About Me – Samir Khuller
Computer Science (Algorithms)

2019-?: Barris Professor and Chair (Northwestern)
2012-2019: Elizabeth Iribe Chair (U. Maryland)
1992-2012: Faculty (U. Maryland)
1990-1992: Postdoc (U. Maryland)
1990: Ph.D. Cornell University (Ithaca)
1986: CSE UG (IIT Kanpur, India)

About Me – Mary Hall

2015-   CRA Board Member

2020-   Director, Kahlert School of Computing, University of Utah

2012-2020 Professor, University of Utah

2008-2012 (Tenured) Associate Professor, University of Utah

1996-2008 Assistant and Associate Research Professor, USC; Project Leader, USC/ISI

1995-1996 Visiting Professor, Caltech

1992-1995 Research Scientist, Stanford University

1991 - PhD CS, Rice University

1985 - BA CS and MathSci, Rice University

Overview

- What goes into a tenure dossier?
- Getting Started
- Candidate Statements
- External Letters
- Processes along the way
- Mechanics of the tenure process
- General Advice
- Q&A

What Goes Into a Tenure Dossier?

From the <u>Candidate:</u>
- Statements: Personal or Research, Teaching, Service, …
- Selected publications that highlight research contribution
- CV or equivalent
  - *awards, publications, grants, invitations, presentations, service (university and professional)*

From the <u>External Research Community:</u>
- Outside letters
  - *Some names provided by candidate, others selected by review committee at various levels of review*

From within the <u>University:</u>
- Teaching evaluations, observations, and student input
- Evaluation by faculty Retention, Promotion & Tenure (RPT) Committee
- Evaluation by Chair, Dean, President, other committees
  - *Less detail as it goes up the levels of hierarchy*

Getting Started

Learn the rules and expectations:

- Find all the policy documents related to retention, promotion and tenure:

  - *Office of Faculty, College, School, Department*

Build the narrative for your tenure dossier from the beginning:

- Consider that as you develop your research program, plan your courses, and network within your community.

It takes a village – get help:

- Have you been assigned a mentor? If not, is there someone in your program you can ask for help?

- Identify mentors in your research community, and ask questions of them

- Teaching mentoring

  - *university resources, workshops, and external sources, visit classes of experts*

Candidate Statements

Reach non-experts within university and experts in your field
- Demonstrate vision, impact and leadership
- Provide tangible evidence to connect the dots
  - Research Statement: *paper led to plenary lecture/prestigious invitation, early research led to successful proposal and funding, follow-up on your work by others*
  - Teaching Statement: *created a new course that now reaches 100 students per year, integrated research content into graduate course, advised 4 undergraduate researchers who went on to graduate school*
  - Service Statement: *created a workshop in a new area held at a premier conference, organized the Phd Forum at a premier conference*

External Letters

Usually assembled by a combination of names given by the candidate and selected by the department (50-50 is a good estimate)

- Have ready at least 6-8 people who know your work well, and are not "close collaborators".
- Develop these relationships early
  - Could be editors who handled your papers on journal submissions.
  - Could be senior people in the field who just know your work (especially folks whose work you cite and built on).
  - Make it a habit to visit a top group/lab in your area at least once a year to speak. High chance that this will (a) get your work known (b)might help you recruit a postdoc as well and (c) get your work well known in this community.

Processes Along the Way

Checkpoints along the way provide useful and constructive feedback regarding your progress and tenure *trajectory*:

- Periodic meetings with your Faculty Mentor(s), Chair/Dean
- Annual Faculty Merit Review/Evaluation (and potentially informal evaluations)
- Mid-probationary (3rd or 4th Year) Retention Review
  - CV; research, teaching, service statements (& COVID Impact statement?); teaching evals
  - Possibly a few (3 - 4) external referee letters (from domain experts)
  - Faculty committee and chair/dean/committee assessments—input on "making sufficient progress?"
- Approval to be put up for Tenure Promotion, by your Tenure Decision Date (TDD)
  - May be possible to get an *extension* to your TDD, without a "higher bar" needing to be met
  - Possible to be considered *early*, but do so only if "slam dunk" case; usually not advised
  - Possible to be denied from promotion consideration; notice given for "terminal year"

Mechanics of the tenure process

Quite a long process lasting 8-10 months (typical)

- July: Submit your promotion file materials
- Aug-Oct: Dept waiting for letters.
- Nov-Dec: Dept. vote meetings
- Jan-Mar: Moves to the college level committee
- April: Moves to the Provost's office
- May: Process ends with President's signature!

General Advice

Focus on building a thriving research program while satisfying other obligations
- Write/submit papers to top places, may take multiple iterations
  - *employ "paper-level parallelism" so that you & students have multiple publications in the pipeline*
- Develop/submit strong proposals to extramural sources (federal, industry, foundations)
  - *employ "proposal-level parallelism"*
- Co-author proposals with others: builds collaborations, and can be good training
- Network and create opportunities to present your work and ideas
- Ask to be nominated for early career honors and awards
  - you may need to help write the nomination

Take advantage of peer mentoring
- e.g., Assistant professor "beer nights"
- How are your peers addressing the issues you are encountering

Interactive: Questions for Attendees

- What are some of the review/feedback processes along the TT at your institution?

- When/How is tenure review initiated and what are the steps at your institution?

- What are typical dossier components for promotion consideration at your institution?

- What are typical criteria/standards for being promoted with tenure at your institution?

- What role are external experts in the field (referee letter writers) expected to play?

- What general advice on being strategic in positioning yourself for successful promotion would you like to receive or might you share with others (peer-to-peer mentoring)?

- What might go wrong?

Conclusions

Being a Professor is supposed to be fun - Keep that in mind
- Take all the help/advice you can get
- Take care of your family and your health

Best of luck!