APT Workshop
(professorship)

Juan Uriagereka
Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs
Agenda

1. General Considerations
2. Expectations of APT Committees
3. What the University committee looks for in a APT package
4. Discussion
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3. What the University committee looks for in a APT package

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Tenure is not an individual right

Rather, it is a privilege of academics that,

In the pursuit of truth for the common good,

have established themselves as worthy of an academic institution

(a state, in cases of public education)

that is willing to continuously support them for the next few decades.
Lest this be confusing...

- Playing by uniform APT rules...
- ... doesn’t have to mean being uniform in all counts.
- In particular: YOU (i.e. your department) ARE THE EXPERTS in your area.
- Therefore: YOU SHOULD ESTABLISH YOUR CRITERIA for excellence in that area.
In a nutshell:

- The main expectation of the APT committees...
- ... is that every unit takes the APT process seriously.
- One size does not fit all, however...
- We should all abide by rules that seek excellence in the pursuit of truth for the common good.
- Otherwise tenure would simply not be justified.
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From the USM Policy

“The criteria for tenure and promotion in the University of Maryland System are:

(1) teaching effectiveness, including student advising;
(2) research, scholarship, and, in appropriate areas, creative activities; and
(3) relevant service to the community, profession, and institution.”

ALL THREE, and very especially the TOP TWO, are taken very seriously.
From the UMCP policy

- “The University of Maryland is dedicated to the discovery and the transmission of knowledge and to the achievement of excellence in its academic disciplines” (l. 28).

- Administrators are ultimately responsible for implementing this policy, and nothing like hiring and tenure practices represents the seriousness of such efforts.
The APT committee...

- ... seeks to understand YOU and the work you do in YOUR UNIT.
- The most important thing a dossier does is **tell a story**, your story.
- It is a narrative with several layers,
- Told by 3 different committees and 3 different university officers.
- The hope is that conglomerate does justice to the case.
Committees...

- Emphasis on surface aspects (worrying about the inessential aspects of a CV, the spelling, the neatness)...
- Often comes at the expense of genuine substance.
- Cases in higher committees do not depend on neatness...
- ... as they do on a professional evaluation of quality and impact indicators.
What is important...

- ... is to show the significance of your work, your program, your achievements.
- Are you a leader in your field who should also become a senior member of the university?
- That’s your story, and telling it accurately and profoundly often requires taking a step back for perspective.
Things to think about...

- Be **critical** with yourself and your discipline.
- **Reach out to peers**, get to understand what they do and to get them to understand what you do.
- **Don’t procrastinate**. Think of your case from the day you are given tenure – and keep asking yourself how you’re progressing within the professorial track.
- Be **proactive** in the profession and keep a **record** of your activities and your achievements.
- **Measure your results**, don’t take them for granted.
Things to avoid…

- In general, **don’t try to get your friends or collaborators to write evaluation letters!**
- Take seriously both the positive **AND THE NEGATIVE** criticism, and **address it always head on** and rationally.
- Only if you are **demanding** with yourself and your environment will it evolve to be worthy, and this is what you reflect in your professorship narrative.
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Indicators

- Everyone knows THEIR field is unique...
- That said, you need to establish your own indicators of excellence - and to apply them.
- What does YOUR FIELD (outside this university, going into our peers) determine as measures of success in your area?
- Your best strategy is to clearly determine these indicators, and then to show how you follow them.
Rational questions:

- What counts as “peer review” in your field? Are these standards applied in peer institutions?
- What counts as “metrics of impact” in your field? Are these taken seriously in peer institutions?
- How does your field define “regional”, “national” or even “international”?
- How do you delineate the differences between research/creativity, teaching/mentoring and service?
The university is changing

- An emergent culture of cooperation and interdisciplinarity is growing.
- Great societal issues (climate change, renewable energies, social justice, international cooperation) are more and more central.
- The university is being ‘professionalized’.
- If your creativity falls into these dimensions...
- At this point in time you need to make a special effort to spell-out what this means in your case.
- (So that your colleagues understand and appreciate your approach)
Just one more thing…

- **Mentorship, mentorship, mentorship…** (Even at the associate level!)
- **Learn culture of institution & department.**
- **Establish connections within department.**
- **Find out spoken and unspoken expectations of junior faculty.**
- **Become familiar with tenure process**
Some stats (for what they’re worth)

2013-14 PROMOTION CASES

- 41% Awarded with Discussion
- 45% Awarded as Slam Dunks
- 14% Withdrawn
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