

UFF TENURE WORKSHOP TALKING POINTS 2003

Victoria Castellanos, CHUA, tenure awarded August 2002

1. The only people who you can be sure has a firm grasp on what it actually takes to get tenure at FIU *right now* are the President, Provost and the Deans
 - a. Repercussions
 - i. Can't trust that you will be given an assignment that will get you tenure
 1. The rules are different now than they have been at any time in the past
 - a. Most people, including many chairs, don't yet fully "get it"
 2. Chairs have their own agenda, which isn't necessarily congruent with the best interest of tenure-earning faculty
 - a. Need people to teach classes
 - b. Need people to direct programs
 - c. Need people to be on committees
 - d. Need people to build infrastructure
 - e. Need people to develop community relations
 - f. In the past, these needs were taken into consideration, NOT ANY MORE
 3. Things you were specifically hired to do, i.e. to provide a specific expertise or meet a specific need of the department, may very well *not* earn you tenure
 - ii. You can't rely on feedback on progress toward tenure except from Provost, *current* Deans, and perhaps colleagues who have *both* been at a Research I universities *and* are established leaders in discipline
 1. Other faculty, including people in leadership positions, may unintentionally give you false reassurance
 - a. I have had 3 college configurations and 4 Deans since I was hired. The current Dean, who was the one who evaluated my file, has no idea what previous Deans told me about their expectations or their evaluation of my progress toward tenure, nor do I think he cares, nor would it make any difference if he did.
 - i. Specific benchmarks indicated by one of my former deans are not even close to meeting the current expectations for tenure in 2002
 2. A 3-year evaluation may be of little benefit unless it is with the provost or dean

- a. In my case, a 3-year evaluation (had someone offered to do one) with the dean I had at that point (Dean # 2 of 4) would have been falsely reassuring
- b. If your Chair recently (past 2 years) was promoted to full professor or hired as full professor from Research I university.
- 3. Ratings of 'Excellent' on your annual evaluation can provide false reassurance because your assignment may have very little to do with what you actually need for tenure
- 4. Matriculation awards and merit awards, even if decided at the college level, can provide false reassurance.
 - a. You can get merit money, based on your productivity, every year that it is available and not get tenure
 - b. You can be evaluated by a group of tenured faculty, from diverse departments in your college, and be chosen as one of the top 30% performers *across the college*, in Teaching, Research and Service, over the 3-5 years of your employment at FIU, and not be recommended for tenure.

MY BEST ADVICE:

- 2. My advice for the best chance of getting tenure
 - a. First, put your CV into the tenure format and carefully note what you *are* and *are not* allowed to include in that CV
 - i. Grants submitted but rejected
 - ii. Concept papers submitted (not official grant applications)
 - iii. Papers submitted but not accepted
 - iv. Courses taught and size, SAT scores of students
 - v. Number of new course preparations
 - vi. Whether or not your students can write in English
 - vii. Number of graduate students advised
 - viii. The GRE scores of your graduate students
 - ix. Whether or not the university has the facilities or other infrastructure you need to conduct your research
 - x. Some items may get a line item at the end under "Service," but who is going to care?
 - 1. Accreditation documents you prepared
 - 2. Student advising
 - 3. contributions to infrastructure
 - 4. etc.
 - b. Your CV needs to be a document that would impress *any* accomplished academic in your discipline with your research/creative productivity

- i. Publications or other creative products
 - ii. Grants funded
- c. *There is no place on the CV to provide an excuse.* No one will hear the whole story of your first 5 years at FIU, nor will it affect their decision even if they did. Examples of things that are not going to be considered an excuse:
 - i. Terrorist attacks/wars/bad economy/budget cutbacks
 - ii. Lack of infrastructure
 - iii. Teaching load, shortage of faculty in department
 - iv. Assignments to do other activities
 - v. Department accreditation crisis
 - vi. No history of research funding in your department
- d. If any conversation starts....
 - i. "I probably shouldn't ask you to do this since you are not tenured..." *You respectfully decline.*
 - ii. If they continue on saying "People have done this in the past at FIU and still gotten tenure..." *You turn your tail and run.*
 - iii. If you need to get help from other faculty to tactfully decline, you find someone who can help you say NO.
- 3. Bottom Line: *It is up to the individual tenure-earning faculty* at FIU to make sure that he/she gets appropriate assignments and has the time and resources required to have *sufficient pubs/products and funded grants listed on your CV.*
 - a. Do whatever you need to do to get pubs and grants.
 - b. Do as little as possible that detours you from getting pubs accepted/in print and grants funded
 - c. Get a mentor... someone who has gotten tenure in the last 2 years or who got tenure at a Research I university
 - d. Be strategic with each and every decision you make
 - e. Do not accept reassurance *from anyone* but your Dean
- 4. Focusing on grants and pubs is a no-lose strategy because even if you don't get tenure here, you have what you need to get hired elsewhere.