



Building Institutional Support

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three-legged tenure stool

- **research**
- **teaching**
- **service**

The research leg has to be substantial; teaching and service have to be there, but impractical to think they carry the same weight as research.

two worlds

- **external:** research leaders in your sub-field (review your proposals & manuscripts, invitations to speak, evaluate your scholarship for tenure/promotion)
- **internal:** head, dean, senior faculty, infrastructure personnel, research support services, IRB, EHSO, grants & contracts, purchasing, physical plant. Learn which individuals can affect your career progress!

All junior faculty know this is important!

- Spend most of your time in the research lab, building your research team and developing your ideas into grants and publications, develop national visibility in your field through your scholarship, and by cultivating sponsors in your field who will invite you for talks and nominate you for awards

The research leaders in your sub-field are usually external to the university.

just as important!

- **cultivate allies/support within the university**
- who are the people you should get to know within the university, faculty governing bodies and committees, support facilities and services?

getting started

- Most universities have established a thorough orientation program and, on many campuses, there exists a formal organizational framework for further interaction with new faculty. Take advantage of such opportunities.



seek out the women scholars in your university

- peer mentoring among female faculty in a higher education context offers an effective mentoring approach toward supporting women in forging scholarly identity.

cultivate allies/support

- Find out about, and take advantage of, opportunities for learning about how the university and your department operate.
- Consider that "going it alone" doesn't work that well for anyone. Be willing to ask for help.
- Begin assembling your "advisory board" of supporters and advisors in the university community. They can give you a "heads up" in dealing with infrastructure personnel, research support services, IRB, EHSO, grants & contracts, purchasing, physical plant.
- Meet with your chair to discuss departmental expectations for tenure and promotion. Discover which senior faculty's opinions really count because they have leadership influence over others.

Jim Luurs' rule

- In every university unit there is one individual who really knows what is going on and how to get things done. Cultivate this person. Dealing with anyone else is a waste of time.
- Title/rank has nothing to do with it, the effective person could be an administrative aide or receptionist or part-time help.
- When you have found such a gem, treat him/her very well

“quick starters”

- R. Boice discovered that “quick starters” among new faculty had 8 characteristics in common; 3 of these involve having the **attitudes which encourage institutional support**:
- Verbalized uncritical, accepting, optimistic attitudes about undergrad students on campus
 - Displayed low levels of complaining & cynicism about their campus & colleagues in terms of supportiveness and competence
 - Disposed to seek advice about teaching from colleagues via observing, and from faculty development programs; spent 4 hrs/week in social contacts with colleagues that included discussions about teaching.

Quick Starters: New Faculty Who Succeed, R. Boice, New Directions for Teaching & Learning, (No. 48 Effective Practices for Improving Teaching) p111-21 Win 1991

FIND OUT

- How is the junior faculty member's department organized? (Divisions, Committees?)
- How are decisions made? What are the opportunities for junior faculty involvement?
- Is support staff available to junior faculty? What can be expected of support staff?
- What supplies and expenses are covered by the department? By the university? Are there other resources available to cover expenses related to teaching and research?

find out:

conferences/publications

- What conferences should the junior faculty attend? How do you choose between large conferences and smaller events?
- How much travel is allowed/expected/supported?
- What can you do at professional gatherings to gain the type of exposure that can lead to good contacts, and potential names of tenure-file reviewers?
- Authorship etiquette: On collaborative efforts, how are the authors listed? Where do graduate student names go? How important is first authorship? How is alphabetical listing of authors viewed?
- Where should you publish? What should you publish? How much/how often? What are your department/school's expectations regarding publication before tenure and promotion? How do journal/chapters in edited collections/conferences compare?
- Where should your publishing energy go: is a single-author book always preferable to an edited collection? May material published be submitted elsewhere? When is it time to worry if you haven't published?
- Is it worthwhile to send published reports to colleagues here, and elsewhere? What's the line between sharing news of your accomplishments and appearing self-congratulatory?

find out: grants

- What research resources are available to you as a faculty member?
- How important are grants? How do you get hooked into the grant-writing process? How much effort should you be investing in capturing research funding?
- How can you find people to assist you in writing the best possible proposal, to draw up the budget?
- What are departmental expectations of percent of your salary to be supported by external grant funding?
- What is the expected percent of indirect cost funding on grants you received? Are there funding agencies to which you should not apply for grants because of inadequate indirect cost recovery? For laboratory space, what is the expectation of the amount of indirect funds recovery per square foot of laboratory space you occupy?
- How does the department assess shared cost for use of common equipment and its service contracts?
- What do you see as your research "niche" in your department, in your area of research?
- What does your chair see your area of research contributing to the department, eventually to the school?

find out: presentations

- Should you give presentations within your department? How often?
- How are colloquia in your department organized? What are the opportunities for your graduate students to present their work?
- Should you give presentations about your work at other universities/institutions/public settings? How often? How important is this?
- If it is important, how do you get invited to give these talks?

find out: collaborative research

- Is collaborative work encouraged or discouraged in your department/school/fields?
- With other members of your department? With international colleagues? With colleagues who are senior/more established? With other junior faculty/graduate students?
- Long-standing collaborations, or single efforts?
- How important is it to have some (or all) single-author papers to your credit, or papers with multiple authors in which you are first author or senior author?

find out: teaching

- Will you be expected to assemble a teaching portfolio for your tenure review? What goes into such a portfolio?
- What are you expected to teach? Are some types of teaching more valued?
- How much flexibility is there in teaching schedules? Who controls the schedule?
- Which are the "good" subjects to teach? Is it good to teach the same course semester after semester, stay with a single area? Or should you "teach around"?
- Is it good to develop new courses? Specialized courses in your research area?
- How can you use a special topics course to get a new research project off the ground?

find out more: teaching

- How much time should you spend on your course preparation? Where's the line between sufficient preparation and over-preparation?
- Will you have a teaching assistant? Who will select him/her? What can you expect of a teaching assistant, and what are your responsibilities for evaluation of his or her performance?
- Are there departmental/school standards for grading?
- What degree of freedom do you have in determining course content? Does your department expect midterm and final exams?
- How are you evaluated on teaching? What importance is placed on peer observation of your teaching? On student evaluations? If senior faculty do observe your classes, who asks them to come? To whom do they report, and in what way?
- What resources are there for improving your teaching?
- If a classroom problem arises you aren't sure how to handle, what are your options for seeking advice, help?
- What documentation related to teaching should you keep? Syllabi? Exams? ppts?
- How should you develop a teaching portfolio? What form should it take? What should it include?

find out: student supervision

- How important is your work with graduate students? How many should you expect to supervise? How many is too many? How much advising should you expect to do?
- How do you set limits on the amount of time/effort you invest in graduate students?
- How do you identify "good" graduate students? What qualities should you look for? How aggressive should you be in recruiting them to work with you?
- What should you expect from your graduate students? How do you identify a problem graduate student?
- How important is it to the department that you are a Ph.D. student advisor? On a Ph.D. student committee? A mentor for a professional school thesis? Mentor for an independent honors thesis? What are the qualifications to become a Ph.D. advisor in the Graduate School?
- What should you keep in files on your students? Remember that you have to write reviews and recommendations for them.
- Should you hire postdoctoral associates? What are the advantages/disadvantages?
- How are the pay scales set for the graduate students and doctoral students? Should you be involved in writing training grants?

find out: service

- How much committee work should you expect to perform within your department? School? University?
- What committees should you push to serve on? Are there any you should avoid pre-tenure?
- How much time should you expect to devote to committees and other forms of service as a junior faculty member?
- How important is professional service outside of the university? How much paper and proposal reviewing is reasonable? Review boards? Journal assistant editorships?
- How do you weigh the prestige of organizing a national event in your field versus the time commitment?

find out: review process

- How long is your appointment? When will you come up for review? What sort of reviews? How is a fourth-year review, for example, different from the tenure review?
- What is the process? (What do you submit for review? When? How do you hear the results? How are the reviewers selected? Do you have a role in that process?)
- If you are responsible for submitting your own list of potential outside reviewers, how do you go about assembling such a list? What kind of reviewers should you try for? Are international and domestic reviewers regarded equally? How is the reviewer's own eminence evaluated? How much prior contact with a potential reviewer makes them unsuitable for your list? (Is having been on a panel together acceptable, but not a professional friendship?)
- What information is important in your vita? Is there any activity too trivial to include?
- Should you send copies of congratulatory letters to your department chair, or simply retain them for your dossier?
- How are raises determined in your department? School? How will you find out about your raise? What's the process for discussing your raise in a given year?
- How can you get feedback on how you're doing at any point in your pre-tenure career?

what else besides teaching & research?

- understanding of higher education organization and operations
- knowledge of institutional policies and related regulations
- hiring, selecting, and evaluating faculty and staff
- knowledge of local promotion and tenure policies and practices
- participating in student and faculty recruiting efforts
- using leadership skills
- managing people and finances
- developing faculty and staff
- carrying out administrative duties
- goal setting and planning
- participating in various roles in team efforts
- participating in institutional governance
- participating in interdisciplinary curriculum development
- representing the institution, department, or discipline
- providing service of several types
- participating in outreach and community efforts

Your institutional allies/advisors can help you with these.

sources

- *Faculty in New Jobs: A Guide to Settling In, Becoming Established, and Building Institutional Support.* Jossey-Bass Higher and Adult Education Series. Ed. Robert Menges (about navigating the interpersonal and intrapersonal dynamics of a new faculty role)
- *The New Faculty Member: Supporting and Fostering Professional Development,* R. Boice, Jossey-Bass Inc., 1992 (part 3 discusses ways of building an institutional support system).