

Review the following Promotion and Tenure scenarios and select the correct answers based on the insight gained from the Increasing Women in Neuroscience course. Questions adapted from the University of California, Irvine ADVANCE Program and the National Science Foundation under award SBE: -0123682.

Promotion Discussion: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SPBLCVG>

As a tenure committee chair, you've had difficulty scheduling a meeting with one of the Assistant Professors to discuss her progress toward tenure. You know she wants to have her academic file submitted for review as soon as possible but you don't believe she is ready for the promotion, even though you recognize that she is a promising and talented scientist. Your research is very demanding at this particular time and you're struggling to meet the demands of your research and your responsibilities as chair. You lead a research team that includes other members of the department, and one of them was recently promoted. She's challenged you on that promotion, citing a recent publication that she co-authored and some promising results in a recent experiment.

Which of the following are important parts of the best approach to take at your next meeting with the assistant professor? (Check all that apply)

- A. Identify a mentor for her to work with. Help her create a plan that includes some regular feedback from you.
- B. Explain why the promotion to the person in your department was made.
- C. Apologize that you've been so busy and tell her that you'll focus on her soon.
- D. After recognizing her recent successes, very clearly identify the reasons why you don't feel she is ready for the promotion. Describe milestones and timelines of what she needs to do to demonstrate that she is ready.
- E. Tell her that it is not appropriate to challenge the other promotion, and that her time will come – she just has to be patient.

A and D are correct. The chair is responsible for ensuring that the tenure and promotion criteria are clearly defined and that all individuals are informed. The chair must also ensure that the departmental tenure and promotion process is transparent and implemented in a fair manner. It can be helpful for the chair to work with junior faculty to identify a mentor or mentoring team to provide assistance, advice, and feedback. It is also important to have an annual review of all junior faculty so that they receive regular feedback on their progress in meeting the criteria for promotion and tenure. Clearly defined criteria, transparent procedures, and regular feedback are best practices for facilitating faculty promotion and tenure.

Evaluation Criteria: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SZRK8XX>

Susan, a newly hired faculty member coming from a different university system, was appointed to an associate professor position. Until this appointment, she had no experience with the policies of her current institution. She is asked to write an evaluation of another member of the faculty whom she does not know well.

Which of the following is the most important thing for Susan to do first?

- A. Read all of the faculty member's published work to assess the quality of his research.
- B. Ask other faculty members with more experience in the department for their opinion of the person being evaluated.
- C. Have a one-on-one meeting with the person being evaluated to get to know him better.
- D. Obtain all available materials that describe the criteria by which a member of her department is supposed to be evaluated.

D is correct. The most important foundational element for any evaluation process is a description of the criteria by which the faculty members are evaluated. Not only is this necessary to ensure sufficient transparency to avoid the appearance of favoritism, but it also allows both the review committee members and faculty members to work on a level playing field. Institutions' promotion policies and evaluation criteria should be well documented and freely accessible.

Tenure Review: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/RK9MHNF>

Kim is an assistant professor coming up for tenure in a year. She is very focused on her research and is sought after to participate in collaborative projects. Ted was hired as a full professor and has been a member of the department for 12 years and a member of the tenure committee for 4 years. He is a well-known scholar but his research has not been going well in recent years. He is on the path to slowing down and planning to retire in the next five years. Kim believes that although Ted's research is lagging, he still has significant influence in the department and holds an important key to Kim's tenure. Kim is slightly intimidated by Ted and does not feel like she and Ted have comfortable interactions.

What are some tactics that could be implemented by the department to minimize the perceived bias Kim might feel about Ted providing feedback during Kim's tenure review? (Check all that apply)

- A. Implement annual reviews of all non-tenured faculty to provide ongoing feedback about performance.
- B. Conduct regular department social events where faculty members have the opportunity to get to know one another better.
- C. Require all members of the department to provide structure, non-binding feedback during all tenure reviews.
- D. Implement a formal review and evaluation process that clearly identifies the criteria by which faculty members are evaluated.
- E. Provide regular feedback from the entire department that is separated into tenure related advice and general advice.

A, C, D, and E are correct. It is important to provide regular, ongoing, unbiased feedback about faculty performance to ensure that faculty members understand their strengths and areas for improvement on an ongoing basis. Even if there is a small tenure committee that makes ultimate recommendations about tenure, a requirement that the committee consider department-wide feedback can minimize any perception of favoritism. Clear, comprehensive standards by which faculty performance is measure also minimize the likelihood of tenure decisions being perceived as unfair.