Permanence in the STEM Workforce: The Route to Tenure in Academia

Ricardo Cortez
Mathematics Department
rcortez@tulane.edu

IMA Special Workshop
Careers in Mathematical Sciences: Workshop for Underrepresented Groups
March 26-28, 2015
Most universities implement a third-year review for Assistant Professors, a review for tenure and promotion to Associate Professor during year 6, and later a review to Full Professor.
The purpose of the Third Year Review is to obtain a “mid-course” judgment on the candidate’s progress toward tenure. It is a rigorous review of published material, work in progress, a five-year research plan, and teaching performance.

Teaching
• Able to direct undergraduate projects, honors theses, advise/mentor students
• Good teaching evaluations in a variety of courses

Research/Scholarship
• Dissertation loose ends completed: ‘good’ publication record
• Scholarship includes conference talks
• New research directions identified
• Signs of independence

Universities look for evidence that a transition has been made; that scholarly record is likely to develop into one deserving tenure (trajectory)
The tenure review is a very rigorous review of the candidate’s scholarly output, teaching, and citizenship.

**Teaching (in addition to previous)**
- Able to direct graduate student projects
- New course(s) proposed/developed

**Research/Scholarship (in addition to previous)**
- Independent research: ‘good productivity’ (publications, talks, citations)
- Scholarship includes grants received

**Citizenship**
- Departmental/Institutional committee work
- Professional organization leadership

Universities look for evidence of national recognition and upward trajectory
Tenure in Academia: Typical criteria for full professor

The evaluation for Full Professor is a rigorous review of the candidate’s scholarly output, teaching, and citizenship. The expectation of **demonstrable excellence** is higher. All documents are expected to show **national or international visibility** and **leadership** by the candidate.

**Teaching (in addition to previous)**
- Supervises graduate students (and/or Masters students)

**Research/Scholarship**
- Research shows leadership in some area
- Research activity in the department (summer programs, postdocs, etc.)

**Citizenship**
- National or international recognition and leadership
Third-year review

- Research accomplishments since hire, 5-year research plan
- Teaching activities since hire, teaching statement
- Any service (citizenship)
- CV, selected reprints
- Department letter with recommendation

Tenure and Full professor

- Research accomplishments since last review, 5-year research plan
- Teaching activities since last review, teaching statement
- Service (citizenship) at local, regional, national, international levels
- CV, selected reprints
- Department letter with recommendation
- Also 3-4 letters from external evaluators sought by department and 3-4 letters from external evaluators sought by Promotions Committee
- Evidence of national visibility and recognition
Tenure in Academia: my recommendations

- Every aspect of the evaluation must be considered **critical**
- Prioritize but document everything! Don’t be modest!
- Understand your university’s Teaching vs. Research balance expectations

- **Teaching is interpreted broadly:** student projects/theses supervised, mentoring activities, individual/group advising, participation in teaching conferences, REU teaching, teaching awards, ...

- **Research statement:** highlight significance of your work, mention high citations when relevant, quality of journals where published, invitations to give seminars and conference talks, grant review comments of awards, ...

- **Service:** emphasize importance of committee work (especially at regional or national level), highlight your contributions

- Ask a mentor to review your material and follow advice