

FD Newsletter

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Editor's Note

Academic communities worldwide are reviewing their career structures with an eye toward greater competitiveness, cost performance, and personal accountability. Tenure is at the focus of many debates inside and outside the university. Although it has its share of detractors, few would dispute the effectiveness of the tenure system in fostering high productivity among candidates who have successfully navigated its “track”. Furthermore, the fact that some of the most innovative universities in Europe and Asia are now adopting U.S.-style tenure systems attests to the concept’s enduring utility. However any university considering a tenure system must debate its pros and cons and ensure its fit with the institution. With this purpose in mind, we have dedicated this issue of the FD newsletter to tenure. Prof. Katsuhiko Mori introduces the bold idea of “contribution units” as a way of fairly assessing

tenure track performance. Addressing the difficulty—and undeniable importance—of evaluating teaching, Prof. Heather Montgomery argues for ongoing or “formative” assessments in place of the notoriously unreliable quantitative surveys. Prof. Kenya Kubo reminds us of special circumstances related to the tenure track in natural science. In my essays I have tried to give a global overview of the tenure system and suggest that a self-reflective faculty portfolio might be one way to mitigate the stressful, unilateral, and output-based assessments employed by many universities today. Our hope is that these perspectives will enrich discussion on tenure inside and outside ICU.

As is our custom, we also encourage our new colleagues to introduce themselves in our newsletter, and we take this opportunity to warmly welcome them to our community.

Richard L. Wilson / FD Director

Academic Tenure Today

Richard L. Wilson / FD Director

Introduction

Tenure is basically a job security system for university professors. The granting of tenure guarantees academic employment until retirement. It is usually conferred as the result of a rigorous evaluation process that takes place in the years beginning with the initial fulltime appointment. Academic tenure has been credited with providing a fair, transparent, and attractive career structure that is essential for quality higher education. Faculty members who achieve tenure are assured of their status among peers, and a competitive faculty leads to institutional competitiveness. On the other hand, the academic career structure is by no means static, and reflects changes in demography, financial resources, and university pedagogy itself. This essay will introduce the tenure process, compare

the U.S. model with structures in other nations, and conclude with some of the arguments for and against the classic tenure model.

What is the tenure process?

Although it is by no means universal and has its share of critics, here we shall use the US tenure system as a model in explaining the tenure process. University personnel hired as “tenure track” faculty are eligible to apply for tenure after a probationary period (usually around six-seven years). Institutions customarily inform these new faculty members about what they have to do to achieve tenure. The internal criteria vary according to the mission of the institution, but published research historically has been given the

most emphasis. Consequently, many universities, especially “research universities,” provide new faculty with support (teaching reductions, leaves, research budgets) to encourage research in those tenure-track years. Frequently there is an interim review of the candidates, wherein qualified candidates are assured of continuing status. In any case during this period the candidate for tenure must achieve a substantial record, and in preparation for the tenure review, gather research achievements —particularly books and/or journal articles, and in some disciplines major research grants, into a “dossier” and submit it to the department, division or the university.

After this the process is out of the hands of the candidate. Subject to an internal decision (usually departmental) to recommend the candidate for tenure, the research-related documents are distributed to a team of independent referees, usually outside the university, for “peer review” Reviewers are unknown to the candidate and to each other, and pledge confidentiality. Generally the candidate suggests some of these reviewers and the university chooses the others (the names of the latter are unknown to the candidate and to each other). After the university receives the peer reviews, they are turned over to a university-wide committee who judges them together with internal evidence for teaching and service. Considerable care is taken to award tenure only to those likely to remain a productive researcher and teacher throughout their careers. Various types of extensions or grace periods may be given to candidates, but generally the model is “up or out” within a specific time frame. Most universities also have a system to address grievances.

Tenure success rates at U.S. universities vary widely and one has to read the data carefully, but a 2006 survey of average rate for 10 major research universities showed a tenure success rate of 53 percent. (These were Florida, Illinois, Iowa, Maryland, Michigan, Northwestern, Penn State, Pittsburgh, Rutgers, and Wisconsin. See Dooris and Guidos, “Tenure Achievement Rates at Research Universities,” Annual Forum of the Association for Institutional Research, May 2006).

Teaching vs. Research: What Counts in Tenure Decisions

Tenure at “research universities” is traditionally based on concrete standards of scholarly achievement, namely the publishing of monographs and books, the successful completion of a scientific research program and the publication of the results. Results are judged according to a highly specialized set of intellectual standards. Teaching and service receive significantly less scrutiny.

Tenure standards at liberal arts colleges, on the other hand, often give teaching more weight. In a 1998 survey of deans of four-year LA colleges, 97% of the deans considered teaching to be the major factor in evaluating faculty (followed by student advising 64%, campus committee work 58%, and research 40% (Peter Seldin, “How Colleges Evaluate Teaching 1988 vs. 1998,” 50 *AAHE Bulletin* p. 6 [March 1998].) The same survey found that the major source of information in evaluating teaching performance was TES-type systematic student ratings (88%). However many observers criticize the over-reliance on these ratings. Many of them are simply too general: evaluation systems have to be designed to fit the purpose. Critics also call for the incorporation of other types of data such as peer observation and self-observation (which ranked rather low in the 1998 survey—40% and 59% respectively).

The other problem at liberal arts colleges is that, despite the stated interest in good teaching, in the end the tenure criteria often mimic those of major research universities, that is, quantitative research results of a highly specialized kind. If research is to remain an important factor, a possible solution may be “researching (not only teaching) to the mission of liberal arts.” As explained in a Swarthmore College report on “Building the Liberal Arts Faculty”:

A liberal arts college... should reward [the faculty] for broadening outwards from their initial base of knowledge, reward them for forging connections between disparate areas of knowledge, reward them for extending their work as intellectuals beyond the campus and beyond academia. How can we possibly ask our students to gain an appreciation of the whole structure of knowledge if we ourselves rarely glance beyond the confines of a narrow specialization?

If our students have distribution requirements and the like, then so should the faculty (<http://www.swarthmore.edu/SocSci/tburke1/building.html>).

In other words, the author is envisioning a type of bridge-building research that mirrors the commitment to liberal-arts teaching.

What is the present status of university tenure worldwide?

In the United States, tenured positions were a staple of postwar university employment until the 1970s. The end of the Cold War and shrinking of state educational revenues, however, challenged the finances of many universities. Personnel costs have been a favorite target for budget cutters, and non-tenured personnel are generally less expensive than tenured ones. From a peak of about 60 percent of all fulltime teaching positions in the mid-1970s, the percentage of tenured professors in the U.S. is now about 30 percent (University World News, March 2009; see also chart). Clearly the majority of U.S. university teachers are no longer tenured.

In the U.K., academic tenure was granted until 1987, when tenure was transformed from something “hard” (almost impossible to fire faculty) to “soft” (faculty may be dismissed for financial reasons). Employment has become far less secure. The general tendency is to give long contracts to the most qualified candidates but without the lifetime job security of tenure; at major research universities no more than 30 percent of academic faculty have such contracts (Kim, T., “Transnational Academic Ability, Knowledge, and Identity Capital,” in Kenway and Fahey (eds), *Discourse Journal: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, special issue 31(5), October 2010). Fixed-term contract and part-time staff is growing at the expense of long-term employees. Fixed terms grew from 39% of the academic staff in 1994 to 44.8% in 2003, while part-timers rose from 12% in 1995 to nearly 18% in 2002 (Court, 1998; Robinson, 2005, quoted in “Back to the Future? The Academic Professions in the 21st Century,” p. 136, in Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (OECD), ed., *Higher Education to 2030*).

In continental Europe, one traditional model is the German “Habilitation” system that requires candidates

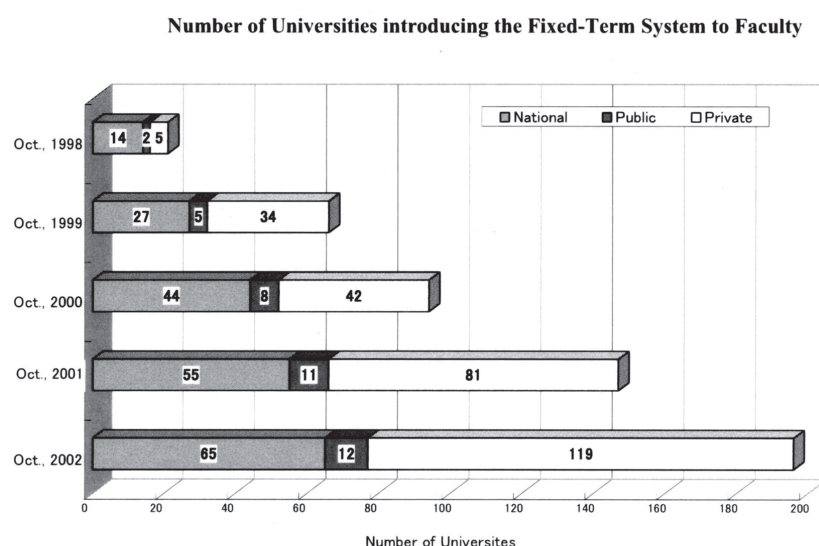
to labor as “academic assistants” for up to ten years under senior professors before attaining qualification to become a permanent professor. Another is the civil-service based system of Spain, Italy and France, with early access to a hierarchy of permanent positions after a very rigorous selection process. Germany has augmented its system with a new type of rank, featuring relatively unencumbered “junior professors” (*juniorprofessoren*) who are like tenure-track assistant professors in the U.S. (although in Germany there is no tenure examination; candidates may apply for permanent positions after a six-year period as a junior professor).

Asian institutions are also showing signs of a shift away from the lifetime employment model. In China, public university reform accelerated from 2004, led by Peking University. Instead of lifetime employment, tenure is awarded to professors only. Lower ranks are awarded contracts up to 12 years. If these candidates fail promotion qualifications they are terminated when their contracts expire. Many of these contracts are short and contain strict quotas for publications (see <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/cpi/documents/discussion-papers/discussion-paper-43-education-li-whalley.pdf>). In Korea, the lifetime tenure system is also being eroded by multiyear contracts, although an American-type peer-review process for tenure has been introduced at select Korean universities such as Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST) and Seoul National University.

In Japan, the traditional system of tenure for life came under critical examination from the 1990s. With the promulgation of the Optional Term-Limitation Law (*Sentaku Ninkisei-hou*) in 1997, universities could adopt fixed-term contracts for their educational staff without running afoul of the Labor Standards Law. To persuade universities to adopt fixed-term employment, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) created “Coordination and Promotion of Science Technology” (*Kagaku gijutsu shinkou chouseihi*), a fund that provided salaries for up to 4000 fixed-term hires. The tactic seems to have succeeded, and fixed-term employment is playing a larger part in hiring practices (see tables). There is also limited support for tenure-track positions: from 2006, MEXT also began to award grants to a select number of universities to hire “tenure track” young researchers in science and technology; a total of 544 such grants were made

from 2006 to 2010 (Shino Inamata, “Expansion of the Tenure Track System,” from *Competing for Young Academic Talent: Tenure Track as Best Career Track?*

Japan and Germany in Comparison, Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft symposium, April 26, 2012).



Source: MEXT (2005). online information at <http://www.mext.go.jp>

Grades of Faculty Appointed under the Fixed-Term System, by University Sector

	Professor		Associate Professor		Lecturer		Research Associate		Unknown*	Total	
National	730	(3.5%)	513	(3.0%)	322	(6.1%)	1,979	(11.5%)	2	3,546	(5.8%)
Public	35	(1.0%)	39	(1.5%)	24	(1.5%)	33	(1.2%)	0	131	(1.2%)
Private	274	(0.8%)	89	(0.5%)	239	(1.8%)	948	(5.4%)	21	1,571	(1.9%)
Total	1,039	(1.75%)	641	(1.8%)	585	(2.9%)	2,960	(7.9%)	23	5,248	(3.4%)

Source: MEXT (2005). online information at <http://www.mext.go.jp>

Notes: * The answers are unable to identify the grade.

1) The values in parenthesis are the proportions of the total number of faculty on the Fixed-Term System by university sector and grade.

Tables from Futao Huang, “The Academic Profession in Japan: Major Characteristics and New Changes,” in Hiroshima University, *COE Publication Series* 20 (2006), pp. 204-5.

The Benefits and Liabilities of the Tenure System

The global trend toward fixed-term academic employment compels us to reexamine the benefits of tenure. First, tenure is believed to guarantee academic freedom; faculty with guaranteed employment are not under pressure to work in a certain style or follow certain regimes of knowledge. Second, the tenure competition encourages and rewards a culture of academic excellence, replacing cronyism and inbreeding. Third, faculty take pride in being evaluated favorably by their peers. Fourth, faculty

granted tenure are typically loyal to the institution that granted it and see the rewards of investing in its improvement. Fifth, tenured faculty form a stable personnel base that facilitates good administration. Sixth, tenured faculty become a critical mass for quality control: without incumbent faculty the quality of junior staff would be very difficult to assess, since people who fear losing their jobs tend to hire less skillful entrants to protect themselves. That brings us to the seventh point: faculty with job security are, in a word, secure, and that frees them to concentrate on the

challenges of the profession.

There are just as many criticisms of the system. The first is that job security makes people unproductive (the favored argument in policy circles in the U.S. and U.K.). Second, in an age of quickly evolving theory and technology, the specialties of many permanent faculty are bound to become obsolete, which will be a drag on the development of the university.

The third criticism is that an over-emphasis on publishing (“publish or perish”) hampers classroom teaching; many question the relationship between scholarship and the ability to teach. The fourth point regards in-house politics: candidates for tenure are beholden to their tenured colleagues, which encourages an institutional political correctness. Fifth, universities with tenure systems develop a two-tier system; faculty members without tenure, often barred from activities and governance, feel like second-class citizens. Sixth, conducting the tenure process is a substantial administrative burden. Seventh, faculty with tenure are less inclined to cooperate with university management.

Conclusions

Despite the diversity, the academic career structure traditionally has been built around two stages: an entry or probationary stage with a limited time frame, and a guaranteed stage, either for a long term or the entire career. Looking at the global trends—that indicate the growing use of fixed-terms—the critical issue seems to be the survival of the latter. The burden is now on administrators and faculty who approve the tenure system to demonstrate its viability. Most of us would agree that employment security itself is a desirable outcome. What we must examine is the process. The tenure process is defensible if it is fair and transparent; tenure is defensible if tenured professors contribute to the institutional mission as well as conduct research. Tenure is not defensible if tenured professors see themselves as immune to self- and external review. Although it is beyond the scope of this introductory essay, deliberations on the academic career ladder must also take into account the profound shifts in higher education itself, including changes in modes of knowledge and communication. Academic communities must find time to review and debate their career structures accordingly.

A Proposal for ICU Contribution Units (ICUs)

Katsuhiko Mori / Department of Politics and International Relations

Although I was appointed as a member of the current tenure review committee established at the Faculty Council (FC), I argue that renewing the tenure system also requires a reform in the current faculty appointment. This is because a tenure system should aim at encouraging junior faculty members to achieve a high-level academic professional performance (research, education and administration) in a fair and transparent way, and the current appointment system at ICU often discourages them to do so—in the form of two separate ways of tenure-granting for Japanese and non-Japanese faculty members.

In order to achieve these dual goals, I would like to propose to the decision-makers of the University to reform the faculty appointment system equally applicable for both Japanese and non-Japanese faculty members and to devise a system called “ICU Contribution Units” (ICUs) to measure their performance for the purposes of tenure assessment, promotion, as well as research leave prioritization in an effective way.

First, let me propose that the current faculty appointment system should be revised as follows:

(Current ICU Regulations)

Professor – Senior Associate Professor – Associate
Professor – Instructor – Assistant Professor

(Proposed Revised Regulations)

Professor – Associate Professor – Assistant Professor

1. Assistant Professor (“Jokyo”) should be activated as a five-year tenure-track appointment position, while Associate Professor (“Jun Kyoju”) and Professor (“Kyoju”) are to be tenured.
2. New appointments at the rank of Senior Associate Professor (“Jokyu Jun Kyoju”) and Instructor (“Koshi”) should be terminated.

By so doing, the Galapagos syndrome, i.e., the existing system peculiar to ICU, can be harmonized with the current Japanese as well as internationally standardized systems.

Second, keeping this assumption in mind, let me provide a provisional list of my proposal on ICUs. The actual weights for the respective contributions should be considered by another FC committee and approved by the Faculty Meeting (FM) as well as other administrative meetings.

Research Achievement (Draft)

Solo authored book: 2

Co-authored book: 1

Solo edited book: 0.75

Co-edited book: 0.5

Solo authored article for an internationally distinguished academic refereed journal: 2

Co-authored article for an internationally distinguished academic refereed journal: 1

Solo authored academic refereed journal article: 1

Co-authored academic refereed journal article: 0.5

Other publications without peer review: 0.25

Note: Practices and situations specific to some disciplines, such as Journal Impact Factor and other quantitative measures of the importance of a journal in its field, are to be considered.

Educational Contribution (Draft)

Senior Thesis Advisor: 1 point per advisee

Master’s Thesis Advisor: 1.5 points per advisee

Master’s Thesis Second and Third Reader:

0.5 point per advisee

Doctoral Thesis Advisor: 2 points per advisee

Doctoral Thesis Second and Third Reader:

1 point per advisee

Major Advisor: 1 point per year (1/3 point per term)

Service-Learning Advisor: 0.5 point per advisee

Teaching Practice Advisor: 0.5 point per advisee

Note: Based on the current understanding of the purpose of ICU’s Teaching Effectiveness Survey (TES), the above proposal does not at all include any measure of teaching effectiveness. However, the current TES practice is also to be reconsidered in order to encourage a higher level of teaching performance.

Administrative Contributions (Draft)

FM Chairs, FC Chair: 2

FC Councilors: 1

FM Subcommittee Chairs and Members: 1

University-Wide Committee Chairs and Members: 1

Note: Administrative positions with additional financial compensation, including Department Chairs and Major Coordinators, are presented and evaluated in the updated CV and excluded from the proposed ICU point system. Appropriate points for various types of committees are to be identified and reviewed by the Vice President for Academic Affairs regularly.

The above draft proposals for point allocation are just a starting point for discussion and deliberation. We should collect and review information on similar practices employed at other liberal arts colleges in Japan and others, and review appropriateness and feasibility in the contexts of ICU. Advantages, compared with the current practices, include: increased transparency in performance evaluation, improved fair treatment for different entry levels across different disciplines, and incentive-giving for junior faculty’s contributions to the ICU community.

Evaluating Teaching in the Tenure Process

Heather A. Montgomery / Department of Economics and Business

“This may sound like a stupid question...but I’ve got tenure, so I’m going to go ahead and ask it anyway!” So began the question and answer session at a conference I recently attended. In the U.S. at least, tenure is on everyone’s mind. (I should add that the quote above actually prefaced an important and profound question...)

Having been asked to contribute an article for this FD Newsletter issue on the tenure process, I, too, have had the issue of tenure in mind as I attended conferences in the past several months, and used coffee breaks, dinner or receptions as a chance to hear from others about how it works at their institution.

In the United States, faculty hired for so-called “tenure-track” positions are usually hired as an assistant professor, and a tenure decision will be made within a certain number of years, at which time the successful candidate is promoted to the tenured position of associate professor. The unsuccessful candidates can often have their contract extended for a year or so, but are basically expected to move on to another institution and start the process all over again, perhaps with the promise of a shorter tenure clock the second time around. At most institutions, tenure is based on an evaluation of some combination of research, teaching and service to the university. Beyond this broad guideline, the exact criteria are usually purposefully vague. Based on my unofficial survey, service seems to count for very little in the equation: on the contrary, senior faculty members view it as their responsibility to shield junior faculty still on the tenure track from anything beyond minimal committee work. Research and teaching, however, are in most cases crucial to winning tenure. The conventional wisdom holds that research tends to have a heavier weight at the big research universities, while teaching is more carefully scrutinized at smaller liberal arts colleges.

So the conundrum for liberal arts colleges is how to evaluate teaching. Evaluating research also has its

challenges, but in economics, at least, where journal articles are the key to tenure, it is not too difficult to get rankings of journals based on their “impact factor” to make the evaluation a little less subjective. Performance in teaching can be more difficult to quantify.

There are, of course, student teaching evaluations. But faculty members worry that student evaluations may not be an accurate measure of teaching effectiveness. The easy-to-quantify “bubble sheet” varieties are particularly suspect. Those still on the tenure track are the most critical, but senior faculty also voice concerns that student teaching evaluations are more a measure of the grades students expect to receive, or the entertainment value of the professor, than actual teaching effectiveness.

These concerns seem to be backed up by the data. A quick review of the literature reveals that a positive correlation between teaching evaluations and students’ expected grades is fairly robust. The importance of entertainment value in teaching evaluations is also well-documented, starting with the infamous “Dr. Fox” experiments, in which an actor who gave an entertaining, but completely meaningless lecture on ‘Mathematical Game Theory as Applied to Physician Education’ got overwhelmingly positive teaching effectiveness evaluations from three separate audiences of students.

There is also ample evidence that things completely beyond the control of the instructor can significantly sway teaching evaluations. Student motivation is a big one. Students taking a course as a major elective or simply for interest give significantly higher evaluations than students taking a course as a major requirement or to meet some required general education credits. Other factors that sway student evaluations but may not be within the control of the instructor or really measure teaching effectiveness include class size, level and workload. I was once told by senior faculty member of ICU that ICU students

“like to work hard” as evidenced by their high evaluations of courses in which they put more hours of study. I nodded as I fondly recalled the many excellent, hard-working students I have encountered here who seem to truly love learning. But surveys show that hardworking students give higher student evaluations at other colleges and universities as well, and research suggests there is self-selection among the students occurring when they choose their courses, so such correlations are difficult to interpret. The bottom line from all the research, surveys and correlations seems to be that junior faculty who need to get good course evaluations for a tenure decision should one, get a teaching load of mostly upper-level seminar courses; two, bombard the students with difficult assignments during the add-drop period so that only a small core of truly interested students will remain; three, entertain those committed few who remain with meaningless anecdotes all term while; and four, convincing them that they are all doing very well and can expect to receive an A. Of course, this is probably not the recipe that colleges and universities had in mind when they decided to include quantitative data in evaluating teaching performance!

For all of these reasons, there now seems to be a bit of a shift away from the “bubble sheet” style quantitative student evaluations in the tenure decision at many smaller liberal arts colleges. Some junior faculty members that I spoke to were working hard on documenting student learning outcomes to demonstrate their teaching effectiveness when they came up for tenure. Others worked on bolstering their teaching portfolio by sharing new, innovative techniques at teaching poster sessions organized around academic research conferences. Administrators are shifting toward more qualitative student evaluations, which range from simply replacing the existing bubble sheet format with open-ended questions to more comprehensive approaches that include collecting letters from alums who have graduated in the past ten years or conducting oral interviews with current and former students.

But even qualitative teaching effectiveness evaluations are suspect. When queried, one senior faculty from a college that uses qualitative student evaluations of teaching in tenure decisions basically dismissed them, saying of students and the evaluation

process: “They’re 20 (years old). They spend 5 minutes on it.”

So what’s a liberal arts college with a serious commitment to teaching quality to do? I didn’t find any easy answers. One interesting trend at some of the top liberal arts schools is a focus on *formative assessment*—gathering feedback for faculty members to use in ongoing efforts to improve their teaching effectiveness—rather than *summative assessment*—attempts to measure the success of teaching at the end of a predefined time period for the purpose of evaluation and tenure decisions. At the schools I talked to, peer review by fellow faculty members, in addition to students, is an important part of formative assessment. At some colleges, for example, the classrooms of junior faculty receive periodic, unannounced visits from all the other faculty members in their department and receive feedback on their teaching from the day they are appointed. The idea is to help the new faculty member achieve his or her potential as a teacher rather than to simply evaluate teaching at the end of five years, just before making a tenure decision.

A system like that imposes some burden on senior faculty members, but there are also ways to implement formative assessments yourself. I have experimented with formative assessments here at ICU in two ways: by having a friend sit in on my class and give me feedback afterwards and by using the anonymous “survey” function on Moodle to give the students themselves opportunities to provide me with feedback at the beginning and middle of the term. Both experiences were eye-opening and I think have really altered my teaching style. The Moodle survey, however, suffered from a well-documented problem with electronic surveys of teaching effectiveness: only about half the students responded, even though I gave them time in class, in front of a computer, to complete the survey. I am not sure either experiment gave me an accurate picture of the “average student”, but I am sure that both helped me to develop as an instructor. One personal goal I have for this year is to take advantage of the FD office service to video tape some of my lectures and watch them myself.

Another trend I noted at a few of the top US liberal

arts colleges I investigated was a shift toward documenting teaching *adequacy*—which implies meeting or exceeding some defined standard of excellence—rather than trying to compare the *relative effectiveness* of teaching by faculty across different disciplines with very different classroom environments. Junior faculty on a tenure clock can never really hope

to beat out all the competition when it comes to measurements of teaching effectiveness, but with the support of their institution and colleagues they can meet a standard of teaching excellence and build a platform from which to launch a lifelong journey in developing their full potential as educators.

University Tenure: A Natural Science Perspective

Kenya Kubo / Department of Material Science

The difference between tenure tracks of Japanese and non-Japanese faculty at ICU has been a concern for a long time, and it must be taken care of as soon as possible. Although it is not necessary to follow the footsteps of U.S. where tenure system is widely diffused, it is still important to secure the careers of faculty, and to hire human resources that meet the institute's standards. Tenure system is starting to be recognized in Japanese universities as well. It is time for ICU to introduce this system for Japanese faculty, and at the same time, to scrutinize and improve the existing system. I am not going to write about university-wide issues of education and administration, but would like to concentrate on the tenure system in the field of Natural Science, where conducting of experiments play a major role in the study.

In the disciplines of Natural Science where experiments are crucial, the first step is always setting up the lab by obtaining appropriate space, machinery, and other equipment. A typical laboratory is several times larger than an office, and this vast space must be equipped with tables and drafts, racks, electricity and other utilities, drainage, and ventilation ducts, all cut out for the purpose of the lab. This will cost both time and money. For example, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology supports diffusion of tenure system, and as a part of this, it suggests institutes to give grants to tenure track faculty. Sensitive experiment equipment may need couple of years to be restored once moved from its original location. This means students and scholars must maintain these equipment while they occupy themselves with other subjects that do not require this

particular equipment.

Therefore, support for studies involving experiments should consider the importance of maintaining the environment, and also take into consideration that newly set up labs are not always ready to produce results, thus sometimes it is necessary to push back the date of tenure evaluation. Evaluation of the performance, however, should not be difficult, since papers in the field of Natural Science could be published within month of its submission, or one year at the latest, making it easier to judge in which lab the experiments were conducted. Bearing in mind the points above, tenure evaluation for a scholar in the field of Natural Science involving experiments should be set approximately five years after the scholar's appointment. However, the Labor Contract Act will be amended in April 2013, which states that contract employees with limited contract is eligible to work beyond the limit, if the employee has worked for more than five years. But if a scholar fails to achieve tenure after the evaluation set in the fifth year, the institute will only be able to give limited contract. This contradiction should be straightened with help from those familiar with the law.

Like other disciplines, studies of Natural Science are often very specialized and deepened, making it difficult for the colleagues, even for those in the same major, to judge properly on the performance of the candidates. In such case, it would be necessary to summon an appropriate external evaluation board. Of course, selection of such board should be designed fairly and transparently.

From this academic year, new faculty with tenure from other institutes will be treated as tenure holders at ICU. Therefore the role of personnel selection committee is crucial in judging who is the “expected human resource at ICU.” The responsibility of the committee is larger than ever. Also, like the evaluation

of tenure, newly appointed faculty must have access to transparent standards for their positions and promotions, no matter how hard it is to come up with such a standard at ICU, where fields of education and research are so vast. At least, a guideline must be prepared to judge each case appropriately.

(English translation provided by the FD office)

Managing The Tenure Track: The Academic Portfolio

Richard L. Wilson / FD Director

Introduction

Most university faculty who have experienced the tenure-track process will volunteer the opinion that it is extremely stressful. Aside from the challenges of conducting quality academic research and carrying out good teaching, the tenure candidate must face the vagaries of personnel decisions: there are often real or perceived ambiguities about how they, the candidates, will be judged. Furthermore, candidates traditionally have had little chance to explain their styles of research and pedagogy in the evaluation process: results have to “stand for themselves,” frequently without an integrative narrative or context. On the opposite side, senior faculty and administrators are chronically apprehensive about the task of promotion and tenure screening. Every case presents its own particular nuances, making an equitable basis difficult. Furthermore, in an age of ultra-specialization, it is difficult to judge academic product outside one’s particular field. Given these circumstances, quality assessment becomes a minefield with potential downsides for all parties.

The Academic Portfolio

The Academic Portfolio (AP) offers a way of lowering the tensions of assessment while insuring its effectiveness—for candidates and their assessors. Under the leadership of Peter Seldin, now a Professor Emeritus, Management from Pace University, the AP has developed into a sensitive and reflexive tool for an age that demands accountability from university faculty. Seldin’s AP is a document that records teaching, research, and service performance, not as a

dry list of facts but as a reflective process. It lists significant professional achievements, but focuses on the “why” and “how” of those achievements rather than raw data. It is cumulative, and therefore becomes a record not only of achievements but an account of the process of faculty development. It can show how, over time, candidates have faced their own weaknesses and overcome them. In the portfolio, the candidate can discuss professional philosophy, methods, and objectives in an integrated manner. Emphasis is placed on a format and prose that can be understood by non-specialists.

Sample Academic Portfolio

Professor Seldin gave a lecture on the AP in Tokyo in 2009, and the following outline of a sample portfolio is based on his presentation. The words that Seldin repeated over and over again were “self-reflective”, “selective, not exhaustive”, “quality and significance of the work rather than data,” and “understandable by non-specialists.” The AP document is cumulative: it would be started at the beginning of the tenure track; it would be periodically be shown to and discussed with faculty mentors; finally, it would be submitted as a central part of the candidate’s dossier to the university tenure committee. Suggested page numbers for an AP come from Professors Seldin’s template. Using this approach, a tenure candidate can build his or her portfolio over time, adding and subtracting like a painter may adjust the pigments on a canvas. The finished “work” is lavished with time and contemplation, and thus becomes the record of a process instead of a hastily compiled list of

references and dates.

Preface (1/2 page)

Professional Philosophy, objectives

Teaching (5-6 pages)

Teaching duties

Curriculum revisions

Selected course syllabi (abridged)

Sample course evaluation

Teaching improvements

(possibly linked to above)

Research (5-6 pages)

Nature of research

Importance of research

(including statements by peers)

Selected achievements (books, articles)

External funding/important grants

Professional society activity

Selected presentations/performances/exhibits

Service (1-2 pages)

Important university service

(committees, task forces)

Personal contribution to the above

Integration (1-2 pages)

Three professional achievements of which the candidate is particularly proud

Future goals

Appendix

(this may contain the data sets of the traditional CV; 6-10 pages)

The Role of the Mentor in Portfolio Building

The anxiety of the tenure process can also be reduced by the mentor system. From my own experience as a tenure candidate in a U.S. university, the most important support came from my faculty mentor—in that case, a senior member of my department. At that time, faculty mentoring was rather casual, but now it is widely institutionalized and quite sophisticated. In addition to helping the candidate to understand the structure and culture of the organization, today's faculty mentor can provide strategic knowledge of the "system" and explain "informal" rules; the mentor can give the candidate individual recognition and encouragement, as well as constructive criticism and feedback.

Today's faculty mentor is frequently chosen from outside the candidate's department so as to avoid

potential conflicts of interest. The role is multifold: the mentor visits the candidate's classes and has access to the candidate's research; the mentor can ensure that the tenure candidate is not unfairly burdened by new courses, large classes, or time-consuming service appointments; as a periodic contributor to or reader of the candidate's AP, the mentor becomes a witness to the candidate's growth, potential, and ability to overcome problems. The mentor may also prepare an endorsement of the candidate for the final tenure examination or appear before the examination committee on behalf of the candidate. The mentor is a motivator and personal advocate but also an agent for successfully connecting the candidate to the mission and culture of the university.

To maintain a successful mentoring program, the university has to support it. That means periodic workshops to ensure mentoring quality, and a structural integration of the mentoring program into personnel policies. As an example of the latter, some universities include in their letter of hiring (the "job offer") that part of the university culture includes mentoring of new faculty: the incoming member is expected to cooperate with the program. Finally, administrators have to watch over the program to ensure that mentor-candidate relationships are actually working.

Summing up

Through the Academic Portfolio the tenure track becomes a personalized process of professional development rather than a trial whose "verdict" is based on quantitative research output. Through the mentor system the candidate is subject to constructive third-party assessment from the outset. Potential weaknesses can be identified and corrected throughout the process. Criteria and potential outcomes are made explicit. By design, the AP may be tailored to the university mission/campus culture, thus insuring institutional continuity as well.

Further reading:

Peter Seldin and J. Elizabeth Miller Jossey-Bass, *The Academic Portfolio* (2009).