

Notes from CT Faculty Promotion Panel - 27 February 2018

Panelists:

Sue Barton (Professor, Plant and Soil Sciences)

Jeni Buckley (Associate Professor, Mechanical Engineering)

Marie Laberge (Associate Professor, Women & Gender Studies)

Michael McCamley (Associate Professor, English; CT rep of University P&T Committee)

Moderated by Matt Kinservik, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs - oversees the promotion process, makes sure that things are handled fairly and consistently

MK: What was your biggest anxiety/concern going into the promotion process, and was it realized or overblown?

SB: Would I have enough scholarship? As an extension specialist, I have SoTL publications but is that enough? But the department committee actually wound up being concerned that with a 70% teaching workload, the undergraduate coursework didn't appear to match that. But the extension work is where a lot of teaching responsibility was. So in the end the scholarship expectations were exceeded but the scrutiny was put on teaching.

Q: Was extension part of your workload?

SB: 70 teaching 20 scholarship 10 service - extension is split over both teaching and research; the way I presented it in my review came off as confusing. (I was originally hired as 100% extension and job position morphed.)

JB: I kind of have a chill personality and "go with it" anyway; I felt like I had the support of my department. I was told that the process was ultimately the result of the question of whether I would be missed if I were gone. I have a great mentor who walked me through the process. My anxiety was about where to put some of my bigger projects in terms of teaching/scholarship/service - what am I going to do with these items that don't clearly fall into one of these buckets? (The design studio, and a non-profit initiative)

ML: The monumental nature of what was looming - but I found ways to break things down bit by bit. My workload is 100% teaching and I had 12 classes to document, so I just outlined things, deciding what to focus on over time. Having that outline to cross things off was very helpful.

MM: Kind of a combination of what everyone else is saying. Which activities go into which category in terms of workload. What is teaching versus service. Also the monumental nature of the document. As CT we do a lot of stuff! How do I make sure I don't forget to include things, and how do I sell them to the best of my ability? I also had really good mentors. I lead or co-lead WAC workshops. I sold this more toward teaching and supporting the teaching culture of the

campus, rather than as service. Year by year our workloads might change based on what the chair needs. 80-85% teaching and the rest service.

MK: How can you find out what your workload was? There is an actual defined number of your assigned workload, and you should know what it is and how to represent that in your promotional materials. It's important to do this because your department, college, or university will otherwise "default" to the usual TT expectation. So it's up to you to tell them what it is. Consider your dossier as a rhetorical document that argues why you should be promoted.

Hopefully promotion committees are also looking at the promotion documents for your dept/college/univ.

During annual appraisal, your dept chair assigns workload in terms of percentages. I've seen people report the aggregate (average these out), or report it year by year. Our university document requires workload to be represented by the department chair - but that's already after your external reviews and dept committees have reviewed your case. So the faculty handbook will be changed soon to require the candidate to present this information instead.

Can you give an example of how you resolved this?

SB: My committee said my undergrad course count wasn't equivalent to 70% teaching, so I had to go back to show how all my extension work counts as teaching. Other faculty I know, know how many classes it takes to reach the % teaching they have, and they're not required to teach more than that. At 70% teaching, I would need to teach more undergraduate courses, so I keep adding them on - but the tradeoff is I would do less extension work.

Q: Does graduate course teaching count?

SB: Yes, but I don't teach grad courses.

Q: The union says we need to be evaluated on our workload, and that's all it says. How that's interpreted is between you and your chair.

Q: I thought I was supposed to do service and teaching as my job but I found out my workload is officially 100% teaching. I don't understand - does service not count? I put service into my two-year review.

MK: Want to keep today's emphasis on dossier, but one immediate specific purpose of workload accounting in appraisal is for merit day considerations. Let's say you don't have any workload in a category but you did a bunch of stuff. You can still include that in your dossier. This is no time for modesty. Represent your accomplishments and if you overachieve in an area where you have little workload, point that out!

Q: Say you only have workload in two categories. Is it true that all three categories must be represented in your dossier? I am 96% teaching, 4% service. Can I be promoted with zero research? I have received conflicting messages.

Q: CBA says you can only be promoted based on your workload.

Q: What does your promotion P&T document say? It should explain that.

Q: This can't be in conflict with the university P&T document.

Q: How do you make a strong argument with categories with "gray areas"? A lot of service and teaching overlap and a lot of non-tangible things that I do like external development that are more broad and open. How do you decide where to put it and what lessons did you learn in doing the promotion process? What's unique to your roles that you categorized differently, or what would you have done earlier knowing this?

JB: External contracts for engineering senior design, I put in all three categories. If it makes sense, it counts for multiple things. I'm responsible for bringing in senior design projects from external clients. I pulled that money in for the department, so that's research. For teaching, this connects to the design class. For service, I set up the contracts, I drive around and make these connections. I put it in each of these bins but explained why it applied to each. I encourage everyone to do scholarship in teaching and learning. The education dept is wonderful as collaborators. That's you improving teaching and that's legit scholarship.

Q: This depends on your department. Some departments explicitly don't count education research.

ML: You have to explain to those outside your department the significance of what you are doing. We need to be able to articulate and make the case for yourself about why each item is in what category and how much you do - expressing how it fits in multiple categories helps. To reiterate what Matt said earlier, you have to sell yourself. I don't usually go around explaining how wonderful I am, but that's what you need to do here.

SB: Taking the opportunity to get scholarship in depts that allow it - I wrote a refereed journal article on evaluating students on a study abroad program. Not a super technical article but good enough to get published. That became a journal article I could list as scholarship.

JB: If you can "chip at it as you go" - quicklink to your CV on your desktop and don't worry about formatting, and just list everything, every talk you give, journal articles, etc. The most painful part for me was going back through all my course evaluations and going through numbers and selecting quotes. Also going through appraisals/reviews from your chair. I see my score relative to the department in all three categories - teaching, service, research. I do the same with the teaching evaluations.

Q: How heavily are student evaluations weighed in this process?

MK: General comment - if you're not intentional about representing evidence of quality teaching, your P&T committees will look at two numbers from each course - "overall rating" for instructor, "overall rating" for course, and they'll compare it to the department/college/etc. There may be a line or two from a peer evaluation. So if you don't deal with them or bring supplementary evidence of teaching quality, they'll default to those measures and overrepresent them. That's the danger.

SB: I pulled out comments that reflect things I'm proud of. Enthusiasm, stuff like that. To represent outside the classroom teaching, I had a lot of evaluations (for example master gardener training) of 11 sessions that were each rated and I had a graph of what was reported as the most and least effective sessions and I could show that mine were the most effective. I also have a whole chart about what they said they learned from this training. I was able to show that half of the comments from the whole training, they learned from me. That can be powerful and goes beyond regular student evals.

MM: CTAL does an amazing workshop on documenting teaching and the measures you can use to show you're an effective teacher. One idea is student work as a demonstration of what they've learned. CTAL can help you think of ways to document your teaching effectiveness.

ML: Kathy P at CTAL helped me to document my teaching, create graphs, and most importantly, help to explain them, especially the dips and where I was more successful. For example, I could explain when I tried new things and how I learned from them, and I can explain my performance across the board. Highlight how you are constantly addressing/adjusting things in your classes and making revisions. In terms of student work I relied a lot on downloading old assignments from Sakai. I could go into their assignments and take comments from documents that students made. This gave evidence that they understood how to bring this material into their everyday life. So you can describe the trajectory of a course over the years, why I made changes, how I impacted student learning. So you can go beyond the student eval numbers.

Q: I think it's also important to highlight comments that appear to be bad. For instance, students complain that I never address questions directly, but I use that to point out that I do active learning.

MK: If you have an anomalous course eval and don't explain it, that's grounds for suspicion, but addressing it shows you are reflective and helps to explain some of the other dips that you do not address.

Q: Do you address all the comments or pick a random sample? We don't approve of "cherry-picking" comments.

SB: I put in a link to all comments, but I highlighted things I'm proudest of.

Q: Our department is still trying to get a fair promotion document for CT faculty. How do you document excellence in teaching? Excellent versus very good? What about external evaluations?

MK: What do you put in a dossier for an external evaluator to assess excellence in teaching?

MM: All my external evaluators were external to UD. In preparing my dossier for them, a big part was showing my reflections go beyond common assumptions of good teaching. I supplied all my materials - syllabuses, assignments, lesson plans. I have colleagues in English education who have videos of teaching, but that's also part of the work they generate in teaching English ed majors. I brought in a student essay in various drafts and showed where the student began and where the student ended up. I showed my comments and explained what I was trying to get the student to do. Also I presented my grading criteria and how students achieved learning goals.

Q: Articulating high-quality teaching can be diverse across departments. It seems to mean making the case that your teaching is up to par compared to education research. Did you show you keep up with the literature to defend your high quality teaching? Examples?

JB: Active membership in our professional educational society, attending and publishing in conferences. I invited the education department to review me. CTAL can do that too. I had some references in my documentation when I made course changes. I also pointed out what learning I'm still doing in that area - what am I doing now to gain that knowledge?

MK: Enter your profession's course design competition if your organization has this.

Q: Everyone's advice is about telling a story, explain workload, present evidence. How can we best use UD Academe to do this in a narrative way? I'm scared that my internal or external evaluators won't take the time to click and download hundreds of documents - UD Academe just presents a series of links, so there's a lot of trust that your P&T committees will look at everything? How do I use the system to get the reviewers to see what I want them to see? Do I create a massive PDF that presents my information in the order I want them to see?

MK: Medium doesn't matter - paper, Sakai - it's the same risk or anxiety.

JB: I was one of the last to use Sakai.

SB: I used UD Academe and I put together statements and I loaded them with what I really wanted people to know, and I referenced where they could find evidential material. But if they want to believe me and not look at that material, that's fine! But they got the statement of what I wanted them to hear about each of my projects.

Q: How long is too long of a narrative?

MK: Some people do a brief narrative. A teaching statement and all the other materials are supplemental? Be brief. Otherwise do the statement as the introduction and then evidence to follow within the same document. The main concern is being reading and navigable.

JB: If there's another CT in your college/department, ask for their document. You might also need to present different formats for different people. Some of my reviewers just wanted a single PDF.

Q: There is a button in Academe, that will pull everything that you select as "show in dossier," it will pull it into a PDF.

Q: Any advice for people who teach newer/more obscure areas for how to get objective evidence to measure against? There is only one other university that offers this area, so there's not "apples to apples" comparison.

CTAL can help with documenting course goals ahead of time and show how you met them. CTAL has a good workshop.

SB: I didn't compare myself against others teaching at other universities.

Q: Check to make sure you know what your department means by "external." External to dept, college, university?

MK: The statements in the three areas are really important documents, especially as you get further from the department .Be mindful of audience - even at the college level this can be a diverse set of backgrounds. Have topic sentences. Help them read your document and guide them to approving your promotion. Bold sentences you want them to read, but make sure it looks good.

Q: How do you account for overload?

MK: You document it.

SB: This is something that was an issue for me. The college committee said I got paid for teaching courses at longwood gardens in continuing ed, so that doesn't count (it's not through UD). I said I was still representing UD and educating people and working hard to develop the course. I made a case in my letter that outside pay wasn't an issue, and I didn't hear anything more about it.

Q: I also have a lot of focus on community and I don't know how to document the impact I have on the community when I say, screen a bunch of people for illness or high blood pressure.

MK: UD is saying to engage in outreach, so we should reward it, but we need to figure out how to document it. Think about how to represent this in terms of promotion requirements.

SB: Even numbers - how many people did you interact with? Do you have thank you letters/emails/texts?

JB: Tie in to the idea that you're representing UD. I have a non-profit that reaches 1600 people a year directly - we have an executive director, etc, but I still guide things. I communicate how many I directly impact and how much impact the organization has. If it's UD-branded, include it.

Q: How does the standard change between associate and full professor promotion? It's not just seven more years of good teaching.

ML: It should be in your department's P&T documents. It may clearly state going from regional to national impact for example.

SB: I don't think you have to show different evidence - if you were excellent going up for associate and already making national impact, you don't need to do something even better, is that correct?

MK: Many documents want more leadership and broader impacts outside the region. Being on an editorial board for a journal. Are you in your national organization in some way, committee work in national committees. Show you're engaged and providing leadership beyond campus.

Q: For TT faculty external evaluations is one of the most important parts. How did you choose external evaluators?

MM: My departmental P&T chair wrote a very detailed letter to my external evaluators with my department promotion criteria and asked them to follow those guidelines. In my case they were all external to the university. Most places don't have CT faculty like we have, so having the P&T Chair frame it in ways they could understand was helpful. I asked the most impressive people I could - associate deans, people in my field who would know what I'm trying to do and my disciplinary value.

SB: If you've been involved at a national level, you know people at that level to ask as evaluators.

ML: External only HAS to be external to the department.

JB: I had a mix, external to the dept and to the university. I wanted people who could speak to my instruction, who could speak to my ability in the classroom. It's important to have someone who could speak to that. One of my external evaluators was someone who'd seen me in the classroom and could comment on my work.

MK: I'm seeing promotion materials that are more of a mix, half external to the unit but internal to UD, half external to UD. It's also a mix of who's the best in the field and who isn't. It's your decision to suggest whoever you want for external reviews.

MK: Final thoughts?

JB: We have an external review board for our program and that's a natural pick for outside reviewers. They've seen what I'm about and what our department needs are.

MK: Work in your discipline in regional/national societies - nominate someone who's seen your work in that area. I've seen people from industry and government write letters because of the nature of work.

Q: I have research, community service, and still 80% teaching. I don't want to leave the 20% out. I've been asked to give seminars at the national level and have published a couple of papers. Should my list of reviewers focus on teaching?

MK: You're not confined to just teaching letters. Suggest to your department those who can speak to a certain part of your workload.

Q: in terms of a national reputation, does that include writing a textbook or educational journal or speaking at a teaching conference?

MK: all of the above.

SB: One more general comment: what it looks like, matters. Formatting, making charts look cool. It's supposed to be about the content, and we're human, and reading something that looks need is more impressive. It's not supposed to matter, but I think it does.

MM: Know all your P&T docs - dept, college, univ.