

The Tenure Process

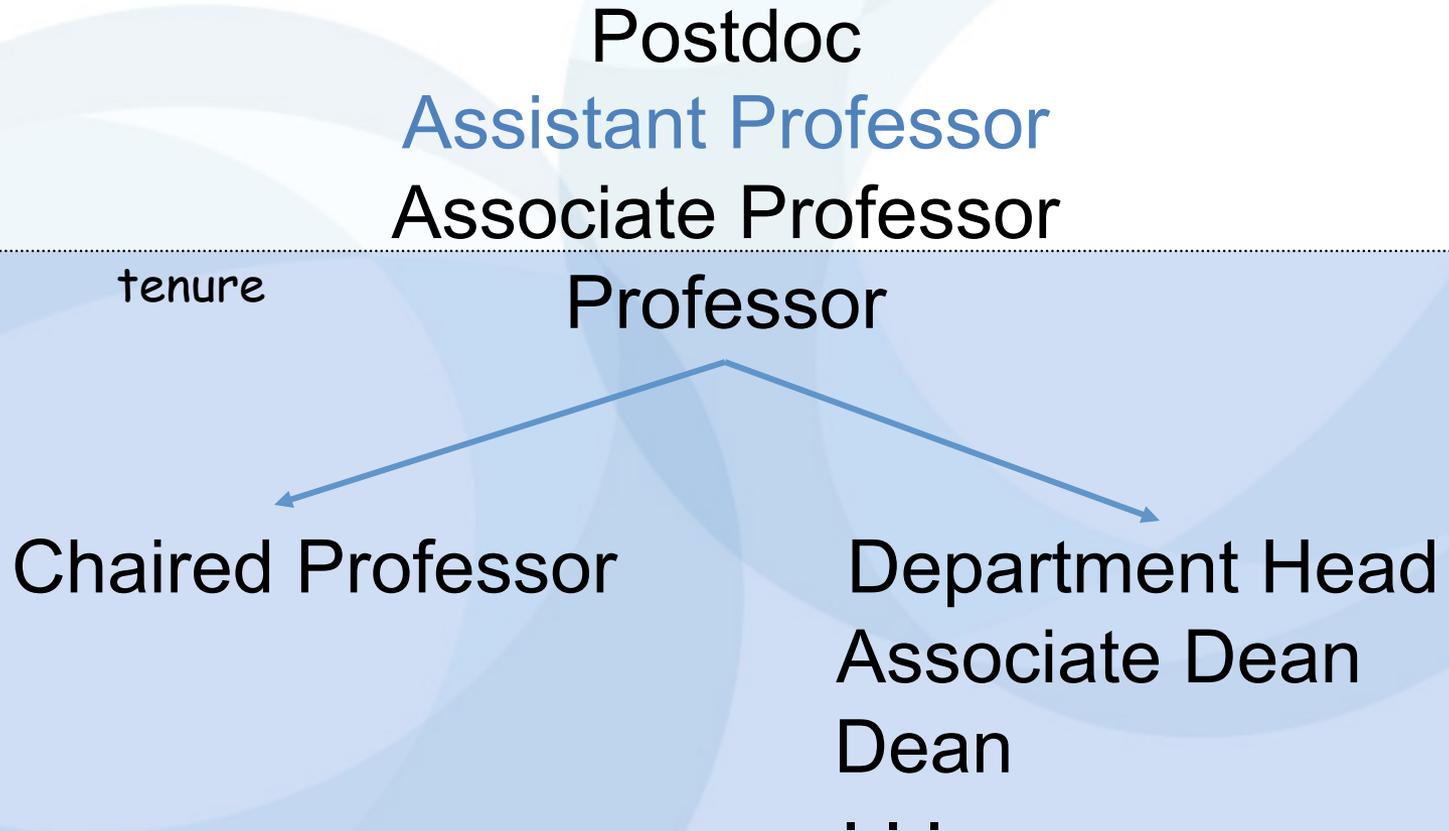
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The Academic “Ladder”



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Tenure Process

Usually a six year “clock”

Find out the evaluation process -- common example...

Yearly **written** evaluations by Dept. Head (and perhaps P&T Committee)

Mid-tenure review by Dept. P&T Committee, Dept. Head, Dean and College P&T Committee

- Some depts get external letters (3-6)

Sixth year promotion and tenure review

- external letters (typically 8-15)



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No Substitute for Quality

Basic factors

excellence in research
excellence in teaching
excellence in service

*importance depends
on institution*

How can you do it all?

Concentrate on what's important in your local context
Whatever that is, don't be a bad teacher
Perform limited, but reliable service

... *perceptions count*



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Understand your Institution

Expectations vary by institution – know yours!

Ask department chair/head, mentor, colleagues

Look at CVs of successful, recently tenured faculty

Find mentors

you may or may not have a formal mentor

different mentors for different activities (teaching, research, dept politics, etc)

- ask for advice, feedback, examples, etc



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Teaching

General tips

Want to do a good job while minimizing effort

Have an overall teaching plan/goals and update annually

Try to limit the number of new courses you teach/prepare

Shoot for a mix of undergrad (honors!) & grad (core, seminar) courses

Negotiate for release from teaching

As part of start-up package, for developing new courses and labs, pre-tenure mini-sabbaticals

Shoot for **good perceptions** – positive evaluations

Be available, but be careful of your time

- be on time and don't end early
- give extra lectures when it helps
- keep regular office hours

Don't be too hard **or** too easy

- good learning is not *hard* teaching

Don't do evaluations right after an exam



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Research Advising

Recruit good students

- Review applicants and make offers to top ones (TA from dept, RA, share with dept)
- Offer grad level reading courses (as overload if necessary)
- undergrad (summer) research programs

Learn when and how to say “no”

- A bad student is worse than no students
- See them “in action” first (in class, trial project)

Balance PhD and MS students

- Try to graduate at least one PhD by year six
- Don't take on too many MS students

Getting them to produce

- Build a mentoring hierarchy



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Publications

Quality before quantity in publications

Journal publications

- Understand the importance of publishing in referred journals

- Understand journal rankings in your field and related fields that you publish in

- Track special issues for faster turnaround

Conferences and workshops

- Be visible and well-respected

- Understand conference/workshop rankings

- Keep track of acceptance rates

Read reviews, revise and resubmit rejected papers worth salvaging



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Funding

Target funding opportunities

Visit funding agency sites regularly

- Volunteer to serve on review panels
 - ✧ For types of proposals you will submit – not the panels that are desperate for panelists...
- Get on a funding opportunities mail list

Apply for junior faculty awards

- NSF/ONR/ARL CAREER competitions
- Other career development awards (industry, university)

Seek advice/examples from colleagues

Ask successful colleagues to review your proposal and *Listen* to their feedback

borrow sample proposals from successful colleagues

If at first you don't succeed, try, try again



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External Evaluators

External letter writers

Some selected by you

Some selected by your department

Can usually black list one or two people--but do so carefully

Can informally suggest names

Some departments exclude/include:

- Thesis advisor
- Co-authors and collaborators

OK (good) to ask someone if you can recommend them as a letter writer

- Provide them an easy way out -few people say “no” outright



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Getting Known

Network at Conferences

Go without a paper, introduce yourself

Talk tours

Self invitation (I'll be in area)

Proposal Review Panels, Journal refereeing, Conference PCs

Volunteer yourself

Host Distinguished Lectures, invite others to visit and give talks

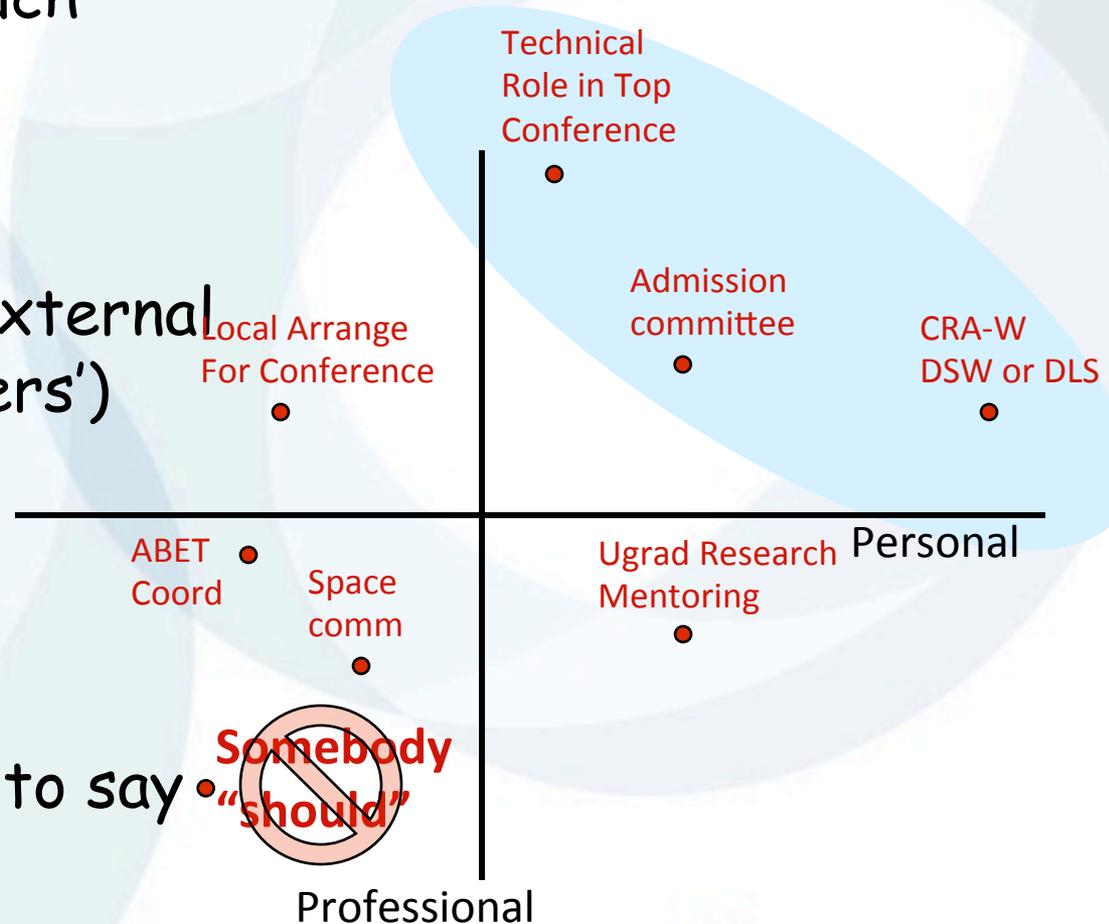


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Choose Service that Matters!

- Find out what/how much service really counts
- Cost/benefit analysis
 - + better environment
 - + visibility/respect (external and from campus 'elders')
 - + connections
 - stress
 - time
 - enemies
- Learn when/how/why to say no
- Quality & Reliability more important than quantity



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Overall Advice

The most important thing is to enjoy the work you do

Keeping in mind the milestones you need to reach to be successful at what you do

Strike a balance between your family and social life and your career

Don't be consumed by the process

Above all, remember that there is life out there with OR without tenure



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Dos and Don'ts

Do become someone other faculty want as a colleague

Do make a good first impression

Do be a team player

Do get to know leaders in your field

Do take criticism/feedback/complaints seriously

Do find mentors

Do get along well with staff

Do keep records

Do choose your battles wisely

Don't let your research get off to a slow start

Don't be labeled as a bad teacher

Don't do too much, too early – don't take every grad student who walks in your door or join all collaborations

Don't be viewed as unsupportive of department goals

Don't do anything that is unethical or makes you uncomfortable

Don't brown-nose or be insincere

Don't make enemies, but speak up