

COACHE

the collaborative on academic careers in higher education

A JOINT INITIATIVE TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF FACULTY WORK LIFE

Appendix B: Open-ended Responses

Open-ended Responses

Some COACHE survey questions offered an opportunity for faculty to accompany certain responses with explanations in their own words. Following are the comments provided by respondents at your institution.

Q27b. On what are tenure decisions in your department primarily based? *Subjects responding "Somewhat disagree" or "Strongly disagree" to Question 27a ("From what I can gather, tenure decisions here are based primarily on performance rather than on politics, relationships, or demographics.") were asked this follow-up question.*

Research and some political issues.
They are primarily based on publications and funding. Teaching and service are supposedly also important, but I think that this is only on paper. They are clearly not as important as publications and funding. However, the tenure process still seems to be loosely defined, and if the Department or University wants to dismiss someone, they will find some reason to do so, no matter what the achievements are. In other words, it is a highly variable process.
Performance -- It is not the Department that I am concerned about; it is the misunderstanding of Architecture from the University which is most troubling.
Research output, service, fit.
Scholarship -- Receiving funding for grants and publishing; Teaching -- Evidence of providing creative, engaging teaching and mentoring; Service -- Serving on College, University, and community committees, and showing scholarly activities regionally, nationally, and internationally
Publication record, grant money, teaching evaluation.
They say research, teaching and service. However, I have observed that certain people get preferential treatment.
How things look on paper, rather than the contributions a member has made and will make and their ability to work as a colleague.
Grant money.
It is not clear the extent to which subfield disputes will play a role. I have no Senior professor in my field so they won't know how to assess my performance (who they will get letters from, etc.). Another problem is the conflict between what are good journals to publish in my field vs. what are good journals to publish in more quantitative driven research. So I'm stuck trying to please two different sets of criteria.
I don't know.
The publication of a book; service (participating on school-wide and Department committees) and satisfactory teaching. However, I have heard through unofficial channels that average/mediocre teaching evaluations from students can be used to deny tenure to faculty that others don't want for political, personal or 'collegial' reasons. I had discussed my current health situation (need to get accommodations now under ADA) with a lawyer and he told me that he had represented colleagues in my school who had been denied tenure because of shady manipulation of teaching information by the administration.
In theory, research, teaching and service. In reality, it is impossible to tell. One may as well work in a feudal fiefdom and hope to get on well with the lord of the manor.
I am the first in my program to last this long (i.e., to make it to the first review). I have no idea if I'll make the review, or what the hell tenure is based on. No idea. There is a little piece of paper somewhere that spends one page on service, one paragraph on teaching (that makes no sense and does not have a guide to what constitutes good teaching), and half a paragraph on research (that is vague about how much is needed, suggested deadlines, kinds of journals for impact, whether for certain a book is needed or not, and if not, how will a bunch of journal articles will be evaluated. It's ridiculous. If I make tenure or even this third year review it will be because the gods were aligned -- because I couldn't tell you.
Two Departments (49% & 51%) and Colleges have to decide about my number of peer reviewed publications, grants brought in, teaching evaluations, number of student advisees, and services.

Ability to get grants and status in the field as seen by people not in my field.
Performance, collegiality, somewhat on politics
In my Department: Merit. In the College and University: Politics and personalities.
When it comes down to it, it seems to be politics.
Scholarship and teaching.
Scholarly or creative activity.
These decisions are SO inconsistent and UN-defined it is impossible to say. Tenure granted with NO publications, Vanity Press publications, lots of publications, professional activity, no professional activity, lots of service, minimal service, etc.
Political alliances, favoritism. Criteria ultimately have little meaning.
I went up for tenure this year, and despite having the same number of publications as the last two to go up, having outstanding teaching ratings in the top %s of the University, and having the most outstanding service in the Department, I was asked to go up again this year, one year after my latest time required by the University. I met all requirements of my Department and College and then was denied by the Provost.
Whether or not you have an R01 grant. Anything else makes you qualified for advancement according to the non-tenure track.
Too complex for written answer -- my time is more valuable than your survey.
Solely on having an RO1 grant
Tradition: "If we (Committee members) suffered to get promoted so will you."
Research; but a few receive tenure because of service (or political relationships).
Unclear, although a mixture of performance and politics.
Research, teaching, and service.
Not clear
In regard to my academic home, College of Public Health, it is unclear. However, I have seen examples of individuals with marginal performance in areas such as scholarly activities get tenure. For example, I can think of at least one individual, who has never been PI on a major grant and has not been first or last author on a single paper in the previous five years, get tenure! This doesn't send a good message and gives the sense that differential treatment is being applied, particularly because this individual holds a very influential administrative position at the College.
Publishing papers and getting grants funded.
Primarily research, but I have observed that politics and friendships seem to enter in cases that are borderline.
The tenure process is an inherently unequal process. Thus, I believe the faculty in my Department would say it's based on teaching, scholarship, and service, but at the end of the day there are a lot of code words that are used that suggest otherwise.
Research, service, teaching
Creative activity, service, teaching
Scholarly activity, according to the very limited information that I have. Some indicated that high numbers of publications as first author are required, although I do not see that other tenured faculty have achieved these. The analysis of others' activities suggests that other factors apply, but the water is muddied by the existence of different "tracks" for achieving full professor status here. Even my Chairperson does not always communicate a consistent message to me regarding the process, and I was given downright incorrect information regarding my "salary position" during my interview, which was not corrected for over a year after I worked here.
Research.
Research dollars
Research, teaching and service.
Independent research, funding, and publications
I do not know the criteria very well. It is supposed to be on research, teaching, and service. However, there are not precise specifications on number or quality of publications, nor number of courses taught, nor number of students in courses, etc.

Scholarship, publications, teaching and service on committees.
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Q46a. Who serves as the chief academic officer at your institution? *Subjects responding "Other" were asked to specify:*

Is this a trick question?

Provost.

Q47. Assuming you achieve tenure, how long do you plan to remain at your institution? *Subjects responding "For no more than 5 years after earning tenure" to this question were asked to specify their reasons:*

I do NOT want to end my career here.

Want to move to the East.

Spouse needs a job.

Geographic location.

Compensation is way too low compared to industry and other institutions.
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I may need to relocate for parent caring.

Better teaching opportunities elsewhere.
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I have a life shortening serious illness. I am not sure how long I will be able to teach, whether I will be able to meet the demands of tenure or how long I want to do this considering I have small children. It is sad because I love my job and genuinely feel supported by my colleagues.
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The College that I am in cares little for our Department. We will never ever get the resources we need to be great.

Spouse in another location.

Environment not conducive to long term success.

I doubt that I'll get tenure here, but if I do, I'll leave as soon as possible.

I'm searching for a job now.

That is it.

Would like to move.

Geography.

Geographic location.

Lack of direction here.

Remote location; least prestigious Department.
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At this point, I'm assuming I won't achieve tenure.

Quality faculty at cancer center are leaving; thus, decreasing opportunities to collaborate locally.
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Prefer a more accessible location and a better intellectual fit with my colleagues.

We would like to move to be closer to family, and if my spouse finds fulfilling work elsewhere. Otherwise we would stay for the foreseeable future.

Without fair compensation, I see no viable future here.

I am going back to my country.

Lack of colleagues.

Quality of University/quality of education in general in Arizona.

If I can, I would like to be at a Department that is stronger in my area of specialization, as well as at a University that offers on-site childcare.

Fine place to be Junior faculty, but I can't imagine spending more than my Junior faculty years here.

I don't like the location or the Department enough to stay.

Location, climate.

Compensation, geography.

No pay raises, continuing down-sizing of [ethnic group] faculty in all Departments.

Mobility is important.
