

## Notes from Mentoring Panel on Tenure and Career Issues

### **Melanie Matthies:**

- The role of the UPT is to be very vigilant. With this in mind your Part II's should be filled out carefully, concisely, and honestly.
- With regards to your letters of recommendation, unfortunately, you have no control over these. The department chair solicits letters from tenured professors at other institutions in your field and they ask them if you would get tenure at their institutions. However, there are things you can do to aid in this process:
  - (1) try having a list of senior faculty you've encountered that are "arms length" from you
  - (2) You should go to conferences and events in your field to increase your visibility.
- Channel your inner "Britney Spears." By this I mean you need to sell yourself and ask for feedback. You should work towards establishing national recognition. Do some committee work (one time short investments, no policy or curriculum committees). Don't ever agree to anything on the spot, always give yourself time to think it over and get back to them.
- With respect to teaching; email is bad, Courseinfo is good. Don't answer every email, post answers to frequently asked questions on the discussion board of Courseinfo. Talk to your colleagues about department expectations (for teaching) like readings, etc. You should keep your course valuations. Also, utilize the Center for Excellence in Teaching and your senior faculty members in your department for feedback.
- Be aware of stress and respond to it appropriately. Don't let it build up.

### **Dan Clemens:**

- First point I would like to discuss is time management:
  - Do it all; attend to all facets of your job and learn how to cut corners when and wherever you can. Read your emails and respond in a timely manner, and follow instructions. If people take the time to write up and point out the guidelines they expect them to be followed. The facets of your career, teaching, scholarship, and service must all be attended to appropriately.
  - Cutting corners safely: touch any document only once. Be a "thirties manager." When you pick up a document give it your full attention, make a decision on it if it requires one, and move on. You should respond to emails in a similar fashion and always assume that your email will be published.
  - Use your day efficiently: Know whether you are a morning person or an evening person. Find out when you are most productive during the day and organize your daily work load accordingly. Effectively use your time and utilize your TA's, discuss grading papers and exams with them.
  - Answer your mail.
- As for your applications, your Part II's you be succinct. Remember, K.I.S.S. – Keep It Simple Silly. Do not attempt to BS the committee. Follow instructions

and do not get emotional when answering comments. Get advice from senior faculty in your department.

**Lena Lundgren:**

- I will discuss two things today. The first will regard the committee and how to write towards those not in your field. The second will discuss parenting and tenure.
  - The committee is not only made up of those in your field, therefore, don't write about your teaching and research in an overly specific way. Do it like you would write up a course description. It is fine to use nomenclature specific to your field but understand that someone from the arts or humanities may have to read and understand this, so write with that audience in mind as well.
  - Parenting: One major concern of parents is traveling to conference. Try to choose conferences wisely, conferences where the key people in your field are.
  - Make decisions wisely, i.e. whether you will give a lecture, advise a certain person, etc. This is a major factor in avoiding guilt. Also, in regards to avoiding guilt, make sure you have flexible time.
  - Don't think there is a "bar of achievement." There is no threshold that you have to hit and then you can coast, you need to be perceived as a leader and as someone who will continue to lead even after the pressure of achieving tenure is gone.

**Irving Bigio:**

- The university regards you as a long term investment and because of this they want you to succeed. The University is family friendly; they are very supportive and provided extra time to the "tenure clock" when time is taken off for starting a family, so don't be afraid to do so before you reach tenure.
- Develop a relationship with a senior faculty member with whom you get along with well and have similar interests. You can start to build the Part II and show your mentor to receive feedback.
- You can't do everything, technically. So you have to choose wisely:
  - Service: You should participate in committees but not at the expense of your teaching or research. If service keeps getting dumped on you by your department chair talk to your dean.
  - Talk to recent tenured professors. Invite a senior member who is well known as a good professor to come to your class and evaluate you.
  - Grad students: Invest time in your grad students. Help them succeed and this will reflect well on you. Grad students count more than post docs and cost less too. Undergrad students are valued as well.
  - Don't write your Part II's as you did when you applied for the initial position or for grad school. Write it as though you already have tenure. It's a style thing; show it to your mentor to get feedback.
  - Be productive: It is important to show you're working at your research. Apply for many grants and take advantage of seed grants. Getting 1 out of 8 grants is better than 1 out of 2. It is ok to be a co-investigator and make collaborations, you don't have to jump straight to being a PI.

- Try to travel but stay away from the big conferences, instead go to a specialized conference where you increase your visibility and chances of networking.