

ADVANCE Promotion & Tenure Faculty Panels

Updated May 19, 2020

Introduction

Each year, the UD ADVANCE Institute and the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs jointly host two panels for faculty on the promotion and tenure (P&T) process at the University of Delaware: one for assistant professors on the tenure process and one for associate professors on the promotion process to full professor. In 2020, the two panels were joined into a single Zoom event because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The purpose of the panels is for informal conversation about the P&T process. Understanding that every department follows different protocol, panelists are asked to speak to their own experiences. Panelists are chosen to represent a range of disciplines and relevant committee work. The ADVANCE panels focus on the process for tenured/tenure-track faculty. The CT Caucus offers separate panels for CT faculty and CTAL offers a panel on preparing teaching dossiers.

Panelists have requested that we do not record the sessions. Instead, each year UD ADVANCE compiles this aggregate summary of the primary points made over the years during the panels. In this document, we first summarize key points that tend to come up every year, by topic. Points specific to a given panel are included at the end.

New in 2020, we have added a section that addresses the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the P&T process and evaluation of faculty.

P&T information related to Covid-19

- The timetable for dossiers is the same as in the faculty handbook with the exception that the April 30 date for declaring intentions has been extended to May 31. No other dates have been changed.
- The COVID extension is universal, there is no need to request it. It is not a stop-the-clock so there is no question of it interfering with that. It does not use up one of your two stop-the-clock options.
- Candidates are not required to take an extension. It is up to the candidate. Candidates should confer with their chairs and their mentors sooner rather than later when considering whether to make use of the extra year.

- The administration is coordinating with the university faculty senate and other faculty groups on campus on addressing issues associated with covid and P&T, including those that relate to equity.
- It is important for all to remember the impact of the pandemic on faculty productivity/progress. Since this is and will continue to be a disruption, be sure to keep records of how the crisis impacted you so that you can address it in your dossier. This is especially important for faculty who will not be going up for tenure or promotion for another 6+ years.
- Student evaluations will continue as usual. Candidates can choose whether (or not) to include evaluations from spring 2020 in their dossier (and appraisals). Make a note for yourself for your file so if you decide not to include the spring 2020 evaluations in your dossier, you will remember to include a brief description of why.

General career advice for building a strong professional record

- This is a marathon, not a sprint. Start early. Find out what the expectations are as soon as possible. Do your best to enjoy your work along the way.
- Go to workshops, talk with peer mentors. Stay goal focused. Apply time-management strategies. Be mindful of which projects you pursue.
- You get evaluated on your work! If you don't have the work it's hard for the committees, deans, etc. to say yes.
- Make writing a habit. Consider the types of publications that are given highest weight within your department and prioritize these. For early-career faculty, you can start with relatively safe publication outlets and then target top journals as your work develops. Find out what publication venues count for your department.

Preparing for the P&T process

- The faculty handbook and departmental P&T guidelines are the starting point for gathering information on the process. Make sure you understand the process, the timeline, and your rights as a candidate. Review the P&T documents (departmental, college, university) with the chair, mentors, and a variety of members of the department. Different colleagues may interpret these documents differently. Talk to lots of different people.
- Look through at least two other dossiers for the same level promotion.
- Talk to others in your department who have recently gone through the process.
- Be proactive in searching for faculty in your area who have been through the process and can provide you with feedback.

- Keep in mind, feedback is only helpful if it is constructive and honest--do not be afraid to ask opinions of faculty members who are known for giving such feedback! However, carefully consider the feedback and use it as you choose.
- Make the most of peer-review opportunities, which provide a platform for seeking out areas that may need to be addressed in order to progress.
- UD has an institutional membership to the National Center for Faculty Development & Diversity (NCFDD), which provides workshops on time management, stress management, building networks of mentors, etc. Email pdi@udel.edu to join the mailing list.
- The Center for Teaching and Assessment of Learning (CTAL) is another institutional resource that can help with the development of dossier documents. Panelists discussed changing your perspective of the process being isolating to one of a community-building enterprise where your external reviewers and department are cultivating feedback around your work.

Process Mechanics

- The P&T process moved from paper binders to electronic dossiers on Sakai to UD Academe and now to a new PDF-based, in-house system in 2020. The Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs should be sending out an announcement about the new platform by the end of May, 2020. He will also be holding a training session (or sessions) early in the summer. The new platform should be available as of July 1. Since the materials for the external letter writers will be due before then, pull those together in whatever format your department requests or that you think is best. Contact Sunaina Soares (ssoares@udel.edu) in the provost's office for more information.
- Work at rank is considered even if at another university. Include that work in your dossier, but be sure to show that you have continued on an upward trajectory since arriving at UD.
- Keep a "shoe box" of your work, honors, feedback, etc. Keep both a virtual and physical version to store anything that comes up over the course of your time at UD that may be useful for your P&T processes (i.e. invitations to speak, a letter from someone saying thank you for being on a committee, a letter from a student, etc.). Document as much as you can -- save letters, event flyers, photocopy of conference schedules, etc. You can also include invitations that you declined as a means of speaking to your impact and reputation. Likewise, if you submitted a grant that was not successful, keep the information. You may choose to include it in your dossier narrative to speak to your effort.
- You may add to your dossier after it has been sent to the next level (i.e. a grant, new publication), with notification sent to the committee. If you choose to do this be sure it is clear that this is material added after the previous opinions/decisions and external review letters were written.

- Build bridges with senior faculty in your department if they don't really know you. They will be voting on your case, so make sure they are familiar with you and your work.

Candidate Statements

- Make your workload completely clear in your description. Remind your chair that it also needs to be in the chair's letter, per the Faculty Handbook.
- The format of your dossier narrative is up to you (i.e., structuring it chronologically or by research-teaching-service). Structure it in a way that best tells your story.
- Your research statement should be brief (a few pages) and to the point. Consider writing short executive summaries (quick overview plus bulleted list of achievements). Refer to more detailed information in appendices or elsewhere.
- Keep your audience in mind as you prepare your dossier. The P&T committees above the department do not know details or culture of your department or of your specialization area. Write in an inspiring and legible way to committees at every level. Find a balance between sophistication and clarity.
- Do not make your case controversial. You want to keep the committees' focus on the actual work. For example:
 - Avoid inaccurate or inconsistent information.
 - Make sure the number of (for example) publications in your dossier agrees with the number in your CV. Make your cv clear - if there are any muddy points it will raise questions.
 - Don't make the level of your contribution a debate. Make clear what is an independent paper, a submitted paper, an accepted paper, etc. Provide ample documentation.
 - If you are a co-PI on a grant, clearly indicate how much of the grant money is yours.
- Factual and quantitative information and results are primary and must be clearly listed and identified. If applicable, include citation numbers, impact factors, etc. Use graphs, charts, and tables as much as you can to break up text and contribute to your story.
- An interesting idea is to include a map that shows the impact of your work throughout the world (Google Scholar can do this).
- Also critical to tell your intellectual story. Narration is your best opportunity to frame the details that follow in your dossier. Narrate your candidate statement about the impact and high quality of your work. If your work is controversial, take ownership of it! Explain it and its impact.
- The critical component of the dossier that everyone will be looking for is impact: what has been the impact and value of your work to your department, your college, the university and the profession? Articulate the significance and innovation of the research. For example, does your research solve societal problems or contribute to policy?

- Impact is measured in different ways in each unit, so it is important to make sure you know the metrics and culture within your own department (i.e. grants, books, referred articles, etc).
- Identify your “brand” and weave it into all aspects of your dossier: who are you as a scholar? a researcher? a member of the University community?
- Make clear statements that make it easy for readers to summarize key points (“Her research is important because...” or “His teaching is innovative because...”)
- Avoid jargon; explain significance of awards, conferences, invited talks, etc. Realize, however, that committees and faculty may not read and absorb a long statement and will not “dig out” the details. Be clear and concise.
- Don’t be shy about describing your accomplishments, but avoid superlatives (“best,” “only,” etc.) unless you are sure that they apply.
- If applicable, make sure you have a Google Scholar page. Not having one can set up a red flag.
- If you are using a different methodology than most in your department, or your reviewers, make your case. Explain why your approach is important within your field. Make it clear. Give your reviewers context.
- Address gaps/deficiencies or other possible doubt raisers head on. For example, if you’ve been having trouble getting grants explain how you are approaching the problem differently in the future. If you have a gap due to a family/health/ or other personal matter, you do not need to go into details. Just make note of it and discuss how you are addressing it.
- If you took an extension (e.g., stop the clock), you don’t have to explain why. Just make note that you took the extension.

External Reviews

- Don’t underestimate the importance of external letters in the review process.
- Spend time thinking about the institutions that letter writers come from, the individuals themselves, and pick the best of both. The pedigree of the evaluator is generally not as important as their status as an expert in the field and their ability to speak to your work and your influence in the field. Reviewers provide their own CV, which should be proof of their expertise in the field.
- Explain why each person would be a good fit to evaluate your work. You can share why those that the department put forth might not be a good fit (and provide insight, i.e. historical background).
- Be intentional in getting to know external people in your field. If appropriate in your discipline, pursue invitations to give seminars at other schools or invite people to give talks at UD. This will help build your pool of potential letter writers (and could even lead to collaborations/joint proposals). However, don’t directly ask them to write you a letter.

- The best letters come from people who have seen your work at conferences or read your papers/books. They know your work, but don't have close association with you that may disqualify them. Committees like to see letters that say, "I've never actually met Dr. X, but I've seen her speak at conferences and she would be tenured at my institution."
- If you are concerned that particular reviewers may provide letters that are too concise (e.g., norms for letters may be different in other countries), be sure that the reviewers receive a description of the standards for letters from your department.
- If your work is interdisciplinary, rather than getting some reviewers from field A and others from field B, try to find reviewers who understand the complications of working interdisciplinarily, between A and B. Be sure to say something about that in your dossier as well. The reviewers may be, probably are, very smart but may not know your specific work so you need to provide them with the context.
- There is some debate surrounding the level of professional connection a letter writer may have with you. The faculty handbook states, "only reviewers without personal ties to the candidate should be selected." The point is that external reviewers have to be able to provide an objective letter. Reviewers should explain in their letters their relationship to you. Also consult with department and college guidelines, which may be more specific than the faculty handbook.
- Avoid listing multiple people from the same institution as potential letter writers. These will largely be dismissed.

Teaching

- Your teaching dossier can cover a broad range of teaching activities (working with grad students, QP committees, UG teaching, independent studies, etc.) and can use a number of different ways to measure excellence (rather than focusing solely on numerical ratings on student evaluations of teaching). There are excellent campus resources such as CTAL and peer evaluation of teaching.
- Summarize teaching data. For example, include student evaluation averages and how they compare to averages in your department, class sizes, etc. Tell your story as a teacher. Give good examples and also an overall summary. One panelist used an evaluation of a single course, tracking documented outcomes over time.
- Provide some evaluation of teaching beyond student evaluations. For example, syllabi, sample exams, sample projects, thank-you notes from students, mid-term evaluations, teaching workshops that you've attended.
- Think about having senior colleagues come to your class to evaluate your teaching. Peer evaluations are often given more weight than student evaluations.

- Include some supporting information from your courses: Work with CTAL to frame your pedagogy and teaching goals.
- The most important thing you can do is show how you have developed as a teacher over time and changed course as needed. Be self reflective in your teaching statement. Committees are looking for progress and improvement. You don't have to be perfect.

Service

- When choosing service assignments, prioritize high visibility over high time commitment.
- Service needs to demonstrate that you are a good citizen. It should make you visible to others in your department/college.

Additional tips from the Assistant to Associate Professor Panels:

- Two- and four-year reviews need to be included in your dossier for tenure. Reference these reviews. Show that you've grown. Address questions that came up in the reviews and how you addressed them.
- If you are thinking of going up for tenure early, consider meeting with your chair first to discuss the strength of your case.
- Bear in mind that the decision to award tenure is binary. If you get tenure, don't focus on the people who didn't vote for you. Think about the outcome, not the individuals.
- If you find yourself in an appeals situation, the letters that are written all along the way are intended to give you feedback. Take a deep breath, read the letter from the perspective that the letters are there to say to you what is missing from the dossier or is not clear, what may need to be provided, etc. The information that you need will be in those letters. It will tell you how you need to prepare for that appeal process.
- You should use the appeals process to get your case on the record more than trying to convince someone. Choose one or two "things" to concentrate on, don't just "throw spaghetti at the wall," which will just muddy the case.
- The process allows for flexibility in terms of career path. One panelist had been part-time faculty, then research faculty, then tenure-track, and then tenured.
- Don't think of promotion as a goal unto itself. Treat the process as if you were applying for a new job, either at UD or elsewhere. Convince the committees that they would hire you all over again, but this time at the next level. Talk about your future plans.

Additional tips from Associate to Full Professor Panels:

- Don't treat promotion to full professor like the promotion to associate professor. It's not a matter of proving again your worthiness. Getting promoted to full professor means you're worthy of special recognition. You have national or international prominence. A lot of this promotion is about leadership.
- Think about the process analytically. If you get a "no," it really means "not yet." You do not lose your job, which means that, in a way, the stakes are lower for the evaluation committees than when you were going up for tenure. Therefore, make the committees' jobs as easy as possible. Establish a clear, sensible, well-documented case.
- Humanities perspective: the work that gets you promoted to associate professor is solidly focused in a subfield. The work that gets you promoted to full professor should have an appeal outside of the subfield.
- In the humanities, you may need a second book to get promoted. It can be much more difficult to write this one because it's not based on your dissertation (which is like a rough draft).
- Does it "count" to have a book written but not yet published and reviewed when you go up for full professor? Answer: it should, because it can take years after a book is finalized before it is reviewed. Contextualize for the committees where your book is in the publication process and the anticipated timeline (not all committee members will be familiar with book publishing).
- Having an international reputation in your field can be an important component of the promotion to full professor, but how do you build this? Starting early and building your resume with these criteria in mind is important. Make connections at conferences, secure invitations to give seminars, be active in professional organizations. You need to have visibility outside of your specific discipline.
- People want to see you take on a more expansive role in service while your scholarship is still progressing. They want to see an upward trajectory in good citizenship.
- Engaging in service to the profession at this level can help your promotion case as you become connected to others in your field who can write letters of support. It can also illustrate your prominence in your field. Consider organizing meetings or sessions for your disciplinary society; become a journal editor.
- If you have had an administrative leadership role (associate chair, grad director, etc.), tell the committees the level of work/commitment associated with this role. They may not know.
- Time management is key. Keep focused on what is most important in your professional community. Save time in your weekly schedule for writing: papers books, proposals, etc.
- Be cautious about how much time you invest in other kinds of service, particularly things you may feel passionate about but your department may see as irrelevant to your work as a scholar. On the other hand, one of the luxuries of tenure is you get to choose, to a certain extent, where you want to put your time. If you're going to do things that will take time away from research,

make sure you explain in the dossier why they were worthwhile. When thinking about service, ask yourself: Which service opportunities are the right ones for you? Think about taking on a few leadership roles instead of multiple committees. It is better to take on one highly visible service commitment than a series of low-visibility commitments.

- Have a plan. Choose service that will establish you as a leader. Don't be reactive. Think, "By the time I go up, what do I want to be able to show?" This will help you say no to requests that don't help you.
- Clearly articulate the impact of your work. Consider using h-factor or citation counts (if applicable) or find other ways to provide analytic data to document that your work has impact in the field and beyond. You do not need to include these factors if they are not applicable for your field, but be able to contextualize this for the committee since they will not be familiar with your field.
- Your mentorship of students is another way to speak to your impact. How have you been helping students succeed? How has your research stimulated new research from your students? Where have you placed your students professionally?
- The question of "When should I go up?" is much more amorphous for promotion to full professor than it is for tenure decisions. Panelists encouraged the audience to look at it as one big journey, not two separate journeys, so don't stop in between. When you put together your dossier, you are telling a story (see above paragraphs about the intellectual story), so tie together your story from assistant professor until now: where you are now and how your research has been moving.
- Consult with senior colleagues and the P&T committee and P&T chair. Make sure you have support for your promotion case from within the department. Listen to their advice, even if you don't agree. They are on the other side of the issue, so they have a different perspective.
- Associate profs can't vote on promotion to full professor, but in some departments they can join in the conversation, so make sure they know you and your work.
- It can be okay to have a career lull or gap and then get back to full speed. Emphasize in your research statement that the lull or gap has ended, that you are back on track.
- Use your personal statement to look forward. Give the committee the sense of an ongoing life beyond the promotion decision. A panelist suggests using this template: "My whole career is dedicated to X. To date I've gotten to this point (describe), but there's so much yet to do. Here's how what I've done so far has primed me for the next step (future collaborations, projects, etc.)." Make the reader so interested in your statement that they want to read the rest of your dossier to learn more.

- Use your post-tenure review(s) as a way of getting real feedback on your dossier but be cautious about how you use the feedback. Take it as advice, but not gospel. The people who signed off on your review may not be the same as the P&T committee.
- Help your P&T committees judge you appropriately. Tell them which metrics and standards are appropriate in your discipline. You may want to compare yourself directly with 4 or 5 of your peers (this is appropriate in some fields but not all).
- Think about what types of resources you need to position yourself strongly for promotion (e.g., reduced teaching, service, etc.). Most chairs will be open to discussing a request for resources.
- If you feel you are ready to go up “early,” discuss this with others in your department and in your field. You should clearly be exceeding the standards if you want to go up early. Get mentorship and guidance from others, but ultimately you know the guidelines and are the only person who knows when you’re truly ready. If you are denied you can go up again, but beware of squandering the time of your external reviewers.
- Is there a “too late” to go up for promotion? Continued productivity does not mean that all years at rank have to be stellar, just ensure the gap can be explained. Be sure to show evidence of an upward trajectory in excellence and productivity. For example, if you took parental leave and had a slow period as a result, explain it in your dossier. It’s better for the committees to understand and recognize the circumstances instead of simply observing a slow period in your record.
- To stand out, try something innovative (but not too out there) in terms of teaching or service. For example, sincere involvement in outreach or trying something new in your classroom and testing how it worked out.
- Use the appeals process to your advantage if necessary. In an appeal, you get to make your case but the other side does not.
- Reasons to go up for full professor
 - You can say no more easily to service requests and the like
 - You have more freedom
 - You can do leadership in your own direction!
 - The title makes a difference, especially regarding grants and higher administrative posts
 - Psychologically it’s done, it’s a relief

Faculty Panelists

2020

Joint panel held via Zoom

- Toby Driscoll, Professor, Mathematical Sciences (Faculty Senate P&T committee)

- Mellissa Gordon, Associate Professor, Human Development & Family Sciences, Associate Professor, Human Development & Family Sciences
- Sheng Lu, Associate Professor, Fashion & Apparel Studies
- Holly Michael, Professor, Unidel Fraser Russell Career Development Chair for the Environment, Department of Earth Sciences

2019

Promotion from Assistant to Associate Professor

- Jesús Botello, Associate Professor, Languages, Literatures and Cultures
- Chad Forbes, Associate Professor, Psychological & Brain Sciences
- Sheng Lu, Associate Professor, Fashion & Apparel Studies
- Mark Mirotznik, Professor, Electrical & Computer Engineering; Chair, Faculty Senate P&T committee
- Angelia Seyfferth, Associate Professor, Plant & Soil Sciences

Promotion from Associate to Full Professor

- Toby Driscoll, Professor, Mathematical Sciences (Faculty Senate P&T committee)
- Chrystalla Mouza, Distinguished Professor & Director, School of Education
- Kristen Poole, Blue and Gold Distinguished Professor, English
- Bert Tanner, Professor, Mechanical Engineering

2018

Promotion from Assistant to Associate Professor

- Melissa Melby, Associate Professor, Anthropology
- David Martin, Karl & Renate Boer Professor, Materials Science & Engineering,
- Jia Song, Associate Professor, Biological Sciences
- Dana Veron, Associate Professor, Geography
- Regina Wright, Associate Professor, School of Nursing; Associate Dean, College of Health Sciences

Promotion from Associate to Full Professor

- Alice Ba, Professor, Political Science & International Relations
- Ben Fleury-Steiner, Professor, Sociology & Criminal Justice
- Jill Higginson, Professor, Mechanical Engineering
- Greg Hicks, Professor and Chair, Physical Therapy
- Chris Williams, Professor, Entomology & Wildlife Ecology

2017

Promotion from Assistant to Associate Professor

- Carlos Asarta, Associate Professor, Economics
- Jason Hustedt, Associate Professor, Human Development & Family Studies
- Mary Ann McLane, Professor, Medical Laboratory Sciences (University P&T Committee)
- Mary Watson, Associate Professor, Chemistry & Biochemistry
- Humanities representative unable to attend

Promotion from Associate to Full Professor

- Antony Beris, Arthur B. Metzner Professor, Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering (College P&T Committee)
- Rachel Davidson, Professor, Civil & Environmental Engineering
- Jennifer Joe, Whitney Family Professor of Accounting (College P&T Committee)
- Edward Larkin, Professor, English
- Buz Swanik, Professor, Kinesiology & Applied Physiology

2016

Promotion from Assistant to Associate Professor

- John Ernest, Professor and Chair, English
- Jennifer McConnell, Associate Professor, Civil & Environmental Engineering
- Mary Ann McLane, Professor, Medical Laboratory Sciences (University P&T Committee)
- Barret Michalec, Associate Professor, Sociology & Criminal Justice
- Yvonne Ou, Associate Professor, Mathematical Sciences
- Rhonda Prisby, Associate Professor, Kinesiology & Applied Physiology

Promotion from Associate to Full Professor

- Jack Baroudi, Professor, Accounting and MIS, Interim Deputy Dean and Associate Dean for Graduate & MBA Programs, Lerner College
- Patricia DeLeon, Trustees Distinguished Professor, Biological Sciences
- Dallas Hoover, Professor, Animal & Food Sciences (former member of University P&T committee)
- J-P Laurenceau, Professor, Psychological & Brain Sciences
- Jung-Youn Lee, Professor, Plant & Soil Sciences
- Kent Messer, Unidel H. Cosgrove Chair for the Environment, Professor, Applied Economics and Statistics

2015

Promotion from Assistant to Associate Professor

- Joann Browning (panel chair), Professor of Theatre and Senior Associate Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
- David Burris, Associate Professor, Mechanical Engineering
- Rebecca Davis, Associate Professor, History
- Greg Hicks, Associate Professor and Chair, Physical Therapy
- Anja Nohe, Associate Professor, Biological Sciences

Promotion from Associate to Full Professor

- Nii Attoh-Okine, Professor, Civil & Environmental Engineering
- Arwen Mohun, Professor and Chair, History
- Lori Pollock, Professor, Computer and Information Sciences
- Michael Shay, Professor, Physics & Astronomy
- Bahira Trask (panel chair), Professor and Associate Chair, Human Development & Family Sciences, former member of her College P&T committee