Tenure within the Department of Youth Development: An overview

The mission of the Department of Youth Development is to practice and advance the academic discipline of youth development. The University hires probationary faculty members because they have the potential to make significant contributions toward the missions of the Department of Youth Development and the University of Wisconsin Extension. The probationary period allows the University to evaluate their faculty hires before committing to them on a long-term basis through the granting of tenure. It is a time for the probationary faculty member to demonstrate and build evidence of their scholarly efforts. Tenure is granted to faculty with a consistent and high level of scholarly achievement which the University believes will continue for the remainder of his/her career.

This document suggests an approach for the probationary faculty period. It also suggests that the probationary faculty member know and understand the time frame and time commitment needed to be successful and to engage in ongoing reflection in their work.

Understand scholarship in the context of UW-Extension.

- Learn the definition of scholarship that is used in UW-Extension. Seek to understand how scholarship is practiced and evaluated in the Department of Youth Development and throughout UW-Extension. See http://www.uwex.edu/secretary/facart.cfm Faculty Articles of Governance Appendix IB for the UW-Extension definition of scholarship.

- Take a scholarly approach to your work including your planning, your reporting, your programming, your evaluation and your reflection. Scholarship should not be viewed as an occasional act like writing a department paper. Scholarship should be an overall approach to our work.

- It is your responsibility to engage in opportunities to increase your knowledge of the tenure process. You should know and understand your tenure timeline, attend tenure workshops, read the portfolios of tenured faculty members, and elect to write your mini portfolio.

- Quality plans and reports become the basis for your scholarly work. Think them through and incorporate what you have learned from each planning cycle. Seek feedback and support from your mentor, liaison and colleagues.

- File the appropriate reports in a timely fashion.

- One, two and three-year reviews are opportunities for thoughtful reflection. It is important to come prepared, and give review recommendations serious consideration.

- Seek opportunities to contribute to the department, program area, and association that will advance your own professional development and/or scholarly work.

- Rely on your mentors and colleagues to develop relationships with other faculty who understand the tenure and portfolio process.

Reflect on your work and on your development as a faculty member

- Reflect on the recurring aspects of the 4-H organizational system in your county. What are the scholarly approaches you could take with regard to these efforts?

- Take time to continually reflect on the work that you do. What did the county look like when you started? How is the county different now? Can you answer the question “now that the work is done—‘so what’, what difference did it make in the lives of the participants
and the communities they live in? What are the future implications of your work? How will you share your results with other colleagues, the organization and stakeholders?

• Assess your progress against the criteria for promotion. See Faculty Articles of Governance Appendix IB. Seek the assessment of others.

Being successful takes time and time management

• Probationary faculty members are responsible for knowing their own timeline. What is your tenure due date? When are you first eligible to submit for tenure? When is the best time to submit a mini-portfolio?
• Tenure is an ongoing process. Start laying the groundwork for achieving tenure as soon as possible. Share your plan with your mentor, liaison and other supportive faculty.
• Find ways to enhance your time management skills.
• Establish a system for maintaining and organizing materials that you want to use in your tenure documentation.

Achieving tenure is the short term goal

• The long term goal is the ongoing commitment and contributions you make to the profession and the discipline.
• Tenure is a commitment by the university that provides rights and responsibilities to the faculty member.
• You have responsibilities that include ongoing scholarly work and contributions, supporting other colleagues, meeting deadlines, and serving in leadership roles.

Developed April 26, 2007
Revised July 30, 2007
Reviewed by Liaisons August 07
Revised September 6, 2007
Revised by Department Committee (J. Jorgensen, M. Stuessel, and T. Talen) November 16, 2009
Approved by Department December 4, 2009