

Panelists:

Rachel Bean, Associate Professor, Astronomy, College of Arts and Science

Lara Estroff, Assistant Professor, Materials Science and Engineering, College of Engineering

Cynthia Leifer, Assistant Professor, Microbiology and Immunology, College of Veterinary Medicine

Connie Yuan, Associate Professor, Communication, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

Tenure and Promotion

1. For tenure, the university are looking for evidence of:
 - Great research (grants/awards, publications, talks, graduate mentoring)
 - Good teaching (including UG research)
 - Willingness to do service (extra-Cornell service is good)
2. Find out your department’s and the university expectations for 3rd year and tenure review
 - talk to a number of faculty members in your dept. including your department head (your chair is only one person, and the chair-ship changes).
 - Some departments allocate outside-department mentors, ask them
 - Tenured faculty sit on adhoc committees, ask them about their experiences/advice.
3. Start to keep a file from day one (acquire evidence/ keep records):
 - Keep copies of teaching assessments, all relevant activities and invitations
 - Departmental annual reviews can be useful (record + connection with other faculty)
 - i. If your department doesn’t do annual reviews ask if they can
 - ii. At the least have 1 or 2 senior faculty assigned to meet with you once a year/ discuss your CV/progress and plans
 - iii. Have a tenured faculty member sit in on one of your classes per year and give you feedback/ write a review of it that can go in your file.
4. A quick start is vital
 - the 3rd year review is important, the letter your dept chair writes at 3rd year goes into your tenure review, it needs to create a consistent picture of success.
 - don't assume you can produce just before tenure. By your third year review have:
 - i. Research funding
 - ii. Publications
 - iii. Graduate student support
 - iv. Positive teaching assessments
5. You were hired because you can get tenure – but don’t assume it’s a fait accomplis
 - Make your case obvious on paper, build on it year by year
 - Think strategically, plan from the start, don’t get caught out later on
 - Make it easy for them to give you tenure, at least make it hard to find reasons to deny it.
 - College & university committees are not in your field, make your case clear to non-experts.
6. keep a list of all the thesis titles (even undergraduate students) and where your students go when they leave (at least in engineering, they want that on your tenure CV), keep a folder where you put all talk announcements, outreach events, etc. so that updating your CV is easy. Collect everything, and then maybe trim down after you put in your package.

Building your academic identity

1. Stay focused on building your core academic identity

- Don’t dabble in too many things. You’ll have to write up a coherent path for your tenure file

Interdisciplinary Work

1. Be aware that of the challenges of interdisciplinary publishing
 - Which journals are acceptable to all collaborators?
 - Interdisciplinary journals – keep in mind your visibility, and the problematic nature of some journals.

Grants

1. Have your grants critiqued before they go out the door, the more comments the better
2. Apply for grants straight away, don't wait
 - don’t be shy in grants about stressing your expertise/vision
 - outreach has become increasingly important, get evidence of experience in this before you apply
3. Be aware of internal Cornell (or university) opportunities e.g. ADVANCE, Affinito-Stewart
4. Learn about what it takes to be successful in getting grants
 - i. sit on grant panels - but apply rather than sit if you have to make a choice, (be proactive, contact the program officer to offer to be a panel member)
 - ii. ask faculty if they'd be willing to show you recent examples of their grants,
 - iii. ask them about their experiences with various grant programs/program officers
5. Don't be afraid to gambled - spend your startup and assume you will get grants (maybe not the right advice for this current funding climate, but I'm willing to be provocative.) - If you don't have students, you won't get the research done.

Teaching and Advising

1. Have senior faculty observe your teaching, provide feedback and be prepared to write letters of support for your teaching component of the tenure dossier
2. co-teaching can be tricky
 - i. may be expected to take on the administrative duties
 - ii. try to arrange teaching to have 2 distinct parts, don’t interleave
 - iii. get separate assessments for your teaching
3. guest lectures to cover for other faculty who are away (within reason)
4. Graduate students and postdocs
 - Selecting good students/ saying no to weak students is a skill that you may not have needed before postdoc/ UG.

Service

1. Be selective about committee service
2. Let your chair sift through the requests
3. Don't overburden
4. work toward a service identity that can be emphasized in the tenure document
5. Learn when to say no/yes (balance time vs rewards, and how it fits with the evidence/support for your tenure review)
 - some departments try to protect their new faculty from the most onerous teaching courses/committees, some don’t. Try to maximize the time you have for research external committees, grant reviews, editorial boards, conference talks, conference organization (find out time commitments, do they raise your profile? research is paramount)

Managing labs and staff

1. learn how to interview effectively to staff you lab with the best possible people
2. Be prepared to deal with difficult conversations and difficult situations, they will happen, have a strategy to deal with them and get practice (EIO workshop at Cornell)

Create a network of supporters/advocates

1. Get senior faculty on your side
 - You need advocates in the tenure meeting. Faculty in your subfield are particularly important for your tenure case; their opinions on your research will be listened to, they will suggest names for tenure letters.
 - utilize senior faculty as mentors but keep it professional, and don’t air dirty laundry/ insecurities.
 - your department head is a key person for your tenure case, make it easy for them to support you – let them know good news you have (awards/grants etc), provide them with easily usable materials to help them build their part of the tenure case
 - if you have differences of opinion with faculty during your first six years: choose your battles, talk to them in person prior to any meeting, don’t blind side them.
 - Try to get a grip of department politics. Senior faculty can have insights into how issues arose (often they have arisen before), and how to solve/sidestep them.
2. Be involved in your department / university
 - give a colloquium or seminars
 - attend departmental coffee/ departmental socials
 - keep your door open
 - inter-disciplinary research
 - outreach
3. be involved in the wider community (the tenure letters)
 - external collaborators
 - invite colloquium speakers, arrange conferences
 - panels (be professional, while these are meant to be anonymous, the other panelists know who you are/what you said)
6. Minimize saying no to an invitation to lunch with your colleagues - almost all departmental business gets started (and maybe finished) before the faculty meeting at which it is "officially discussed" begins.
7. Invite yourself places – find funding (at Cornell – PDG)

Kids and tenure track

1. Tenure is possible if you have/ are going to have kids, it just means that you have to be even more strategic/focused on the things you need to get tenure
2. Talk to colleagues who’ve done it, taking leaves vs. not, the impact on their research, ability to travel, how their department responded etc.

General advice

1. Know your own style in working and in advising – get others’ advice and points of views, but don’t try to emulate them, but rather to do what works for you and your personality.