- Typically review for promotion consideration is 6 years for assistant to associate or instructor to senior instructor.
- Six additional years for promotion to professor.
Appointment Letter

- Specific job responsibilities stated (e.g., 80% teaching, 20% service)
- Revised workload expectations accordingly so clear and current
- Provide a guide for promotion process
Annual Review

- Responsibility of the department chair
  - The chair can use a committee
  - Input from campuses/centers
- Conducted annually
- Calendar year review
Annual Review

- Abridged
- Comprehensive
- Intensive

Establish a record of performance.
Annual Review

- Used for raises
- Faculty sign to indicate they read the review
- Faculty may write a response
Annual Review

- Should be formative and evaluative
- Address progress toward promotion
- Feedback to prepare for promotion
- Faculty report activities using Activity Insight
Intensive Annual Review

- Requested by faculty member and/or chair
- Formative review to prepare for promotion
- Procedure similar to promotion process so ideal for getting feedback from department
Intensive Annual Review

- Results in one of four categories:
  - Well Prepared
  - Satisfactory
  - Improvement Needed
  - Unsatisfactory (would typically result in non-renewal)
Appeal of Non-renewal

- To the Faculty Status Committee within 30 days
  - Inadequate consideration
  - Violation of academic freedom
  - Substantial procedural irregularities
  - Not -- the merits of the decision
Promotion Review

- Thorough review
- Consideration usually after 6 years (end of 5th)
Promotion

- Decision should be consistent with prior annual reviews

- Exact procedures vary by department and college (know thy guidelines)
Promotion Procedures

- The faculty member assembles a file (May-August)
  - Curriculum vitae
  - Teaching portfolio (limited to 5 pages)
  - Context statement (limited to 2 pages)
  - Research/scholarship statement (limited to 2 pages)
  - Exhibits

See Faculty Manual and unit handbooks for specifics—vary by units.
The Department Considers the File (August – September)

- The file now contains:
  - The candidate’s curriculum vitae
  - Teaching portfolio
  - Context statement
  - Research/scholarship statement
  - Past reviews
  - Exhibits (e.g., articles, presentations)
Faculty Recommendations

- Each senior faculty provides input on whether to grant or deny promotion
  - Shared governance.
  - Recommendations should be consistent with past reviews.
  - At least 5 faculty recommendations
Exceptions to Recommendations:

- Anyone who will participate later in the process (e.g., chair, dean, vice-chancellor).
- Anyone who has a personal relationship with the candidate or other conflict of interest.
The Chair’s Summary

- Consults with the Academic Director for campus/extension faculty.
- Interprets the case for those outside the field.
- Addresses disagreements in the faculty recommendations.
- Makes a personal recommendation to grant or deny promotion.
  - A recommendation that is inconsistent with the faculty should be explained.
The Dean’s Summary (October – November)

- The Dean consults P&T Committee (and the Vice-Chancellor for campus faculty).

- The Dean makes a recommendation and interprets the case for those outside of the college.
  - A recommendation that is inconsistent with the department should be explained.
The Provost Considers the File (December – January)

- Consults the Provost’s Advisory Committee and some Vice Provosts
- May ask the Deans for additional information
- Can disagree with the prior decisions, but rarely does
If Promotion is Granted

- The candidate receives a letter by March 1.
- The candidate receives a 10% raise effective in the fall.
- The candidate is recognized at the Celebration of Excellence Banquet at Showcase.
If Promotion is Denied

- Can reapply

- Appeal to the Faculty Status Committee (FSC) within 30 days.
  - Inadequate consideration
  - Violations of academic freedom
  - Substantial procedural irregularities
  - Not: Merits of the case
Appeal to FSC

- A subcommittee investigates.
- FSC makes a recommendation to the President.
- The President accepts or rejects the recommendation.
- The President does not usually grant promotion. The case will be reconsidered.
Standards for Promotion

Excellence in teaching, scholarship & service (relative to job description).
Promotion Materials

- Tie contributions to unit and WSU standards and expectations
- Narrative statements that show connections between teaching, scholarship, and service
- Tell the story of the body of work.
- Tie contributions to the key areas of the university (Drive to 25)
Standards for “Full” Professor

- Time in rank is not sufficient.
- Excellent performance in teaching, scholarship, and service over many years (based on workload responsibilities).
- National or international prominence.
- A substantive body of work.
A few myths...

- A majority “vote” leads to promotion.
  - Recommendations not votes.
  - Promotion is based on many factors (e.g., recommendation forms, summaries of dean and chair).

- Majority does not rule.
  - Thoughtful recommendations carry more weight.
  - Some faculty recommendations count more than others.
  - Faculty members that make positive recommendation while writing negative recommendations are counted as negative.
If one faculty member is against me, I won’t get promoted.

• Negative recommendations may not be decisive.

• Many successful faculty members receive some negative “votes”.
Faculty opinion alone decide promotions.

- The process would terminate at the departmental level if that were true.
- Most Provost’s prefer that the faculty make the decision.
  - Provosts step in when the faculty abdicate.
- Retaining an unsuccessful faculty member does him/her no favor.
If you’re well liked, you’ll get promoted; if not, you won’t.

- Promotion will not be granted if your behavior interferes with the functioning of your unit.
- Faculty members who are well-liked may have an easier time
“If Professor X got promoted, I surely will!!”

- Cases are judged on their merits relative to standards, not in comparison to others.
- You may not know everything about Professor X.
- Standards change over time, etc.
Promising Packets

- Tell the faculty story
- Clearly convey involvement in scholarship
- Clearly leads reader through materials
- Stand alone in terms of descriptions
- Clearly describe excellence and unique contributions
Pitfalls

- Incomplete information
- Unclear and unedited writing
- Confusing presentation of materials
- Lack of clear connection with scholarship
A word about scholarship for teaching focused faculty

- Teaching as research
- Scholarship of teaching and learning

Who Are You?
And why are you here?
What is it that makes something scholarly?
Components of Scholarship

- Disciplinary expertise
- Breaks new ground—innovative
- Can be replicated
- Can be documented
- Peer reviewed
- Evidence of impact

Diamond & Adam, 1995
MAKE THE CASE FOR YOUR WORK AS SCHOLARLY!!
FAQs

- What should be in the context statement?
  - Explanations of any unusual challenges or opportunities
FAQs

- How does early promotion work?
  - Performance must be exceptional, not just meet our standards
  - Only with the Provost’s prior approval
FAQs

- Can a candidate add to their file after the file leaves the department?
  
  - Only minor modifications are allowed (e.g., the full citation of a paper listed as in press).
  
  - If a submitted paper (grant) is accepted, the candidate can request reconsideration of the file by the department.
FAQ’s

Should I include letters from colleagues? Do I need external review letters?

- Not all units require external letters for contract faculty (check guidelines).
- If included, be sure reviewers speak to the body of work, not personal testimony from close friends/colleagues.
QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, CONCERNS??
The End