

# Thriving in the Tenure System II: Transitioning From Associate to Full Professor

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B106/107, The Henry Center



# Thriving in Mid-Career at MSU: Administrator Perspective

*June Youatt*

Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs



# Thriving in the Tenure System II

## Agenda

The View from the Provost Level

Role of the Reflective Essay

Navigating the “Mid-Career” Faculty Terrain

Options and Opportunities for Development

What do Deans, Chairs and College Tenure Committee Members have to say



# APPOINTMENT, REAPPOINTMENT, TENURE, AND PROMOTION RECOMMENDATIONS

- ...academic administrators have the special obligation to build academic units strong in scholarship, teaching capacity, and public service.
- To discharge this responsibility, academic administrators must apply rigorous standards in making RPT recommendations.
- The achievement and performance level required must be competitive with faculties of leading research-intensive, land-grant universities of international scope.

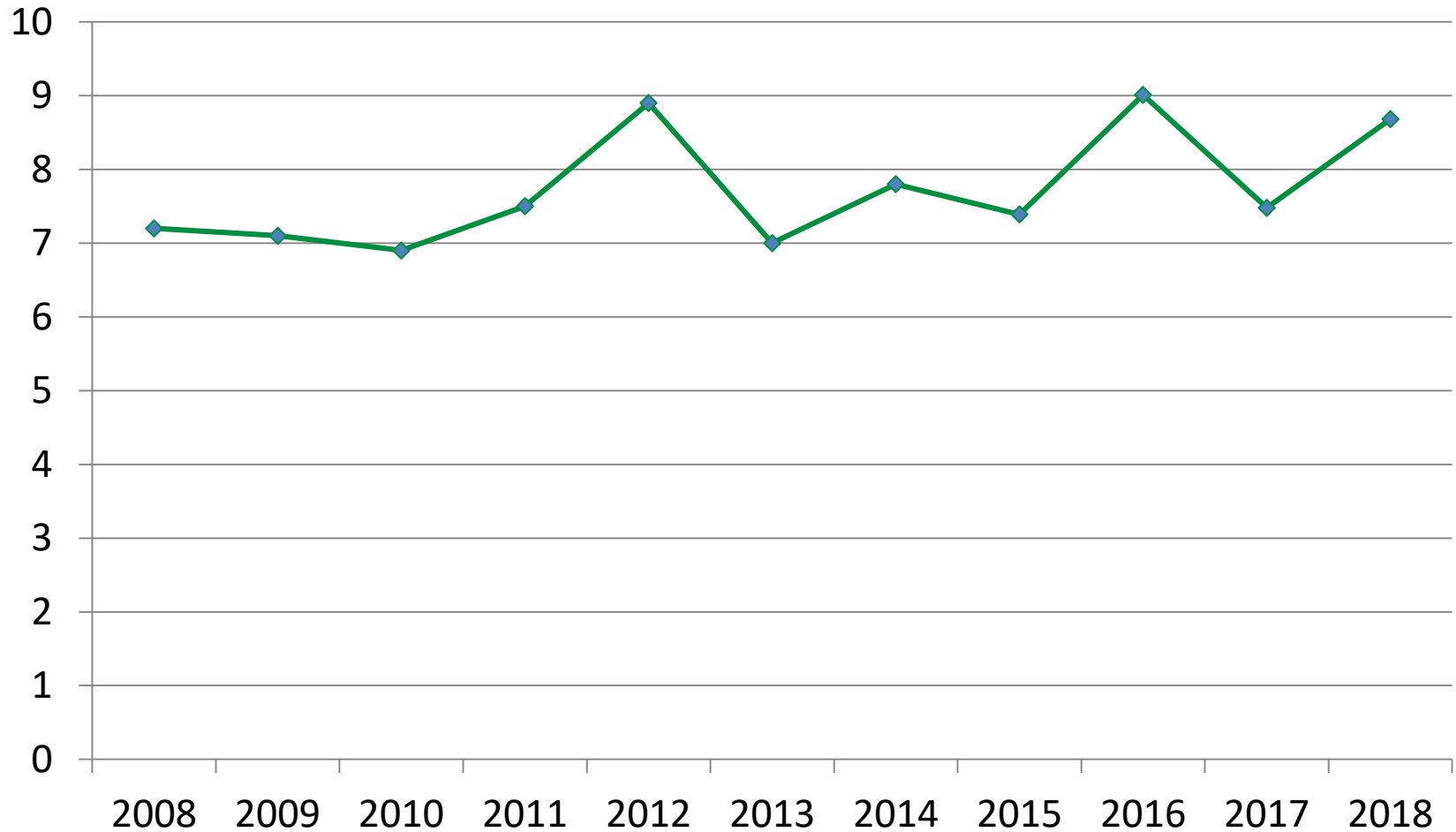


# APPOINTMENT, REAPPOINTMENT, TENURE, AND PROMOTION RECOMMENDATIONS (slide 2)

- A recommendation for promotion from associate professor to professor in the tenure system should be based on several years of sustained, outstanding achievements in education and scholarship across the mission, consistent with performance levels expected at peer universities. A reasonably long period in rank before promotion is usually necessary to provide a basis in actual performance to permit endorsement of the individual as an expert of national stature and to predict continuous, long-term, high-quality professional achievement.
- Bearing in mind the University's continuing objective to improve its faculty, the unit and college must refrain from doubtful recommendations .... The dean must evaluate carefully each recommendation to ensure that it is well grounded and fully justified.



## Average Time in Rank When Promoted to Professor



# THE REVIEW PROCESS

Department level committee makes recommendation to chair  
or school director



Chair independently makes a recommendation to the dean



The dean is advised by a college review committee



The dean independently makes a recommendation to the  
provost



## THE REVIEW PROCESS (Continued)

Representatives of the provost meet with each dean – Associate Provost AHR, VPRGS, and a distinguished MSU faculty member -- to review each case



Provost meets with representatives and formulates recommendations for President and Board of Trustees





# University Level Peer Review Committee for Tenure

Faculty Role in the Process

Brian T. Pentland

Main Street Capital Partners Endowed Professor  
Department of Accounting and Information Systems  
Broad College of Business



# Faculty Committee Make-up

12 faculty members

“all distinguished”

4 sub-committees

My sub-committee had members from:

Business, Social Science, Education

We reviewed Business, Com Arts, Education,  
James Madison, Law, and Social Science



# Faculty committee

We review and discuss all materials provided by the Dean to the Provost:

- Form D (includes faculty advisory votes)
- Annual Performance Reviews
- External Letters and related information

We participate in tenure system process only



# The Big Meeting

One faculty representative joins the meeting with

- College Dean (Associate Dean may also attend)
- Associate Provost for Academic HR
- Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies

Each candidate for promotion to Associate or Full Professor is discussed

Faculty thoughts are shared, but we are *advisory*



# The Faculty Role

- Seek to have a progressively stronger faculty
- Seek to maintain integrity of the process
- Independent Faculty Review
  - Faculty voice outside a candidate's community
- Impact on decision making?
  - Not likely on any one candidate
  - Over time... ?
- Promote a broader ,university-wide understanding of the process and the standards



# Reflective Essay

Juli Wade

Academic Advancement Network



## The Reflective Essay Should:

- Describe how you contribute to the missions of MSU and society more broadly
  - Impact and broader context of your scholarship and teaching/mentoring should be explained
- Highlight scholarship, research, and creative activities; what you have done and where you are going
  - Make a cohesive trajectory clear
  - Tell a story about your vision and progress toward it
- Include information on leadership in your discipline and at MSU, and how these contributions will advance in the future



## The Reflective Essay Should (slide 2):

- Make the strength of your reputation clear
- Be a polished document that includes some specific examples
- Communicate at a level appropriate for knowledgeable people who are not in your discipline





## The Reflective Essay Should *Not*:

- Simply summarize what is in CV or Form D (or be a list of what you've accomplished)
- Use a lot of jargon



## Questions to Ask:

- Why do you do what you do? And why does it matter to people other than you?
- What do you want to be known for, and why?



## General Advice:

- Get information from senior colleagues and unit leaders about the culture in your department and college regarding style and content of the document
- Highlight (and strive for) integration across your duties; focus on scholarship while making clear how all aspects (teaching, research, creative activities, service) impact each other

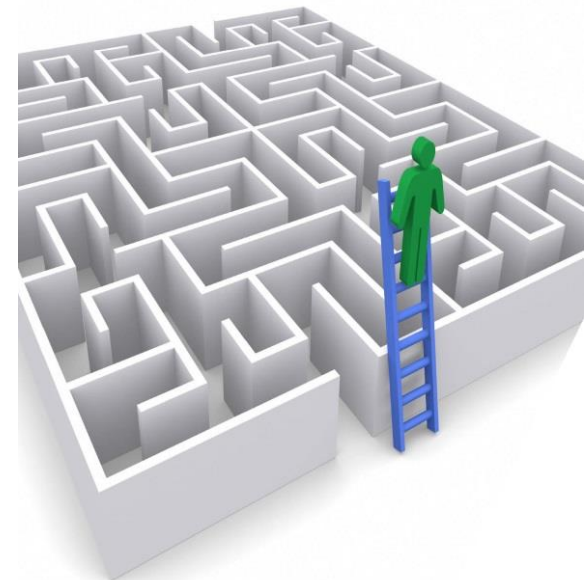


# Questions?



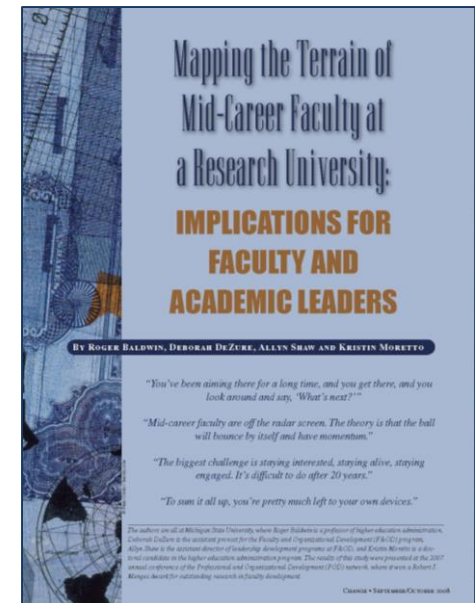
# Navigating the Terrain of the Mid-Career Faculty Experience at MSU

- ▶ Roger Baldwin  
Erickson Professor, Higher, Adult & Lifelong  
Education



# Topics

- Experiences and Challenges of Mid-Career Faculty
  - Mid-Career in context
  - Study of Mid-Career Faculty at MSU
    - Key Findings and Recommendations
    - For full discussion of design, sample, and findings, see *CHANGE* (2008) article
- Initiatives at MSU to Support Mid-Career Faculty



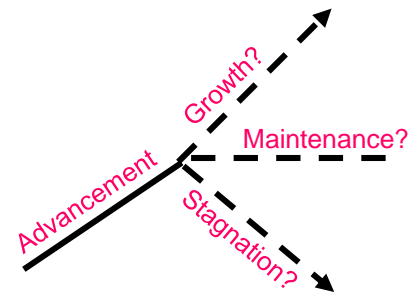
## Mid-Career Faculty in Context

- Midlife and mid-career are transition periods with distinctive challenges
  - No longer a novice professor
  - Gradually moving into the senior ranks
  - Mastered basics of the job (e.g., teaching) but often are confronted with new challenges (e.g., service and leadership expectations)



## Mid-Career Faculty in Context (slide 2)

- Short career ladder, extrinsic motivators (tenure, promotion) can diminish in mid-career
  - MC faculty can reach a plateau when growth and advancement slow or stop
  - Opportunities for learning, new challenges, growth opportunities needed to keep mid-career faculty engaged and productive





## Mid-Career Faculty in Context (slide 3)

- Limited research on mid-career faculty—Many assume faculty at mid-career know how to succeed, can fend for themselves



## Mid-Career at MSU

- Conducted a study of mid-career faculty issues at MSU
  - Interviewed associate professors 1-5 years post-tenure, 6+ years post-tenure
  - Interviewed department chairs who work with mid-career faculty
  - Questions concerned mid-career experiences, challenges, expectations, how to support mid-career faculty



# Common mid-career challenges at MSU

- **New expectations & demands:**
  - Higher or enhanced performance (especially in publications and grants)
- **New roles and duties** (especially service, administration, leadership)
- **Negotiating competing roles, finding balance**



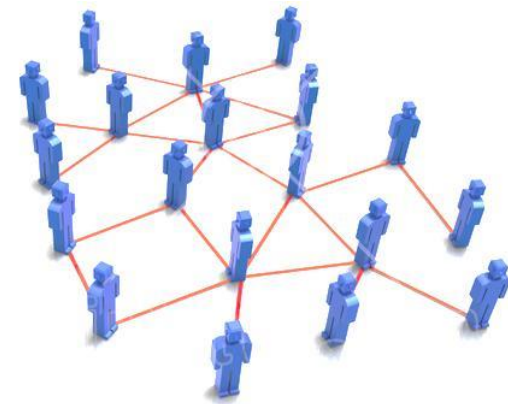
# Common mid-career challenges at MSU

- **Feeling Neglected or Invisible:** Less attention and support from department chair, colleagues
- **Unclear Goals:** Now what do I do? Without tenure to aim for, what do I want to accomplish? How do I identify my own targets?



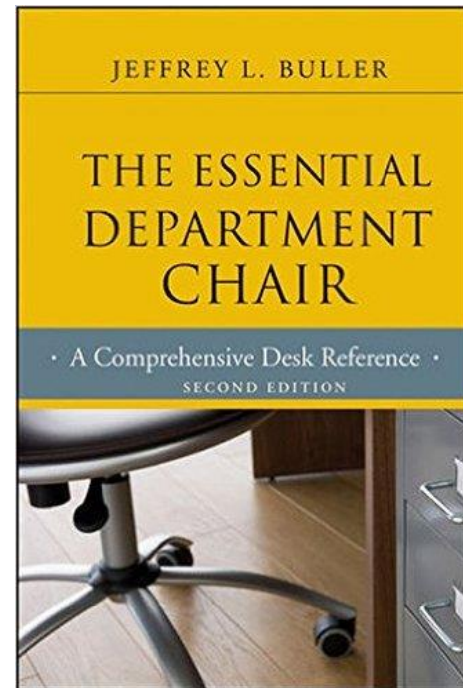
# Strategies Used by High Performers at Mid-Career

- Network, collaborate, build teams
- Exhibit adaptability, flexibility
- Strive to obtain external grants (particularly in STEM disciplines)
- Move from shorter to longer range projects



# Enlist your department chair as an ally

- Help MC faculty **balance roles**
- **Identify new goals**
- **Locate resources:** Funding, time, linking M-C faculty to other forms of support
- **Annual reviews** are good times to assess progress, identify goals, discuss what types of support is needed to move toward goals



## Resources available at MSU

- **Academic Advancement Network (AAN)**
  - Supports colleagues in developing productive careers reflective of their individual aspirations
  - Helps colleagues connect their aspirations to institutional priorities.



# AAN Nodes (areas of focus)

- **Teaching & Learning**

- Supports academics in developing & achieving goals for teaching & learning
  - Adams Academy Fellows (scholarly teaching practice)
  - Lilly Fellows (scholarship of teaching & learning)
  - Learning Communities

- **Research & Scholarship Node**

- Supports building & sustaining impactful research and scholarly programs
  - Support for interdisciplinary research and creative activities (in collaboration with OVRGS and other units)

- **Academic Career Paths**

- Supports meaningful & productive professional & personal lives across the arc of the career
  - Facilitation of department/college level mentoring workshops

- **Leadership Development Node**

- Facilitates learning opportunities for current and future leaders
  - Exploring Academic Leadership Lunches
  - AAN Leadership Fellows
  - Big Ten Academic Alliance Academic Leadership Program (ALP)





## Looking Forward

- See the mid-career as a time for reflection, refining, refocusing
- Be strategic in making choices
- Be proactive in setting directions, selecting opportunities, and seeking mentors



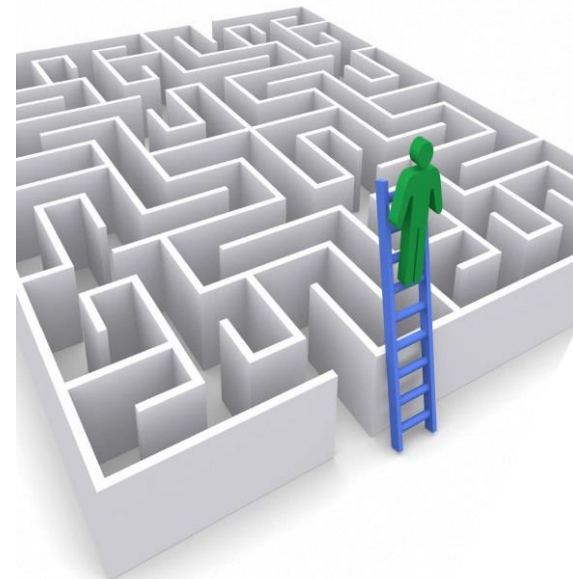
# Options and Opportunities for Development at the Mid-Career

▶ **Ann Austin**

Professor, Higher, Adult & Lifelong Education

Associate Dean for Research, Education

Assistant Provost for Faculty Development—  
Career Paths



## Mid-Career and Mid-Life as Time of Transition

- This period can be challenging and also exciting
- A time to reflect, reconnect, recharge, retool, redirect, renew
- An opportunity to be purposeful about one's career and goals
- A time for conscious reflection, analysis, and planning



# Consider your Options and Opportunities

- Take the time for a mapping process:
  - Consider your goals and values
  - Identify qualities, abilities, and skills of interest
  - Assess contextual factors of importance as you make decisions
  - Identify resources
  - Brainstorm possibilities
  - Talk with colleagues
  - Consider your overall trajectory—strengths, emphases, connections across elements of your work



# What are your goals and values as you look forward?

- What are you good at? What do you enjoy?
- What would you like to be doing differently? What have you not done yet that you would like to do? What have you done that you would like to do more of (or less of)?
- How has and how might your work fit with your broader life commitments, goals, and interests?
- What do you want your accomplishments at the end of your career to be?
- How do you see your work in relation to the university, your field, and the national/international contexts?
- What is the overall trajectory you are creating?



# What qualities, skills, or abilities do you want to develop or expand?

- Disciplinary/content/interdisciplinary expertise
  - New or extended topical expertise
  - New or expanded methodological areas
- Professional, personal, and process skills
  - Leadership abilities
  - Organizational knowledge and skills
  - Communications skills
  - Interpersonal strengths
  - Team management skills
  - Negotiation and conflict resolution skills
  - Financial management skills



## What contextual factors are relevant to your mid-career planning?

- Changes and directions in your field
- The situation in your department or college
- Personal responsibilities, constraints, goals, opportunities
- Feedback or conversations with your colleagues and friends
- The trajectory you are creating across your career



# Identify Resources for Advice, Ideas, & Support

- AAN (noted in Roger's comments)
- Office of VP for Research
- Work/Life Office
- College and institutional grants, fellowships
- Scholarly associations
- Foundations and federal/state agencies
- Colleagues whom you admire





# Brainstorm the Possibilities

- In Teaching
  - New courses, study abroad teaching, online teaching
  - Team teaching, special topics
- In Research
  - New collaborators or new work with established collaborators
  - Shifting to larger-scale projects
  - Opportunities with national agencies, scholarly associations
- In Service
  - Leadership roles—within MSU
  - Leadership roles—editorships, professional societies



# Talk to Colleagues about their Experiences

- My own case:
  - 1998: Fulbright to South Africa
  - 2015-2016: Two-year leave to work at the National Science Foundation
- Benefits and Outcomes
  - New research directions
  - New teaching opportunities
  - Collaborations for my department and college
  - National and international connections
  - Family benefits



# Mid-Career as a Time of Options and Opportunity

- Map and plan (with your overall trajectory in mind)
- Talk with colleagues, seek advice, use resources
- See this as a time for recharging, retooling, refocusing, rejuvenating
- Make strategic decisions based on reflective mapping



# Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure Process from the Vice President of Research and Graduate Studies

**Stephen Hsu**

Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies



# Break

Please take a 15 minute break.



## Panel Discussion

- *Charles L. Cox, Professor and Chairperson, Physiology*
- *Rachel Croson, Dean, College of Social Science*
- *Gemma Reguera, Professor, Microbiology and Molecular Genetics*
- *Cary Roseth, Professor and Chairperson, Counseling, Educational Psychology, and Special Education*
- *Narayanan Parameswaran, Professor and Associate Chair, Physiology, and College of Human Medicine Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure Committee Member*



Thank you.

Please take a minute to provide feedback by filling out the program evaluation that will be emailed to you.

Please visit the resource webpage of the Academic Advancement Network website at:

<http://bit.ly/ThriveTenureSystemII>

