

The Path to Professor, *aka* You Got Promoted to Associate Professor, Now What?

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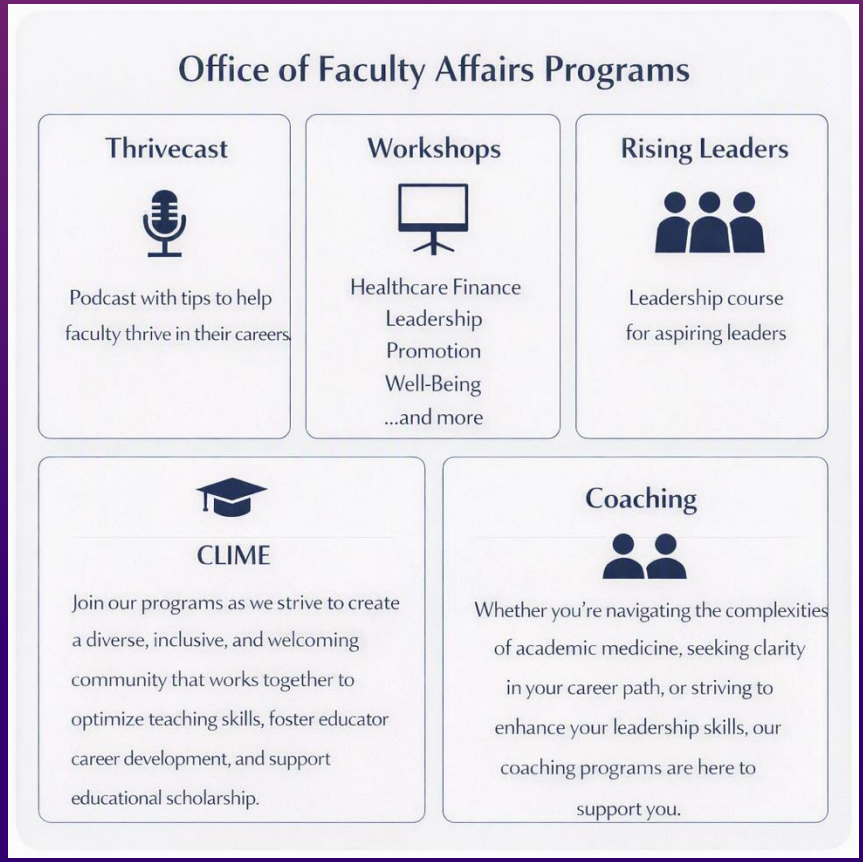
UW School of Medicine
11/17/26

Office of Faculty Affairs



The mission of the UW School of Medicine Office of Faculty Affairs is to support and empower our community of faculty to learn, grow, and thrive.

Visit our website to explore our full range of offerings! In addition to those highlighted here, we provide resources and events designed to support faculty throughout their careers.



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Well-Being Programs



We are committed to supporting the well-being of people across our biomedical research departments, clinical departments, health system, and learning environments.

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Upcoming Events

12/3/26: Leadership: Walking Through Conflict

1/7/27: Skills for the Busy Faculty Member: Time Management and Organization

1/26/27: Creating Your CV: How to Highlight All You Do

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Evaluation



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Today we will...

1. Discuss how to leverage your time and skills as Associate Professor to meet your goals - *Dr. Smith*

2. Explain the promotions process from associate to (full) professor - *Dr. Prager*

3. Spotlight the wisdom and advice of recently promoted faculty - *Fantastic panelists*

Q&A with Panel of Recently Promoted Faculty

Başak Çoruh, MD – Professor, Dept. of Medicine

Nita Khandelwal, MD, MS – Professor, Dept. of Anesthesiology and Pain Medicine

Jason G. Smith, PhD – Professor, Dept. of Microbiology

Joanna Wrede, MD – Clinical Professor, Dept. of Pediatrics

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What is your department?

ⓘ The Slido app must be installed on every computer you're presenting from

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What is your current rank?

ⓘ The Slido app must be installed on every computer you're presenting from

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Continuing your career journey (and ending up somewhere delightful!)

Sherilyn Smith, MD

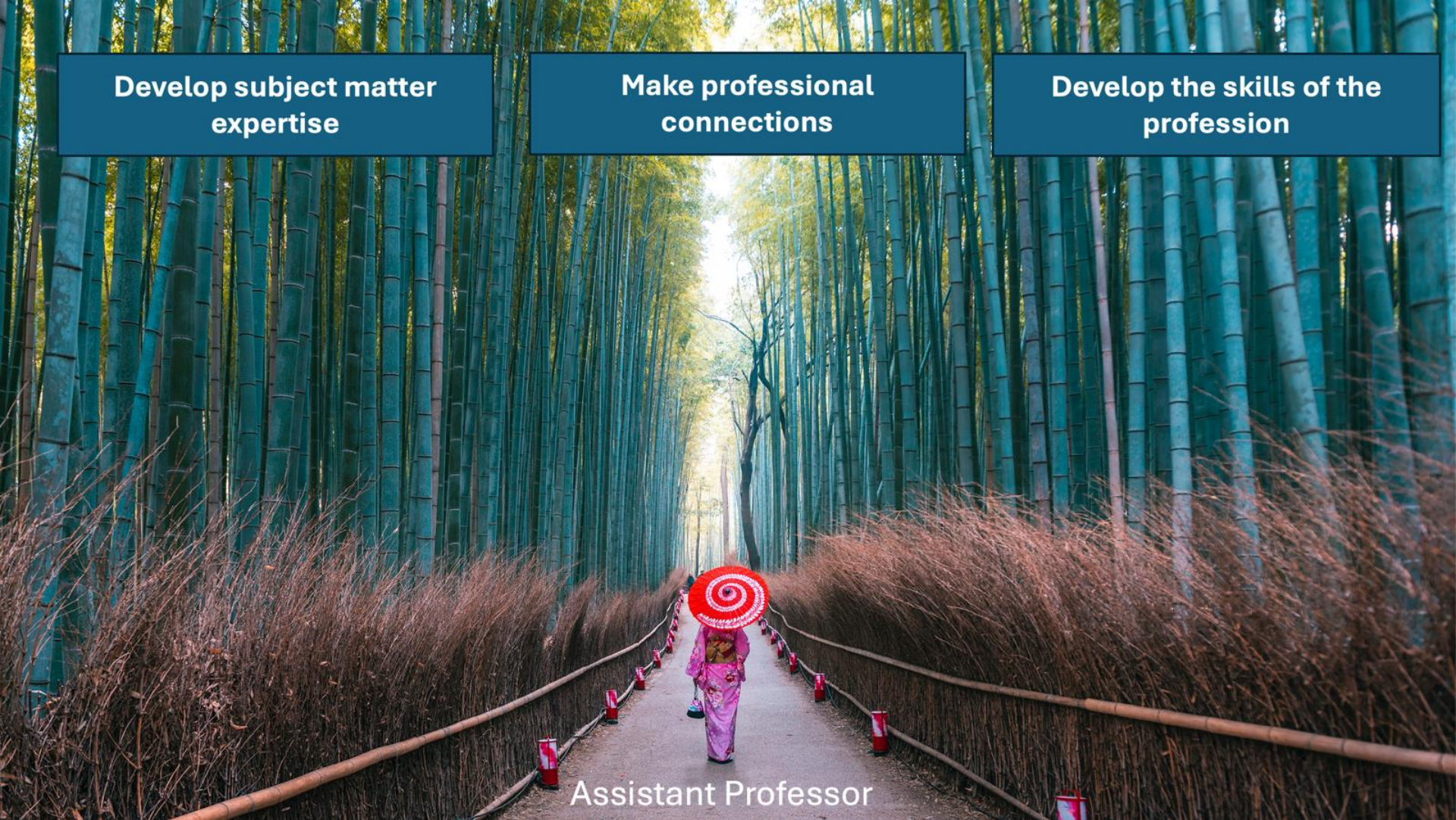
Professor Emeritus

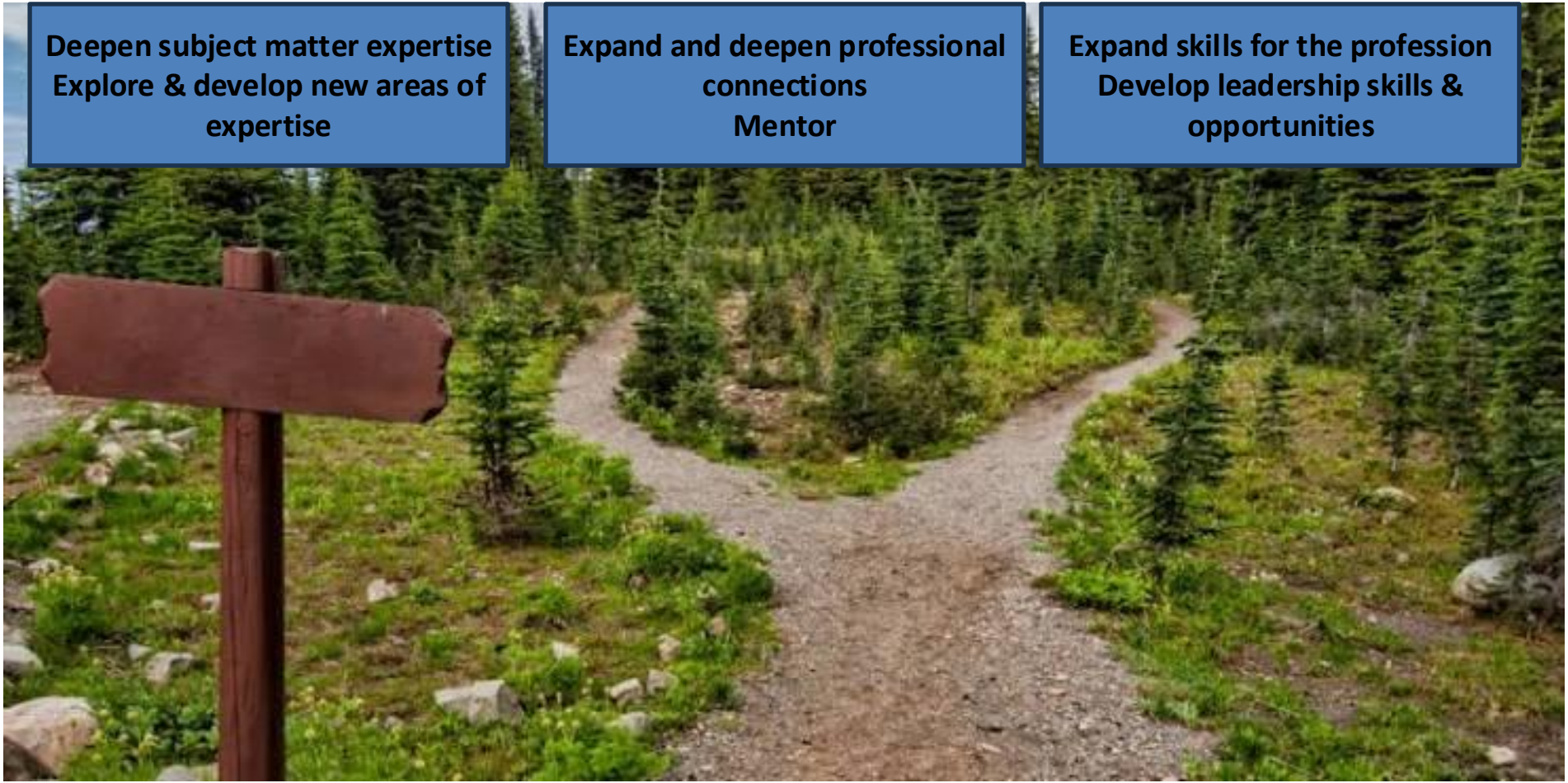
Department of Pediatrics



What we will cover

- Big picture framework for making the most of your time as Associate Professor
  - You get to decide how this will go
- Process for creating an actionable plan to leverage your strengths to continue your success


Develop subject matter expertise
Make professional connections
Develop the skills of the profession
Assistant Professor



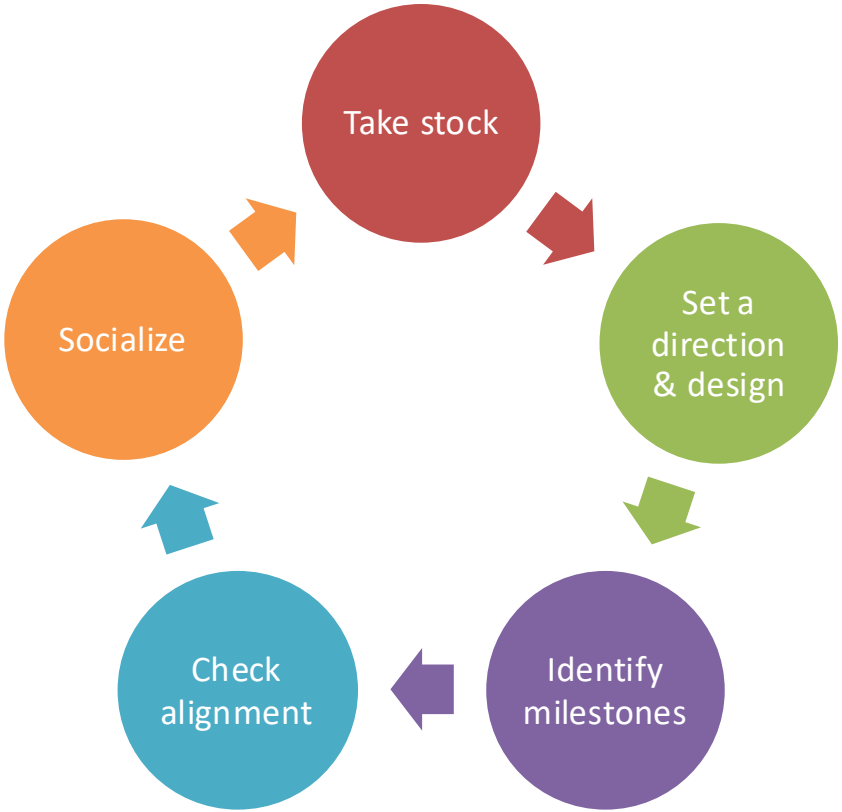
Associate Professor

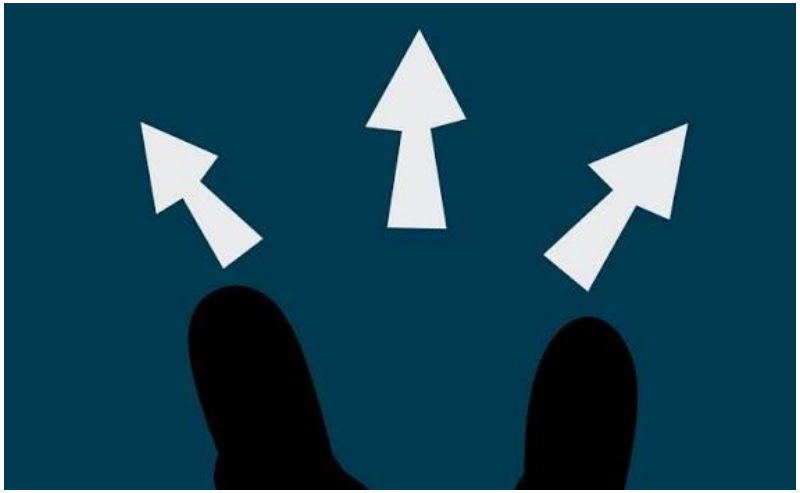
How to enjoy the career journey as you go?



- Attention
  - Time to reflect & plan
- Alignment
  - Values: yours and the organizations
  - Strengths and the road ahead
- Augment your perspective
  - Think and plan with others—uncover your blind spots
- Actively choose your next steps
  - Every step (even those not taken) is a choice
  - Shift toward proactive AND remain open to new possibilities

An approach to play with





Take stock of what matters

Identify your core values

Identify your strengths

How do your values show up in your career?

How can you use your values to make decisions?

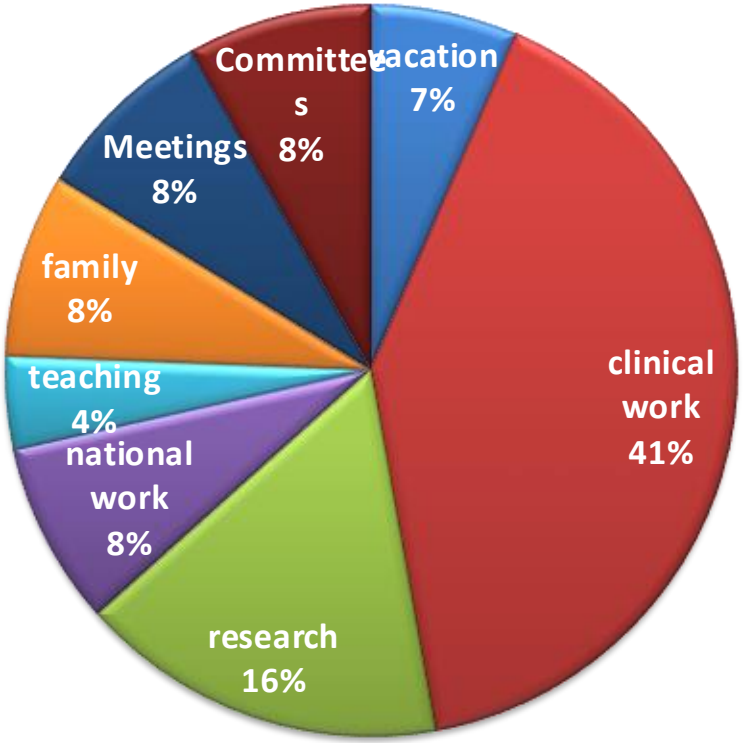
How will you leverage your strengths?

What strengths do you want to grow?

https://brenebrown.com/resources/dare-to-lead-list-of-values/

www.viacharacter.org

Take stock: how are you doing now?

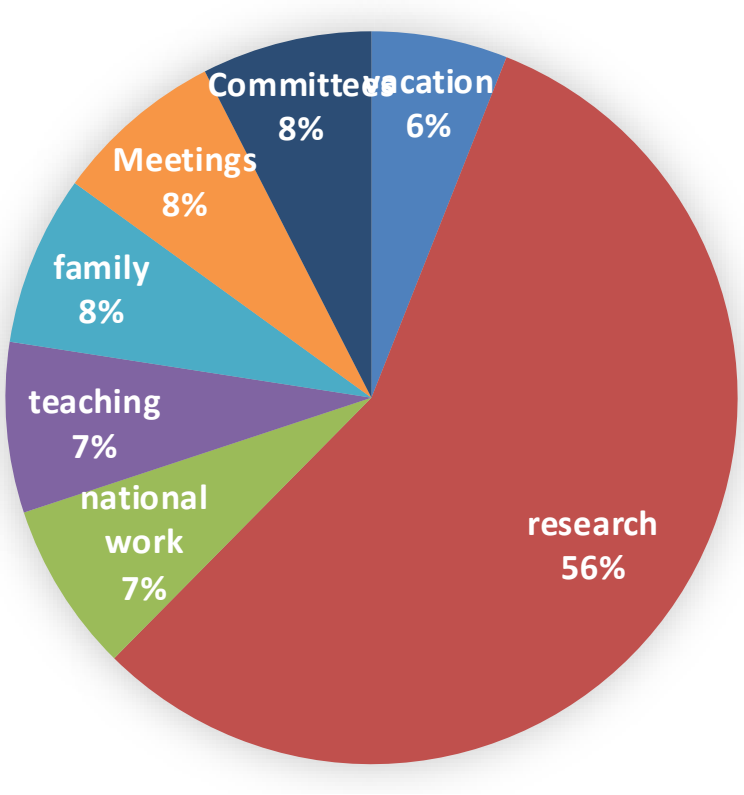


Great! Keep going

Needs watching, not sure

Gotta Change!

Take stock: how are you doing now?



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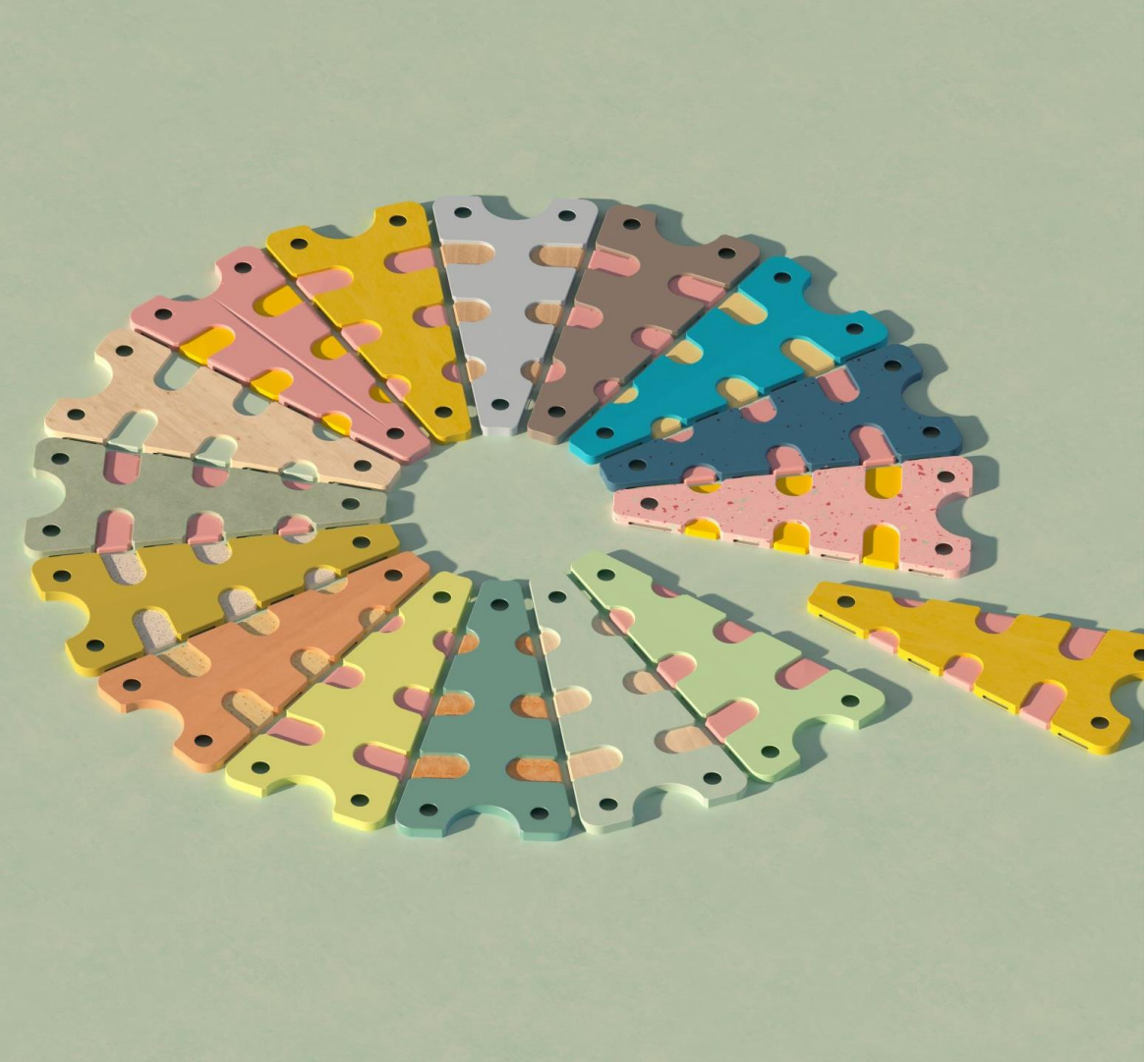


Take stock: how are YOU doing?

- Take a minute and draw a circle and split it up into sections.
- Label each section in a way that makes sense to you (e.g. clinical, research, family, fun etc)
- Reflect a minute and give it a color

- **You are on your way!**

Set a direction

- What is your dream for yourself?
- Broad strokes
- Think Big!

- More of something?
- Less of something?
- Something totally new?

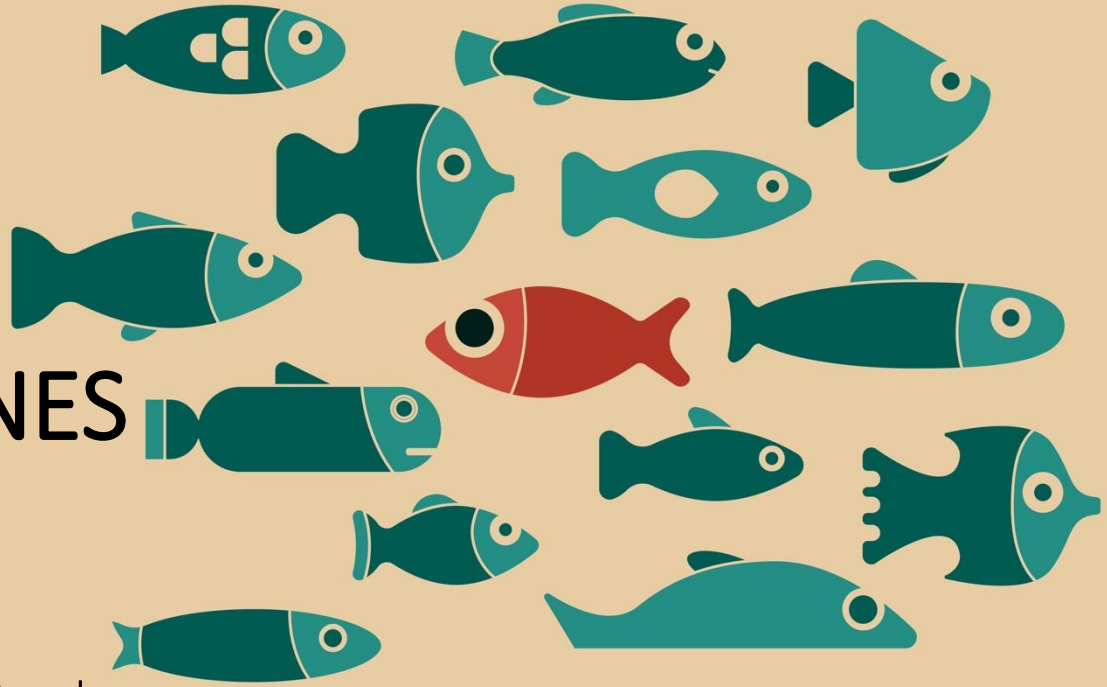


Design

- Brainstorm! No wrong ideas
- Choose a few ideas to pursue
- Can be in different domains
- Share them with others and listen to their take
- Think of what you might learn if you try something …to inform your goals and directions



CLARIFY GOALS & IDENTIFY MILESTONES



They keep you on track

Break it down



- Goal: Your direction; where you will focus
  - Be specific as you can
  - Iterate
- Milestone = Your markers of progress
  - Jot something down to get started
  - Iterate
- Work backwards from the goal to create best guesses about milestones
  - Refine as you go
- How does this feel?
  - Scary but exciting?
  - Completely overwhelming?
  - Blah…?

Check alignment

- Look for coherence
- Check in with values, strengths
- Is there “room” for new ideas?
- Are you attending to all elements?
- What about the other elements of your life?

Deepen subject matter expertise	Expand and deepen professional connections	Expand skills for the profession
Explore & develop new areas of expertise	**Mentor**	**Develop leadership skills & opportunities**

Identify Skills and Gaps

- What do you need?
- Ask colleagues, mentors, peers




Grant Writing; Manuscript productivity



Engage supervisors and mentors

Boss/Supervisor	Mentor
Separate meeting-not an annual review Check for engagement & excitement Stay curious (and open to modifications!) Align goals, experiments with the steps for promotion	Find a few internal and external Get differing perspectives Include both the long and short term goal Explore for what else? Who else to talk to?

EXAMPLES



Have an institutionally supported role in GME

- Core Values: education, helping others
- Direction: Expand formal educational role so it is my career focus
- Brainstorming: Residency program director, create my own multi-specialty training program, focus on transition between residency and fellowship, something in wellness, something in assessment/skills development, run a sim lab for skills development
- Steps & Experiments:
  - Year 1: current training program accreditation finished; develop faculty development module (feedback); have one meaningful mentoring relationship
  - Year 2: Join a new committee (either local or national) focused on education; expand mentorship
  - Year 3: Develop skills to align for possible internal roles—training + experience; explore possible roles locally, research best fit
  - Year 4: Apply for roles
- Socialize: Check in with allies, mentors at national and local levels; solicit additional ideas. Iterate

Deepen subject matter expertise	Expand and deepen professional connections	Expand skills for the profession
• Develop new training modules and track adoption • Successful accreditation fellowship	• Join CLIME at UW to expand exposure to educational community • Join educational interest groups at national level	• Experiment with building in more assessment into teaching
Explore & develop new areas of expertise • Explore possible internal roles in education along continuum. Talk with UW leaders • Talk to others at national level • Take two online courses (short)	**Mentor** • Expand meaningful mentoring over two years—focus on resident/fellows	**Develop leadership skills & opportunities** • Join national education committee

Be a recognized leader in a new research area

- Core Values: Creativity and Collaboration
- Direction: expand into a new area of research that leverages molecular tools and large data bases
- Brainstorming: leverage national network focused on rare neurological diseases; new modalities for diagnosis/prognosis; community outreach to improve outcomes
- Steps & Experiments :
  - Year 1: identify two new collaborators; 2 new diagnostic/prognostic tools; check with community group (already have a contact)
  - Year 2: create database, identify questions and apply for seed funding
  - Year 3: present at two meetings, draft initial paper
- Socialize:
  - Talk to current collaborators; network at annual professional meeting; talk with research mentor

Deepen subject matter expertise	Expand and deepen professional connections	Expand skills for the profession
• Attend conference in new area to present work	• Network to identify collaborators and socialize idea • Join national committee in the new area	Grant/proposal writing course
Explore & develop new areas of expertise • 2 new molecular tests & application. • Big data use in the area	**Mentor** • Identify trainee to help with part of project • Find out how to get funding to support trainees	**Develop leadership skills & opportunities** • Public engagement/donor engagement around idea

Lead a center of clinical excellence

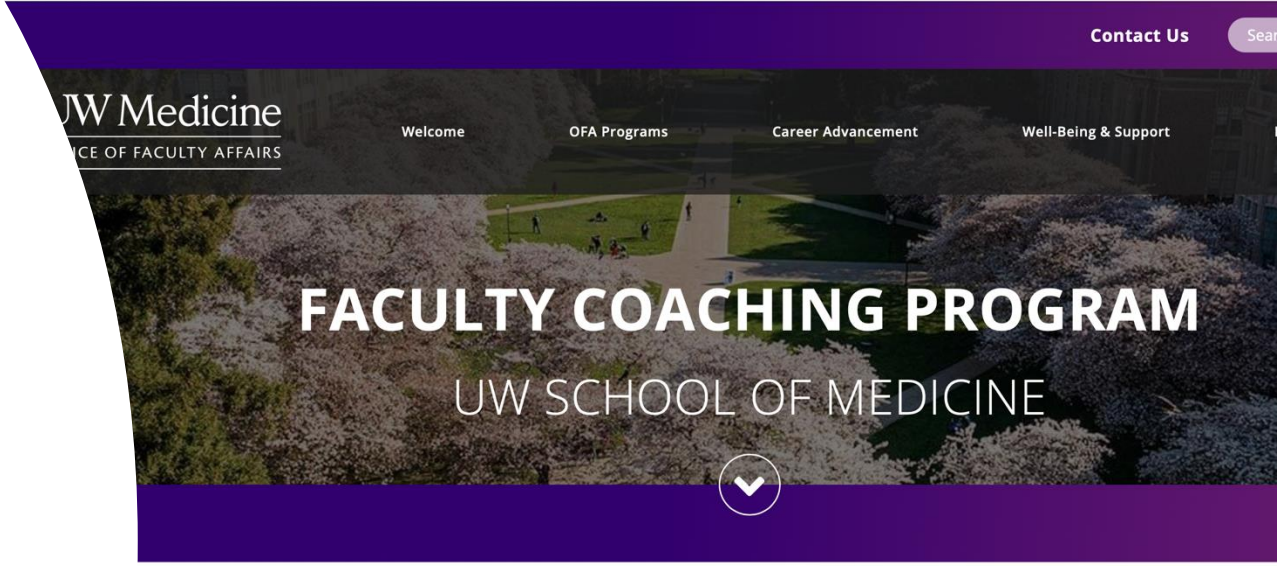
- Core Values: Appreciation of Excellence & Beauty; Service
- Direction: Take existing programs related to obesity care and diabetes and create an integrated community-based program
- Brainstorming: UW Neighborhood clinics with dedicated providers across Puget sound; telemedicine integration; new multi-disciplinary teams at UW Northwest Hospital; cross specialty clinics, school clinics for teens
- Steps and Experiments:
  - Year 1: Find three other people to collaborate with, talk to service line managers, research other programs that have been successful. Identify funding and area for first implementation;
  - Year 2: Draft proposal with specific 1st site; determine ROI and how to report innovation; find clinical leads in each site; write job descriptions, socialize/market
  - Year 3: Launch in first site for center, determine next two sites begin implementation process
- Socialize: Reach out to people who have developed a similar program at UW, talk with division chief about timeline and FTE

Deepen subject matter expertise	Expand and deepen professional connections	Expand skills for the profession
• Obesity care in the community • Gaps in DM management in community • Technology use for both	• Talk to center directors in other areas a UW • Reach out to 3 colleagues in 3 other institutions • Find a “tech” person to help with industry collaboration	• Learn to write project proposal for philanthropy
Explore & develop new areas of expertise	**Mentor**	**Develop leadership skills & opportunities**
• All things going into a center of excellence designation • How to create and lead multi-disciplinary teams	• Mentor two residents with similar interests...can there be a publication? Presentation?	• Leadership training • Management course



This is a lot to navigate!

Get some coaching!



Helping our faculty to thrive throughout their career is a priority for the UW School of Medicine.

The Faculty Coaching Program is focused on professional development of our mid-career faculty given the positive impact on le development, well-being, and supporting them and their teams. This program is growth-oriented with a goal of improving job satis providing support for faculty at career transition points, particularly those who have moved into or are considering leadership role biomedical research or clinical departments are welcome to apply.

On this page, you will find information about each of our coaches and frequently asked questions about the program.

Apply To Receive Coaching Here

How promotion fits in



- Is this a goal for you?
- The criteria help set milestones and goals
- Process is important!
- Keep the alignment…there are many paths to your goal

Take aways

- Elements of moving through your associate professor phase:
  - Subject matter expertise
  - Networking & mentoring
  - Expanding skills for the profession
  - Leadership opportunities and development
- Pay attention to all elements of your life
- Iterative and reflective process to move forward
- Design plans and goals to move toward your destination
- Don’t go it alone!

This curated list comes to you from your UWSoM Office of Faculty Affairs Team and Coaches. We've handpicked these resources to support your growth and success, whether you're looking to explore new opportunities, navigate career transitions, or simply find inspiration for your next steps. Dive in and discover the tools that can help guide your journey!











Thank you!



The UW School of Medicine Appointments and Promotions Council

Overview of Process and What It Means for You

SARAH PRAGER, MD MAS
PROFESSOR, DIVISION OF COMPLEX FAMILY PLANNING,
DEPARTMENT OF OBSTETRICS AND GYNECOLOGY
ADJUNCT PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES
CHAIR, SCHOOL OF MEDICINE APPOINTMENT AND PROMOTIONS COUNCIL

Why be promoted to Professor?

- **Status/Title**

  Recognition of hard work

- **Salary increase**

  Recognition of hard work

- **Leadership Roles/Opportunities**
- **Freedom**

  Can step off the conveyer belt

  Reassess and pursue new things

  Can happen even without promotion!

	Tenured or WOT	Clinical Practice	Clinical	Teaching	Research
Appt. length	3 years for asst prof. Continuing for assoc prof & prof.	3-10 years	1 year	3-10 years	3-10 years
Day-to-day working title	Professor	Professor of Clinical Practice	Clinical Professor	Teaching Professor	Research Professor
Teaching	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Voting rights	Yes	Yes, most	No	Yes, most	Yes, most
Scholarship	Publications	Innovation: teaching, clinical, quality, or equity	No	Innovation: teaching	Publications
Clinical service	Yes, if applicable	Yes	Yes	No	No
Other service	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No

What do the different titles MEAN?

- They define different ways of doing one's job
- Different titles come with different overall job requirements and requirements for promotion
- We need people in ALL these titles in order to do the work needed at UW SOM

- There is no inherent increased or decreased value of any of these tracks
- There <u>are</u> differences in the rights and responsibilities

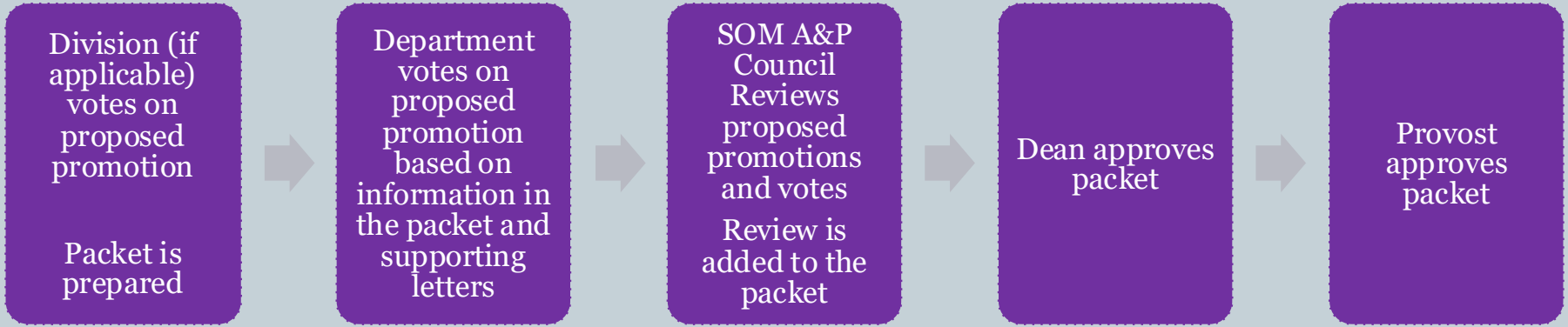
Why care about the School A & P council?

Because to be promoted, it is a key step in the process

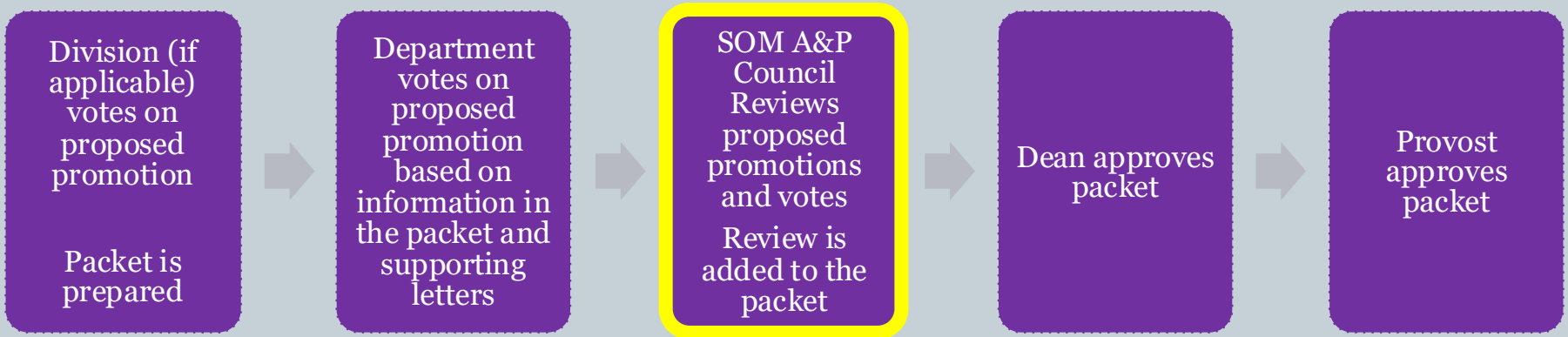
Understanding the process will help you navigate your promotions or provide counsel/mentorship to others

Add transparency and resources for questions

Promotion Process



Promotion Process



Appointment and Promotion Committees

Departmental Appointment and Promotion Committees help define criteria for appointment and promotion

Those criteria have commonalities as dictated by Faculty Code and the SOM

They are otherwise unique to the Department

Are approved by A&P Council and the SOM

All Department voting faculty vote on appointments and promotions (based on rank)

Proposal for unified Appointment and Promotion Criteria

Create one set of criteria for all 31 departments in the School of Medicine to use

Criteria would still vary by title, but not from one department to another

Increase equity so that promotability was not dependent on department

Increase ability for everyone to understand expectations for promotion

Ensure that all criteria are also consistent with the faculty code and other University governance

School of Medicine A & P Council

One of a few “governance councils” in the SOM

Professors who are not Department Chairs

Not more than one per Department, regardless of Department size

Starting this year, there is an Associate Professor council to review promotions to associate professor

Addition of Clinical Faculty Track adds too many additional promotions to review

It serves as peer review on behalf of the SOM, outside of the home Department

Is observed by ex-officio (non voting) members

Communications are confidential

What do we look at?

Promotion criteria for 31 Departments, SOM Guidelines, UW Faculty Code

Individual faculty packets, including CV, letters, evaluations, personal statements

Each packet is reviewed by two members, one primary, one secondary

Review template filled out, will become part of the packet

Information in the Review Template

the review is DETAILED, everything is looked at

Candidate name and other basic information (dept, etc)
Promotion being proposed
Departmental faculty vote
Educational Background
Research
Teaching
Clinical
Service
Letters of evaluation
Contributions to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (optional)
Professionalism
Assessment and Recommendation

School of Medicine A & P Council

Anticipate 230 total promotions this year, reviewed in fall/winter (to associate and to professor)

The vast majority only celebrate the faculty member accomplishments

Over 90% of packets are clearly outstanding or routine, thus do not require in depth discussion

<7% are challenging and require discussion

What do you mean by “challenging”????

Significant number of no votes in division or department

More than one unfavorable referee letter

Poor evaluations without evidence of improvement

Professionalism concerns

Lack of clearly demonstrated independence

Unexplained variability

Concerns that some aspect of promotion criteria are not met

Trajectory

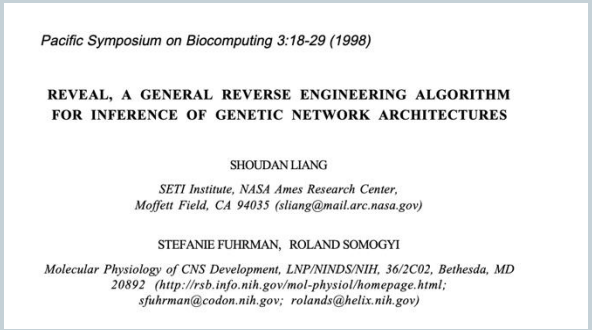
SOME RELATIVELY COMMON ISSUES THAT ARISE THAT HAVEN'T ALREADY BEEN DISCUSSED

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



Pacific Symposium on Biocomputing 3:18-29 (1998)

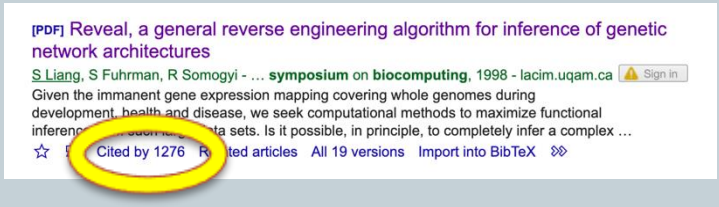
REVEAL, A GENERAL REVERSE ENGINEERING ALGORITHM FOR INFERENCE OF GENETIC NETWORK ARCHITECTURES

SHOUDAN LIANG

SETI Institute, NASA Ames Research Center, Moffett Field, CA 94035 (sliang@mail.arc.nasa.gov)

STEFANIE FUHRMAN, ROLAND SOMOGYI

Molecular Physiology of CNS Development, LNP/NINDS/NIH, 36/2C02, Bethesda, MD 20892 (http://rsb.info.nih.gov/mol-physiol/homepage.html; sfuhrman@codon.nih.gov; rolands@helix.nih.gov)



[PDF] Reveal, a general reverse engineering algorithm for inference of genetic network architectures

S Liang, S Fuhrman, R Somogyi - … **symposium** on **biocomputing**, 1998 - lacim.uqam.ca Sign in

Given the immanent gene expression mapping covering whole genomes during development, health and disease, we seek computational methods to maximize functional inferenc… …ta sets. Is it possible, in principle, to completely infer a complex …

☆ … Cited by 1276 R…ted articles All 19 versions Import into BibTeX »

How can you help yourself succeed in the process?



Use your mentors! Talk to your Chair.

Understand your story in the context of promotion

- Where it is ‘usual’ and where it isn’t
- Make sure we understand your unique contributions!



Know what is in your packet (aside from letters)

- Highlight your strengths, own your weaknesses and your plan for improving

Know that most candidates are promoted with no issue

QUESTIONS?

Q&A with Panel of Recently Promoted Faculty

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Nita Khandelwal, MD, MS – Professor, Dept. of Anesthesiology and Pain Medicine

Jason G. Smith, PhD – Professor, Dept. of Microbiology

Joanna Wrede, MD – Clinical Professor, Dept. of Pediatrics

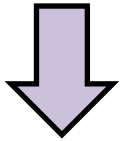
ADDITIONAL SLIDES

Promotion Criteria

UW Medicine
UW SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Know Your Department's Criteria

Each department does things slightly differently



Start by talking to folks in your department

Know Your Department's Criteria



UW Medicine
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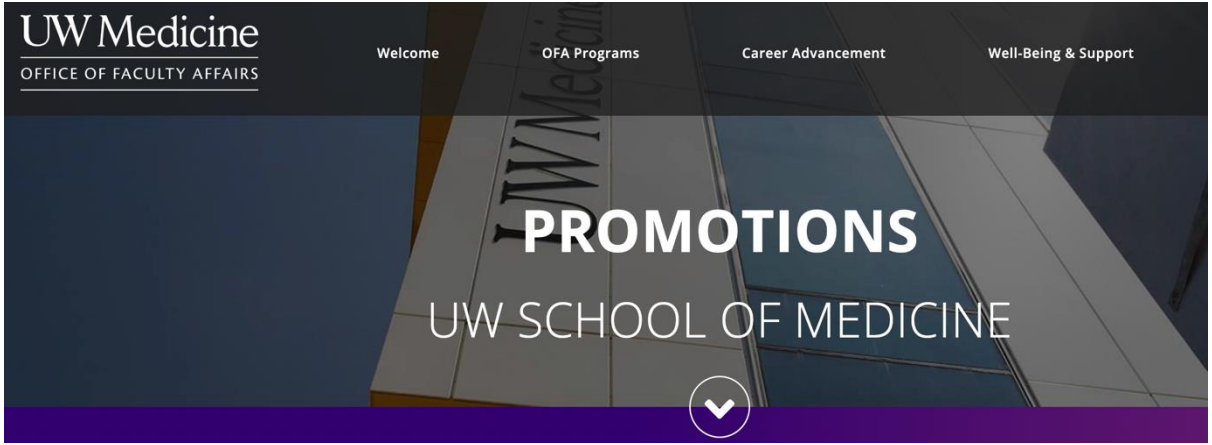
Key Resources



Revised (2025) A&P Guide

https://faculty.uwmedicine.org/promotions/

Workshop recordings, slides, departmental criteria

UW Medicine
UW SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

We are here to help!

srooh@uw.edu



Dr. Giana Davidson
Vice Dean for Faculty Affairs
ghd@uw.edu



Dr. Michelle Terry
Assistant Dean for URMS Career Development
mterry@uw.edu

We Would Love Your Feedback



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