

**Tenure Conversation for a New Century:
Rigor, Flexibility, and Excellence
at a Great Public University
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Guide to Contents:

- A. Introduction: Background and Activities: page 2.
- B. Three Contexts: Values, Data, and History: page 3.
- C. Observations (I): What Works Well, in Practice, in our Tenure System: page 8.
- D. Observations (II): What Works Not So Well, in Practice: page 10.
- E. Observations (III): Thinking in the Horizon of Time: page 16.
- F. Ideas for Consideration: page 17.
- G. Sources and References: page 24.

A. Introduction: Background and Activities:

The Tenure Conversation Group began its work in 2008-2009 at the request of Provost Patrick Farrell, with continued support from Interim Provost Julie Underwood and Provost Paul M. DeLuca, Jr. We were asked to engage in thoughtful, low key discussion of ways in which our tenure-track culture works well, and ways in which we may improve. Our task is modest: to provide initial observations and ideas that can lay a foundation for wider discussion.

The long-term goal is to help foster a culture of campus conversation and best practices regarding tenure. Our intent is to catalyze continuing conversation, data collection, and ideas about opportunities for improvement – not to shut down conversation. We do not aspire to write the definitive final word. On the contrary, ongoing thoughtful conversation about strategic issues is vital to sustain our mission as a leading public university long into the twenty-first century.

A conversation about tenure cannot be reduced only to a discussion of best practices in the year of the tenure decision. It is inseparable from a conversation about the pre-tenure years – the multi-year process of professional mentoring and learning, by a variety of relevant actors, that culminates in a tenure decision. Nor is it inseparable from awareness that the ultimate responsibility to produce, over time, a record of achievement worthy of tenure rests with the probationary professor. We hope that all will read this report with the process dimension in mind.

We are grateful to our many interlocutors for embracing the spirit of a low-key but important conversation – non-defensive and non-accusatory in tone, yet aware that frustrations or problem areas can arise even in a well functioning system. All our interlocutors recognized that conversation about tenure and best practice is strategic for a future of excellence in the twenty-first century context of higher education. We profoundly appreciate such thoughtful engagement.

At the same time, we have learned that a report about a matter as delicate and strategic as tenure can generate a certain Rorschach-test effect. Each actor involved in the tenure process may wonder, “Is this report really aimed at my alleged failings or need for improvement?” During the drafting and sharing process, we have seen the Rorschach effect. Some actors have said the report is generous with Divisional Committees and tough on Department Chairs, while others have made exactly the opposite observation. Such reactions, while understandable, can exert damage if they render thoughtful and frank conversation among distinct actors more difficult.

Our working assumption, borne out by our experience with interlocutors, is that all actors in the tenure process act in good faith to serve the University and its academic units, on a case by case basis, and to respect University rules and values. We are impressed by the individuals who play roles in the tenure mentoring and evaluation process. This report focuses on a systemic level. It asks us all to step back from the individual case level, and to reflect more systemically about best-practices and change over time.

This report also asks us all to recognize human fallibility. Even when the system works well as a whole, and even when the individual actors do a great job as a whole, we all sometimes make mistakes. This is why, for a matter as academically and financially strategic as tenure, universities commonly use a multi-level sequential review and advisory process before reaching a final conclusion about granting of tenure.

The members of the Tenure Conversation Group came to the work with considerable experience. All have served in one or more of the following capacities: Divisional Committee, University Committee, or Department Chair. All are full professors who have mentored colleagues and participated in probationary and tenure reviews. They reflect a variety of stakeholders in the tenure process, as well as balance across knowledge fields and the four faculty divisions. The members are Jake Blanchard (Engineering Physics), Barbara Bowers (School of Nursing), Patti Brennan (Industrial and Systems Engineering), Murray Clayton (Plant Pathology and Statistics), Jane Collins (Community and Environmental Sociology, Gender and Women's Studies), Jim Escalante (Art), Beth Meyerand (Medical Physics), Laurel Rice (Obstetrics and Gynecology), and Sue Zaeske (Communication Arts). Steve J. Stern (Vice-Provost and History) served as Chair. Mo Bischof and Eden Inoway-Ronnie (Provost's Office) also worked with the group and provided research and staff support.

In addition to its internal meetings to consider data and analyze issues, the Tenure Conversation Group solicited advice and feedback, grounded in experience and thoughtful reflection, from a wide variety of actors. Our interlocutors included the University Committee, the four Divisional Committees (Arts and Humanities, Biological Science, Physical Sciences, Social Studies), Lori Hayward and David Musolf in their respective roles as Secretary of the Divisional Committees and Secretary of the Faculty, the academic deans and central campus leadership, chairs and directors (via the "Chairs Chats" meetings), and recently tenured faculty. We have also worked with our WISELI colleagues as they prepared tenure related data collection for the faculty climate survey scheduled for Spring 2010.

With everyone including ourselves, we used three open-ended starter questions:

1. In practice, what works well in our tenure system?
2. In practice, what does not work so well in our tenure system?
3. As one looks forward, what emerging issues will be important for the tenure consideration process in the future?

Sections C, D, and E of this report parallel the order of the starter-questions above, to share what we learned in each of these domains.

B. Context: Values, Data, and History:

When considering the wider context for meaningful discussion, three key questions arise. First, why do we value a tenure system at all? Second, what is actually happening? What do recent and current data tell us about tenure rates? Third, where have we come from and where are we headed? How might historical awareness influence discussion?

1. Why do we value a tenure system at all? Tenure has become so accepted in the modern academy that we may lose sight of the larger reasons we value it, aside from the impact its achievement has on individual lives and careers.

For a great university, a well functioning tenure system – rigorous in its demand for demonstrated excellence; flexible in its embrace of the ways distinct fields and epistemologies breed distinct pathways to and markers of excellence; agile in its ability to adapt to changes in the world of academic knowledge and work – is valuable for several reasons.

(a) The long-term institutional commitment to a quality faculty member breeds academic freedom and breakthrough, by assuring that truly original or idiosyncratic thinkers will not be silenced or swayed by shifting winds of popularity or fashion, or by the intellectual tyranny of mainstream thought, or by fear that a bold experiment or daring-thinking effort may fail. Other forms of dismissal for cause exist and are legitimate. Intellectually, however, we want to encourage “fearless” drive in the sifting and winnowing for truth.

(b) The existence of a tenure clock system creates accountability. It requires that an assistant professor demonstrate a record of achievement and excellence within a finite period in order to earn tenure. It requires that the hiring academic unit document achievement of that standard. It requires, as part of such documentation and assessment, submission of the scholarly record to off-campus peer review. The tenure clock system also socializes professors into a high-stakes, merit driven ethic of research, teaching, and service, and into the idea that such achievement must be rigorously documented.

(c) A well functioning tenure-track system serves students not only by assuring that faculty meet a high standard of excellence and are unfettered by fear of original thought, but also by breeding a stability of commitment that fosters good teaching. It encourages faculty to build something of enduring value – to concentrate on the long-term needs of the community and its students, rather than to focus on the search for the next temporary job.

(d) A healthy tenure-track system that fosters retention of quality people also has financial value. It means that initial investments in start-up packages and in mentoring of probationary faculty have a better chance to turn into net gains as seasoned faculty with long-term institutional commitment pull major external grants into their labs, and into the University and State economies. A revolving-door faculty culture would be very expensive, as well as deleterious to students. It would flush away resources that must be invested in start-up packages and mentoring as we recruit the best minds.

2. What do the tenure-rate data tell us? Most probationary faculty achieve tenure at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, based on their combined record of scholarship, teaching, and service within the six-year “tenure clock” period. (The chronological clock period and the tenure clock period are *distinct* concepts, because there are legitimate reasons to pause or pro-rate the tick of the tenure clock. For example, we encourage faculty to request a tenure-clock pause because of birth of a child. We also allow for pauses because of unforeseen contingencies that directly affect productivity, such as a construction problem or a weather disaster that blocks the take-off of lab research.)

We have an authentic rather than a “make-believe” tenure-track system. We work with a grow-your-own-star model of recruitment; about four-fifths of new faculty appointees are probationary faculty. We are careful about the quality of initial appointments – and the likelihood that the appointed assistant professor will have the capacity to meet our tenure standards. We take seriously the *process* of tenure preparation – mentoring, peer review, and professional development – that precedes the tenure decision year. Most appointees achieve tenure.

For sake of balance, we note that the general statement does *not* imply that we have a perfect system – that we adopt the hubris of assuming human infallibility and systemic perfection. Here are three limits of the general characterization.

(a) It does *not* address uneven tenure rate outcomes – for example, the gaps between rates in the Social Studies Division and the other three Divisions, or between white male faculty compared to female faculty of color.

Uneven Tenure/Retention Rate Outcomes, Tenure Track Faculty, by Division

	Biological Sciences	Physical Sciences	Arts and Humanities	Social Studies
6-Year Rate, cohorts = 1994-95 to 2003-04	44% (n = 249)	63% (n = 159)	59% (n = 151)	36% (n = 266)
9-Year Rate, cohorts = 1994-95 to 2000-01	72% (n = 160)	77% (n = 104)	79% (n = 96)	49% (n = 181)

Notes: The tenure rates above take into account *all forms of faculty attrition*; see the text below for distinct measures of tenure rates. The gap between cumulative tenure rates between female faculty of color and white male faculty (and male faculty generally) is based on data and analysis in the College of L & S 2007 EDC Report on “Faculty Diversity and Excellence.” For College women faculty of color, taking into account *all forms of faculty attrition*, the 6-year tenure rate (cohorts 1987-2001; n =45) amounted to 33.3%, and the 9-year tenure rate (cohorts 1987-1999) amounted to 44.8%. In both instances, the gap compared with men exceeded 20%.

(b) The general characterization does *not* address invisible opportunity-cost – people who do not make it into our tenure-track system. Such invisible opportunity-cost may occur, for example, in relation to the dual track recruitment system (tenure track, CHS track) in health sciences. It may also happen, for example, in relation to diversity if the applicant recruitment pipeline is inadequately maximized in searches.

(c) The general characterization does *not* address the ways that our tenure system – as an experiential and perception-based process – may or may not affect retention beyond the point of tenure, or competitiveness of recruitment in some fields compared to others.

There are three standard ways to measure tenure rates: (a) retention and promotion of probationary faculty within six chronological years; (b) retention and promotion of probationary faculty within nine chronological years; (c) approval votes in the case of candidates who “make it” to the Divisional Committee level.

The six-year measure reveals a significant gender gap and considers all forms of attrition – people who left to take another job, or did not receive a recommendation for renewal during the probationary period, or did not receive an executive committee recommendation for tenure, or did not come before the Divisional Committee because of a tenure clock pause (“extension”), or resigned for personal or health or other reasons, in addition to people without tenure as a result of the outcome of Divisional Committee advisory votes and the formal tenure process. **The six-year tenure rate**, for probationary faculty cohorts hired from 1994-95 through 2003-04, **is about one-half** (47.6%; n = 825). The gender gap is about 14% (39.2% women, 52.8% men).

The nine-year measure also considers all forms of attrition, and enables us to see more clearly the impact of the difference between chronological time and tenure clock time. The

gender gap narrows considerably. **The nine-year tenure rate**, for cohorts hired from 1994-95 through 2000-01, **is about two-thirds** (66.5%, n = 541 probationary hires). The gender gap is about 6% (62.9% women, 68.7% men). Arguably, the single most meaningful rate is the nine-year rate that takes into account all forms of attrition, since legitimate tenure clock pauses have become common, and since the measure does not screen out cases that would have failed to receive a favorable Executive Committee or Divisional Committee vote, if presented.

The Divisional Committee measure screens out all attrition not directly attributable to consideration by the Divisional Committee. It asks how many faculty candidates, within the smaller (pre-screened) universe that “arrives” to the Divisional Committee level, receive a positive advisory vote.

The Divisional Committee approval rates have exceeded 90% since the early 1990s. Approvals were 93% (n = 378) during 2004-09. The aggregate rates reveal no meaningful distinction between female and male candidates (both at 93%), but disaggregate data reveal nuances. For example, there was a gender gap in the Social Studies Division’s approval rates: female candidates at 86%, males at 98% (n = 43 and n = 53, respectively). The Tenure Conversation Group notes the gap, but does not claim to have an explanation of it.

In the 1980s, Divisional Committee approval rates were somewhat lower – 88.4% during 1981-1991 (n = 934). (If one took into account 7 overrides or tie-breakers by deans and 10 positive advisory votes by DCs in re-considerations a year later, the rate would be a bit higher.) Although there was no meaningful aggregate distinction between female and male candidates, disaggregate data reveal a more nuanced picture. Only 6 women came up for consideration in the Physical Sciences Division, and a gender gap (female approval at 80.4%, male approval at 87.7%) was present in the Biological Studies Division. (Divisional Committee data relied on year-by-year records kindly supplied by Lori Hayward.)

3. Where have we come from and where are we headed? Historical consciousness is useful. It enables us to see the tenure system that we take as common sense not as something timeless or self-evident, but rather as a set of practices and expectations that took hold in a foundational moment – and subsequently refined in response to perceived needs, the shifting shape of knowledge fields, awareness of exclusions that required remedy, and the like. It encourages us to ask what further refinements may be needed to assure that we will be a leading public university far into the twenty-first century. It *also* enables us to see that some tensions of the tenure process are structural, not of recent creation.

Notwithstanding our pride in the UW-Madison’s pioneering role in the 1890s-1910s in defense of “fearless sifting and winnowing,” a recognizable version of the modern tenure system – and the public research university as we know it – did not emerge until the post-World War II era. This was the age of democratization of access to higher education, and expansion of public investment in science and education. The foundational document about tenure and academic freedom was a 1940 statement of principles by the American Association of University Professors (see AAUP 2006: 3-11, and for a 1915 forerunner, 291-301). In the 1940s-1960s era of the modern tenure and university system, the standard of evaluation had a stronger “old boys network” aspect. The ethos of faculty searches as well as tenure evaluations placed greater weight on trust in the judgment of authoritative figures, less weight on having such figures elaborate the reasoning behind the judgment. The open-posting system for faculty vacancies we take for granted today was not common. The prevailing norms meant that letters of recommendation for jobs, letters of evaluation for tenure, and documentation of the tenure

case could all be much shorter. (For UW-Madison and academic freedom controversies in historical context, from the 1890s through the post-war expansion, see Curti and Carstensen 1949, I: 288-89, 508-27, 630-45; II: 53-76, 339-42; Cronon and Jenkins 1994, III: 123-31, 468-70; Cronon and Jenkins 1999, IV: 400-11; also Herfurth 1948.)

The University of Wisconsin and its tenure system bear witness to this historicity. Consider, for example, our Divisional Committee structure. In 1942, the University Committee proposed a four-part Divisional Committee structure, to provide advice to deans or the president on promotion. The rationale noted that the University was expanding, that new fields of specialization were emerging, that new demands for cross-cultural study and trans-unit collaboration were expected to become important after the world war. Divisional Committees would presumably help “bridge the gap between the autonomous departments and the single administration of a large college.”

The proposal ignited controversy. The faculty of Physical Sciences voted to disband Divisional Committee organization in 1945. The faculty approved a Divisional Committee structure in 1948, but implementation proved slow. The founding structure in 1959 blended the UW-Madison and UW-Milwaukee faculties, and relied on appointed rather than elected chairs of divisional committees. The recognizable version of our current Divisional Committee structure did not crystallize until the 1970s.

Meanwhile, debate and tension about proper roles sometimes occurred. In 1969, for example, the Biological Sciences Division included the following statement in its guidelines: “There is a mistaken impression that legitimate requests can be irrevocably blocked by an unrealistic or capricious Divisional Committee. This is not so. . . . [T]he Committee’s role is only advisory. The Dean and Chancellor need not accept its advice.”

To the contemporary eye, the early guidelines for promotion dossiers look brief – more inflected by the normative assumptions of how peer review and trust worked in an “old boys” era. The tenure guidelines of the Social Studies Divisional Committee in 1959 amounted to *one* page. As late as 1969, the tenure guidelines of the Biological Sciences, Humanities, and Physical Sciences Division amounted to less than *three* pages. Not until the 1980s did the Divisional Committee guideline documents turn decisively toward the detailed prescriptive documents we now expect. Notable refinements have continued, such as the incorporation of a key 1997 committee report on how to document and evaluate scholarly excellence in appointments with a heavy extension or “Wisconsin Idea” component.

[Quotes and chronology above are from documents in the Divisional Committee files, kindly supplied by Lori Hayward.]

A similar historicity applies to many other aspects of our tenure culture. For example, we pay closer attention to formal mentoring, orientation, and networking of probationary faculty today. The earlier era relied more on informal mentoring, a kind of apprenticeship by osmosis. Likewise, the Women Faculty Mentoring Program we now value would have made little sense to most faculty in the early post-World II tenure era (1940s-1960s), because few faculty were women and little urgency was attached to recruiting and retaining women faculty. Another example of shifting context is financial. In an earlier era, the financial implications of tenure were bound by finite time caps at the individual level, since mandatory retirement ages applied. Today, tenure is not bound by a mandatory retirement age.

The paradox of tenure evolution in medical schools during the last quarter-century is a final example of historicity. This is important to understand because the relationship of health sciences and tenure has sparked tension, from time to time, on our campus. Yet it is not always clear that such discussions are informed by a sense of historical change and continuity.

Between 1985 and 2004, academic medical schools came to play an expanded role in clinical care – as well as research and teaching – in the U.S. medical and health science system. The **absolute numbers** of MD faculty in clinical departments who were on the tenure-track soared more than 50% – **from 14,026 to 21,921**. At the same time, the **relative proportion** on the tenure-track declined – **from 57% to 42%** of faculty.

(A complication of comparative assessment is that tenure may be “counted” or understood differently in institutional contexts; some medical schools operate in a more stand-alone context in which tenure refers to the medical school rather than the university as a whole. Nonetheless, it is worth knowing that UW-Madison’s SMPH has been a national outlier in the relative proportion of MD faculty in clinical departments who are tenure-track. As of January 2009, the proportion was **29.5%** when considering MDs on the tenure and CHS tracks [n = 637]. Not surprisingly, the proportion falls lower, to 6.3% [n = 2607], if one includes faculty on the clinician-teacher track. Such proportions contrast with those of our closest prestige competitor among Big Ten research universities. At the University of Michigan, the proportion of MD faculty in clinical departments on the tenure track was 46.7%. Figures above were kindly facilitated by SMPH Dean’s Office.)

Meanwhile, the political economy of tenure in medical schools – the institutional commitment to salary and job security, in exchange for a documented record of achievement and excellence – diverged from the standard academic model. To compete in the academic-medical market required a hybrid political economy that built a portfolio salary structure, based in part on the tenure system’s long-term institutional commitment to salary, and in part on revenues generated by clinical care and research projects. In nearly two of five (38%) of medical schools in 2005 (n = 113), even the portfolio budget system had fallen apart – tenure did not guarantee clinical faculty even a partial base salary. Its functions, beyond protection of academic freedom, are two-fold: the accountability-recognition function, to mark and credential scholarly excellence; and the governance function, when defining the community of access to faculty governance. (For an introduction to trends and national statistics cited, see Bunton and Mallon 2007. For a pertinent 1999 AAUP document on tenure and hybrid realities of medical schools, see AAUP 2006: 119-24.)

Historical consciousness invites us to avoid equating practice at a given moment with timeless common sense, and thereby frees us to ask useful questions. As a campus, have we have addressed recent trends and anticipated new ones, in a manner consistent with the enduring principle of a rigorous and flexible tenure system. Are we attuned to the needs of a leading-edge university of the twenty-first century? Are we thinking *with* the arc of time, or forgetting about it? In section “E,” we identify some arc-of-time issues.

C. Observations (I): What Works Well, in Practice, in our Tenure System:

The Tenure Conversation Group did **not** conclude that we have a broken tenure system in need of major overhaul or restructuring. Key areas that work well are listed below. Some of

these have a double-edge aspect or a caveat that needs acknowledgment. We note such situations, but reserve their discussion for later.

1. Accountability:

Having the Divisional Committee process of review leading to an advisory vote helps the University and its departments sustain high standards by reinforcing a sense of accountability. For an issue as intellectually and financially strategic as tenure, a sequential multi-level review process in the tenure decision – where home department faculty, campus-wide faculty committees, and academic deans all play significant roles – makes sense. This is a principle widely shared in higher education. The process strengthens accountability within a shared governance paradigm. The principle of sequential multi-layered review also takes into account the human fallibility that may occur, albeit only rarely, at any level of the process.

(We note a caveat. Accountability to a Divisional Committee can turn into a double-edged sword, if it breeds outsized fear and avoidance behaviors; see D.1. below.)

2. Conscientiousness:

The many actors, in the mentoring and evaluation journey that culminates in a decision about tenure, are conscientious. They take their roles seriously. Divisional Committee members are thoughtful, and many approach their reviews as a scholarly endeavor. Chairs and faculty at the Department level likewise take the evaluation process seriously and thoughtfully. At the campus and faculty governance levels, additional initiatives such as creation of the Women Faculty Mentoring Program, faculty legislation on legitimate reasons to pause the tenure clock, and workshops for probationary faculty evince awareness that conscientiousness about tenure must begin with good mentoring, well *before* the tenure decision year. Similar statements could be made of the other relevant social actors – including academic deans and probationary professors.

3. Non-political ethos of Divisional Committees:

Divisional Committee members are generally apolitical in their approach, and generally understand the importance of avoiding favor of one academic unit over another, one field's epistemology over another. They avoid horse-trading dynamics.

4. Authenticity from result-based perspective:

For faculty who are on the tenure track, the tenure system is “authentic” in the sense that most faculty achieve tenure and hired in the good-faith expectation that they are likely to build a record worthy of tenure. The results – see data in section “B” above – bear out this expectation. If a candidate makes it to the Divisional Committee stage, the strong probability is that she or he has built a record worthy of tenure.

(We note in passing a caveat. Is there an opportunity-cost in the form of invisible exclusion of people before they enter our mentoring-tenure system? Does such opportunity-cost affect some academic fields more than others, some racial-ethnic groups more than

others? Does perception about mentoring or tenure create additional pipeline, recruitment, or retention problems?)

5. *Pro-active assistant professors:*

Many assistant professors take a pro-active role in learning what the expectations for tenure are and how to meet them. They visit the Divisional Committee Office or the Vice-Provost for Faculty & Staff Office for advice or to see model dossiers. They seek additional informal mentors or work with the Women Faculty Mentoring Program. They attend annual tenure workshops and build a documented portfolio of accomplishments in dialogue with tenure expectations. They seek frank assessment of strengths and weaknesses on the road to the tenure decision. The campus culture and our tenure workshops encourage a pro-active style.

6. *Experience and willingness to share:*

There is a reservoir of experience and wisdom on campus, and many veterans are willing to share what they have learned. Some department chairs or former chairs have become expert and experienced writers of tenure dossiers, who understand well what Divisional Committees need and want to know, and can offer good advice. Likewise, former Divisional Committee members constitute a pool of experience. Some schools and colleges have appointed people to serve as “second-eyes” to review draft dossiers and spot areas in need of improved or clearer explanation before the final-draft version is sent on to the Divisional Committee.

7. *Clarity of guidelines:*

On the whole, the Divisional Committee guidelines are clear. They offer more guidance compared to the pre-1980s era. They signal a desire to balance rigor and flexibility: to sustain eminence as a premier research university while integrating a strong commitment to teaching and service, and while holding in mind the reality that there are multiple fields, subfields, and cross-fields of knowledge. The guidelines take cognizance of a wide range of fields and hybrid appointments – for example, cluster fields and multi-unit appointments, jobs with a heavy extension and/or community-based research agenda – and their multiple pathways to and markers of scholarly excellence.

D. Observations (II): What Works Not So Well, in Practice:

The Tenure Conversation Group and our interlocutors at every level – divisional committee members, department chairs, University Committee members, academic deans, and recently tenured faculty – also found some areas where our tenure system does not work as well as we would hope. We list below some major recurring observations of areas in which we can do better.

1. *The fear factor:*

Perception or mythology about Divisional Committee can create an overblown fear factor that leads to self-defeating behavior. For example, fear may encourage distortion in making the case for tenure, such as trying to gloss over (rather than engage and explain) an apparent weakness in the dossier in the hope that no one will notice. Another example is poor decision making or mentoring about career choices on the road to tenure. For example, a mentor or mentee may make poor decisions about whether to request a tenure-clock extension, or whether to follow one's research passion, based on the fear – not always well informed or up to date – that “you must do the following or the DC will vote against you.” Mythology, fear, and communication can also lead to alienation that harms retention in the medium run – the sentiment that “I got tenure, so why do I feel miserable about this place anyway?”

The fear factor cannot be reduced simply to a problem of perception without connection to a larger social context. It can be compounded by inconsistent feedback over time from senior colleagues who extrapolate from their own experiences, by anxiety about institutional memory on Divisional Committees with rotating memberships, and by concern about acceptance of unusual research methodologies and publication outlets in some cross-fields of knowledge.

2. Variable quality of the process at the department level, at different stages:

(a) **Before** the tenure decision year, problems of unevenness of advice, preparation, and learning can arise. Here are some examples.

(1) The quality of mentoring and the annual review process varies. Faculty may mentor their younger peers based on their personal memories (accurate or inaccurate) about what the tenure process was like in their own era and their own case, rather than based on current policy and guidelines. *A recurring example is the mixed-messaging some probationary faculty still experience about whether it is wise to receive a tenure clock extension related to child birth. Campus policy emphatically considers it wise to take tenure clock extensions related to child birth, and the policy is strongly aligned with Divisional Committee practice.*

(2) Misalignments can emerge between expectations at the outset (as written in letters of appointment, for example), and the standards or research and teaching assignments that come into play at a later stage.

(3) Misalignment issues and anxieties may be compounded in cases where the candidate does considerable work across distinct units or across conventional disciplinary boundaries (for example, in a cluster appointment or a joint appointment).

(4) Some departments do not have written standards or legislation that summarizes criteria for tenure, notwithstanding a requirement in FPP (7.14.D) that they develop such standards. As important, they may not communicate standards effectively at a cultural level.

(b) **During** the tenure decision year, unevenness of preparation and follow-up can also occur. Here are some examples.

(1) The quality of tenure dossier preparation, so that it matches up effectively with Divisional Committee expectations and its need-to-know guidelines, varies considerably.

(2) Awareness by Chairs about the crucial importance of their cover letters varies. The quality of assistance to chairs by departmental Tenure Review Committees, to lay a foundation for the cover letter, also varies. In cases where the department's Executive Committee has cast a split vote, the quality of explanation varies.

(3) Skill in explaining to an audience of intelligent outsiders – people truly outside the field and its epistemology, but who will understand what is explained clearly – the nature of a candidate's field or subfield, and its criteria and markers of excellence, varies. (Also, some subfields have become so "mixed" – an interdependent crossing of fields – or have become so technical that clear explanation is more challenging than usual.)

(4) Securing appropriate outside letter writers can prove challenging. In an age of proliferation of fields – both specialized subfields, and emergence of new cross-fields – identification of appropriate outside referees, able to engage the candidate's work, can prove complex and daunting. Even diligent chairs with considerable intellectual range can run into difficulties.

(5) The experience factor – recent involvement in tenure and dossier evaluation at the divisional committee level – varies within executive committee cultures. Some send up tenure cases every year; others send up cases only once every few years. Some have a cluster of former members of the divisional committee with recent experience; others don't. Some have had great success with recent tenure dossiers; others have not.

(6) The quality of monitoring and communication during the tenure decision process – timely delivery of information to and from candidates, well contextualized interpretations of what a majority Divisional Committee vote actually signifies – also varies.

3. Variable capacity to evaluate, at the divisional committee level:

Divisional Committee members face the difficult task of balancing the need to uphold high standards, and the flexibility also required to engage and evaluate fairly a wide array of fields, subfields, trans-fields, and academic-work obligations. They need to accomplish this in a manner that is timely and does not harm our competitive ability to recruit and retain outstanding faculty. Even if all dossiers were clear and well prepared, the diversity of fields and pathways to tenure can create some unevenness or frustration in the capacity to evaluate.

Such issues arise in relation to fragile institutional memory, the diversity of fields and appointments, and the distinct career cycle phases of candidates presented to the Divisional Committee for an advisory vote.

(a) **Fragile continuity.** Divisional Committee members observed that fragile continuity of memory and membership can sometimes prove challenging. The somewhat unpredictable

course of faculty leave cycles, and the multiple demands (research, teaching, service) on faculty time, in some years requires that committees socialize more new members than usual. Such situations can compound the unevenness of experience and memory within the committee. Recruitment for service on the Divisional Committee has also sometimes proved difficult. Such situations can complicate issues of continuity, as well as field balance, from year to year.

(b) ***Diversity of fields and appointments.*** The diversity of fields is staggering – the UW-Madison web site in March 2009 listed 166 academic departments and programs. All influence the range of intellectual life and expectation in the campus community, and most have tenure-home status. It would be surprising if the range of fields and academic expectations did not pose some challenges in capacity-to-evaluate at the Divisional Committee level.

There are two aspects to the diversity-of-fields issue: (1) *the challenge of effective communication, understanding, and evaluation* when work in a given field, subfield, or cross-field is submitted to review by intelligent outsiders whose range of direct expertise is bounded; and (2) *the challenge of intellectual cosmopolitanism*, that is, embrace of the many forms or pathways – some unfamiliar – to excellence of scholarship, teaching, and service.

It is important to note that the Divisional Committees have devised some practices to respond to the challenge of evaluating a wide array of fields. Several examples are given in section “F” of this report.

Nonetheless, the diversity of fields and appointments can pose perennial challenges of capacity to communicate, understand, and evaluate. Four well known areas of challenge have been *arts fields, health science fields, service- or community-based research fields, and blended fields* that press against conventional academic boundaries.

The first three cases – arts, health science, and service- or community-based research fields – are variations on the idea of the scholar-practitioner, where distinction between scholarly professional-clinical practice that advances a knowledge field, and non-academic professional-clinical practice, is vital. Once the distinction is drawn, it requires explanation, documentation, and acceptance.

One Divisional Committee member usefully described the issue as the distinction between “content” and “currency.” In a field like philosophy, compared to other humanities fields, the intellectual content of the research may look like an “outlier” to the persons who happen to be on the Divisional Committee in a given year. But the “currency” of excellence – how one measures productivity and assesses quality – may look familiar. In the performing and creative arts, the “currency” itself may diverge from the norm familiar to most members of the Divisional Committee in a given year.

Similar issues may arise for distinct kinds of teaching. Some fields lean heavily to in-class teaching and readily generate a well known currency of data including peer review of classes and syllabi, and student evaluations. Others lean heavily to out-of-class models such as clinical apprenticeship, field-based teaching, extension- or outreach-education, and the like.

The fourth example – blended fields – may render identification of the appropriate Divisional Committee itself a highly ambiguous issue. Once a Divisional Committee is identified, creating a process of effective communication that finds an intellectually cosmopolitan response may also prove vexing.

(c) **Career cycle phases of candidates under consideration.** Each Divisional Committee issues a single set of guidelines for tenure dossier preparation, but should the documentary requirements be the same for a senior faculty hire at the tenured level and for a probationary faculty member coming up through the system for a first-time tenure evaluation?

In reality, the contexts are different. A full professor under consideration for an appointment at UW-Madison may have a very lengthy and multi-faceted track record, compared to an assistant professor under consideration for tenure. The scale of career documentation may be dramatically different. The time available to departments to assemble the dossier may be shorter, if negotiations to hire with tenure do not reach a final stage until late in the academic year. Access to some parts of career documentation, such as student evaluations of teaching at other institutions, may prove elusive. At the same time, strong competitive pressure may require an agile tenure decision making process.

Such situations can create frustrations for all actors. Even if the Divisional Committee informally has an internal understanding that the documentation requirements are different for a dossier assembled under circumstances of competitive recruitment of an established scholar at the tenured rank, that understanding is not necessarily communicated, formally or informally, to departments. Lack of communication can create unnecessary anxiety and stress for the department Chair who faces a highly competitive recruitment environment, and may compound challenges of perception in relations between departments and divisional committees.

In sum, an absence of expedited-review guidelines or understandings, whether communicated formally or informally, may inject an unnecessary added burden or anxiety and perhaps harm institutional competitive advantage.

4. Invisible opportunity-cost related to reputation and competitiveness:

In some fields (notably, health sciences), a reputation or a mythology about our tenure system as compared to those of other universities may affect competitiveness in faculty recruitment. **The obvious problem:** Some chairs seeking to recruit faculty have found that otherwise promising people decline to take seriously the idea of an appointment at the UW-Madison. **The subtle problem:** Some departments worry, rightly or wrongly, that when recruiting new chairs, they may find themselves running into a disconnect – between the kind of person they perceive as suitable to lead a modern academic-medicine department effectively, and the kind of person they perceive as suitable for the Divisional Committee.

Invisible opportunity-cost related to reputation may also be significant from a diversity perspective, when considering the faculty application pipeline, or retention. (Consider the troubling gap in retention of faculty women of color discussed in section “B” above.)

Whether one interprets the perception issues as substantively accurate, or as miscommunication, they can affect competitiveness and create opportunity-costs.

5. Uneven learning of relevant information:

Uneven learning can create disconnects – between context and individual case, between documentation and understanding, between policy and practice. Such problems came up in varied ways. Some examples follow.

(a) No office has taken responsibility for a “big picture” orientation on tenure for campus leaders including department chairs, and drawing on collaboration from divisional committee chairs. Such spaces of encounter can be useful. They provide an opportunity for leaders to set tenure within a broader framework of trends, dilemmas, and issues in the academy and at UW-Madison. They can usefully delineate the roles of the various players in the mentoring and tenure process. They offer divisional committee chairs, and experienced department chairs, an opportunity to share ideas and to offer guidance to less experienced department chairs. They create a vehicle for best-practice sharing across the divisional committees and across departments.

(b) Knowledge of variation of disciplinary conventions may vary and give rise to unwarranted assumptions. For example, in science fields, disciplinary convention differs on a matter as basic as multiple-author listings in a collaborative research publication – some fields list the authors in order of the importance of their individual contributions, others list authors in order of seniority or prestige, others use alphabetical or reverse-alphabetical order, and so on.

(c) People’s awareness of their options is limited. For example, faculty and chairs may not understand that it can be legitimate to request a tenure clock extension if forces beyond one’s control – unexpected or uncontrollable events that influence the pace of research, such as a lab construction delay, an unlocked cage, or a disease or contamination problem that spreads among lab animals. Another example is the case of people who may not know that out-of-classroom teachings such as clinical bedside teaching may “count” as part of one’s teaching record.

(d) Mentoring of chairs on tenure related issues – from the annual probationary reviews, to the tenure dossier itself, to issues of how to handle sensitive yet relevant medical information – is uneven and relies on willing mentors and mentees. Best-practices such as “second eyes” to review first-draft dossiers and thereby mentor chairs and improve the quality of the product seen by Divisional Committees are also unevenly applied.

6. Perception of limited or uneven intellectual cosmopolitanism:

Notwithstanding the overall soundness of the tenure system, some faculty including former Divisional Committee members believe that at times, some DC members succumb to an excessive gate-keeper mentality that dampens intellectual cosmopolitanism. Justified or not, such perceptions can lead to distrust that the Divisional Committee will consider a field and its standards in a manner that is open-minded (as well as rigorous), rather than succumb to an implicit ranking of field legitimacies. The consequences of such anxiety are serious. They can create a vicious circle by compounding the “fear” and evasion problem described above (D.1). They can also corrode the perceived legitimacy of the tenure review process.

7. Data collection and analysis.

When we collect data (as in WISELI climate surveys), we do not devote as much energy as we might to analyzing with relevant social actors, including deans and divisional committee members, the findings and implications. Data collection without engagement and discussion will not enhance the quality of our tenure process.

E. Observations (III): Thinking in the Horizon of Time.

A detailed futuristic analysis is beyond the capacity of the Tenure Conversation Group. We offer a brief list of emerging issues that may pose challenges for a successful mentoring and tenure process in a twenty-first century context.

It is worth underscoring that such issues are as important for mentoring along the journey toward a tenure decision year, as for evaluation and dossier formation during the tenure decision year.

1. Big-team and trans-field research. This issue is most visible in the sciences, where the vocabulary of “big-science” has become common, but it has also emerged in other fields including the social sciences, and in trans-fields or interdisciplinary fields built around an aggressive concept of disciplinary border crossing and collaboration. Big-science or other projects that require extensive collaboration among teams and sub-teams of researchers may pose special challenges. The phenomenon is not new, but its presence and impact on some probationary faculty work cultures may intensify over time. The relevant issues may be several: (a) how to assess individual merit and contribution to group work; (b) how the cost of big-team projects may affect grant funding success for probationary faculty; and (c) how, for purposes of arms-length peer review letters, to distinguish between a peer with a close working relationship on the “sub-team” of a probationary candidate, and a scholar with a more remote relationship within a larger “umbrella team” concept that includes many loosely or intermittently connected sub-teams.

2. Research finance. As the financial underpinnings of research shift, some conventional markers of success may come to be anachronistic. Probabilities for success by young researchers in major federal peer-review grants may continue to diminish and average age of first-success may continue to climb. (In some federal grant contexts, the earlier norm of a 20% success rate has declined to an 8% success rate). In addition, increased reliance on private-sector grants for research may affect the availability of markers (e.g., transparent peer review, transparent acceptance/rejection rates) considered customary in academic culture.

3. Digitization, in relation to scholarship, teaching and learning, and the tenure review process. The world of publishing, and teaching and learning, is shifting dynamically in the digital age. Not all the implications of such changes will be clear, but some are apparent. Among areas that may shift are not only the nature of the publication outlets (e-journals and e-books), but also protocols of peer review, reliable tracking of acceptance rates, data measures of intellectual influence within and across fields, and the ability to “capture and transmit” for tenure review intellectual products (including creative performance and art) tied to transitory publication (“moving-part” or time-lapsing models of publication, rather than timeless or fixed models of publication). How digital culture will affect student cultures of feedback and expectation in the teaching-and-learning process, and the process of faculty peer review of teaching, is also an emerging issue that may be relevant for tenure assessment.

Digitization is also relevant for the tenure dossier and its transmittal systems. To date, we continue to rely on a paper system, rather than a mixed paper/electronic document system, or an electronic system.

See also the discussion of internationalization below.

4. Internationalization. The internationalization of higher education – notwithstanding the economic meltdown of 2008-2009, world wide demand for student seats is expected to double by about 2025 – may profoundly reshape graduate training experiences of the professoriate in U.S. universities. It will also reshape the competitive market for faculty recruitment. It would be surprising if such trends did not affect the ways we document excellence, the ways we mentor probationary faculty and help them learn tenure expectations, and the interface between recruitment-retention pressures on the one hand, and the tenure-evaluation system on the other.

One aspect of internationalization is the relation to digitization. The digital revolution generated an exponential information curve – “information created” grew from under 200 exabytes to 750 exabytes between 2005 and 2009. International peer reviewed scholarship has become part of this phenomenon. The number of scientific articles published in peer reviewed journals by U.S. authors has remained flat between 1990 and 2008 (ca. 330,000 articles per year). During the same period, annual peer-reviewed science articles by authors from emerging countries soared – to 112,000 articles in the case of China, an increase of over 1200%; and to 30,000 per year in the case of Brazil, an increase of over 700%. The rate of growth has been especially strong since 2000. (For an overview and statistics, see *Economist* Special Report 2010: esp. 4, 18.)

5. Diversity. The shifting composition of U.S. society in the coming century will shrink the white majority to a minority, and create new multi-directional dynamics (both “domestic” and “international”) in how we understand the student populations we need to teach effectively. Such shifts may also affect knowledge production by posing new research questions, or inspiring new community-based research efforts at public universities with a land-grant tradition, or inspiring new kinds of performance-publication outlets to disseminate knowledge.

6. Health sciences and health care. Shifts in the organization of health care access and delivery, in the capacity to research, anticipate, and treat disease, and in socio-demographic trends (including generational, linguistic, racial-ethnic, and international-immigrant composition of U.S. society) are all likely to drive changes in academic health sciences. Such shifts are likely to create more pressure for translational research and scholarship, and new expectations or demands for interface of academic health sciences and clinical practice or expectation.

7. Off-track faculty and tenure-track faculty. A recent study of ten major research universities analyzes in considerable depth a trend of slow but steady growth of non-tenure track instructors (Cross and Goldenberg 2009). As the proportion of off-track to tenure-track instructors increases, what implications may it have for the ways we conceptualize and assess tenure evaluation, teaching and learning, and the professoriate? At UW-Madison, the ratio between tenure-track faculty and instructional academic staff is currently about 1:1. (In 2008, the instructional academic staff headcount was 2139 and the faculty headcount 2178; the 1999 figures headcounts were 1873 and 2123, respectively).

F. Ideas for Consideration.

The Tenure Conversation Group eschews the convention of concluding with formal prescriptive recommendations. Instead, we offer *ideas for consideration* by the various social actors in the mentoring and tenure process. One may think of these ideas as “suggestions in a

spirit of conversation” about best-practice improvement of the tenure process, broadly defined to include the lead-up to the tenure decision year, as well as the formal tenure review.

We hope that conversation in a best-practice spirit inflected by historical consciousness will contribute to professional success and a positive climate for probationary faculty. We underscore that our tenure system largely works well. As with most activities, one may discern room for improvement. One is also aware that shifts in the socio-historical context of higher education and knowledge production may spark needs for adaptation, facilitated by thoughtful campus conversation.

1. Leadership Orientation and Sharing of Experience.

An idea worth considering is to *incorporate, within the annual August leadership orientation for department chairs and academic program directors, a “big picture” and process orientation on tenure.*

The orientation would draw on collaboration from divisional committee chairs, and provide a space of useful encounter among distinct leadership groups with a role in the process. They provide an opportunity for leaders to set tenure within a broader framework of trends in the academy, to delineate the roles of the various players in our mentoring and tenure process, and to share best-practice tips across the divisional committees and across departments.

Such an orientation could also provide a great deal of practical advice about key elements in the process, e.g., the role of the Chair’s letter during the tenure decision year. Section “D” above highlights not only specific problems at distinct stages of the tenure process, but the ways uneven awareness can create a disconnect between policy and practice, intention and outcome.

(The Provost Office organizes the annual academic leadership orientation, which draws on collaboration by campus leadership and governance actors.)

2. Mentoring of Key Social Actors.

An idea worth considering is to *upgrade our mentoring of key social actors, at the several levels where communication, assessment, and preparation of tenure related documentation take place.*

Some activity along these lines already takes place. This idea builds on and extends such practices, by focusing on workshops and mentoring on four levels: probationary faculty; chairs, faculty, and administrative staff responsible for tenure dossier preparation; academic associate deans (or similar personnel) who monitor the process at the school/college level; and divisional committees.

(a) We already hold workshops, through the Office of New Faculty Services, for probationary faculty. An August orientation supplies the basics about rules and procedures. Mid-year workshops focus on practical issues and include direct discussion with the Divisional Committee chairs. Recently, they have incorporated new elements: how to build a tenure documentation portfolio in “real time,” in dialogue with Divisional Committee guidelines; and how to build strategies for effective use and learning from the mentor-mentee relationship.

(b) We have also begun to hold practical workshops for department chairs, to which faculty and administrators responsible for tenure dossier preparation are also invited. The Vice-Provost Office takes responsibility for these workshops. They have focused especially on key areas that sometimes cause difficulty, e.g., the necessity to explain the nature of the field and its standards of excellence for an audience of intelligent outsiders, the unintended effects of the “fear factor” when dossiers from departments are considered at the Divisional Committee level, the problem of identifying appropriate external letter writers for particular fields or cross-fields. These workshops also emphasize the value of seeing “model” dossiers in the Divisional Committee Office.

These workshops could improve by creating reverse-calendar documents that provide a realistic guide to preparation in time for Divisional Committee review.

These workshops could also improve by drawing in more effectively the faculty and administrative staff who assist the Chair and take some direct responsibility for dossier preparation.

(c) To date, academic associate deans (or similar personnel) who monitor or take some responsibility for the tenure process are neither invited to tenure workshops with department chairs, nor are invited to a space of encounter and sharing as deans about tenure related issues. Given their critical roles, some thought about how best to create a useful space of practical encounter and sharing among academic associate deans may be worthwhile.

(d) Some divisional committees find it useful to organize an orientation session to establish ground rules, and to provide some mentoring or guidance for new members. Others rely more heavily on the method of informal apprenticeship without explicit orientation. Divisional committee chairs do not generally meet to share tips and ideas with each other. (Occasional meetings have happened, however, on an ad hoc basis.)

Shared encounters among chairs of divisional committees to share best-practice ideas may prove useful, whether to consider strategies for orienting new members, or to respond to mentoring/guidance requests that cut across the four divisional committee domains. For example, some department chairs have expressed strong interest in the creation of short “do not” documents – suggestions from the divisional committees about what “not” to do in order to avoid writing a “bad” tenure dossier presentation.

The Tenure Conversation Group reiterates that cross-talk among divisional committee chairs, and reflection about explicit orientation of new members, are simply ideas for consideration. We value the independence required to fulfill the advisory-vote role of the divisional committees.

3. Second-Eyes Practice.

An idea worth considering, by department chairs in collaboration with academic associate deans, is *to utilize “second-eyes” practice to yield a more effectively written and explained dossier before its transmittal to the Divisional Committee.*

The practice is straightforward. An experienced outsider to the tenure home unit or to the specialized subfield – perhaps someone with a reputation as an effective former department chair or as a thoughtful former DC chair or member – would read a draft tenure dossier. The

reader would point out aspects in need of better explanation for an audience of smart outsiders, or in need of more complete information to achieve full DC understanding in accord with DC guidelines. Assisted by second-eyes practice, the department produces a clearer, more effective presentation of the case.

Several schools/colleges have adopted a second-eyes practice, and have found it useful. For those that are very large or do not use the practice, an idea to consider is **selective** use, in cases where the department chairs and academic associate deans consider it worthwhile.

Here are examples of select cases where the need may be significant, *regardless of the high scholarly quality of the tenure home department*. (a) Some units are more inexperienced than others. They may not have had a tenure case for a number of years. Small size or recent turnover may mean that no one on the EC has recent DC experience. They may have a new Chair who has never served on a DC. (b) Some units may have recently experienced a string of unsuccessful tenure dossier experiences at the DC level, a situation that may signal internal cultural misunderstanding of what is required, and may also spark cultural fear (or mythology) that compounds the problem. (c) Within a department, some knowledge subfields or trans-fields may be so specialized, unusual, technical, or esoteric that they present special challenges to the art of effective explication (or translation) of the case to outsiders. (d) Similarly, some tenure cases may involve candidates whose cross-unit appointments and responsibilities pose challenges for effective explication of the case.

4. Divisional Committee Tools: Fact-Finders, Scholarly Advisors, Digitalization.

An idea worth considering is *to reflect on whether good-practice tools already in use by one Divisional Committee may prove useful, perhaps in adapted format, for another*. It is understood that each DC decides for itself whether a good-practice tool used by one DC is adaptable or helpful. The first two ideas that at least one or another DC has found useful are considered briefly below. The third refers to development of new ideas for good-practice tools.

(a) Fact-Finders (or alternatively, tenure ambassadors):

The Physical Sciences Divisional Committee sends a fact-finding subcommittee to departments, after receiving the tenure dossier, to seek additional information if needed, and to understand better the nature of the case. Visits sometimes generate supplemental written documentation. Physical Science DC members find such fact-finding visits a useful way to bring additional knowledge into the DC tenure review process.

Fact-finder practice may also limit the number of times the DC may need to defer a vote, pending additional information. This is important because deferrals (although sometimes necessary) are not without cost. They can create unwelcome negative effects for the culture of tenure and retention within departments. They can also compound the end-of-year crunch in the work load of the DC.

A variation on the fact-finder idea is that of tenure ambassadors who visit departments to explain expectations and needs of the Divisional Committee, or to learn more about standards and expectations in particular fields or subfields.

(b) Scholarly Advisors.

In select cases, where field balance or specialized knowledge issues arise, the Arts and Humanities Divisional Committee occasionally complements the expertise of its current membership by relying on campus scholarly advisors for help. For example, if a literary scholar has written much scholarship in Croatian, and the current year's DC membership does not include scholars fluent in Croatian, the DC may decide to get some advisory help.

Since the balance of expertise at any DC table fluctuates from year to year, the option to create a small advisory subcommittee of experts may be a welcome tool for various DCs in select situations. For example, the Arts and Humanities DC may be short on creative or performing artists in a given year, the Biological Sciences DC may be short on a medical physicist or similar cross-division scholar, the Social Studies DC may be short on a qualitative ethnographer familiar with non-Western epistemology, and so on.

(c) Digitalization.

Digitalization presents an example of the potential usefulness of sharing ideas across Divisional Committees for development of new good-practices to address newly emerging issues. As discussed above (section E.3), there are several dimensions to the issue – from digitalization of scholarly research publication, to formats (paper versus electronic versus mixed) for presentation of the tenure dossier itself.

5. Enhance Health Sciences Assessment.

An idea worth considering, by all relevant actors, is *to consider specific tools designed to engage fairly and rigorously the unique hybrid realities of academic health sciences, while working within the institutional arrangements and enduring values of our tenure system.*

Integration of clinical responsibilities into the academic expectations and competitive recruiting environment for some health science disciplines, and increased and sometimes synergistic intersections of research work with clinical work, will influence productivity patterns and measures for some faculty. This is the intellectual aspect of “hybridity,” which also includes a financial aspect.

(For perspective on the evolution of academic health sciences since the 1980s, and the intensification of hybridity at every level – the intellectual research and work duties, the financial structure that shapes the recruitment environment, and the practical meaning and implications of tenure itself – please refer to section B. 3 above. The research cited refers to medical schools, but the social phenomenon under discussion is not limited to them.)

The two ideas below would involve numerous campus actors, and would benefit from additional discussion with the University Committee and Divisional Committees.

(a) Divisional Committee Guidelines Enhancement to Engage Academic Health Sciences.

The Biological Sciences Divisional Committee might consider closing the gap, in the current DC guidelines, between the careful explication of standards and criteria related to scholarly/teaching excellence in performance of extension duties, and the relative inattention to and lack of definition of scholarly clinical practice in health science fields.

Put differently, the DC guidelines document appears to have integrated seriously the 1997 document on scholarly extension practice posted on its web site, but appears not to have integrated or updated the 2005 report, also posted on its web site, on scholarly clinical research and practice. It is understood that such a task may take time, and that it is the Divisional Committee members who decide whether and how to close the gap.

Other Divisional Committees where the issue of scholarly clinical practice may arise (notably, Social Studies) may also wish to consider the issue of guidelines related to scholarly clinical practice.

(b) Utilization of FPP/Faculty Legislation Flexibilities to Address Hybrid Work and Research.

Academic deans, associate deans, and chairs in health sciences might consider, in dialogue with the University Committee and the Academic Personnel Office, whether they have fully and appropriately utilized FPP – especially 7.04.D and 7.04.H.3 – to frame appointment letters, pro-rate the tenure clock, or postpone the start of the tenure clock, in the case of appointments that blend a non-academic clinical practice expectation, and a scholarly research (including clinically based research) expectation.

There are two imaginable paths to creative use of FPP (Faculty Policies and Procedures) and Faculty Legislation provisions already in existence, and intended to introduce appropriate flexibility. One path, which has been used significantly, is to take cognizance of hybrid work and research realities through permissible transfer from the CHS track to the tenure track (see Faculty Legislation II-327 at 329).

The second path, less explored to date, is to consider recognizing the hybridity of work by creating a hybrid appointment – in which the faculty member is not 100% CHS track or 100% tenure-track, as if they were mutually exclusive, but rather partly CHS and partly tenure-track. Such a structure of appointment would recognize the hybrid nature of the position, allow for the pro-rated tenure clock tick when the tenure-track appointment is 75% or less, and possibly improve UW-Madison's competitive position in recruitment.

The larger issue is to build on the flexibilities in FPP and Faculty Legislation in order to address a hybrid reality and frame the tenure clock and its length appropriately. We already distinguish between “tenure-clock time” and “chronological time” in appropriate situations (e.g., child birth, or a flood disaster that ruins a lab). *As with other suspensions or pro-rated pacing of the tenure clock, the appropriate time-standard by which to assess scholarly, teaching, and service accomplishment is tenure-clock time, not chronological time.*

6. Surveys and Data Collection.

An idea worth considering is *to enhance the data driven dimension of conversation about tenure by engaging issues of perception (in addition to “outcomes”) by probationary and recently promoted associate professors, through surveys and other sources such as exit interviews.*

Perception and mythology loom large on issues as strategic to the faculty career cycle as tenure. It would be helpful to understand experiences of mentoring and progress toward tenure from a probationary faculty perspective, and to assess impacts on climate, job satisfaction, and retention. (A note of methodological caution is in order. From a sociological perspective, in apprentice-like situations, the person who experiences the apprenticeship process as negative may change her or his mind, after moving on to the next phase.)

Campus commitment to collect tenure-related survey data, perhaps once every three or four years, has been coordinated with WISELI's ongoing climate studies including a Spring 2010 study. The point of our idea is not simply to collect data, but to find useful ways to engage, in a constructive spirit, what the data turn out to tell us.

Although we have eschewed formal recommendations, we conclude with one. Let us embrace the value of a campus conversation about tenure, precisely *because* the topic is sensitive yet strategic, and precisely *because* human and organizational fallibility happens, even amidst healthy organizations and processes.

We believe that such a conversation, if conducted in non-accusatory and frank fashion, can sustain and improve the culture of rigor, flexibility, and excellence essential for a great public university in the twenty-first century world.

Sources and References:

The Tenure Conversation Group is grateful to Academic Planning and Analysis for campus data; the Divisional Committee Office for historical documents on governance and divisional committee tenure advisory votes; the School of Medicine and Public Health for data on peer institutions; and our interlocutors, among them department chairs, faculty, deans, chairs and members of the Divisional Committees and University Committee, Lori Hayward and David Musolf as their respective staff, and central campus leaders. Thanks for your generosity.

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