

GUIDELINES FOR PROMOTION AND TENURE OF COLLEGE FACULTY IN THE 21st CENTURY

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Guidelines for promotion and tenure are changing as the profession of college faculty enters a new era. These changes are occurring as Colleges and Universities are "graying". Some college Deans predict that more than one third of their faculty will retire in the 1990's (Wisniewski, 1989). Changes in promotion and tenure policies will require knowledge of rules and guidelines that are sometimes nebulous and often confusing.

In addition to unclear or confusing criteria, the young faculty member in agricultural education or extension faces the paradox that faculty who currently serve as role models may not practice activities required for success under the changing guidelines of the 1990's. A study by Bott (1988) revealed that the higher education faculty from the vocational programs he surveyed spent less time on research and publication activities than on teaching and service. Paradoxically these same faculty even agreed that scholarly activities are the most important criteria in the retention, tenure, and promotion process.

Further compounding the difficulties faced by young faculty members is the different emphasis and scope of varying institutions (Seldin, 1975). Strategies that lead to success at a large Land Grant institution are different from those recommended for smaller colleges with less emphasis on research and publication (Applegate, 1981). These differences leave little common ground for faculty seeking directions.

This article describes recent research that focuses on guidelines and strategies for promotion and tenure of agricultural education and extension faculty as they enter the 21st century. Information is presented in three parts: (a) assessment of institutional expectations; (b) documentation procedures; and (c) integration of teaching, research, and service activities.

Assessment of Institutional Expectations

Centra (1979), suggested that, regarding faculty promotion and tenure, institutions should be broken into two categories: 1) Teaching Institutions; two-year and four-year liberal arts, post-secondary technical institutes and comprehensive community colleges, and master's-degree-granting institutions and; 2) Research Institutions; doctoral-degree-granting and research institutions. The former emphasizes teaching and the latter emphasizes scholarly activities. This separation of institutions of higher education into these two categories allows one to focus on the distinct division of roles one must play in his or her professional development.

Teaching Institutions: In institutions where teaching is a major focus, teaching effectiveness of faculty has been evaluated most frequently from data supplied by; department chairpersons (85%), deans (82%), colleagues' opinions (49%), and research and publications (44%) (Astin & Lee, 1967). Paradoxically, this study reported that department chairpersons, deans and colleagues obtained their data most often from informal student opinions. Another unusual finding was that scholarly activity was a significant consideration in determining teaching effectiveness, probably because the data from students were considered second hand.

More colleges and universities appear to have begun formalized systems of collecting students' opinions of teaching effectiveness (Petty, 1986). This change is partly due to higher standards that have become more formalized and statistical (Israel & Baird, 1988).

However, whether or not the teacher is evaluated formally on classroom teaching, general opinions of peers are powerful indicators of teaching effectiveness. One factor affecting these peer opinions is that of scholarly activity. Concentrating on scholarly activity may help influence opinions created by peers and students regarding one's teaching.

In teaching institutions, the faculty member should assume the responsibility of informing the department head or dean of his or her individual teaching effectiveness. Naturally this means doing a good job in the classroom. But more importantly the teacher should initiate communication with regards to promoting his or her own teaching effectiveness.

Research Institutions: In the research oriented institutions, the message is clear: publish or perish. However, some individuals find it difficult to publish refereed articles or books. For these people, other categories of performance may suffice for publication. The key is that the activities be scholarly. That is, they should contribute knowledge to the profession.

A good outlet for scholarly work is through presentations of papers at conferences and professional meetings. In a study done by Bott (1988) this activity was ranked fifth of twelve items listed as important to the tenure and promotion process at Land Grant institutions. For many faculty members these papers become manuscripts to be submitted for consideration by a journal.

Documentation Procedures

The responsibility of documenting the facts and building a case for tenure and promotion is now primarily on the faculty member (Mortimer, Bagshaw & Masland, 1985; Smith, B. L., 1973). Out of necessity, then, records must be kept and one must document scholarly activity.

A colleague from one's college who has recently succeeded in the promotion or tenure process is a good source of determining what documentation is needed. However, a better choice is a mentor. A mentor is a senior colleague who has several years of experience and should know about internal institutional procedures for promotion and tenure (Kaufmann, F.A., Harrel, G., Milam, N.W., & Miller, J. (1986).

If a mentor is not available to help in documenting professional productivity, the faculty member may have to choose a more generic route. One study that provides insight into what a faculty member should document comes from the American Council on Education (Gustad, 1961). In his study, Gustad found ten factors that impact on promotion and tenure decisions (1961). These ten factors were assembled from a survey of 584 post-secondary institutions. They are : (a) classroom teaching, (b) personal attributes, (c) student advising, (d) research, (e) publications, (f) committee work, (g) work in professional societies, (h) time in rank, (i) public service, and (j) supervision of graduate students.

Suggested Guidelines: With the possible exception of personal attributes, each of these factors can be easily documented by the faculty member. Below are some suggested guidelines for each factor.

Classroom Teaching: The faculty member must have classroom evaluations from students and from other professionals such as the department head or a tenured full professor who would serve as a mentor. This combination will give a balanced review of classroom expertise and could quiet potential critics.

The classroom evaluations should be confidential and anonymous. Preferably evaluations are collected by a student and tabulated by a third party, such as a secretary. It is important to collect an evaluation from students in all classes and labs, particularly the time-consuming agriculture laboratories.

Some faculty may worry about receiving negative results from student surveys. However, data collected over a four-to-six year period, which is usually the minimum time for application for tenure and promotion, will yield averaged results. These averages should give a fair estimate of one's teaching ability. One note of caution – the lower ranking professors usually teach heavier loads, often times laboratory classes with a plethora of underclassmen (freshmen and sophomores) with the resultant extra time demands of laboratory involvement. This means that more emphasis will be placed on teaching effectiveness at a time when the challenge from workload will be greatest.

Personal Attributes: It is important to get along with colleagues and students, and one must be able to work with others in committee meetings. These traits are manifested in everything one does. They can serve the individual well or bring continual disaster to the individual throughout his or her career. However, deficiencies of personal attributes perceived by others can be negated somewhat by technical or research skills (Applegate, 1981).

Student Advising: Advising load, is the most easily measured component of student advising. But more important than quantity is quality. A bad advisor is soon discovered. Higher education is a closed society with few secrets and advising is the most dominate factor with which students can identify. Documentation for student advising requires keeping a personal diary with all advisees listed and the frequency with which they are seen. Supervising student teachers and advising student

organizations such as the collegiate FFA are excellent methods for demonstrating quantity and quality in student advising.

Research: There is a distinction between research and publications; some institutions make this distinction very clear. Consequently, research-based work (i.e., grants and contracts) should be reported separately from other kinds of scholarly activities. Research productivity and quality can be documented best by peers from within and outside the institution. Reports of research grant funds, data based monographs and published articles are all examples of ways to document research.

Publications: The degree of acceptance by an institution of the types of publications depends on the institution. Research institutions may only recognize publications in certain journals recognized for their quality in research. Senior or sole authorship of books and peer judgments of output may be other criteria for acceptance. Teaching institutions may recognize locally published monographs, minor contributions to books, or a variety of other publications (Centra, 1979). Sometimes, even professional activities can be accepted as publications at these institutions. An example of acceptable activities are attendance at seminars, conferences, or workshops that increase knowledge and allow exchange of ideas.

Committee Work: Working with committees can also be described as external or internal service. The internal service is the attendance and participation at faculty meetings, and committee service at all levels. External committee work is with professional organizations or community service work. Of primary interest to the institution is committee work at the departmental level as well as institution wide. Participation means serving as chair of committees or contributing to committee productivity.

Work in Professional Societies: Working with professional societies requires service work beyond the institution. The implication to colleagues and administrators is that this work requires professional expertise. The work is recognized outside the institution and is easily identified. Examples include being an officer or serving on a committee of a professional organization and refereeing a professional journal, such as the Journal of Agricultural Education or journals for state and regional organizations (Bjorkquist, 1988 and Centra, 1979).

Time in Rank: The most critical component of this category is to carefully weigh teaching, service, and research productivity along with time in rank when applying for promotion or tenure. In other words, the faculty member should not try to go for promotion until background productivity warrants a good chance to get it. Failure to get promoted produces little positive results. Next year's committee action or administrative decisions may be skewed by previous years' results, even though the individual in question subsequently had a productive year.

Public Service: This activity beyond the institution includes service to other universities and colleges, program development, workshops, project coordination, and consultation. The only community work that can be documented are those activities which reach beyond personal service to allow the application of professional expertise to social organizations and agencies and thus aid the university in responding to community concerns (Centra, 1979). Examples include consultations with local farmers; presentations to FFA chapters; holding local, state, or national offices; judging livestock at state or regional fairs; and supervision of student and community projects (Applegate, 1981).

Supervision of Graduate Students: To document one's work with graduate students requires the use of a daily diary where notes may be kept for reference. Supervising the research and activities of graduate students is very time consuming and documenting the volume of work load is only one measure of the time and effort involved. Even though this may not be an indication of the quality or quantity of work done, such data collection is necessary. Involvement with graduate students is particularly important when applying for promotion to full professor. To capitalize on one's efforts and time spent with graduate students, it is necessary to publish with graduate students whenever possible in order to demonstrate excellence in this area.

Integration of Teaching, Research, and Service Activities

Balancing one's professional load among the three areas of teaching, research, and service activities is difficult. Tenure and promotion policies will vary from year to year depending upon institutional imperatives or funding (Bott, 1988). Additionally, young professors working with extension programs or student teachers may find that their job places a heavy emphasis on service and field work (Drake, 1982).

Differing opinions with regard to promotion and tenure are also found in the faculty member's role within the institution. For example, strength in an area of service or teaching that may be important to departmental colleagues may not count with one's Dean, or Vice President for academic affairs, or university wide promotion and tenure review committee. Each may take a different view of weights assigned to the relative importance of teaching, research, or service (Balyeat, 1965). Therefore, it is important to develop one's own professional strategy.

This strategy should put personal strengths and interests first and foremost to assure that the professional will be satisfied with the resultant working environment. Establishing these personal priorities is also useful in seeking and securing the kind of position that fits one's own personal strengths and interests.

Second priority should be placed on departmental interests and priorities, not because the department is of less importance than personal interests but because this is where one can have the most impact to affect things that can be changed. The departmental level is dynamic. One can make things happen. Colleagues share common concerns and experience. Associates who vote and nominate for tenure and promotion personally know the candidates. Resumes and applications have faces and personalities attached. Thus the young neophyte can attain an identity and develop a 'niche' within the organizational structure.

Institutional involvement is ranked third. Public and private funds for underwriting faculty positions are secured through the institution and its support must be available for any program to exist. Survival as a professional depends upon having a professional affiliation. Therefore, demonstration of a high level of interest and commitment to the institution is essential for one's own professional survival.

The college, or similar major unit within the institution, comes last. Since the college forms the direct administrative line for tenure and promotion it is important for faculty members to operate successfully in this environment. This becomes particularly important since some incongruence with the mission of department, faculty, and the university may occur at the college level. Faculty members should be cautious with the relationship their department has with the college and university and not worry about issues for which they cannot effect change.

By considering the above structure, professional responsibilities can be balanced with occupational responsibilities. This is accomplished by making a list of pros and cons on a sheet of paper. The faculty member should consider the value of teaching, and the pleasures of advising students, working in the laboratory, conducting research, writing, visiting schools or industries, and working with student teachers.

After these items have been listed, they should be ranked from most important to least important. Each of these items should be weighted in addition to the ranking, if ranking alone does not seem appropriate. This values-clarification process is also helpful for making later decisions – particularly decisions regarding items considered very important to the institution, major unit, or department. Periodic review or updating of this list is useful for balancing one's career objectives and putting focus into one's professional direction.

Summary

This report has presented strategies for success in tenure and promotion by agricultural education and extension faculty. These strategies focused on three areas. The first was awareness of institutional expectations. The second area was documentation procedures. The third was integration of teaching, research, and service activities.

Institutional expectations control the level and balance of success strategies one should apply. Careful thought and effort given to the primary concerns of the institutional imperatives should serve as a guide into the 21st century for one's own personal success strategies. Documentation of one's professional productivity may be the most important component of guidelines for promotion and tenure. Several techniques have been discussed and their salient points listed. Keeping records and developing open communication with the administration is necessary for the flow of information and for establishing positive attitudes about professional productivity.

Integration of teaching, research and service is difficult for most faculty. Achieving a balance depends on setting priorities while considering personal interests, abilities, and institutional priorities. Setting goals and asking for help from colleagues are important aspects of effective integration for achieving success.

Faculty in agricultural education and extension who are seeking promotion and tenure into the 21st century can achieve their goals by following guidelines and lessons of the past. Each faculty member must develop his or her own strategies for success. These strategies should be developed from consideration of several interacting factors. Achieving a balance of these factors is not an easy task. But by setting clear goals and priorities and careful consideration of personal attributes and institutional expectations, success is within one's grasp.

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