DEMYSTIFYING TENURE AND PROMOTION: STRATEGIES FOR A MERITORIOUS FILE

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Associate Vice Chancellor for Faculty Equity Diversity and Inclusion

The UC San Diego community holds great respect for the land and the original people of the area where our campus is located. The university was built on the un-ceded territory of the Kumeyaay Nation. Today, the Kumeyaay people continue to maintain their political sovereignty and cultural traditions as vital members of the San Diego Community. We acknowledge their tremendous contributions to our region and thank them for their stewardship.
• What’s **bad** about advancement and promotion at UC:
  • It’s a complex, bureaucratic, policy-bound process that is multi-layered and laden with options.
    ➢ Effortful to learn about and understand.

• What’s **good** about advancement and promotion at UC:
  • It’s a complex, bureaucratic, policy-bound process that is multi-layered and laden with options.
    ➢ Your fate is determined by a system of checks and balances, and (not really) by any one person.
Policies and Manuals

Two articulating policy documents:

- The APM (Academic Personnel Manual; UC)
- The PPM (Policy and Procedure Manual; UC San Diego)

The PPM supplements the APM with additional UCSD-specific policies

Especially relevant policies to advancement and promotion:

- **APM 230-210; PPM 230-210; “Review and Appraisal Committees”**
- **APM 230-220; PPM 230-220; “Professor Series”**
- **APM 230-285; PPM 230-285; “Lecturer with Security of Employment (Teaching Professor) Series”**
POLICIES AND PRACTICES

• Note! Because a process is “complex, bureaucratic, and policy-bound” does not mean it always plays out fairly and equitably.

  • Challenge #1: The complexity of our articulating policy manuals.

  • Challenge #2: Policies are like “statutory law”; there is still a “common law” component.

  • Challenge #3: Human judgment (and bias) is part of the equation.

• Get guidance. Get mentors. Like our team in FDI.
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- Assoc I – III to Prof I
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- Assoc V to Prof III

No steps/just merits within Above-Scale: 4 or more years between merit advancements
TYPICAL CAREER PATH AT ASSISTANT RANK

• Appointed to Assistant Professor Step II
  • Serve at Asst II for 2 years, advance to Asst III (Dean)
Academic Review at UC San Diego

Candidate’s Materials (e.g. Bio/Bib, teaching evals, etc.)

Department Chair

Candidate’s Materials

Decision

Source: 2018, UCSD Academic Personnel Services
• Appointed to Assistant Professor Step II
  • Serve at Asst II for 2 years, advance to Asst III (Dean)
  • Serve at Asst III for 2 years, advance to Asst IV; appraised (EVC)
TYPICAL CAREER PATH AT ASSISTANT RANK

• Fourth-year appraisal:
  • Generally happens in parallel with second review
  • Opportunity for you to get feedback from all levels
  • In addition to narrative, formal outcomes will be one of:
    • Favorable (*rare*)
    • Favorable with recommendations (*modal*)
    • Problematic
    • Unfavorable
Academic Review at UC San Diego

Candidate’s Materials (e.g. Bio/Bib, teaching evals, etc.)

Candidate’s Materials

Department Recommendation

Candidate’s Materials

Department Recommendation

Dean’s Recommendation

Candidate’s Materials

Department Recommendation

Dean’s Recommendation

Reviewers’ Recommendation

Source: 2018, UCSD Academic Personnel Services
TYPICAL CAREER PATH AT ASSISTANT RANK

• Appointed to Assistant Professor Step II
  • Serve at Asst II for 2 years, advance to Asst III (Dean)
  • Serve at Asst III for 2 years, advance to Asst IV; appraised (EVC)
  • Serve at Asst IV for 2 years, promoted to Associate Professor Step I (Chancellor)

• IMPORTANT: Along with the current file, CAP always sees the previous file.
  • So, CAP will see their appraisal of your file.
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Source: 2018, UCSD Academic Personnel Services
GOING UP “EARLY”

• Note that you can always go up for tenure whenever you want.
  • There’s no such thing as “going up early.”
    • If you’ve satisfied the criteria for attaining tenure, you can go up.
    • Reviewers can’t say, “it’s early, why not take more time to assemble an even stronger file”?
    • Letter writers might say otherwise, but that should be discounted by reviewers.
Candidate’s Materials (e.g. Bio/Bib, teaching evals, etc.)

Candidate

Department Chair

Candidate’s Materials

Department Recommendation

Divisional Dean

Candidate’s Materials

Department Recommendation

Dean’s Recommendation

Reviewers

Reviewers’ Recommendation

EVCAA Approval Disapproval

Source: 2018, UCSD Academic Personnel Services
CUSTOMARY ELEMENTS OF THE ACADEMIC TENURE FILE

- Cover sheet, employment history
- Department letter
- Ad hoc report
- Self evaluation
- External letters
- Teaching evaluations
- Biobib

You get to see all of these and certify them...
WHAT’S WITH ALL THOSE CERTIFICATIONS?

• This keeps the academic review process accountable to you.
  • You get to see every* piece of evidence used to evaluate your case:
    • The content of your file that you and your department assemble.
    • But also the ad hoc letter; department letter; external referee letters; dean letter; CAP letter; EVC/Chancellor letter.
  • You get to provide additional information and context at each step of the way.

* There could be a very very very rarely used chair’s letter you don’t get to see.
CUSTOMARY ELEMENTS OF THE ACADEMIC TENURE FILE

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...but these are the only elements over which you have substantive control

You get to see all of these and certify them...
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Most of your reviews will be *regular* reviews:

- Your first review at UCSD was likely a regular review
- Generally, all that is considered is your most recent *review period*.
  - Starts after your last review period ended (or when you started at UCSD).
  - Generally ends one year before your advancement or promotion is effective.
  - (This is confusing, but not too pertinent for the tenure case.)
AN ASIDE: REGULAR VS CAREER REVIEWS

- You could have 4 career reviews across your time at UCSD (these are sometimes discouragingly called “barrier steps”):
  - Promotion to Associate Professor with tenure.
  - Promotion to Full Professor.
  - Advancement to Professor, Step VI.
  - Advancement to Above Scale ("Distinguished Professor").
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You’ll have up to 4 career reviews across your time at UCSD (these are sometimes discouragingly called “barrier steps”):

- Promotion to Associate Professor with tenure.
- Promotion to Full Professor.
- Advancement to Professor, Step VI.
- Advancement to Above Scale ("Distinguished Professor").

Your entire career (as well as the review period) is evaluated.

How you assemble your file is a bit different for regular vs career reviews.
CUSTOMARY ELEMENTS OF THE ACADEMIC TENURE FILE

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Biobib

You get to see all of these and certify them...
The “biobib” – biography-bibliography – is (especially for research-focused professors) the most important part of your academic file.

- It’s a categorized and organized inventory of all your professional contributions to UCSD.
- Biography: You and your professional contributions to the university and to your field.
- Bibliography: A list of your published work.
- **A sample biobib – mine!**
COMPONENTS OF THE BIOBIB

- Biography:
  - Section I: Employment History and Education
  - Section II: Professional Data
    - (a) Your service
    - (b) Memberships
    - (c) Honors and Awards
    - (d) Contracts and grants
    - (e) External Professional Activities
    - (f) Contributions to diversity
    - (g) Other activities
    - (h) Student instructional activities
    - (i) External reviews of primary creative work

Your department might/should have conventions on many of these. Check to be sure.
**It’s important for the components to be well organized:**

- ALWAYS clearly distinguish contributions from the most recent review period from preceding contributions.

- Relevant sections can have subsections:
  - Service: Department, University, Discipline.
  - Instructional activities: PhD advisees, PhD committees, post docs
  - etc
• Section (f): Contributions to diversity

  • *Everything* we do should be understood in light of DEI

  • Your research, your teaching, your service

  • And so most or all your DEI contributions will be listed elsewhere in your biobib

  • But you should *also* put them here

  • CAP understands that these items are double-listed

  • But it’s good for your DEI contributions to be in one place
BIOGRAPHY COMPONENTS

• Section (f): Contributions to diversity
  • List all that you do
    • Formal stuff – DEI committees, anti-racism programming
    • Design stuff – making your syllabi inclusive, changing your research or teaching approach to reach all students
    • Informal stuff – mentoring others from underrepresented and marginalized communities, community relations
    • Make it compelling: include pertinent details, evidence, effort expended
  • Note: Formal mentoring typically goes in (h), informal mentoring in (f)
COMPONENTS OF THE BIOBIB

- Bibliography:
  - Section A: “Primary published or creative work”
    - Subsections (for me; yours likely differ)
      - A.I: Research Articles/ Original Peer-Reviewed Work
      - A.II: Review and Invited Articles
      - A.III: Books and Book Chapters
      - A.IV: Refereed Encyclopedic Entries
      - A.V: Refereed Commentary
      - A.VI: Refereed Conference Proceedings
  - B: “Other work”
  - C: “Work in progress”

This is almost the entire focus of review; contributions in other sections are marginal or contextual.
• Subsections of A are generally department-specific.
  • You’ll need to work with what you’ve been dealt.
  • But you can provide context in your self statement, and you should provide context to your chairs and/or ad hoc.
• You need to document YOUR contributions to each item (e.g., CASRAI tags).
• Be careful about how to “count” items (and avoid double-counting).
  • Again, context in self statement and to chair and ad hoc.
• In general, use your self statement (and communication with your chair) to get department and field standards into your file.
• And note that department standards for advancement are published!
GENERAL TIPS ON THE BIBLIOGRAPHY

• Section B ("other work") is given very little weight during review.
  • It’s nice to fill this out to have all your contributions in one place.
  • But don’t sweat the details.

• Section C ("work in progress") is tricky.
  • All items listed in C must be provided with your file.
  • Can be useful for appraisal and tenure, or to document progress on projects that span review periods.
  • But, items in C are tracked from review to review – careful!
CUSTOMARY ELEMENTS OF THE ACADEMIC TENURE FILE

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- Teaching evaluations

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You get to see all of these and certify them...
• Campus is in the process of shifting away from CAPEs and to holistic teaching evaluation (stay tuned for future reviews).

• So for now, your teaching evaluations consist of two components:
  • CAPEs
  • Everything else

• Note: CAP is very reluctant to be enthusiastic about tenure files documenting teaching it views as problematic, so take this seriously.
There’s lots to be said about student evaluations generally and CAPEs specifically.

But a frequent practice is:

- Focus on the bottom line “recommend instructor” percentage.
- If there are concerns, dig deeper:
  - Look at specific CAPE questions.
  - Skim through or read student comments.
- These aren’t best practices, but it’s what many will do anyway.
WHAT TO DO ABOUT CAPES

• Provide context:
  • Does this typically course get lower ratings? (Provide data.)
    • Do you teach something controversial or a DEI course?
  • Events that affected ratings (e.g., academic integrity issues).
  • Steps to be taken going forward.
  • Address problematic or inaccurate comments.
• Try not to be defensive or dismissive; engage with the ratings and do the best that can be done with them.
BIAS IN STUDENT EVALUATIONS

• It’s there. It’s real.

• A common culprit:
  • Men tend to be evaluated along a dimension of “brilliance”
  • Women tend to be evaluated along a dimension of supportiveness
BIAS IN STUDENT EVALUATIONS

http://benschmidt.org/2015/02/06/rate-my-professor/
BIAS IN STUDENT EVALUATIONS

• It’s there. It’s real.

• A common culprit:
  • Men tend to be evaluated along a dimension of “brilliance”
  • Women tend to be evaluated along a dimension of supportiveness
  • This puts women in a bind of delivering extra labor to seem supportive, and efforts at rigor can be seen as unsupportive
  • Meanwhile, men’s even minimal attempts at supportiveness are very positively received
WHAT TO DO ABOUT BIAS IN STUDENT EVALUATIONS

• Not much can be done.

• This is why campus is trying to shift how our teaching is evaluated so that student evaluations are a contextualized part of the picture.

• VC-EDI and I tell CAP every year about these biases.

• If you have evidence of bias, cite it. (But appeals to bias without evidence can backfire, unfortunately.)
Still a work in progress, but additional info to provide includes:

- Narratives on classroom teaching.
- Course syllabi.
- Examples of assessments (tests, assignments).
- Peer or Teaching and Learning Commons evaluations.
- Reflections, plans, goals.

Also: Include teaching duties outside the classroom:

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Teaching evaluations
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You get to see all of these and certify them...
LETTERS FROM EXTERNAL REFEREES

• You need at least 5 letters from independent referees.
  • CAP prefers a few more than 5.
  • Should mostly be from full professors and peer institutions.
  • Some recommended by your department, some by you.
    • Talk to people about this (your chair, your mentor, others).
  • Must must must be independent.
    • If there’s more than 5, then an independent-ish letter is okay.
    • But if only 5, your file will be sent back for more letters.
LETTERS FROM EXTERNAL REFEREES

• How to get good letters?
  • This starts early on: Conferences, networking, getting your name out.
  • This is (another!) source of inequity, but do what you can.
    • Use campus support for conference travel.
    • Ask sponsors to help.
    • Use internet / social media marketing.
    • Talk yourself up when you get a chance.
EXTERNAL LETTERS: WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Work with your chair and colleagues **ahead of time** to navigate any trickiness.
  - You **can** exclude people.
  - You **can** provide context on (possible) referees.
- You **will** see the (redacted) letters that go into your file.
  - Only the header and footer are redacted (so if they self-identify, you’ll see it).
  - You **can** respond to letters after they come in.
EXTERNAL LETTERS: WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- You can provide external referees with additional materials.
  - Your vita instead of your biobib.
  - A research statement.
    - This is an especially good idea.
    - Especially in disciplines that produce piecemeal, referees can have a hard time seeing the forest for the trees.
      - Show them the forest – provide the thematic coherence or programmatic structure, which they can provide back in their letters.
EXTERNAL LETTERS: AN ADDITIONAL NOTE

• For better or worse, “response rate” will be considered.

• General types of non-responses:
  • “I’m busy but they’re great.”  These are okay.
  • “I’m busy but you shouldn’t hold that against them.”
  • “I’m busy and I’ve never heard of this person.”
  • “I’m busy.”
  • 🦗 ▫ ▫ ▫ • These are held against you.

• You can provide context when you certify your file with letters.
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SELF EVALUATION

• There aren’t really conventions regarding self evaluations.

• You can contact people in your department (especially those knowledgeable about academic review) for ideas.

• In general, a good self-evaluation is:

  • Complete, but as brief as possible.
  • Organized appropriately for the applicable review.
  • Able to be read, skimmed, or sampled as needed.
EXAMPLE SELF EVALUATION (MINE!)

- Structure (for my Step VI career review):
  - Career Overview
    - (Evidence of independence)
  - Review Period Overview
  - Review Period: Research
    - Summary
    - Documentation of published work.
  - Review Period: Teaching
    - Summary
    - Classroom Teaching
    - Mentoring
  - Review Period: Service
    - Major Service: Department, University, Discipline
    - Minor Service: Department, University, Discipline
  - Review Period: Contributions to Diversity
• PPM 230-220-1.d (2): “For appointment at or advancement to the Associate level or higher, independent academic and intellectual leadership in the field must be demonstrated. Although candidates must demonstrate independence from early-career mentors or advisors in order to be appointed at the Associate level, evidence is not restricted to independent research papers, other independent creative accomplishments, or garnering sole-P.I. grants, particularly if the candidate’s research or creative activity takes place in a large-scale, collaborative team. However, if a traditional demonstration of independence is absent, more substantial documentation is needed to explain and support the case that appointment at the Associate level is warranted. In such a case, letters from non-independent referees (e.g., research team members) may be provided in addition to the usual complement of independent letters.”
Independence is sufficiently important for tenure review that it’s a great idea to point to the evidence of independence in your file:

- Publications / creative activity without mentors or senior colleagues
- Grants or funding as PI and without mentors or senior colleagues
- Recognition in your discipline – invited talks, editorial activities.

Remember: Point to evidence. Think of academic review as like manuscript review.

- Manuscript reviewers shouldn’t assume anything about the research reported in a manuscript, and academic reviewers shouldn’t assume anything about accomplishments documented in an academic file.
SELF EVALUATION: ADDITIONAL COMPONENTS

• Any needed context, added as appropriate.
  • Context for publications given biobib structure: Research section
  • Context for CAPEs: Teaching Section
  • Context for minimal or important service: Service section
    • Especially for DEI contributions: Provide full context!
      • CAP looks to recognize significant DEI contributions.
    • Also a good idea to give your chair a heads-up on these things.
  • COVID statement. Strongly, strongly recommended.
Think about the impact of COVID and your research, teaching, advising.

• Describe and document (for yourself) how your research has been impacted by COVID.

• Take notes now on this, as you may forget which projects have been postponed, duration, etc. No Lab access, etc.

• Also consider how you have adjusted. Did you go back to data you collected previously? Did you engage in writing op ed or for news outlets? Did you use this time to get grants out? Apply for COVID funding for your research?

• Also reflect on the shifts and changes to your teaching and pedagogy. How much time did it take you to get up to speed on Canvas? Zoom? Did you attend any Teaching & Learning Commons webinars or other online professional development forums to improve your teaching?

• How has your advising shifted?

• Undergrads and Graduate Students: Did you increase the number of and timing of office hours to enable students to feel more connected to you and your lab?

• Did you provide weekly or regular updates to your research team?
Everyone has had their probationary extended.

UC has an “8-year up-or-out” policy -- that’s the probationary period.

Generally, this means all faculty appointed on or before 6/30/20 who were within the probationary period when the pandemic started have 9 years before “up-or-out” is invoked.

And you can apply for an additional year extension if applicable.

Note: Automatic extension of probationary period is NOT automatic deferral of review; you need to actively defer a review if you wish (and that’s available too).
OVERALL

• The academic review process – and especially the tenure process – is complicated, but it shouldn't be capricious.

• You could spend a lot of time figuring out every option or every detail...

  • ...or you could ask around: your chair, your department or school AP contact, your mentor, me, etc.

• With a little digging, and enough asking, you can make sure you get the fairest shake possible.

• Don’t be worried about asking: The university has many people who are here to help you get the best shot at success (like me!).
THANK YOU!!

Victor Ferreira
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DEMYSTIFYING TENURE AND PROMOTION: STRATEGIES FOR A MERITORIOUS FILE

Victor Ferreira, Professor, Department of Psychology
Associate Vice Chancellor for Faculty Equity Diversity and Inclusion
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