An overview of the A&P Process at the UW School of Medicine

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*This talk was derived from presentation given by Hunter Wessells, MD, FACS and former A&P Council Chair, 2012-2017
Goal of this presentation

- To have an understanding of the A&P Process at the School of Medicine
- To add transparency to the process to ameliorate concerns
- To help you prepare for an upcoming promotion and promote success
- To identify where to go when questions arise
Departments prepare packets and may have meetings to provide feedback to candidate

- Contents of packet are not described here but include CV, personal statement, teaching reviews (peer and student), clinical reviews, internal and external letters, etc.

> Voting department faculty of equal or higher rank will vote or abstain on faculty promotion packet

- Department Chair writes high level letter summarizing the packet and departmental support - including results of vote

> A&P Council reviews packet and results of review are added to packet

> Dean approves packet

> UW Provost approves packet

> Promotion approved
Available Resources

> UW Faculty Code

> UW School of Medicine A&P Guide

> Departmental Criteria (every department has their own)

> Special for 2020 – Covid-19 voluntary clock stoppage

> Faculty Promotion Website
  – https://faculty.uwmedicine.org/promotions/
A&P Committees

> Each department has an A&P Committee that votes on appointment, promotion and the criteria that defines them

> If committee is separate from all faculty, there will be a vote by all voting faculty in the department

> Those criteria are specific to a department and approved by the A&P Council and the School of Medicine
School of Medicine A&P Council

- One of several governance ‘councils’ from the school
- Composed of Professors who are not Department Chairs
- May be observed by ex-officio non-voting members
- Brings together 31 departmental criteria, SoM Guidelines and reviews
- Reviews for consistency with School of Medicine and harmonizes the process
- All Council communications are confidential
Some high level data

> Council reviews around 120 promotions per year
> For the vast majority of packets, the committee really celebrates the success of the faculty member
  – As a committee member – this is very satisfying, it is amazing to see all the awesome work our faculty are doing
  – When you are promoted to Professor, please consider volunteering to be considered for election
> >90% of packets are either outstanding or more routine promotions and do not require deep discussion
> A small percentage (7% or less) are more challenging and require more discussion
Early Promotions

Mandatory vs Non-mandatory Promotions

> For Assistant Professors, promotion to Associate before the sixth year is considered Non-mandatory and Early

> It normal (and perfectly honorable) to go up on the normal timeline and going up early should be unusual

> My opinion is that early promotions should show a combination of strong trajectory while in rank and unusual circumstances.
  
  – Getting an R01 as PI, a science paper or other honor, for example, isn’t enough
  – Discuss with your chair but in general these
How do committee members review

> Each packet has a primary and secondary reviewer
> The primary reviewer fills out a template
  – Candidate name and other basic information (dept, etc)
  – Promotion being proposed
  – Departmental faculty vote
  – Educational Background
  – Research
  – Teaching
  – Clinical
  – Service
  – Letters of evaluation
  – Professionalism
  – Assessment and Recommendation
The criteria and packet size can be daunting but it doesn’t have to be

> You don’t have to be equally excellent in all domains
  – Depends a lot on your track and activities
  – Read departmental criteria carefully
  – Discuss with your chair

> If not formal, I highly recommend leveraging your informal mentor network of faculty
Things to watch out for

Pitfalls in the process

> “No” votes in the department
> More than one unfavorable referee letter
> Poor teaching reviews and no sign of improvement
> Comments related to unprofessional conduct
> Lack of demonstrated independence
> Unexplained variability in something in the packet

> Lack of a consistent upward trajectory
The Self Assessment is Deeply Important

> Tell your story / journey to get you here
> Paint the other story that ties your CV and rest of your portfolio together
> Don’t just repeat items that will be in your chair’s letter

> Some advice:
  – Being an Assistant Professor is my favorite period of my career, lots of doing what I love and why I got into research
  – As an Assistant Professor, resist getting distracted by things that take time but don’t contribute to your promotion
  – Get strong, unfiltered feedback halfway through (at The Self Assessment is Deeply Important

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Forms of scholarship

> Sometimes scholarship can be nontraditional in a field
> For example, Conference Proceedings in informatics are full journal papers and can be significantly more competitive than journal papers
> Indicate this in Self Assessment or Chair’s letter
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Demonstrating Independence

- Required in some but not all pathways/tracks
- Tension between independence and value to program/laboratory/collaboration
- Challenging paradigm of interdisciplinary work and “team science” make attribution of effort and the assignment of an individual’s contribution more difficult
- Clear enunciation of the candidate’s contribution and impact on a scientific program is essential
- First and last/senior author publications are important, PI of grants, invites to give national seminars, etc. all good evidence of independence
- Highlight in Self Assessment
Last slide advice

> Most candidates are promoted with few, if any, issues

> Spend time on the self assessment
  – Be clear about your strengths
  – Acknowledge (major) weaknesses
  – Include something about your future plans

> Promotion is institution’s affirmation of your long-term value and potential

> Use the promotion website: https://faculty.uwmedicine.org/promotions/