

Tips for Promotion and Tenure

1. Keep Records

The time to begin assembling your tenure/promotion package is when you first start your career in academia. Immediately establish physical and electronic files to keep track of your activities.

Keep paperwork for anything that you think might be useful for your portfolio including: email or snail mail thank you letters, presentations at conferences, service to professional organizations, papers you have reviewed, invitations to speak, awards, committee work, student comments, annual faculty evaluations, course evaluations, syllabi, student research projects supervised, published articles, community service, workshops, consulting, professional development activities, service learning, grants, etc.

2. Organization is key

Provide table of contents and clearly marked tabs in the binder. Don't put documents in plastic sleeves.

3. Narrative is important

The narrative is a summary of what is in your P&T portfolio. This is your chance to make your own case for promotion and/or tenure. Ultimately, you want to describe who you are, professionally, and why you are an asset to the institution. This is also an opportunity for you to show how your research publications and student projects are related to your overall research program, how your teaching has changed as a result of teaching evaluations and other input, how your service to the community and institution have impacted the university.

4. Letters of recommendation

Try to get individuals that can speak to different aspects of your job.

5. Address gaps or missing documents

Candidates are responsible for making sure all required documents are in the file. If an annual performance or course evaluation is missing, the candidate should request a letter explaining its absence from the Chair or Dean. If something is missing, explain why.

6. Explain unusual job responsibilities

Candidates with unusual teaching loads, advising duties, and/or service responsibilities should document and explain. For example, nurses have high clinical responsibilities; therefore, they often have reduced committee obligations. Don't just assume the University Promotion and Tenure committee will know the time commitment associated various job responsibilities. Explain everything.

7. Show progression

When going up for promotion you need to show progression. Demonstrate that you are on a career trajectory – not status quo. For decisions related to promotion to Associate Professor and/or Professor, continuity of productivity over time and significance and impact are important.

8. Self-promotion

This is one time in your life where it is acceptable to brag on yourself. Now is not the time to be shy.

9. Explain everything

Remember that many people, who will read your file, including the majority of the people on the University Promotion and Tenure Committee, will have no familiarity with your area or the culture of your discipline.

Therefore, you must explain why your work is important. Describe its impact within your area and to our university. Explain the relative prominence of journal article, grant, or award. Don't assume anything. Explain everything.