DEBRIEFING PATHWAY TO FULL PROFESSOR

According to Ornstein, Stewart, and Drakich (2007), "promotion is a bureaucratically organized activity [that is] based on the collective judgments of colleagues, committees, and university officials" (p. 5). The perceptions of each of these groups can differ over time. What makes it more difficult is the absence of standards within the collegium. What prospective candidates do know is that they must establish a national and international reputation in their field/discipline that can more easily be interpreted through empirical research and an established scholarly record of presentation and especially publication (Mabrouk, 2007). But as Rich, Margie, and Steve learned, the prevailing climate in the department may block an otherwise stellar record for precarious political reasons not linked to the quality of the dossier: Linda's presence in the department's full professor club may not have threatened the members as much as Margie, Steve, or Rich may have in their respective departments.

An associate professor's informal expectations of his or her own career development factor heavily into the motivation needed for him or her to seek promotion to full (Britton, 2010; McDowell, Singell, & Ziliak, 2011). Because promotion to full is voluntary as opposed to promotion to associate, professors chart their own course. Linda presents a good example of someone who had no desire to seek promotion because she did not choose to publish after receiving tenure. In addition, Roach and El-Khawas (2010) alluded to a 'culture of privacy' among tenured mid-career faculty whose research and credentials tend to be infrequently, if at all, scrutinized by anyone but the department chair. In many cases with no clear-cut guidelines and/or a vague set of goals for associate professors, the interpretation of the process to promotion and the credentials rests with the department chair (Roach & El-Khawas, 2010). By all indications, the department chair should not have encouraged Linda to seek full professor given her record. Neither Margie nor Steve learned if the dean and department chair supported

Linda. They also wondered how Linda obtained the glowing external letters of support she needed.

Post-tenure faculty need as much direction and encouragement as those in the pre-tenure stage. Once institutions award tenure, they typically assume faculty will, as mature professionals, continue to take on more service and quasi-administrative roles (Baldwin, DeZure, Shaw, & Moretto, 2008). These faculty either land onto a confusing plateau that forces them to reassess their goals and research agendas or rest on a comfortable side street coasting along until retirement. Changes within their respective disciplines/fields, puzzling technologies, and different generations of students pose challenges to mid-career faculty that necessitate a higher level of motivation and competitive edge in order for them to remain on the cutting edge. To avoid the onset of deadwood status, department chairs/heads and deans must address the predicament that mid-career faculty often face (Baldwin et al., 2008). For Rich's dean to suggest that awarding full professor must first result in a book publication fully supports Baldwin's premise but the faculty must agree to write it into the P&T document before it becomes gospel.

While the basic process for achieving full professor exists in the faculty handbook, each department needs to specify its unwritten expectations of faculty who seek to achieve this rank (Baldwin et al., 2008). Most university policies are mysterious and intentionally vague for full professor because disciplinary expectations tend to be set within the department or college (Weiser, 2012). Nowhere in Margie's, Steve's, or Linda's faculty handbook did a 30-publication minimum appear: Margie's colleagues arbitrarily established it at that. In the Field, Barg, and Stallings (2011) study mid-career respondents indicated a desire to receive constructive feedback from senior colleagues, an assessment of their progress, and critical guidance after reaching associate professor and before contemplating promotion to full. Margie, Steve, and Rich sought this information but found it inconsistent and, as it turned out, deceptive.

Typically though, criteria for full professor include national and international reputation (Weiser, 2012): an excellent and consistent record of research and publication including articles in peer-reviewed journals, book chapters, and books advancing one's discipline; effective teaching; and a varied record of campus and professional service and outreach activities (Baldwin et al., 2008). Internal review committees may not be able to evaluate their colleagues' accomplishments and must rely heavily on the expertise of external reviewers who bring balance and credibility to the evaluation. However, internal and external peer reviewers may use their own criteria to assess dossiers in lieu of relying on vaguely conceived university guidelines (Weiser, 2012).

At research institutions, excellence in research and either teaching or service must be demonstrated to a committee of one's peers (Roach & El-Khawas, 2010). In all cases, a full professorship reflects faculty leadership ability and professional stature on and off campus (Mabrouk, 2007). However, the expectations vary from

department to department and across institutions at the rank of full making the process somewhat precarious.

One area extensively researched is the gender and racial disparity found among mid-career faculty seeking promotion to full professor (McDowell et al., 2011; Ornstein et al., 2007). Geisler, Kaminski, and Berkeley (2007) determined that promotion in rank varied by discipline or professional field. Their index looked at mid-career faculty and promotion to full and indicated problems within departments in terms of advancement, especially of women and minorities. That did not appear to be the case in these vignettes but could in others.

Buch et al. (2011) found that women more than men plateau at the associate level. Linda provides a good illustration. Several reasons emerged from their study including reactive versus proactive faculty development; lack of clear, consistent promotion criteria; and focus on limited paths to full professor. When women do opt for promotion like Margie, studies show it takes them one or two years longer than men to achieve it (Roach & El-Khawas, 2010). McDowell et al. (2011) noted that in the field of economics, for instance, women expressed a preference for teaching and service rather than research, which may explain their contented presence on that plateau.

BEST PRACTICES

■ Newly tenured faculty should be required to create a mid-career plan that they share with their department chair/head and dean. Together they can function as a team to encourage peer mentoring, as well as provide direction, encouragement, development opportunities, and resources (Buch et al., 2011).

■ Promotion documents should offer greater transparency and more explicit guidelines to mid-career faculty seeking promotion to full. Faculty preparing the document may also contemplate multiple pathways to this rank (Buch et al., 2011; Roach & El-Khawas, 2010). Field et al.'s (2011) findings suggested faculty desire to receive constructive and consistent feedback and critical guidance from senior colleagues in order for them to assess their progress to full. This should be done in conjunction with yearly performance appraisals to provide the candidate with consistency and guidance from the chair.

■ Mid-career faculty anticipating the rank of full as well as contemplating leadership and/or management opportunities would benefit from campus and conference workshops and seminars as well as sabbaticals in order to pursue training and other opportunities to lead on and off campus (Baldwin et al., 2008).

■ Surveying mid-career faculty on campus to learn of their needs should be school-wide or university-wide to determine any overlapping needs and interests (Baldwin et al., 2008; Field et al., 2011). Knowing what this faculty group needs will help match available campus resources and provide those needs through professional development.

RESOURCES

■ The AAUP website offers information on maintaining faculty productivity after they receive tenure: www.aaup.org/AAUP/issues/tenure/productivity.htm. For additional information on the full professorship readers can access the Inside Higher Education website at http://insidehighered.com. Burnham, Hooper, and Wright's (2010) *Tools for Dossier Success* should also be helpful to faculty seeking full professor.