

Promotion and Tenure -- Quick Tips for the New Hire

Although it's hard to be a new faculty member, it's important to be aware of your ultimate goal. Here are a few ideas to keep in mind on the road to promotion and tenure.

Even though you've been at your institution a short time, the quest for promotion and tenure should be in the forefront of your mind. Here are some specific areas to keep in mind.

Teaching

Quality of teaching figures into decisions about academic tenure, even in the most research-oriented universities. Just because you're striving for quality, though, does not mean you need to spend endless stretches of time on class preparation.

Don't feel that you need to have complete, word-by-word notes for all your classes. Research has shown that interaction with the students, even in large lectures, increases ratings and decreases rude behavior by students. Some class time should be spent in asking questions, soliciting opinions, or any other technique that engages the students and gets them thinking. That means fewer lecture notes for you, and better teaching.

Research and Writing

There's no question that publishing matters. Make sure you haven't taken on a project that will only give you one publication. Optimize both quality and quantity. Think about a project with layers of publications, perhaps leading up to one larger publication that incorporates your earlier work. This way you can build your reputation, avoid being scooped, and build up your number of publications and citations.

Relationships

It's who you know and how much they like you. Try to locate at least one mentor, and use your sparkling personality to charm the rest. This may be the most important part of getting tenure. Would you want to have yourself as a colleague for the rest of your professional life? If the answer isn't yes, think about the steps you need to take to change that answer. Coaching can help you if you are having problems with difficult people.

Take Good Care of Yourself

And you thought it was hard finishing your dissertation and finding a job! Make sure you take some time to unwind. Physical activity is important -- you don't have to take up a sport -- just try walking more! If the weather is bad, just walk around the building when you have a 5 minute break. This may sound like a small change, but if you don't stay on top of your stress level, you will pay the price with your emotional or physical state. Do something proactive to relax, such as meditation. You will be infinitely more effective in all that you do.

Congratulations on Your New
Job!

And remember, it will be a little easier next year.