



## **COMMUNICATING ONE'S CONTRIBUTIONS**

This guide is intended to assist UNBC faculty members, librarians, and senior laboratory instructors in their preparation of effective tenure and/or promotion application packages. This resource focuses specifically on communication of one's impact.

Provided by: Centre of Teaching, Learning, and Technology in collaboration with the Office of the Provost and the UNBC Faculty Association.

# A GUIDE TO PREPARING TENURE AND PROMOTION PACKAGES:

## COMMUNICATING ONE'S CONTRIBUTIONS

### INTRODUCTION

Thank you for taking the time for yourself at this important step in your career trajectory – tenure and/or promotion process. You have already begun to assist yourself in developing an effective tenure and/or promotion application by learning more about the process.

The tenure and promotion process is a fundamental aspect to the growth and development of a university. Unfortunately, this process is often surrounded by a lot of mystery and myth. In learning more about the process, you will provide yourself with the tools necessary to accomplish the goal of submitting an effective tenure and/or promotion package.

The guidelines provided in this document are ones that you will likely find to be familiar – you already practice many of them on a daily basis. We hope that you will find this guide to be a useful reminder of the practices you already employ.

## HIGHLIGHTS AND TIPS

Tenure and promotion need not be a mystical process. Learn more about the process.

You are likely aware of many of the best practices in terms of putting together an effective T+P application.

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## 1. PREPARATION STAGE

Provide yourself an appropriate amount of dedicated time to prepare an effective application package.

### Process

Become familiar with the relevant Articles in the Faculty Association Agreement. Section D (pp. 56-116) of the 2010-2012 Faculty Association Agreement provides information on the tenure and/or promotion application process.

Ask for clarification on the meaning of any Article. You have many resources to ask: the FA Office, the Office of the Provost (Donna Plourde and Joan Schneider), your Chair, and colleagues who have successfully applied for tenure and promotion.

### Timing

Tenure is a timed process (see **Article 22.3**). You will be asked to apply **“in your fifth year”**. If you feel that you meet the criteria for tenure before this time, you can apply earlier. Article 22.3.10 outlines how a member may make an application for extension of this timeline.

Promotion is initiated by you. Here you need to balance the timing of your application with your contributions.

Consult with your Chair and/or colleagues on the timing of your tenure application. The Office of the Provost can also provide an audit of your Official Personal File (OPF) to assist you with this decision.

## HIGHLIGHTS AND TIPS

Become familiar with the relevant Articles in the Faculty Association Agreement.

Ask for clarification on the meaning of any Article.

Give due consideration to the timing of your application.

Consult with your Chair and/or colleagues on the timing of your tenure application.

## HIGHLIGHTS AND TIPS

### **Time Management**

Construct a Table of Contents for your application package to use as a guideline for managing your time. Try placing 'due dates' on each section.

### **Ask for a Critical Reviewer**

Check with your colleagues both inside and outside of your unit to see if they would be willing to review a draft application.

Sometimes we do not effectively communicate our contributions or sometimes others will have a different perspective, highlighting the significance of something we overlooked.

A good reviewer is someone who will provide a critical eye on your application. Provide any reviewer with ample time to provide you with feedback.

Avoid asking your rotating member to be a reviewer.

### **Ask to Review a Successful Application**

For some of us, we like to see a template or model to help us understand what is required. Check with the FA Office to see model applications. Also consider asking your colleagues even if they are from other units.

Determine how you will manage your time in terms of writing and gathering the appropriate evidence.

A good reviewer is someone who will provide a critical eye on your application.

Check with the FA Office to see model applications.

## 2. WRITING / COMPILING STAGE

### General Tips

Your goal is to effectively communicate your contributions to teaching, scholarship, and service so that your readers can easily assess whether you have met the criteria for tenure and/or promotion. Remember that you will be providing a written document that will be read by people familiar *and* unfamiliar with your discipline.

Explain any acronyms or jargon.

Effective written communication is related to due consideration of the **structure** of your writing (i.e., how you organize your package) and the **clarity** of your writing (e.g., grammar and word choice).

### What to include in your application?

**Article 22.6.3.1 on pages 91-92 of the FA Agreement provides a concise summary of what you will need to include in your application.**

Your **cover letter** is key to assisting the readers in understanding your contributions towards tenure and promotion.

Use the criteria outlined in the FA Agreement as a way of organizing and structuring your application. For example, Article 22.13.1.1(d) regarding criteria for tenure outlines the requirements for (i) teaching, (ii) scholarship, and then (iii) service. Paralleling this structure in your application makes it easier for the reader to see how you have met the criteria.

## HIGHLIGHTS AND TIPS

Not all readers will be familiar with your discipline.

Explain all disciplinary acronyms and jargon.

Consider the structure of your application and the clarity of your writing.

What to include? See Article 22.6.3.1 (pp. 91-92).

The cover letter is key to your application.

Provide an opening paragraph that lets the Dean know that you have complied with the requirements of the tenure and promotion process (e.g., read your OPF, etc.).

If you are applying for both tenure and promotion, first focus on how you have met the criteria for tenure. The criteria for promotion build upon the criteria for tenure. The decision to grant tenure is independent of the decision to grant promotion.

Quote the criteria outlined in the FA Agreement. This strategy will help your external reviewers understand the UNBC tenure and/or promotion criteria that you are working with. Then ‘speak’ directly to the criteria by providing your evidence.

It is important to note that several of the tenure and/or promotion criteria contain two or more components. Take each of the criteria and break them down into their components.

For example, the criteria of “a record of sustained and productive scholarly activity” can be broken down into the following questions: How have you demonstrated a record of sustained scholarly activity? How have you demonstrated a record of productive scholarly activity? By addressing these two components separately, you make it clear for the reader to understand how you have met the overall criteria.

Use succinct writing. Succinct writing will need to be balanced with the need to provide clear evidence of how you have met the criteria. The onus is on you, the writer, to ensure that it is relatively easy for your diverse readers to see and understand the evidence that you are using to illustrate how you have met the criteria.

## HIGHLIGHTS AND TIPS

Quote the relevant criteria you are addressing.

Note that the criteria are comprised of two or more components.

Be succinct in your writing. Balance this with clear evidence of how you have met the criteria.

Check with the FA Office to see model applications.

## HIGHLIGHTS AND TIPS

Now that you have completed a draft application, re-read the document to ensure that you have addressed each of the criteria for tenure and/or promotion. Remember that a diversity of readers will engage with your application package.

Have a colleague read a draft of your cover letter and/or complete application package.

**Your final application for tenure and/or promotion is due on the first Tuesday after the Labour Day weekend.**

### **After submitting your application**

***After submitting the final document, take a few moments to recognize and appreciate the contributions you have made to yourself, your students, your field, your department, your community, and this university.***

### **FEEDBACK:**

Please feel free to provide feedback, suggestions, and your comments to William Owen (owenw@unbc.ca).

Re-read your draft application.

Ask a colleague to read your draft cover letter and/or complete application package.

The application due date: first Tuesday after the Labour Day weekend.

Pause, reflect on your contributions, and take time to celebrate your accomplishments at this stage of your career.