

# Promotion to the Next Level (Early Research Stream)

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# This Session

How promotion (P) and tenure (T) generally work

How to approach the trio of Research, Teaching, Service

How to manage yourself and others for success

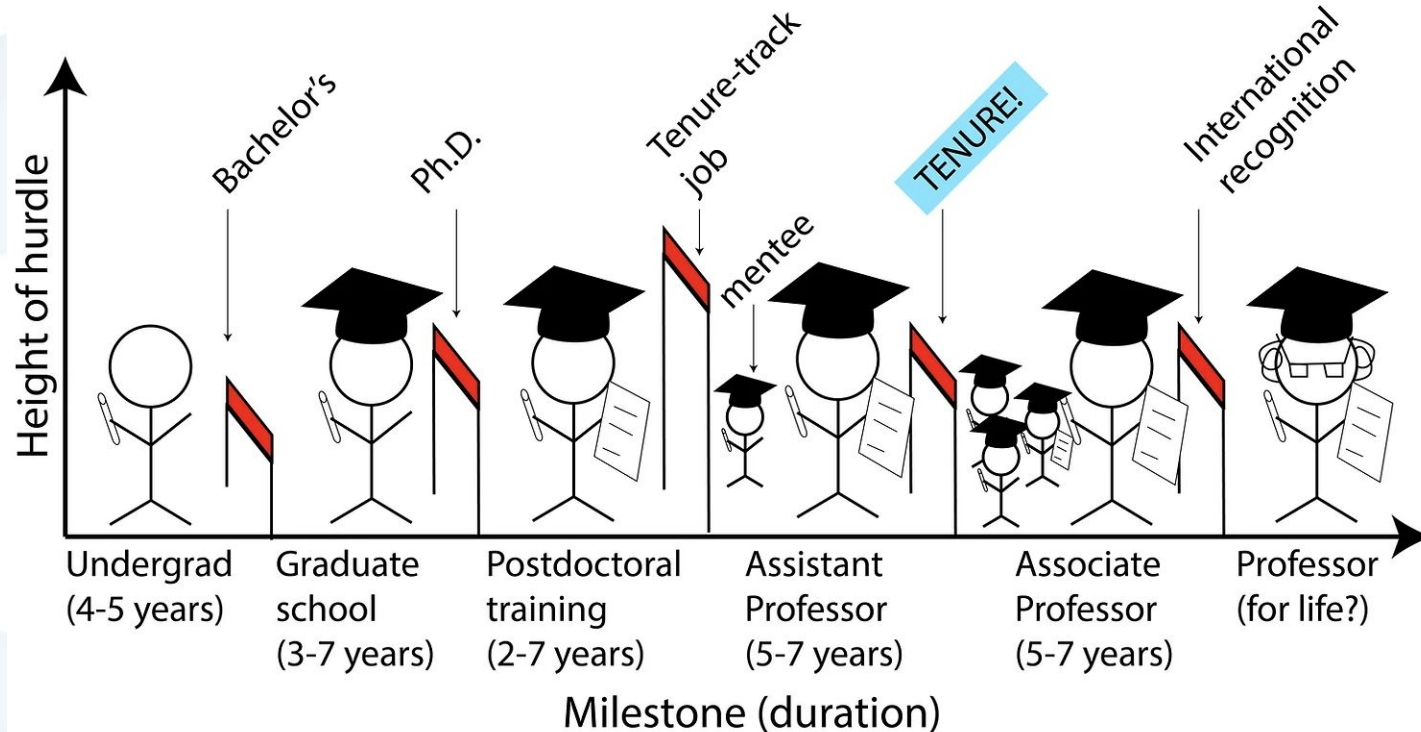
Dos and Don'ts and Mindsets



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# Where does P&T Fit in a Career



Credit: Mohit Verma, <https://www.lifeofaprofessor.com/post/what-is-tenure>

# Examples of the Process\*

Illinois Promotion & Tenure process (Nancy)

Georgia Tech RPT process (Ellen)

\* Your mileage may vary (next slide)



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# Understand your University

- Expectations vary by institution - find out yours!
  - Ask dept chair/head, mentors what counts (how much research, teaching, and service)
  - Look at CV of recently tenured faculty
- Find Mentors
  - Have different mentors for different issues
  - Find a champion that will support you
  - Make sure faculty know what you are doing
  - Ask for advice, feedback, examples



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# Activity: Local Context

In small groups, discuss some aspect of P&T at your university that you don't understand well. Brainstorm strategies to better understand it.

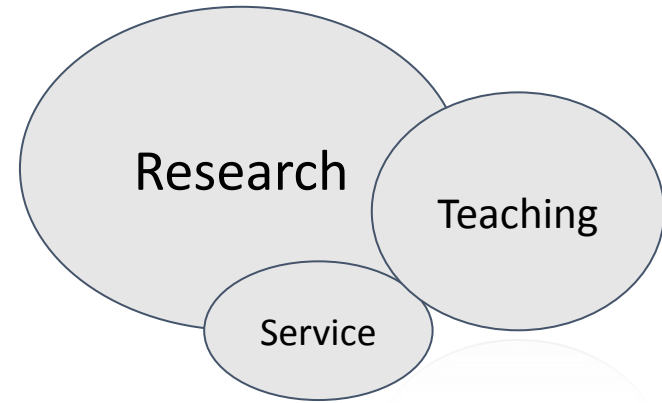
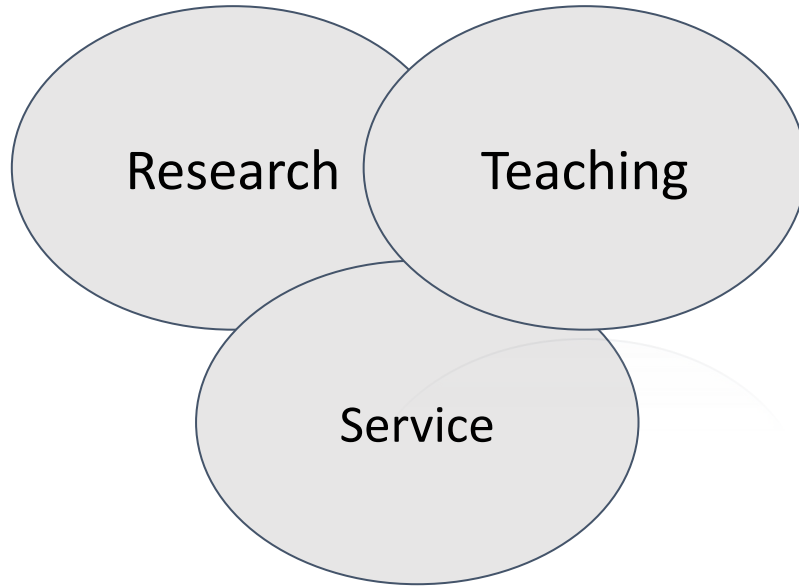
Share back one aspect with the whole group



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# The Three Elements of Tenure



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# Research Agenda

- Choose important challenging problems
- Have a coherent research portfolio
- Publish in top venues in your area
  - Quality not quantity
  - Establish independence from your advisors
- Make your research visible
  - Cultivate senior research leaders
  - Give talks at key research Institutions & Conferences
  - Attend YOUR conference every year and volunteer for it



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# Key Element of (Research) Assessment: External Letter Writers

- Know your institution's rules, but normally some selected by you and some by your institution
  - You can sometimes name some NOT to ask, but be careful with this
  - Usually advisors & collaborators are not allowed
- When you ask potential writers, give them an easy out so they feel comfortable saying no
- Start cultivating connections early!



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# Activity

Make a list of possible letter writers

Share with a partner, and explain who is on your list and why

What is one thing you could do this academic year to cultivate letter writers?



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# Funding

- Target funding opportunities
  - Volunteer to serve on funding panels
  - Apply for junior faculty awards (e.g., CAREER)
- Seek advice/examples from colleagues
  - Use institutional resources
  - Ask colleagues for successful proposals
- Don't give up!
  - Read reviews & retry, ask Program Manager



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# Funding Assessment

What if.....

- I have tried a lot, but not been successful?
- I have been too busy to submit proposals?
- I am co-PI on lots of grants, but not PI?
- All of my grants are with senior people?



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# Advising Students

- Recruit Good Students
  - Try to teach research seminars
  - Recruit undergrads and mentor to grad studies
- Learn when and how to say “no”
  - A weak student is worse than no student
  - Try them out in class projects
- Building a productive group
  - Need to show grad students progress
  - Build a mentoring hierarchy



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# Advising Assessment

- Typically indirect
- Are your students authors on publications?
- Are your students progressing through program?
- Have you graduated a PhD student (or have evidence you will)?



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# Teaching

- General Tips
  - Have an overall teaching plan/goal and update annually
  - Try to limit the number of new courses you teach
  - Shoot for a mix of undergrad (honors!) & grad
  - Do a good job while guarding your time
- Negotiate for release from teaching
  - As part of startup package, for developing new course, pre-tenure sabbatical, family leave



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# Teaching Assessment

- At promotion time, teaching effectiveness is typically assessed using your teaching statement, teaching materials, student evaluations (controversial), and peer evaluations
- If you're not sure, ask for information on the norms on teaching assessment in your department
- Use your teaching statement to document steps you've taken to address any concerns (don't be defensive, address them head-on)



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# Service: How to Select

- Find out what/how much service really counts and choose service that matters
- Do a cost/benefit analysis
  - + better environment, visibility/respect, connections
  - – stress, time, friction/enemies
- Be proactive - volunteer for positions you want, negotiate better deals
- Quality and reliability are more important than quantity
- learn when/how/why to say no



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# Activity: Saying No

Pair up in groups of two

One person should play the department chair

The other should play the junior faculty

The chair should ask the junior faculty person to take on a teaching overload

The junior faculty member should resist



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# Pause

What questions do you have that we have not covered yet?

How would you like to spend the rest of the session time?



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# Mid-Term Scenario I

- Excellent teacher, creatively restructured and revived existing courses, spends lots of time helping students outside the classroom, has published about teaching innovations, great evaluation scores
- Some research publications, including some with undergraduates
- Not much funding success
- Serving as Director of Undergrad Program



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# Mid-Term Scenario II

- Lots of funding success
- Large research group
- Poor teaching evaluations; doesn't want to teach outside of grad program
- Many publications in strong venues
- Does little internal service
- On many top program committees



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# Group Activity: Scenarios

What should these people do next?

Do they need to make changes?

If this was a colleague of yours, what would you advise them?



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# Activity: Clock Extension

What does this mean (Ellen)

In groups of two, come up with a scenario where it makes sense to do so

Then come up with a scenario where it doesn't make sense



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# Evolution of My Thinking (Ellen)

Year 1: I can't do this job

Year 2: I don't want to do this job

Year 3: Maybe I can do this job

Year 4: The hell with "them", I'll do what I want

Year 5: Many things are clicking

Year 6: Tenure (and a baby)



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# Evolution of My Thinking (Nancy)

Year 1: Clueless - thought it would be clear

Years 2-3: Unsolicited strong advice from Head, Dean & others (on research area, extra time...)

Year 4-5: I listened, but I'll do what I want anyway

Year 6: Tenure (& yet another new research area!)



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# Another Take by Radhika Nagpal

The Awesomest 7-Year Postdoc or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Tenure-Track Faculty Life

On how she managed being an assistant professor at Harvard, by treating it not as about getting tenure



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# Dos & Don'ts

- Do be someone other faculty want as a colleague
- Do be a good team player
- Do get to know leaders in your field
- Do find mentors
- Do take feedback seriously
- Do engage with the department
- Do choose your battles wisely
- Don't let your research get off to a slow start
- Don't neglect teaching
- Don't do too much too early - don't accept every student or collaboration
- Don't do anything that is unethical or makes you uncomfortable
- Don't make enemies, but do speak up



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# Questions?



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