Today’s Objectives

• Discuss and identify:
  • Perceived and real needs of mid career faculty
  • Perceived and real barriers to promotion
  • Potential strategies to maintain engagement and participation
  • Potential benefits from changing directions
Associate Professors

- What happens after promotion?
Promotion and Tenure

→ Being promoted to Associate Professor with tenure suggests that “you have made it”

→ Promotion takes the pressure off from the probationary period

→ Staying at Associate Professor grants you access to a job and resources, and provides you with the opportunity to re-evaluate your trajectory, your interests, and your choices
Literature on Associate Professors

• May experience:
  • Low morale when compared to other ranks, or when reflecting on time as Assistant Professor
  • Decreased institutional and/or departmental attention relative to pre-tenure faculty
  • Lack of mentoring and career planning
  • Lack of clarity regarding promotion criteria
    (Baldwin & Chang, 2006; Pruitt et al., 2010; Strange & Merdinger, 2014)

• Some call it an “academic midlife crisis”.

Literature on Associate Professors

• Additional challenges
  • Disproportionate service or administrative duties that interfere with progress toward promotion, especially for women and minority faculty
  • Unclear and inconsistent feedback and communication from DEOs, Deans, or senior colleagues
  • Low recognition and appreciation for multiple projects
  • Low job satisfaction
UI Snapshot of Tenured Associate Professors
UI Snapshot of Tenured Associate Professors

31%
• Associate Professors at UI
• (456 out of 1465)

40%
• Female
• Approximately half a year longer for promotion

7.7%
• Faculty members from URM groups

(as of November 2020)
UI Snapshot of Tenured Associate Professors

- 53% • 0-5 years past tenure
- 54% • URM faculty are 0-5 years past tenure
- 68% • 0-10 years past tenure

(as of November 2020)
Associate Professor Project (17-18)

- Office of the Provost Survey of Associate Professors
  - Sent to approximately 200 UI associate professors
  - 141 responses (nearly 70% response rate)

- Office of the Provost Focus Groups, in collaboration with Faculty Senate and HR
  - Conducted three focus group sessions fall 2017
  - Approximately 70 participants across all colleges
I aspire to be promoted to full professor. I aspire to be promoted to full professor, and I have received formal feedback from a DEO or supervisor regarding my progress toward promotion. I aspire to be promoted to full professor, and I would value regular reviews regarding my progress toward promotion.
My department has a culture in which associate professors are encouraged to work toward promotion to full professor. I understand the expectations and what one needs to accomplish in order to be promoted to full professor. My DEO/Associate Dean provides me with adequate support and guidance to advance my career goals.
I would prefer to spend a greater proportion of my time on research. My teaching obligations make it difficult to find time for research. My student mentoring activities make it difficult to find time for research. My service or administrative obligations make it difficult to find time for research.
Promotion to Full

→ There is no specific time for you to seek promotion to Full Professor

→ Literature suggest that guidelines for promotion are ambiguous particularly regarding the definitions of:
  • Scholarly productivity to make rank
  • National reputation
  • International reputation
  • External funding requirements
Talking to your peers [breakout]

→ Are you planning to apply for promotion in the next two years?
→ Do you have mentors?
→ Do you seek feedback on your progress from your DEO/supervisor?
So why become a Full Professor?

- Incentives
- Prestige
- Autonomy
- Benefits for your department and your institution
Time to Next Promotion

- For the tenure track:
  - Ranges between 1 year and 17 years
  - Women promoted at an average of 7 years
  - Men promoted at an average of 6 years
  - Quickest in Law; slowest in Pharmacy
Why not seek promotion?

→ More autonomy after tenure
→ No time pressure & many choices
→ Maybe you have developed an alternate path such as:
  • Focusing only on teaching
  • Entering administration
  • Becoming involved in the institution’s change efforts
  • Public service

Rockquemore, 2012
Why not seek promotion?

➔ At some point, some feel “stuck“, which is more common than may be appreciated

➔ Reasons why some may remain in current rank:
  • Lack or paucity of scholarly productivity rather than poor teaching
  • Fear of failure
  • Workload paralysis – too much going on …
  • Need support to make decision
  • Comfort as Associate Professor which may lead to disengagement
“Disengaged Associate Professors”

Characterized by:

- Withdrawal from intellectual exchange and collaboration with colleagues,
- Not a participant on decision-making processes,
- Deliberate withdrawal from departmental social activity (or giving cynical advice to junior faculty),
- Lack of involvement in mentoring relationships

Huston, Norman, & Ambrose (2007)
Changing Directions

- A way of addressing feelings of been stuck, disengaged, unmotivated, and in need of guidance
- What does it look like?
Changing Directions: Scholarship

- Become aware of the difference in research requirements between promotions
  - To **Associate Professor** – establish a record of scholarly productivity
  - To **Full Professor** – not necessarily quantity, but impact and national or international reputation
- Need something to **AIM** for…
Changing Directions: Scholarship

→ It may be necessary to re-define your scholarship to forge a new path that will lead to promotion
  • Re-focus scholarship emphasis (dig deeper into already established foci)
  • Define a new scholarship emphasis
  • Join an established research team (collaborate with others)
  • Seek training on advanced research methods/techniques
  • Be strategic about journals and conferences in which you choose to disseminate your work
Talking to your peers [breakout]

- Do you feel stuck or on track? If stuck, why?
- Have you changed directions?
- What did that look/feel like?
- How did you go about doing it?
Changing Directions: Mentoring

Seek mentoring and/or consultation from your DEO or senior colleague to:

- Identify and address barriers to promotion
  - Getting unstuck
- Explore further career development
- Address fear of failure and work paralysis
- Use a Individual Development Plan (IDP)
Changing Directions: Individual Development

- Individual development plans (IDP) serve the purpose of identifying your career goals, your professional development needs, and personal and professional aspirations
- Enhances communication with your DEO or mentor
- Think about it as your “Individual Strategic Plan”
- Review annually to keep you accountable
Changing Directions: IDPs

➔ Your IDP will answer the following questions:
  • What are your personal goals and values?
  • What are your career goals?
  • What are your short and long term goals as you think of your career goals?
  • What timelines and benchmarks will you set?
  • What resources do you need? (technical, financial, mentoring, consulting)
  • How will you measure success?
Your IDP and Your Annual Review

Consider using your IDP as a framework to guide your annual review discussion with your DEO. Be sure to:

- Discuss performance and promotion expectations
- Inquire about progress toward promotion
- Educate your DEO on unique aspects of your scholarly impact and reach
- Discuss effort allocation in relation to achieving promotion, particularly for women and URM faculty
- Seek frequent feedback from DEO and senior departmental faculty
What to expect from your DEO?

- Assist in defining what constitutes national reputation
- Continue to provide or facilitate mentoring
- Strategically use resources (e.g. internal funding) to facilitate travel, to hire GAs, or facilitate necessary developmental task
- Reward and acknowledge departmental contributions (e.g. program coordination work)
What to expect from your DEO?

- When appropriate, your DEO may recommend a change in effort allocation to reflect additional teaching or service (to college or university)
- Recommend and support leadership development IF administrative roles will be part of your future portfolio
Changing Directions

→ Changing directions may also imply a new work environment outside of the current institution (e.g., private practice, government, other institutions of higher education).

→ Make sure to access necessary transition resources.
Closing Thought

“There does not have to be a midlife crisis in academia. Investing in midcareer faculty leads to happier faculty members and stronger institutions.”

Misra & Lundquist, 2015