MAKING THE MOST OF THE MID-CAREER AS AN MSU ACADEMIC

A symposium for fixed-term and tenure system faculty, academic staff, and leaders

April 30, 2018, 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., MSU Union, Ballroom

Academic Advancement Network (AAN) in collaboration with MSU’s WorkLife Office and Vice President for Research & Graduate Studies
What is Mid-Career?

- A long, but somewhat loosely defined, phase of academic life
  - Rich with opportunities and challenges
  - Qualitatively different from early career
    - New responsibilities, such as service, leadership, mentoring
    - High expectations for achievement
    - Somewhat more autonomy, more room for individual initiative
    - Less clear goals than early career
- Thoughtful strategy is required to make the most of mid-career
The Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education

A Research Practice Partnership

http://coache.gse.harvard.edu | @coacheproject
Understanding & Supporting Faculty at Midcareer

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Executive Director, Principal Investigator
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(he/him/his)
Think of a gratifying moment in your career so far.

What at that moment made being a professor (or other academic) a great job?
collaborative on academic careers in higher education
needed this for impact
how to lead the faculty?
shared data w/scholars
started here
Surveys + Reporting Knowledge + "Aware" + "Scholarship"
"The Course" "The Inst."
Consultation Development Leadership
identical means…
but widely different meanings
What are they doing right?

Will they improve? How?
My Assumptions

Adults can grow.
We are unfinished, incomplete beings. Limitations can be transcended.
Your “high-growth” experience

- What was the situation?
- What enabled your growth?
- What did that growth then enable in your life and/or work?
- Who helped you?
- How did they help?

More Assumptions

Adults can grow.

Colleges thrive when faculty thrive...

... and suffer when faculty lack agency.
Trustee to President:
“What if we spend all of this time and money on ‘faculty development,’ and then they leave?”
Trustee to President:
“What if we spend all of this time and money on ‘faculty development,’ and then they leave?”

President to Trustee:
“What if we don’t, and then they stay?”
My Assumptions (3)

Adults can grow.

Colleges thrive when faculty thrive.

Further promotion is a good goal. After all, you were promoted with the expectation of continuing your trajectory... but obstacles arise.
Q: My dept. has a culture where associate professors are encouraged to work towards promotion to full.

45% disagree
Q: When do you plan to submit your dossier for promotion to full professor?

40% have no plans
The Three Classic Stages of a Faculty Member’s Career with the Proposed “Newly-tenured” Stage

- Sources:
My Assumptions (4)

Adults can grow.

Colleges thrive when faculty thrive.

Further promotion is a good goal.

Most midcareer faculty work really, really hard. (Really hard.)

Many are succeeding in ways others can’t see (and don’t reward).
“less than”?
Coping With Midcareer Malaise

How to assist professors through the post-tenure blues.

March 18, 2012

Aging Professors Create a Faculty Bottleneck
At some universities, 1 in 3 academics are now 60 or older

By Audrey Williams June
When Mary Beth Norton went to University in 1971, she was the department's first female hire. An accomplished professor has a 40-year-old son.

Why Are Associate Professors So Unhappy?

June 3, 2012

Unhappy Associate Professors
June 4, 2012 - 3:00am

By Scott Jaschik

If one had to guess at a sector of the tenure-track and tenured professoriate likely to have the lowest job satisfaction, assistant professors might seem logical. They face uncertainty on whether they will earn tenure, the pressure to excel in teaching and research, the need to master departmental politics — and they must do all of that with less power and less institutional knowledge than those at the associate and full professor ranks.

But the preliminary results of a national survey of professors by the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education, at Harvard University, has found that in most measures, associate professors have lower job satisfaction levels than both assistant and full professors do.

Three associate professors at the College of Wooster (from left, Amy Jo Stavnezer, Judith Amburgey-Peters, and Susan Lehman) have formed a support group to help guide one another through the difficult midcareer years.

By Robin Wilson

Seven years after earning tenure at the College of Wooster, Judith C. Amburgey-Peters is still

The Associate Professor Blues
September 28, 2013, 7:10 pm
By Claire Potter

In “Supporting the Second Book,” (Perspectives on History, September 2013), American Historical Association President Kenneth Pomeranz elaborates on a topic he launched in the previous issue. I thought it was great that Pomeranz came out last month about his post-tenure publishing delay: one of the things that I have learned on the...
PTSD

Post Tenure Stress Disorder?
Not improving teaching

Cynical

Bored

Lazy, passive

Complainer

Old white male

Unaccountable

Misunderstood

Angry

Isolated

Stymied career

Abandoned

No-show

Longing for the good ol' days
Lazy, passive

Cynical

Unaccountable

Old white male

Bored

Not improving teaching

Angry

No-show

Complainer

Longing for the good ol' days
Isolated

Marginalized

Misunderstood

Discouraged

Stymied career

Abandoned
Adults can grow.

Colleges thrive when faculty thrive.

Further promotion is a good goal.

Midcareer faculty work really hard.

Gratifying career moments

High-growth experiences

What gets in the way?
- Teaching protections are lifted
- Service load increases
- Asked to serve as chair
- Mentoring disappears
- Grants are more competitive
- Family life / crisis intervenes
- New chair/dean moves goalposts to full
- No clear path to promotion?
- Advising
- Bad experience at tenure—won’t repeat it!
- *All of the above x2 for women, fac. of color*
Average age of faculty, by rank and tenure status, at 50 COACHE research universities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tenure status</th>
<th>rank</th>
<th>$n$</th>
<th>median</th>
<th>mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>not tenure track</td>
<td>Instructor/Lecturer</td>
<td>6,771</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>48.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not tenure track</td>
<td>Assistant</td>
<td>5,078</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>46.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not tenure track</td>
<td>Associate</td>
<td>2,364</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>52.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>not tenure track</td>
<td>Full</td>
<td>1,064</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>59.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>pre-tenure</td>
<td>Assistant</td>
<td>9,245</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>39.0</td>
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<td>tenured</td>
<td>Associate</td>
<td>14,129</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>50.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>tenured</td>
<td>Full</td>
<td>18,306</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>59.3</td>
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Supporting Faculty

How can we help you advance?

Search

Go!
Get data-wise.
Years in rank, current associate professors, COACHE research universities, 2015-17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Area</th>
<th>median</th>
<th>mean</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>10.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Visual and Performing Arts</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>7.29</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>8.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engi / Comp Sci / Math / Stats</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>8.33</td>
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<tr>
<td>Biological Sciences</td>
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<td>8.07</td>
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<tr>
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<td>8.6</td>
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<tr>
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<td>8.1</td>
<td>6.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ag / Nat Res / Env Sci</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>7.13</td>
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</table>

“For how long have associate professors here been at this rank?”
How does our time-in-rank compare to other faculties like us?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline</th>
<th>Comparison Univ. median</th>
<th>Comparison Univ. mean</th>
<th>Compariso n Univ. Standard deviation</th>
<th>Anonymous Big Ten median</th>
<th>Anonymous Big Ten mean</th>
<th>Anonymous Big Ten s.d.</th>
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<td>8.34</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>5.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual &amp; Performing Arts</td>
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<td>7.53</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>5.47</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
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<td>8.04</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>5.49</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
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<td>9.4</td>
<td>8.29</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>5.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engi/CompSci/Math/Stats</td>
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<td>11.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Biological Sciences</td>
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<td>8.8</td>
<td>7.93</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>9.65</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical Sciences</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>4.24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agri/NatRes/EnviSci</td>
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<td>8.0</td>
<td>7.13</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health &amp; Human Ecology</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>6.08</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>7.38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reverse-engineer successful careers
Make orientation an authentic eye-opener.
Start a “contested topics” conversation.*

Open new pathways to promotion through modest T&P reforms.
Start a departmental dialog about differentiating, rebalancing and renegotiation.
Mentor across the ranks.
Tenured associate professors are more likely than others to be poorly mentored or not mentored at all in their departments.
Effectiveness of mentoring outside department, within institution

- Very ineffective
- Somewhat ineffective
- Not received
- Neither/Nor
- Somewhat effective
- Very effective

Bar chart showing the effectiveness of mentoring for different roles:
- T Full
- T Assoc
- TT Asst
- FT NTT

The chart indicates the percentage of respondents who rated mentoring as effective or ineffective for each role.
Invest in chairs as leaders, not merely caretakers.
There is no such thing as “The Faculty,” so make changes one department at a time.
1. Write your three key take-aways on a spare sheet of paper.

2. Write your name at the top.

3. Shift your paper to the right. If you don’t see your take-aways on that person’s page, add them.

4. Repeat as often as your table likes.

5. Retrieve your original sheet.
Insights for Making the Most of Mid-Career

- **Victor DiRita**, Chairperson, Microbiology and Molecular Genetics
- **Jim Dearing**, Chairperson, Communication
- **Chris Gray**, Director, Veterinary Medical Center
- **Malea Powell**, Chairperson, Writing, Rhetoric, and American Culture
- **Terah Venzant Chambers**, Associate Professor, Educational Administration
- **Mark Urban-Lurain**, Associate Professor, Dean’s Office in the College of Engineering
BREAKOUT SESSION SCHEDULE
(Refer to your agenda for session details)

- 10:40-10:50 a.m.  BREAK
- 10:50-11:20 a.m.  Breakout Session #1
- 11:20-11:30 a.m.  BREAK
- 11:30-12:00 p.m.  Breakout Session #2
- 12:00-12:30 p.m.  Reporting and Wrap-up
Reporting

• What are some important issues we should highlight?
• Questions still being considered or you would like to talk about?
• Suggestions you have or that you heard that you would like to share regarding issues in the mid-career?
Moving Forward

• Ideas on how the University can support those at mid-career based on issues discussed today?
Wrap-up

• Thank you
• Evaluations