

**The Promotion and Tenure Process
as an Exercise in
Strategic Thinking:
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About the presenters:

- ***Joseph McCormick, 2nd***, is currently the *Director of Academic Affairs* at the York campus of Penn State University. He is the chief academic officer on this campus, one of fourteen campuses of the University College, dispersed throughout the state of Pennsylvania. In this capacity he has oversight responsibility for the promotion and tenure process, faculty hiring, long-term academic planning, course scheduling and related matters, *at the campus level*.
- Prior to coming to Penn State, he was a member of the faculty in the Department of Political Science at Howard University where he was the Director of the Master of Arts in Public Administration (MAPA) program.
- He earned the BA, MA, & PhD degrees in political science from the University of Pittsburgh.

About the presenters:

Dianne Pinderhughes, earned her B.A. at Albertus Magnus College and the M.A. and Ph.D. at the University of Chicago. She is currently the *President's Distinguished Professor and Full Professor in the Departments of Africana Studies and Political Science* at the University of Notre Dame. Before Notre Dame, she taught at Dartmouth College, and at the University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign where she chaired the Afro-American Studies & Research Program. Her teaching focuses on racial and ethnic politics in the US, Voting Rights policy and American urban politics. She is immediate past president of the American Political Science Association.

The Promotion & Tenure Process as an Exercise in Strategic Thinking

An Overview:

- **The promotion & tenure process at Penn State**
- **Some guiding principles in strategic thinking about the P & T process**
- **Advice on the selection of external reviewers**

The Promotion & Tenure Process as an Exercise in Strategic Thinking

At Penn State, the P & T process consists of a:

- Second year review
- Fourth year review
- Sixth year promotion & tenure review

Initial Observations:

- (1) On its face, this process is rather “transparent,” i.e., it is clearly stated in writing and easily accessible;
- (2) Guidelines on its operationalization vary throughout the University. Within the University College, the responsibility for explaining the process lies with the Director of Academic Affairs (DAA); and

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Initial Observations (continued):

(3) One of the most challenging tasks in the *pre-tenure years* is establishing the “proper” balance between teaching, research/publication, and service. Which of these three areas should receive the most attention is determined by the norms and practices of the college or university where you are located.

Some Guiding Principles in Strategic Thinking

When searching for the 1st tenure track position:

1. **THE IMPORTANCE OF TRANSPARENCY:**

Familiarize yourself with the mechanics of the P&T process. Relevant policies and guidelines *should be* in writing.

2. **THE IMPORTANCE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING:**

Develop a five year planning to guide your teaching, research, conference presentations, publications, and level of service activity at the departmental, college, university, and disciplinary/profession levels.

Some Guiding Principles in Strategic Thinking

3. THE IMPORTANCE OF FEEDBACK AT THE DEPARTMENTAL LEVEL:

Determine if the institutions in which you are interested have pre-tenure reviews at specified intervals.

After you have acquired the position *give careful* thought to:

1. THE IMPORTANCE OF PROFESSIONAL EXPOSURE, AND CULTIVATING PROFESSIONAL EXTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS:

Attend not less than two annual conferences each year in which you present your work OR serve as a discussant. These allow you to: “test” viability of your ideas; discover publication opportunities; and find others who might be interested in your work and who could serve as **external reviewers** of your work.

Some Guiding Principles in Strategic Thinking

After you have acquired the position, *give careful* thought to:

2. ***THE IMPORTANCE OF TRANSPARENCY & THE “POLITICS” OF ADMINISTRATIVE VALUES:***

Find out more about the promotion and tenure process at all levels of the university and the personnel who administer this process.

3. ***THE IMPORTANCE OF SCHOLARLY PRODUCTIVITY, NORMS AND PRACTICES:***

Determine the publication and research trends in your department, especially in your areas of professed expertise.

Some Guiding Principles in Strategic Thinking

After you have acquired the position, *give careful* thought to:

4. **THE IMPORTANCE OF LINKING TEACHING AND RESEARCH:**

Make every effort to systematically link your teaching with your research. Your students are usually the first mass audience where you attempt to demonstrate, face-to-face, what you know about your subject matter and where you pose and offer tentative answers about the pivotal questions that are the foci of your intellectual work. The lessons you learn in the classroom will enable you refine the ideas that inform your scholarship.

Some Guiding Principles in Strategic Thinking

After you have acquired the position *give careful* thought to:

5A. THE IMPORTANCE OF STRATEGIC BALANCE:

While service to the department, to the college/university, and to the profession is important, in the pre-tenure stage of academic life, one should keep these activities to a minimum. *More service activity to others can be a serious disservice to one's chances of ascending the promotion and tenure ladder.*

MORE>>>>

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After you have acquired the position *give careful* thought to:

5B. THE IMPORTANCE OF STRATEGIC BALANCE:

Be cautious in making your choices, if possible, on which committees you serve. Avoid chairing any high visibility committee that may have major demands on your time and orchestrating the actions of others.

On Selecting Your External Reviewers

6.A. During conference activities,

you will have the opportunity to meet a number of scholars, whether on panels, on organizational committees; you may also meet researchers through on-campus lectures and visits.

6.B. Look for highly regarded

scholars whose work complements yours; they might serve as external contacts with whom you can interact, and who could then be called on to serve as an external reviewer as you are considered for promotion and tenure.

6.C. Take time to discuss

with your departmental senior colleagues, how to balance your choice of scholars with those that might be selected by your department.

Some Guiding Principles in Strategic Thinking

If you have additional questions, please contact either of us:

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GOOD LUCK AND DO GOOD WORK!!!