

# Promotion to the Next Level

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# Session Plan

- Start with: What is on your mind? What are you interested in discussing?
- Stephanie's story and advice
- Activity
- Tracy's story and advice
- Activity
- Q&A



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# Transition to Full Professor

**Stephanie Forrest**

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# My Approach to Academia

- Training through
  - Tenure and promotion are waypoints not goals
- The vow
  - Move on when bitterness sets in
  - Avoid bitterness so I don't have to move
- Joy
  - Only serious obligation is to tax payers and students
  - A tenured faculty position is a tremendous opportunity
  - Run to work and smile
- Everyone is replaceable



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# Post-Tenure Pitfalls

- **Failure to thrive**
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> round of funding
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> round of graduate students
  - Existential dilemmas
- **Expected to be a grownup**
  - Extra service load
  - No mentors in sight
- **The myth that anything else counts besides research**



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# Promotion Packets

- **Research maturity**
  - Leadership and vision. Technical depth
  - Stable funding and student pipeline
  - Impact beyond narrow specialty
- **Leadership**
  - Committee and program chairmanships, Editorships
  - Nominating others for awards
  - Curriculum development
  - Mentoring
- **Teaching**
  - Scope, excellence
- **Service: Look for intrinsic merit, not volume or prestige**



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# Growing a Research Group

- 5-10+ students is qualitatively different from 3-4
  - Face time is not all it's cracked up to be
  - 1-1 meetings vs. group sessions
  - Culture matters
- No time to program
- Leadership through intellectual vision and many informal encounters
- Write grants every year



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# Random Thoughts

- Take sabbaticals away from your comfort zone
- Decide who you are and take it seriously
- Avoid administration for as long as possible
  - Credibility
  - Hard to go back
  - **We need more female superstars!**



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# Magic Wand Thought Exercise

- If you had a magic wand that made you a chaired distinguished full professor, what would you do?
- You should spend  $X\%$  of your time on this. Discuss what is  $X$ .



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# How I Think About Promotion

- Relatively narrow and well-defined path to Associate Professor with Tenure
- Can be multiple paths to Full Professor
  - Typically, faculty member initiates (no deadline)
  - Department Chair/Dean are the gatekeepers
- **But**...local norms matter a lot
- And...there is one sure path



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# The Sure Path

- Continued strong publications
- Continued strong funding
- Chair of conference in your area
- A seminal event (the “why now”) – examples:
  - Leadership on a large funded award
  - Breakthrough result
  - Credible threat to leave



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# Local Norms Really Matter

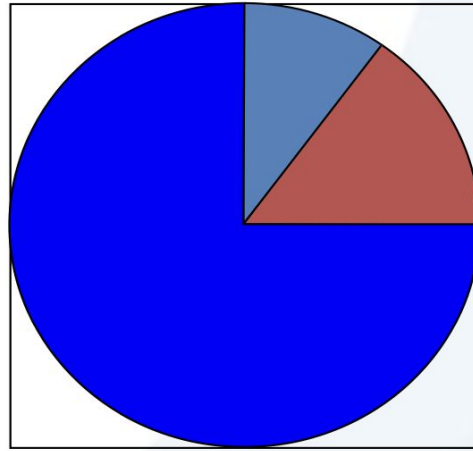
- There are places that ask “why now”
- There are places where everyone who remains productive is promoted after N years
- There are places where promotion recognizes significant contributions internally, even if not research
- You need mentors (esp local mentors) at this level



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# Stay balanced in what counts ...



■ Service ■ Teaching ■ Research



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# There is not “one” path ...

- Stay true to yourself !
  - What’s your passion? CS is a big tent ...
  - You have tenure. Take advantage of the freedom!
- But all paths require *leadership*



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# Criteria for Promotion to Full

*Leadership role*

- in **research**
- in teaching
- in service

**Letters are also critical**

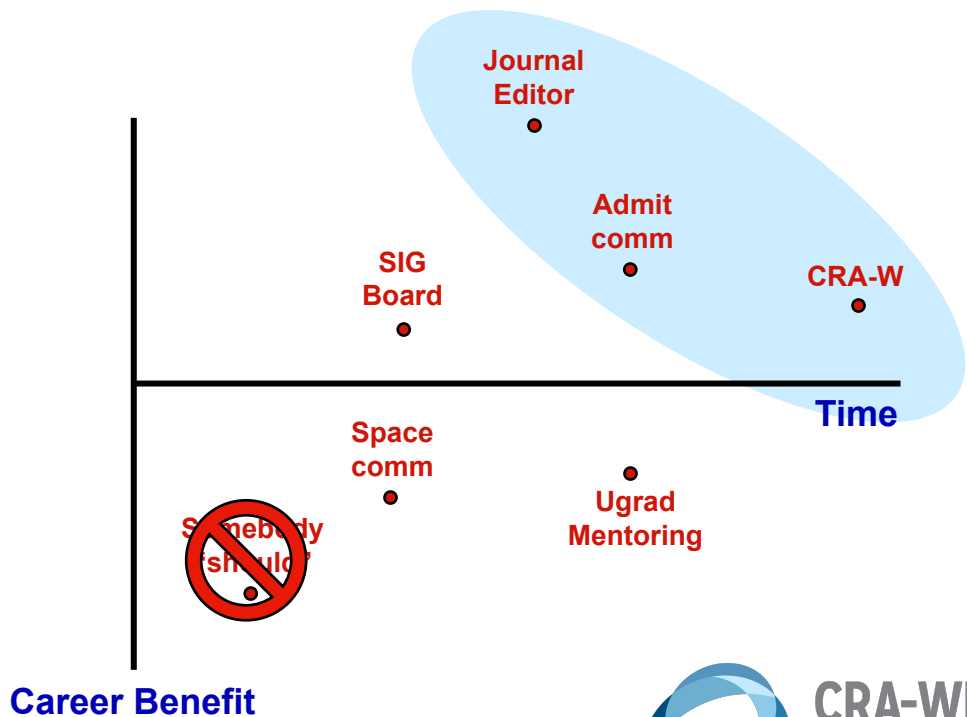


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# Choose Service that *Matters*

- Cost/benefit analysis
  - + better environment
  - + visibility
  - + connections
  - stress
  - time
- Just say “no” to the “somebody should”



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# If promotion is not successful ...

- Not too much is lost ... except your ego 😞
  - you have tenure
  - you can always try again (but consider the timing)
- Understand the failure
  - at department level: get constructive feedback
  - at higher level: is it you or did the dept fail to make a strong case?
- Handling disappointment
  - try to not take it personal (not a “no”, but a “not now”)
  - prepare better for next time
  - consider your options



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# Participatory Exercise

- Spend five minutes making a list of the strengths of your record vis a vis promotion
- Pair up and share your lists
- Share back to the group



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# Participatory Exercise

- Spend 2-3 minutes identifying two things you would like to work on to strengthen your case for promotion
- Pair up and help your partner narrow to one
- Make a plan for next week, next month, and next year to make progress on your one choice
- What will you stop doing; what will change; what will you start doing?



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# What questions do you have?



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