

# Overview of faculty reappointment, tenure, and promotion

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## I. What is Tenure?

**Legal view: tenure is an employment contract.**

- Has no specified end date.
- Can be ended only for specific reasons (cause, financial exigency).

Principles recognized in case law:

- There is no guarantee of tenure.
- The review takes many factors into account.
- There are many levels of review and recommendation.
- Only the governing board can confer tenure.

## **UW Regulation 5-1.E:**

"Cause" is defined to include any conduct which seriously impairs the ability of the University of Wyoming to carry out its functions, including physical or mental incapacity, incompetence, neglect of duty, dishonesty, immorality or conviction of a felony.

## UW's post-tenure review policy:

- All faculty members have regular performance evaluations.
- Results affect salary and future promotions.
- There are corrective measures for cases when performance falls below expectations
- When these measures fail, dismissal is possible.

UW's 2 most recent dismissals of tenured faculty members:

- 2006 (for neglect of duty)
- 1993 (for flagrant insubordination)

(Others have left after a threat of dismissal.)

## Philosophic view: tenure and academic freedom

“Academic freedom and tenure ... exist in order that society may have the benefit of honest judgment and independent criticism which otherwise might be withheld because of fear of offending a dominant social group or transient social attitude.”

Clark Byse and Louis Joughin, *Tenure in American Higher Education: Plans, Practices, and the Law* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1959), p. 4.

## II. STANDARDS AND CRITERIA

From UW Regulation 5-1.D:

“The main criteria for reappointment, tenure and promotion decisions are creative development, advancement of knowledge, and dissemination of knowledge. “

In short, the land-grant mission:

Teaching  
Research  
Service

“many factors”

***The key question:***

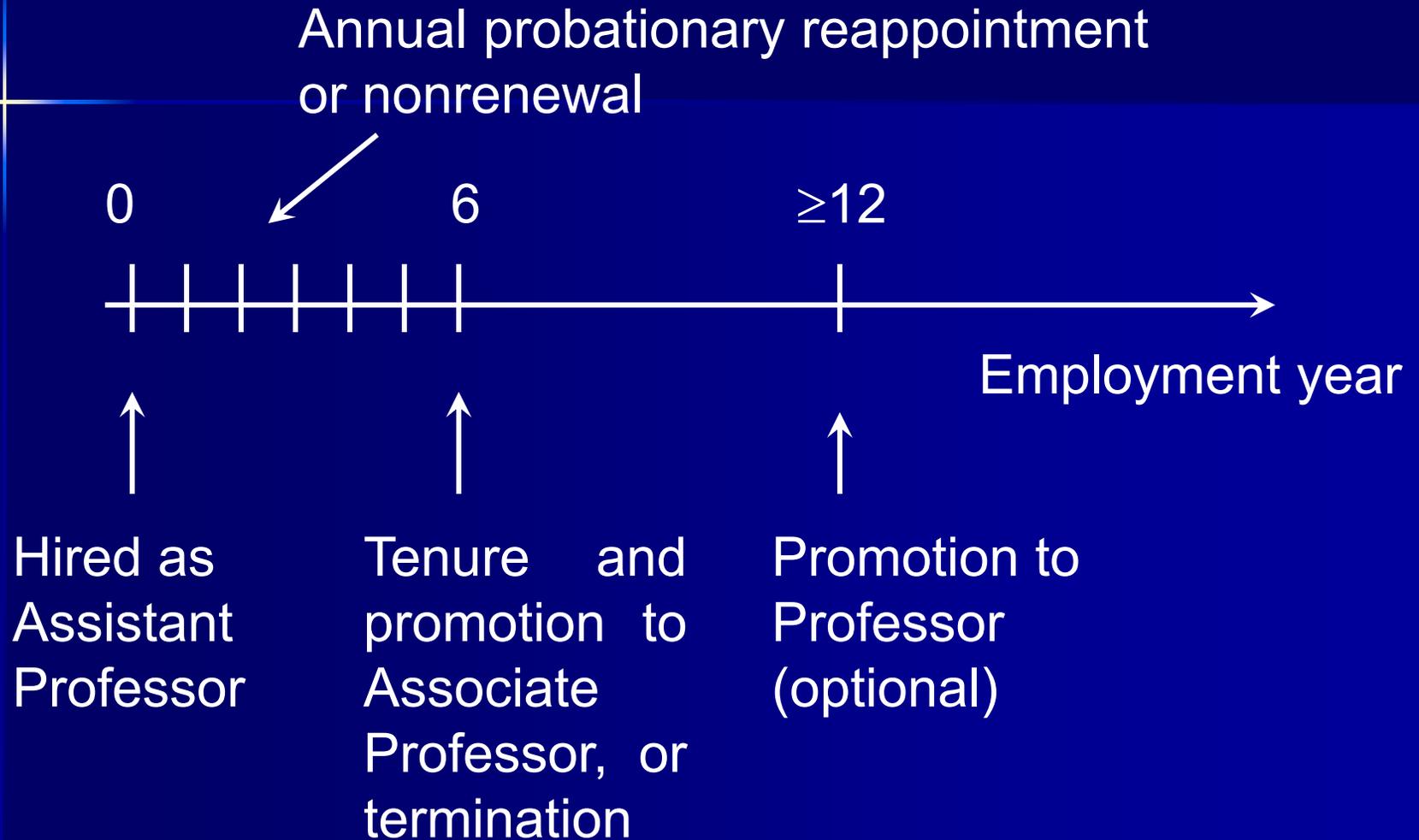
*Does the candidate's record reflect both the commitment and the promise to sustain a career-long record of effective teaching, scholarship at the forefronts of knowledge, and effective service?*

It's not a matter of clearing the bar.

## How do we answer this question?

- Strong teaching, demonstrated *early* in the career.
- Strong scholarship, critical for teachers to remain effective as their disciplines evolve.
- Peer review by nationally or internationally recognized experts, as well as by UW students and faculty.
- Collegiality: ability to work both independently and constructively with others.

### III. FACULTY CAREER PATH



## **IV. PORTFOLIO**

### **Annual documentation of:**

- Teaching evaluation (students, peers, faculty administrators)
- Research record (publications, grants, creative work, external peer reviews)
- Service (UW committees, statewide service, professional organizations)

**Record of previous years' evaluations at all levels**

## V. REVIEW PROCESSES



## Department-level review

- Solicitation of external letters (T&P cases)
- Review and vote by faculty peers
- Recommendation by department head

## Example peer remark (2<sup>nd</sup>-year reappointment):

“For someone with a 60% teaching split, who has taught for two years in another institution before coming to the University of Wyoming, her progress in teaching is unsatisfactory. “

**TEACHING COUNTS!**

**And the pressure to perform comes early**

Example: external letters from

- Colby College
- Columbia University
- Dartmouth College
- Duke University
- Oberlin College

“[The] scholarship is bold in treating major authors and issues, careful in its close reading of primary texts and its consideration of secondary literature, and scrupulous in its honesty and clarity. I have found his work of genuine value for my own teaching and writing.” [From Duke University]

UW Regulation 5-803 requires a minimum of 4 external letters from arm’s-length experts.

### College-level review

- Review and vote by faculty-elected college committee
- Recommendation by dean

### Example remark from college committee:

“It is clear from \_\_\_\_\_’s packet, especially the comments made by the external reviewers, that he has achieved a regional, national, and international reputation for his work... . His record of securing external funding and publishing his work are exceptional. Student evaluations of his teaching have consistently been positive and his graduate students have been very successful in terms of their ability to produce peer-reviewed products.”

“The lay-down hand”

### University-level review

- Review by faculty-elected university committee, if required
- Recommendation by Provost

### Example UT&P comment:

“This case presents an all-too-familiar pattern: fine teacher, great citizen who is ... succeeding at tasks necessary for the department, college, and university, but doing so at the expense of ... research development.”

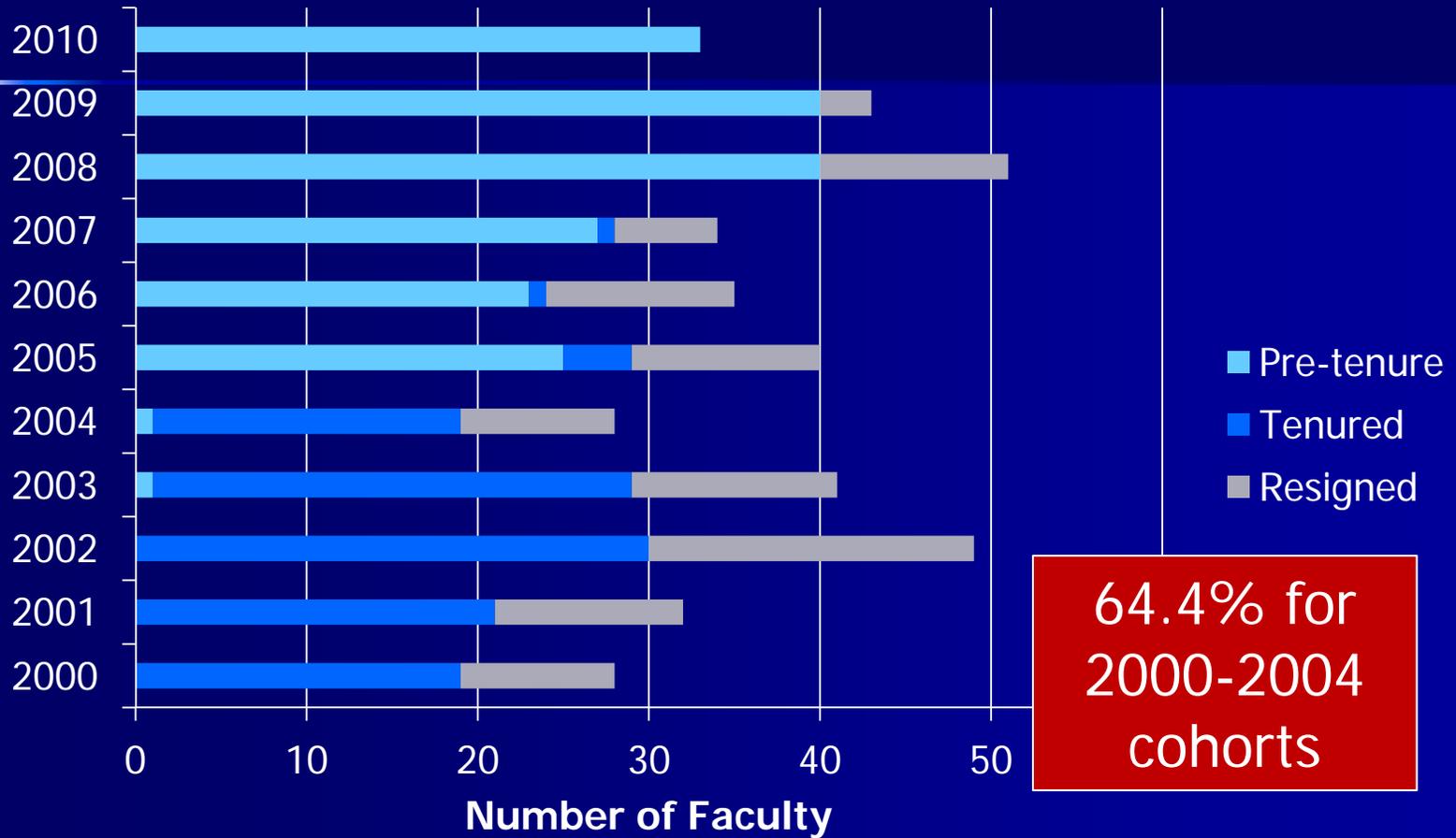
Good performance in one dimension of the job doesn't trump inattention to other dimensions.

## Trustees' action

- Only positive cases forwarded
- Cases presented as a slate.
- Negative decisions in executive session
- March for first-year cases; May for all others

There is no tenure until the Trustees confer it.

## Retention and Tenure, by year of hire



64.4% for  
2000-2004  
cohorts

**QUESTIONS?**

Extra slides follow ...

## Summary:

1. UW's standards require strong teaching *and* sustained, internationally significant scholarship and research.
2. The faculty career path allows for a lengthy probationary period as well as an opportunity to develop wide recognition for teaching and research.
3. A substantial portfolio, documenting teaching and scholarship, forms the basis for all reviews of faculty.
4. Our processes ensure rigorous review by UW faculty peers, by outside experts in the field, and by academic administrators at all levels.

## **Post-tenure review**

UW Regulation 5-808 defines corrective measures available when a tenured faculty member's performance falls below expectations.

Dismissal is possible in persistent cases.

## Summary of Faculty Reappointment, Tenure, and Promotion Decisions, AY 2008-2009

Type of Decision	Approvals	Denials	Total
Reappointment	151	1	150
Tenure	24	0	24
Promotion to Professor	5	0	5

But ... attrition is hard to analyze.

### C. University-level review

- Review by faculty-elected university committee, if required
- Recommendation by VP for Academic Affairs

#### Example comment from UT&P committee:

“\_\_\_\_\_ has a strong ... international reputation for research in an emerging and interdisciplinary field. His 7 letters from outside evaluators indicated strong support. He has generated strong grant support. He has a record of professional and university service. He also carries a heavy teaching load and is an excellent teacher as indicated by student evaluations and department head's comments.

## C. Expectations by rank (from UW Regulation 5-1)

**Assistant professors** shall normally have the doctor's degree in course, and shall have **demonstrated ability**, through appropriate experience, to perform the functions of the position they are to hold.

**Associate professors** shall normally have the doctor's degree in course, shall have established a **reputation** in scholarship, teaching, artistic creation, or other productive activity in the field in which they are to serve.

**Professors**, in addition to having the qualifications of associate professors, shall have demonstrated superior capacity for direction of graduate work and research where appropriate, have attained **wide recognition** in their professional fields for scholarship or other creative work, and shall have gained recognition as teachers and as consistent contributors to the fields in which they are to render University service. **It is not anticipated that each faculty member will attain the rank of full professor.**

## Average Tenure-Stream Flow

$18/36 \approx 50\%$   
50% attrition rate

