

The Tenure Process

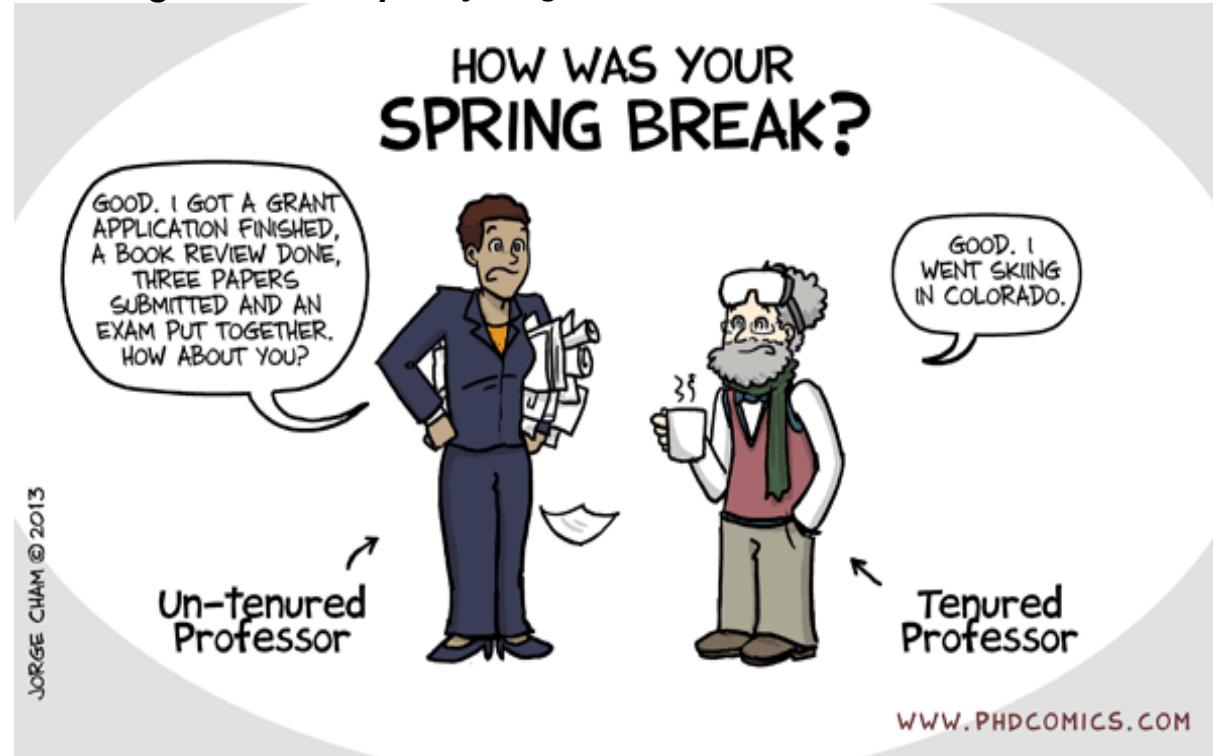
Meghan Burke

Professor of Mathematics (with tenure)

Kennesaw State University

SMB 2015 Mentoring Workshop





title: "Spring Break" - originally published 3/18/2013

How we all think about tenure

Seriously, though

The institution takes tenure so seriously because it really is a lifetime commitment to employ you.

Almost no one else in our society gets this kind of job security. In fact, many institutions have done away with tenure.

Anybody know of any?

Any advantages to that?

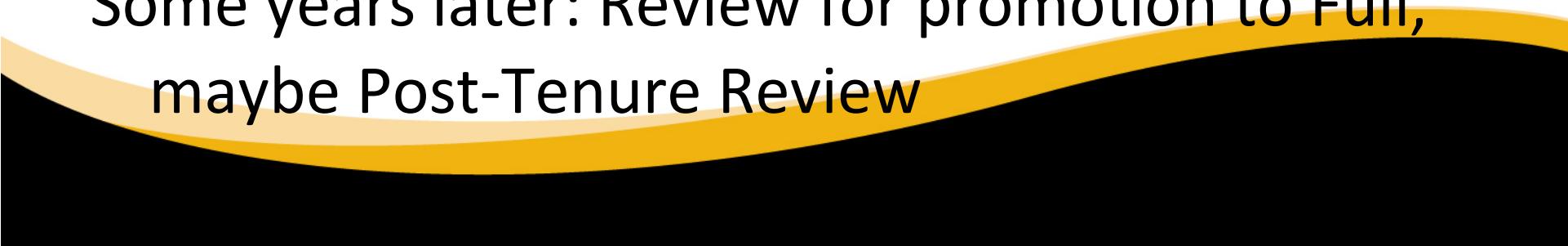
Timeline

In general, the timeline for a new faculty member straight out of grad. school or with 1-3 years post-doc (research) experience (hired as an Assistant Professor) goes like this:

Year 3: 3rd year review

Year 6: Review for tenure & promotion to Associate Professor

Some years later: Review for promotion to Full, maybe Post-Tenure Review



Third Year Review

Note that, in general, the Third Year Review is intended to

- Give you a chance to practice putting together a tenure packet
- Give you feedback on your case, to make mid-course corrections as needed

The results are generally not used to end your contract, but it's been known to happen.



Timeline

You will want to ask if the timeline is different from this. Some institutions:

- Let you come up earlier for tenure (this may or may not be a good thing to do)
- Require you to satisfy tenure criteria in order to get be promoted
- Require you to satisfy promotion to associate in order to get tenure (maybe even years earlier; e.g., CMU)

Credit Toward Tenure

If you are hired with some post-secondary teaching experience (generally not research post-doc, but there are always exceptions), you may be eligible for Credit Toward Tenure.

This reduces the minimum number of years that you must wait before applying for tenure. (E.g., 2 years credit, you can apply in 4th instead of 6th year.)

It MUST be in your offer letter. If you don't negotiate it before your arrival, you don't get it.

It is very important to know whether you are *required* to use this, or it is your *option*.



Credit Toward Tenure or Coming Up Early

Consider that in many institutions, it is to your benefit to take as much time to amass accomplishments before applying for tenure as you can.

- It is essential to know whether you only get “one shot” at tenure application.
- If you have a family or medical issue, find out if “stopping the tenure clock” is possible.

Criteria

It is critical to know from the time you receive an offer, what the criteria are to achieve tenure.

- Do NOT be shy about asking. Everyone around you wants new faculty to be successful and achieve tenure, so they should be able to tell you. Ask the chair/head, ask the dean, ask your colleagues. Ask in the interview, to see if the institution is a good fit for you.
- Keep asking after you arrive, especially if the leadership changes.

Criteria

Hopefully, criteria for tenure and promotion should also be available in writing.

- Ask where you can find this
 - Faculty Handbook
 - Department and/or College Guidelines
- If there is any terminology you don't understand, ask! Often, there is a local interpretation to vague descriptions like "notable" or "significant."

Joint Appointments

These are very special cases, and you will want to do a lot of groundwork before you even accept the job.

Your offer letter, contract, or MoU should state exactly how your tenure case will differ from the usual procedure in either department.

- Who reviews your case? How are they selected?
- Which criteria are you required to meet? Problems arise when both departments expect you to meet their full criteria. That's a job for two people, not one.

Mentorship

Seek out mentors (that's plural)

- In your department:
 - Senior colleagues who have seen the process over a long time: Ask them what makes for a successful case.
 - Junior colleagues who have recently navigated the system successfully: Ask to see their materials.
- Outside your department:
 - At the institution: to get a wider perspective on what the dean/provost seek
 - Colleagues in the field: so you can see what issues you might be missing

Questions?

