Demystifying the Promotion and Tenure Process

Jeanine Cook
Associate Professor
Klipsch School of Electrical and Computer Engineering
New Mexico State University
My Career Path

• Worked in Aerospace for 7 years after obtaining BSEE
• Grad School
  – M.S. in Computer Science
  – Ph.D. in Electrical Engineering
• 2002 – Assistant Professor NMSU
• 2008 – Associate Professor NMSU
• 2009 – Sabbatical. Yeah!!!!
Balance in Teaching, Research, and Service

• Research really counts most
  – Specific research targets
    • Expected to support so fixed number grad students, publish required number of papers, have specific number of citations

• Teaching is next most important
  – Specific teaching targets
    • Expected to receive certain “grade” from evaluations, teach certain % core classes, balanced grad/undergrad load

• Service is smallest portion
  – Broader community, university, college, and department service
    • Expected to be on certain number of committees, give invited talks, conference committees
Annual Reviews

• Both assistants and associates submit packet annually
  – Given feedback on how they’re doing with respect to tenure/promotion track
    • Feedback in form of letter
    • Tell you to do more of this, less of that, …..
    • Supposed to tell you how you stack up against policy
      – Needs improvement: below minimum requirements by at least 20%
      – Good: satisfies requirements
      – Very good: above requirements by at least 20%
      – Exemplary means well above requirements (by at least 50%)

• This is in addition to annual performance evaluation
Pitfalls of Junior Faculty

• Think 6 years is a long time
  – Getting tenure requires steady plodding over these 6 years!

• Wait to find the “perfect” PhD student
  – Don’t hire research assistants until after the 2\textsuperscript{nd} or 3\textsuperscript{rd} year
    • Only leaves 3 or 4 years of productivity!

• Keep getting rejected proposals, but never ask anyone for help

• Overwhelmed, but can’t figure out how to balance
Portfolio

• Big binder! Contains
  – Examples of papers
  – Teaching evaluations
  – Proposals
  – P&T Document
    • Lists everything you’ve ever done in teaching, research, and service
Advice

• Make sure you understand
  – P&T expectations
  – how you’re affected if a new P&T policy is adopted while you’re on the tenure/promotion path
  – when your P&T dossier is expected to be turned in to the committee so you can plan well ahead of time

• Develop a process for tracking everything that you do
  – Papers and proposals are easy to track
  – Service is hard to track

• Work hard at teaching, doing research, and service and tenure will come!