

College of Science Promotion and Tenure Midterm Review.

7-1-2021

Every promotion decision is important for the individuals who are evaluated. For the institution, however, tenure decisions are the most important decisions made in a promotion and tenure process. By awarding tenure, the institution makes a long term academic and financial investment in an individual.

Since a tenure decision is a very critical decision, it is extremely important to give a candidate solid feedback on their performance. Yearly PROF reviews should address the candidate's progress in terms of expectations at the unit, college, and institutional level. In the middle of the probationary period there should be a more extensive midterm review.

Performance during the probationary period is not uniform in time. Actual accomplishments in the first few years often seem smaller, because the candidate is adapting to a new environment. In many cases it takes time for a candidate to find a good rhythm in their teaching. Creating evidence that will lead to a successful grant proposal takes time as well. Therefore, the goal of a midterm review is not to check if a candidate is halfway there, but to evaluate if the candidate will be in a successful position at the end of the probationary period. The key question is growth of the candidate according to the appropriate measures. Another goal of the midterm review is assessing the resources that were provided to the candidate. If those resources are insufficient, the unit should consider to increase resources or adapt expectations. Finally, this is also a time to judge if improved mentoring for the candidate is needed.

The standard tenure process is the following. The tenure clock will begin on the September 16th following the faculty member's hire, so partial years do not count. Under normal circumstances faculty will be considered for tenure in their sixth year of service in professorial rank. In those cases the unit should complete a midterm review in the spring term of the third full year of employment. This will allow the candidate two more years to address critical issues. The midterm review should follow all university guidelines. For example, student input is required, but external letters of evaluation of scholarly work are not. The full set of policies is in the link below.

<https://facultyaffairs.oregonstate.edu/policy-mid-term-reviews-tenure-track-faculty>

This time line will have to be adjusted in a number of cases. If there is a prior service agreement stated in the offer letter, the probationary time is shortened. Offering prior service needs the approval of the Dean of the College. The possibility of awarding prior service may be discussed when a unit head makes an informal verbal offer, but as with all details of a final offer it needs approval from the Dean.

If one year of prior service is recognized, the evaluation of a candidate is based on four years of work at OSU and one year of work at a previous institution. The midterm review should take

place at the end of the second full year of service at OSU, so the candidate has two more years to react to the feedback. If two years of prior service are awarded, the midterm review should take place in the winter term of the second year at OSU. This gives the candidate a somewhat shorter time to incorporate feedback, but for the unit avoids adding additional promotion and tenure work to a busy fall term. In all these cases it is not required to solicit feedback from the previous institution, but a unit is allowed to do so in deemed necessary.

Awarding one or two years of prior service still allows the tenure evaluation to be based on the majority of work done at OSU. If a unit feels a need to award more than two years of prior service a decision on tenure will be based mostly on work performed before the candidate has joined OSU. In some cases a candidate is awarded tenure when hired. In that case a separate process takes place. If a unit has the opinion that the tenure decision should be made after some time at OSU, there should be sufficient time to provide evidence. An evaluation process in which the larger part of the work is performed before the candidate joined OSU is often problematic.

The midterm review timeline is also affected by tenure clock extensions. If a candidate receives a tenure clock extension and a midterm review has not yet taken place, the midterm review should be in spring term two years before the start of the academic year in which the candidate is evaluated for tenure. Such a midterm evaluation should be based on the standard time the candidate would have been in the job without an extension, and not on the longer time scale with the extension.