Promotion to “Full”
Making the Leap to Professor

Kelly Ward & Craig Parks
Office of the Provost

April 30, 2018
What’s on your mind about the promotion to professor?
OVERVIEW
Themes

- Drive to 25 led by quality faculty.
- World-class faculty are crucial to a world-class university.
- Faculty review is detailed and thoughtful, not arbitrary and capricious.
- Faculty are central to the development of a preeminent research portfolio.
The goal of faculty review is to develop and recognize world-class faculty.
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

- Chair/director & dean
- Colleagues (WSU & beyond)
- Mentors
- Intensive review process
- Examples of prior reviews
Key Points

- Promotion is part of a larger system of performance review.
- In most cases, promotion follows logically from prior reviews.
  - Should be no surprises
- New annual review process ties AR with promotion.
Key Points

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

- The probability of success is high.
  - Most candidates promoted.
  - Some associate professors never seek promotion.
PROCESS DETAILS
Mentoring

- Mentoring is an important mechanism to get support for the promotion process (yet often overlooked as a resource for established faculty)
- Multiple mentors can help support the promotion process.
- Provide feedback and suggestions on review materials.
- Ask chair to appoint a mentor to support the promotion process.
Appointment Letter

- Specific job responsibilities stated (e.g., 40% teaching, 40% research & 20% service)
- Revise workload expectations accordingly so clear and current
- Provides a guide for P&T process
Annual Review

- Responsibility of the department chair
  - The chair can use a committee
  - Input from professors
  - Input from campuses/centers

- Conducted annually

- Calendar year review
Annual Review

- Abridged
- Comprehensive
- Intensive

Establish a record of performance.
Annual Review

- Formative and evaluative
- Address progress toward promotion
- Feedback to prepare for promotion
- Faculty report activities using Activity Insight
Annual reviews for associate professors preparing for promotion.
Comprehensive Reviews

- Done every other year (alternate with abridged)
- Includes progress toward promotion
- Ratings:
  - Especially meritorious
  - Strong performance beyond satisfactory
  - Satisfactory
  - Some improvement needed
  - Substantial improvement needed
Intensive Annual Review

- Formative review to prepare for promotion
- Can be requested by faculty or chair
- Procedure similar to P&T process so ideal for getting feedback
- Excellent means to establish promotion timeline
Intensive Annual Review

- Results in one of four categories:
  - Well Prepared
  - Satisfactory
  - Improvement Needed
  - Unsatisfactory
Promotion Review

- Consideration usually after 6 years (end of 5th) after promotion to associate professor.
Promotion

- Decision should be consistent with prior annual reviews
- Exact procedures vary by department and college (know thy guidelines)
Starting the Process

“Candidacy for promotion to Professor may be initiated by the faculty member, one or more departmental Professors, or the department chair.”

Faculty Manual
More on process...

- In an ideal world, the chair would contact you when you are ready.
- The world is not ideal....
  - Faculty may have to initiate process and discuss with chair when ready.
  - Faculty may need to bring their case forward.
Initiating the Review

- Provost guidelines come out annually in May
- Candidates for promotion identified
- Timelines established by college in line with WSU timelines
The Dean’s Role

- “...the Academic Dean will decide which promotion cases are to be forwarded to the Provost and Executive Vice President [and] will notify each candidate of the decision, in writing, within ten working days.” (Faculty Manual, p. 51)
The Candidate’s Rights

“... the faculty member will be given a minimum of five working days to exercise the right to have the packet forwarded to the Provost and Executive Vice President, regardless of the Dean’s decision.”

(Faculty Manual, p. 51)
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—varies by units.
External Letters

- At least 4 external letters are solicited by chair (summer)
  - The candidate submits a list.
  - The chair adds names.
  - The candidate cannot veto names.
  - Letters become part of the P&T file.
External Letters

- Senior professors from peer or aspiring peer institutions (e.g., Michigan State, Penn State).
  - No personal relationship with the candidate or other conflict of interest.
  - Writers receive the file prepared by the candidate.
External Letters

- **External reviewers:**
  - Evaluate the quality and quantity of the candidate’s work
  - Compare the candidate’s work to the unit’s requirements
  - State whether the candidate would be promoted at their institution
  - Help establish national prominence relative to standards of discipline
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
  - External review letters
  - Exhibits (e.g., articles, presentations)
Faculty Recommendations

- Each professor in the unit provides input on whether to grant or defer 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
(September-October)

- 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 defer 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 (although rare)
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 Deferred

- 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.
CRITERIA
Professors

“National, and preferably international, prominence must be demonstrated through some form of recognized achievement reviewed by appropriate professionals for promotion to professor.”

*Faculty Manual*, p. 51
“Candidates for promotion to Professor must show clear and convincing evidence of persistent high levels of attainment in the criteria appropriate to their work assignment and to the mission of their units, including increasing service to the institution, professional organizations, and/or society.” (p. 51)
Standards for Promotion

- Standards must be met in teaching, scholarship, and service.
  - Weight depends on job description
- Judgment of professors is important.

See criteria developed by department and/or school as well as college.
More about Standards

- Time in rank is not sufficient.
- Administrative service is not sufficient.
- National or international prominence is required.
POINTERs
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 contributions in teaching, research, and service.
- Tell the story about the body of work.
- Tie contributions to the key areas of the university (Drive to 25)
Promising Packets

- Tell the faculty story
- Clearly convey involvement in teaching, research, and service
- Clearly leads reader through materials
- Stand alone in terms of descriptions
- Clearly describes excellence and unique contributions
Pitfalls

- Incomplete information
- Unclear and unedited writing
- Confusing presentation of materials
- Lack of clarity about appointment (especially if changes throughout review period)
- Lack of clear descriptions of contributions in all areas
Regents Professor

- Tenured full professor
- Served WSU for at least the preceding 7 years
- National or international prominence
- No more than 30
- No more than 2 nominations per year per College
MYTHS AND FAQ
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.
Promotion is a right. I will be promoted if I do a good job.

- The University expects better than average performance.
- Some associate professors will stay in rank and not be promoted to professor.
Getting promoted is tough. Most faculty do not get promoted.

- Faculty are hired on the assumption that they will be promoted.
- More than 90% of those who are reviewed for promotion receive it.
- Some faculty members never put their materials forward for promotion.
The administration limits promotions during tough budget times.

- Promotions are granted independent of fiscal climate.
Only research and grant funding count.

I’ll only be promoted if I have “x” amount of papers.

- Performance in teaching, scholarship, and service are all part of the review.
- The exact factors and weights vary by workload expectations determined by department & appointment.
- Being promoted to professor is a license to retire.
  - Regents professor
  - Professors can be fired
  - Raises are based on performance
  - Annual review focused on contributions in all areas
If one faculty member is against me, I won’t get promoted.

• Negative recommendations do not decide the case
• 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.
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 the unit.
- Faculty members who are well-liked may have an easier time.
- Materials are looked at holistically and at many levels.
“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.
FAQs

What should be in the context statement?

- Explanations of any unusual challenges or opportunities
- Explanations of how workload has changed
- Context statements are not required
FAQs

How does early promotion work?

- Performance must be exceptional, not just meet our standards
- Only with the Provost’s prior approval
- Request made by dean to provost
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 or grant is accepted, the candidate can request reconsideration of the file by the department.
FAQs

Can excellence in one area mitigate lesser performance in another area?

- Evaluations are completed based on letters of appointment.
- Well rounded faculty that advance research and education at WSU.
Sage Advice From Senior Scholars

- Promotion to full professor is provided to those who lead the field and bring recognition to WSU, as measured by their ability to obtain funding for their work and to publish in respected, peer-refereed journals. Become a leader in your profession...[get off campus] engaging with other leaders and helping set the future of the profession. Ensure that you leverage these relationships to publish, obtain invitations for talks at other institutions where referees may be located, and to obtain funding for your scholarship.
More sage advice

- Develop the relationships needed to get invitations for invited talks at other universities and national/international meetings (ie build metrics that support your reputation outside WSU). Keep up the publications and get a large grant.
When going up for full, focus on how your work establishes you as a national/international authority on your topic. How are you prominent at the national level? More of the same that earned you tenure is not a compelling case – show how your work has impacted the field. **There isn’t just one path/one way, but your case is yours to make – readers should not have to infer this.**
More advice

- Make your materials so strong that there is no question. Materials don’t have to just focus on one thing. Make sure that you have risen to the level of national prominence and that can happen in many ways. Write up your materials so you are going to stand out as a leader in your field regardless of who is reading it. **Strong applications stand on their own.**
Questions, Comments, Concerns??

kaward@wsu.edu
509-335-5581