

Planning Your Path to Tenure: What New Faculty Members Should Ask

By Sarah Maza and Elise Lipkowitz

At its meeting on January 7, 2010, the Council of the American Historical Association approved the following document from the AHA's Professional Division, prepared by Sarah Maza (Northwestern Univ. and member of the Professional Division) and Elise Lipkowitz (Univ. of Michigan and outgoing chair of the AHA's Graduate and Early Career Committee.)

For junior faculty, getting the right information is essential to the successful pursuit of tenure and promotion. While some basic data are usually conveyed at the time of hiring, it is crucial for junior faculty to fill in the details as soon as possible. Furthermore, while institutions have official criteria, practices often diverge from these. For instance, many institutions state that teaching, research, and

service are equally important for tenure and promotion, but in practice one of these may matter far more than another. In order to get a clear picture of what is expected and how to achieve it, junior faculty should make sure to know the answers to the questions below.

We are not suggesting that all these questions be put to the same person at the same time. The information can be elicited over several months through a series of conversations with different parties in your department and beyond: department chairs, senior faculty members, and recently tenured colleagues. It is best to consult with faculty in your own department, since standards and practices can vary greatly from one unit to the next.

The Tenure Clock

When will I be considered for tenure? How long before the process begins will I need to have a tenure dossier assembled?

At what other points before my tenure year will I be evaluated, and what must I prepare for those evaluations?

Under what circumstances—pregnancy, adoption, child-rearing, illness, or other—might the probationary period be extended?

Can I request to be considered for tenure early if my dossier seems to warrant it?

Requirements for Tenure

How are scholarship, teaching, and service weighted in theory and in practice? What other factors might be considered, formally or informally?

In each case, what are the exact criteria for tenure and where might I find these criteria written? What teaching materials should I provide for my dossier (syllabi, a statement of teaching philosophy, a teaching portfolio, assignments and exams, student evaluations)? What materials if any should I supply in relation to my service to the department, institution, and my profession? If a published book is required, must it be published, in press, or is a completed manuscript along with a contract from a publisher sufficient? What caliber of press is acceptable? If articles are required, what proportion should appear in refereed journals? How much conference participation is expected?

How many letters of support will be needed from scholars in my field? Will I be able to suggest names of external reviewers for my scholarship, or will the list be drawn up by the department? Will the letters be requested by the department, or will the requests come from the dean's or provost's office? How important is it for me to establish professional networks and make my work known to potential letter-writers?



The Raymond J. Cunningham Prize for the Best Article by an Undergraduate Student

The American Historical Association offers the Raymond J. Cunningham Prize for the best article written by an undergraduate student and published in a history department journal. This prize, to be awarded annually, was established in memory of Raymond J. Cunningham, who was an associate professor of history at Fordham University. He was an authority on the American historian, Herbert Baxter Adams.

To be eligible for the prize, the article must have been published in a history department journal. To be considered for the 2011 competition, the entry must have been published between May 1, 2010, and April 30, 2011.

Each history department journal may nominate ONE article. Only entries from a journal will be accepted. Each nomination must include a brief letter of support (no more than two pages) along with the article submitted as an entry.

One copy of each entry must be sent to each of the prize committee members.

The winning author and the winning journal will each receive a \$200 prize.

Entries must be postmarked on or by MAY 15, 2011

Questions may be directed to Noralee Frankel at nfrankel@historians.org.

Are junior faculty expected to engage actively in department and university service? Does the department encourage junior faculty to take on substantial service or does it advise them to focus on their research and teaching?

Are there informal expectations that might affect the decision? For instance, does presence on campus, participation in department or university events play a role? What is the culture of the department and how important is it to become part of that culture?

Institutional Support for Junior Faculty

What systems of formal and informal mentoring are available at the department level or beyond? Will I be assigned a specific mentor or am I expected to approach senior faculty and ask them for help and feedback? Are there departmental or institutional opportunities/venues available in order to get feedback on my scholarship or my teaching?

What sorts of support for teaching does the department or university provide? Are there teaching workshops, a teaching support center on campus? Are junior faculty expected to avail themselves of such resources as a matter of course or only if they encounter problems? Are financial resources available in the department or beyond for course development?

Does the institution provide a "pre-tenure" leave and if so, when does this leave take place? How soon and how often during my probationary term may I seek to go on research leave? Does the institution provide sabbatical terms or years, or should I apply for external funding? Will the institution make up the difference between a small fellowship and my salary or living expenses? Are the department and institution supportive of junior faculty going on research leave?

What funding is available at the department, college, or university levels for research and for travel to conferences and how do I apply for it?

The Process


What will I need to provide for my tenure dossier in relation to teaching, scholarship, and service? Beyond my published scholarship, for instance, am I

required to provide plans for future scholarship, grant applications for future projects? Must I provide a tenure statement, and what form does that document usually take?

How is the tenure decision made at the department level? Will a committee prepare my dossier? Who is likely to be involved in such a committee, and how much weight does the committee recommendation carry? Does the entire department vote on my case, or just a subset of it? When and how will I be told of the department decision?

How does the process work at levels beyond the department? Are there institutional faculty committees involved in reviewing tenure and promotion files? What role do the dean, provost, president and other oversight boards play? When will I be informed of the final decision?


How transparent is the process? Can I find out along the way how my case is progressing? Will I have access to my tenure file as it is compiled? How much will I be told after the process is over?




Hagley MUSEUM AND LIBRARY

HAGLEY PRIZE


IN BUSINESS HISTORY



The Hagley Museum and Library and the Business History Conference jointly offer an annual prize for the best book in business history, broadly defined. The next Hagley Prize will be presented at the annual meeting of the Business History Conference in St. Louis, Missouri, March 31 to April 2, 2011.



The prize committee encourages the submission of books from all methodological perspectives. It is particularly interested in innovative studies that have the potential to expand the boundaries of the discipline. Scholars, publishers, and other interested parties may submit nominations. Eligible books can have either an American or an international focus. They must be written in English and be published during the two years (2009 or 2010) prior to the award.



Four copies of a book must accompany a nomination and be submitted to the prize coordinator: Carol Ressler Lockman, Hagley Museum and Library, P.O. Box 3630, 298 Buck Road, Wilmington, DE 19807-0630. The deadline for nominations is December 31, 2010.

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