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
Transition to Full Professor

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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 taxpayers and students
  – A tenured faculty position is a tremendous opportunity
  – Run to work and smile
• **Everyone is replaceable**
Post-Tenure Pitfalls

• Failure to thrive
  – 2nd round of funding
  – 2nd 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
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
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
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!
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.
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
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
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
Stay balanced in what counts …
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
Criteria for Promotion to Full Leadership role

• in research
• in teaching
• in service

Letters are also critical
Choose Service that **Matters**

- Cost/benefit analysis
  + better environment
  + visibility
  + connections
  - stress
  - time
- Just say “no” to the “somebody should”
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
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
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?
What questions do you have?