How to Get Promoted

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Based heavily on prior NSEFRS slides:
http://www.cse.unl.edu/~grother/nsefs/nsefs.html
The Academic Staircase

Postdoc

Assistant Professor

Associate Professor

Professor

Chaired Professor

5/20/11

NFRS'11
The Academic Staircase

- Dept. Head/Chair
- Associate Dean
- Dean
- Provost/Vice Chancellor
- President/Chancellor

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- Postdoc
- Assistant Professor
- Associate Professor
- Professor
- Chaired Professor

tenure
Academic Tenure

Pearls Before Swine
by Stephan Pastis
http://www.comics.com

HI, RAT. WHO’S YOUR FRIEND?

PROFESSOR BOB. HE’S A TENURED PROFESSOR.

WHAT DOES TENURED MEAN?

IT MEANS HIS UNIVERSITY HAS GIVEN HIM A TEACHING POSITION FOR LIFE. SO NOW HE CAN DO PRETTY MUCH ANYTHING HE WANTS.

OH YEAH? SO WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO, PROFESSOR BOB?

BLOW SOME S**T UP.

STAY ON HIS GOOD SIDE.
Academic Tenure

“a status granted after a trial period to a teacher protecting him from summary dismissal”

--Webster’s Dictionary

- Academic freedom to
  - Pursue high risk problems and solutions
  - Report honest conclusions

- It’s a long-term commitment, not taken lightly by the institution
How to get tenure

by Thaves
http://comics.com
Know the culture at your institution

- Virtually all require excellence in 3 categories:
  - Research
  - Teaching
  - Service

- Differ in
  - Relative importance assigned to categories
  - What “counts” as demonstrating excellence
Know the culture at your institution

For research

- **Publications:**
  - Journal v.s. conference v.s. book chapter
  - Single author v.s. multiple authors
    (your students v.s. your advisor v.s. others)

- **Funding:**
  - PI v.s. co-PI v.s. Investigator
  - NSF v.s. DoD v.s. Industry

- **Research advising:**
  - Undergrad v.s. M.S. v.s. Ph.D.
Know the culture at your institution

For teaching
- Undergraduate v.s. graduate classes
- Range of topics v.s. sustained performance
- Large class v.s. small class v.s. individual instruction

For service
- Institutional: Department v.s. college v.s. university
- Professional: Reviewing v.s. mentoring v.s. consulting v.s. leadership
- Public (outreach)
CSE@MSU Tenure Process

- **Yearly written evaluations**
  - CSE P&T Committee, CSE Chair review Vita

- **Third year pre-tenure review**
  - All above, College P&T Committee, Dean review Faculty Review Report, Vita

- **Sixth year promotion and tenure review**
  - All above, Assistant Provost, VPRGS review Faculty Review Report, Vita, External letters (5)
Primary Criteria

- **Scholarly distinction**
  - Coherent body of creative work
  - Significant theme showing growth as a scholar
  - Sufficient productivity for promise of sustained prod. → impact
  - Ability to secure funding in support of your research
  - Respect by acknowledged experts

- **Effective teaching**
  - Good record of teaching at undergraduate and graduate levels
  - Development of curriculum and teaching materials

- **Exemplary service**
  - High quality and reliable
Research

- Articulate your research goals
  - Distinguish near-term and long-term goals
  - Track progress and update, as needed/opportunity permits

- Pursue productive collaborations, but at the same time…

- Establish (some) research independence
  - From your PhD advisor
  - From colleagues

- Keep your field narrow enough to focus but not so narrow as to be inconsequential
Publications: *Quality* before quantity

- Conferences and workshops
  - For visibility, feedback, and gain respect of colleagues
  - Become a *regular* attendee/presenter at some key meetings
  - Know acceptance rates and rankings
    - [http://people.engr.ncsu.edu/txie/seconferences.htm](http://people.engr.ncsu.edu/txie/seconferences.htm)

- Journals
  - Archive mature work in referred journals (know rankings)
  - Leverage special issues for faster turnaround

- Revise and resubmit rejected papers worth salvaging
  - *(Address problems raised in reviews first!!)*
Research Advising

- Balance PhD and MS students (not too many terminal MS)
  - Publish with students, involve them in grant writing
  - Try to graduate a PhD, some MS by year six
- Offer grad level reading course (even if as overload)
- Bargain for RA support & equipment in start-up package
- Meet regularly with PhD and MS students
- Learn when and how to say “no”
  - A bad student is worse than no student
  - See them “in action” first (in class, trial project)
Funding

- Target funding opportunities
  - Check internal sources for new faculty
  - Check funding agency sites regularly, get on mailing lists
  - Talk with funding program directors at conferences, or pay a visit
  - Plan for NSF/ONR/ARL CAREER competitions
  - Investigate opportunity for awards from industrial collaborators

- Ask colleagues (mentors)
  - For a copy of their successful proposals
  - To give you feedback on your proposal outline, your proposal
    - *Listen* to their feedback

- If at first you don’t succeed, (*revise &*) try, try again
Document IMPACT

Impact can be evaluated in many ways

- Journal publication
- Conference publication
- Citations
- Grant support
- Artifact creation
- Technology transition
- Effect on standards
- Even hits on the web, blog

*It’s your job to convince your colleagues of impact!*
Teaching

- Teach a blend of courses
  - Teach courses that are in your area
  - Limit amount of new curriculum development
  - Small/large, undergrad/grad
- Don’t reinvent the wheel
  - Take advantage of campus support programs
  - Ask colleagues for help – share notes
  - Use texts that provide support material (e.g., slides)
- Set up your “kudos” file and keep it up-to-date
- Request a peer evaluation

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Teaching

- Negotiate with Department Chair for courses, release from teaching, pre-tenure mini-sabbaticals
  - As part of start-up package,
  - For developing new courses and labs
- Shoot for good perceptions – positive evaluations
  - Be available, but be careful of your time
    - Be on time, don’t end early, keep regular office hours
    - Leverage electronic communication (discussion forums, email, etc.)
    - Give extra lectures when it helps
  - Don’t be too hard or too easy
  - Plan the the timing of student evaluations
Service

- Quality and reliability are more important than quantity
- Do visible service that will bring respect
  - from your research community
  - from your campus and department “elders”
- Link your service to your research
- Do things you enjoy, feel are important
- Be selective (learn when/how to say “no”!)
Beneficial Service

- Internal service
  - Colloquium chair
  - Graduate admissions
  - College committee (in years 5 & 6)

- Professional service
  - Become known for being a good reviewer
  - Start with workshop organization, work up to conferences
  - Join professional societies (SIGSOFT, SIGCSE, CRA, IEEE CS, or other) and participate in activities
Typical tenure "package"

- Long CV
- Research statement - 3-5 pages long
- Teaching statement - 1-2 pages long
- (Up-to-date web page)
- Teaching Evaluations
- Letters of Recommendations
- Assessment of your case
  - Department personnel committee
  - Department chair/head
  - College personnel committee and Dean
Long CV

- List everything *exactly* once and carefully (avoid padding)
  - Education, Employment history
  - Publications: books, book chapters, journals, conferences (with acceptance rates), workshops
  - Awards, Recognitions
  - Funding: internal and external
  - Service (to profession, department, college, university)
  - Seminars given, Classes taught
  - Students supervised/graduated (awards, committees)

- Request copy of long CV of some successful colleagues
Research & teaching statements

- Your chance to tell your story
  - Explain what is hard, interesting, and exciting
  - Highlight your best work
  - Show how past results impacted your current research direction
  - Show you have coherent, long-term plans
- Have several savvy faculty members read your statements and listen to their advice
External evaluators

- You recommend names for dept to choose some from
  - Recommend only 1 or 2 more names than your dept can use
  - Letters from those on your list carry less weight than others
- Department selects the rest (usually > 50%)
- In some universities/colleges/departments:
  - You can blacklist 1-2 people (but do so carefully)
  - You can informally suggest names or venues
  - Letter writers cannot include thesis advisor, co-authors
  - Letter writers must be at Professor level, include ACM/IEEE Fellows, include some from “peer” institutions
Grow a pool of likely evaluators

- Make a list of potential candidates
- Try to meet the candidates on this list
  - Talk to them at conferences
  - Invite them to give a colloquium, visit your lab
  - Interact with them at program committee meetings
  - Visit them during your “pre-tenure” tour
Overall Advice

- Do things that you feel are important and that you enjoy
  - Keeping in mind milestones needed for success
- Avail yourself of mentors, and return the favor when it's your turn
- Have a life, not just a career!
“Do”s and “Don’t”s

• Do become someone other faculty want as a colleague
• Do make a good first (and lasting) 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 be viewed as unsupportive of department goals
• Don’t do anything weird, irregular, or unethical
• Don’t brown-nose or be insincere
• Don’t make enemies, but speak up
Good luck!
guy and rodd
http://www.comics.com