Tenure from the worm’s-eye view

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Zen and the art of tenure

- Imagine yourself in 5 to 7 years
- Learn to say no
- Say yes to what will help you
What gets you tenure?

- “Convincing evidence of excellence in at least two, and strength in the third, of the areas of teaching; of research, creative or professional activity; and of service, such as to demonstrate the possession of qualities appropriate to a member of the faculty occupying a permanent position.” I.e.,

- Scholarship that attracts the attention of the profession

- Teaching effectively

- Pulling your weight...but no more!
Departmental culture: figure it out!

- Find a mentor (even better, two)
- Learn departmental expectations
- But think beyond the department to your place on campus and in your field
Reflexive monitoring of action

- With yourself
- With your mentors
- With your department chair
- Pay attention to 4.2 and AFRs
- Note: some things worth doing are worth doing badly!
Document what you do

☐ Save everything (OK, not everything!)

☐ Syllabi, assignments, publications, grant proposals, “goody letters,” students’ letters, professional correspondence, etc.

☐ Copies of AFRs and earlier reviews

☐ Keep a tenure diary, if you are in a hostile environment
The tenure statement and file

- No false modesty!
- Think of the traditional rubrics
- Help your colleagues showcase what you do
Scholarship/Research

- Reviewers’ perspective: significance of what you have done, potential of what you will do
- Outside letters: whom do you pick?
- In your statement: explain your field to a layperson; note challenges; convey excitement
Teaching

- Reviewers’ perspective: effective? innovative? committed?
- How do you approach teaching at each level?
- What are your goals?
- What challenges have you faced?
- What have you done to become a better teacher?
Service

☐ Reviewers’ perspective: do you pull your weight?

☐ For tenure, the department matters most

☐ Explain everything you have done, especially if it was demanding

☐ What did you bring to it?
Is tenure worth it?

- Yes!
- But it’s not a reward, it is a form of recognition
- The UMass process makes it seem anticlimactic – which is better than terrifying!
Questions?