



# Supporting Faculty Productivity After Tenure

*Custom Research Brief*

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# I. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

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## Heightened Focus on Faculty Productivity

While supporting faculty productivity is a longstanding concern within higher education, and post-tenure review processes at many institutions are well over a decade old, a range of factors have made these issues an urgent concern at research universities:

- Financial stresses forcing institutions to look for ways to reduce costs and increase productivity
- Heightened external scrutiny of faculty productivity as the public looks for explanations for the rising cost of higher education
- Faculty hiring freezes requiring existing faculty to take on more responsibilities
- Slow down in faculty retirements reducing the ability to replace late career faculty with new hires
- Ambitious institutional research goals that depend on higher levels of faculty productivity

In the past, unproductive faculty were tolerated and administrators had few effective mechanisms for encouraging them to improve or leave the institution. In the current environment, many administrators feel that they need a more rigorous approach to managing faculty productivity.

*“I can’t afford to keep paying faculty who are not productive. But what else can I do with them?”*

Provost, Private Research University

## Specific Questions for this Research Report

A number of the provosts in the Colonial Group asked the Council to investigate effective approaches to supporting tenured faculty whose productivity has fallen short of expectations. At first, the request focused specifically on formal post-tenure review processes, but conversations with additional members of the group as well as with other research contacts encouraged us to look more broadly at the full range of support and development mechanisms for tenured faculty.

Specific questions addressed in this research include:

- *Why does faculty productivity tend to fall off at different stages in a faculty member’s career?*
- *What types of professional development activities are most appropriate at different critical junctures of faculty careers?*
- *How do administrators encourage faculty to develop professional goals, plan for promotion, and consider retirement plans?*
- *What are the characteristics of an effective performance review process for tenured faculty?*

## II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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### Concentrating Scarce Review Resources on Classic Productivity “Stall Points”

- ❖ **Evidence (both empirical and anecdotal) indicates that formal post-tenure review processes are rarely effective at improving faculty productivity.** Many faculty, administrators, and public officials view post-tenure review as a means of “getting rid of the deadwood.” Contacts, however, indicate that punishment for underperformance rarely leads to improvement, for three reasons. First of all, administrators have very few levers available to punish underproductive faculty members— withholding merit increases, refusing sabbaticals, and increasing teaching loads are the most common. Secondly, faculty rarely respond to negative incentives or threats of punishment by increasing productivity. More commonly, they reduce engagement with the department and become embittered. Finally, few administrators are willing to impose punitive measures, particularly department chairs who see themselves more as colleagues than as supervisors. Post-tenure review processes typically fall into the “lose-lose” category of ineffective policies that face significant political resistance from the faculty.
- ❖ **Interviews confirm that the stereotypical “lazy professor” is a rarity. Declines in productivity after tenure typically arise from a range of predictable and addressable issues, such as increases in administrative responsibilities, new family obligations, or changing research interests.** The rigor of the tenure process and the hiring process (particularly in the current competitive environment) means that faculty are almost without exception highly competent and (initially at least) highly motivated. Supporting faculty to overcome these temporary roadblocks to productivity is more effective than punishing faculty for failing to meet expectations.
- ❖ **Supporting high potential or “star” faculty is more likely to bring productivity gains than trying to remediate the lowest performers.** Data show that a handful of high performing faculty are responsible for most of the research productivity in each department or program. Contacts recommend that review processes that focus on overcoming temporary setbacks and expediting promotions for top performers are more effective than those that emphasize sanctions for the least productive.
- ❖ **There are three critical turning points in a typical faculty member’s career where interventions can significantly improve productivity.** Poor faculty decisions combined with mentor inattention at these moments can lead to years of low productivity. Faculty review and development processes should focus on interventions at each of these moments where faculty enter a new career stage.
  - **The “Post-Tenure Slump” (1 to 5 years after tenure):** Immediately after receiving tenure, faculty are often overwhelmed by new teaching and service requirements and require time to restart their research agenda after completing a full cycle just before tenure.
  - **The “Perennial Associate Professor” (10 to 15 years after tenure without promotion):** Those faculty who fail to recover from the post-tenure slump or whose interests shift away from scholarly research may find (often to their surprise) that they are unprepared at promotion time. This group can often become embittered as they feel that they have been unsupported, unappreciated, and even betrayed by their department.

## II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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- **The “Retired in Place Professor” (5 to 10 years before retirement eligibility):** Productivity naturally declines for most faculty as they approach the end of their career, and yet despite a lack of engagement, many postpone retirement, hoping that the longer they wait the better the retirement package they will receive or fearing the loss of identity that can come from abandoning one’s life work.

### Attributes of Forward-Looking Reviews

- ❖ **Pre-tenure faculty undergo effective, regular reviews, but the emphasis on feedback and clear expectations are not carried into post-tenure periods.** The tenure process itself is widely acknowledged as highly effective, but few institutions maintain that kind of rigorous evaluation post tenure. Clearly defining expectations, mentoring, and regular feedback should all be a part of the review process after tenure.
- ❖ **Department chairs and deans should emphasize forward-looking planning rather than backward-looking reviews, laying out clear expectations and specifying resources available to support faculty development.** This future-oriented planning contrasts with the retrospective reviews that comprise most post-tenure review processes. Addressing obstacles to productivity, identifying development resources, preparing for promotion, and crafting professional goals at these key points can preempt the losses of professional direction that cause underperformance.
- ❖ **Faculty productivity problems can often be traced to the failure of department chairs and deans to communicate expectations clearly and to conduct effective reviews.** Senior administrators should provide training for these individuals so that they may conduct more effective reviews. Regular feedback and intensive annual reviews should be administrative priorities.

### Investments for Provost Consideration

- ❖ **Contacts suggest that even relatively small efforts when properly timed and targeted can help associate faculty reinvigorate research productivity. Small investments at critical stall points can reinvigorate research and prevent a faculty member from becoming unproductive.** While the probationary period rightly remains the focus of much investment, contacts stated that tenured faculty respond positively to small financial rewards and more engagement from department chairs and deans. Effective review processes, mentoring networks, and low cost professional development resources may ultimately reduce time necessary for intensive post-tenure review processes focused on problematic faculty.
- ❖ **Provosts should consider the following financial investments and policy initiatives to help faculty maintain productivity.**
  - Small grants (\$2,000) to help associate professors maintain research productivity
  - Childcare grants for faculty seeking to travel for research
  - Training for associate professors on how to balance scholarship, service, and teaching responsibilities after tenure
  - Setting expectations for promotion (including a date for review) in the year after tenure
  - Having faculty update a five year development plan at every annual review

## II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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- Asking all of the full professors in the department to review the work of the associate professors each year so that department chairs can provide more objective and detailed feedback
  - Training for deans and department chairs regarding conducting effective reviews
  - Creation of new professional pathways for tenured faculty based on interests other than research productivity
  - Revision of promotion and tenure guidelines to include guidelines for evaluation of new types of scholarship, such as engaged scholarship or interdisciplinary research
  - Retirement plans that enable faculty to gradually decrease their responsibilities over a period a years and that provide financial incentives to retire before a certain age
- ❖ **Though contacts recognize the extraordinary difficulty in determining specific expectations for faculty productivity and performance, establishment of clear performance guidelines helps faculty members maintain productivity and achieve promotion in a timely fashion.** More institutions have engaged third-party faculty research productivity firms, such as Academic Analytics, to more accurately understand faculty and departmental productivity. Their large databases can help institutions identify peer programs and compare productivity across a range of research metrics, allowing each department to weight metrics differently.

### III. SOURCES

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In this short-answer custom research project, the University Leadership Council research team conducted 18 interviews with individuals at major research universities, both public and private. The interviews focused on the effectiveness of post-tenure review, challenges throughout faculty careers, and methods for encouraging faculty professional development and growth. The team also reviewed secondary research to strengthen, challenge, and confirm findings revealed during interviews.

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Guide to Institutions Profiled in this Report				
Institution	Region	Public or Private	Carnegie Classification	Approximate Enrollment
University A	South	Public	Research University (high research activity)	24,600
University B	Northeast	Private	Research University (very high research activity)	8,600
University C	Midwest	Public	Research University (very high research activity)	47,000
University D	Midwest	Private	Research University (very high research activity)	19,900
University E	Northeast	Private	Masters University (larger programs)	15,400
University F	West	Public	Research University (very high research activity)	22,000
University G	Midwest	Private	Research University (very	15,100

### III. SOURCES

<b>Guide to Institutions Profiled in this Report</b>				
<b>Institution</b>	<b>Region</b>	<b>Public or Private</b>	<b>Carnegie Classification</b>	<b>Approximate Enrollment</b>
			high research activity)	
<b>University H</b>	Mountain West	Public	Research University (very high research activity)	33,100
<b>University I</b>	Mid-Atlantic	Public	Research University (very high research activity)	37,200
<b>University J</b>	Northeast	Public	Research University (very high research activity)	27,00
<b>University K</b>	Midwest	Public	Research University (very high research activity)	41,700
<b>University L</b>	South	Public	Research University (very high research activity)	28,900
<b>University M</b>	Midwest	Private	Research University (very high research activity)	11,800
<b>University N</b>	Northeast	Private	Research University (very high research activity)	9,500
<b>University O</b>	Northeast	Private	Research University (very high research activity)	11,600



## IV. WHY TRADITIONAL POST-TENURE REVIEW DOESN'T WORK

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### Post-Tenure Review Implemented Primarily at Public Universities in Response to External Attacks on the Privileges of Tenure

Over the past 30 years, perceptions that tenured faculty were accountable to no one led public officials and governing boards to call for tenured faculty review policies and penalties for underperformance. During the late 1980s and early 1990s, post-tenure review emerged as a response to these calls and to the end of mandatory retirement in 1994.

According to Licata and Morreale, most institutions with formal post-tenure review enacted policies around 1995. A 2003 study of 372 graduate institutions in the United States found that 59 percent of respondents at public institutions reported that the motivation for post-tenure review policies arose from external sources such as legislatures or governing boards.

Given their political oversight, public institutions adopted the practice at a much higher rate than privates. The 2003 study found that 59 percent of public research institutions surveyed had implemented post-tenure review processes but only 6 percent of private research universities.<sup>1</sup> Among 41 Association of American Universities (AAU) members responding to a 2001 survey, 22 public institutions and 2 private institutions maintained post-tenure review policies.

### Post-Tenure Review Processes Can Be Triggered by Underperformance or Applied Regularly to All Faculty

Licata and Morreale define post-tenure review as “*a systematic, comprehensive process, separate from the annual review, and aimed specifically at assessing performance and/or nurturing faculty growth and development.*”

“Post-Tenure Review.” 2001.; Licata, Christine M. and Joseph C. Morreale. Post-Tenure Faculty Review and Renewal: Experienced Voices. Bolton, MA: Anker. 2002.

Post-tenure review processes are a supplement to annual review processes, intended to be more comprehensive with a broader set of potential consequences than simply consideration for merit raises. Post-tenure review comes in a variety of flavors, the most significant distinction being between regularly scheduled and triggered reviews.

❖ **Regularly-scheduled post-tenure review:** These reviews occur at specific time intervals (typically 5-7 years). All tenured faculty undergo post-tenure review unless a retirement-eligible individual agrees to retire within a specified number of years. According to contacts, very few faculty members receive unsatisfactory or negative regularly-scheduled post-tenure reviews.

❖ **Triggered post-tenure review:** Depending on the institution, a specified number of unsatisfactory annual reviews in a given timeframe results in a comprehensive post-tenure review. According to contacts, very few faculty members undergo triggered post-tenure reviews each year. Among faculty who do undergo triggered post-tenure review, most successfully complete development plans or elect to retire prior to the imposition of sanctions.

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<sup>1</sup> Aper, Jeffrey and Judith Fry. “Post-Tenure Review at Graduate Institutions in the United States: Recommendations and Reality.” The Journal of Higher Education, Vol. 74. No. 3. May/June 2003. Pp. 241-260.; Association of American Universities. “Post-Tenure Review.” 2001.; Licata, Christine M. and Joseph C. Morreale. Post-Tenure Faculty Review and Renewal III: Outcomes and Impact. Bolton, MA: Anker. 2006.

## IV. WHY TRADITIONAL POST-TENURE REVIEW DOESN'T WORK

Comparison of Regular and Triggered Post-Tenure Review Processes		
	Regularly-Scheduled Review:	Triggered Review
<b>Advantages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Motivates faculty to maintain productivity over the review period</li> <li>✓ Establishes fairness by reviewing all faculty regardless of performance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Reduces time spent on post-tenure review by focusing intensive review effort exclusively on underperforming faculty members</li> <li>✓ Encourages effective annual reviews and development planning to prevent triggered reviews</li> </ul>
<b>Disadvantages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>× Increased workload encourages review committees to perform perfunctory reviews</li> <li>× Engenders displeasure among faculty due to work required for review portfolios</li> <li>× Diffuses time and resources across all faculty instead of focusing on those most in need of support and development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>× Encourages faculty members to perform to minimum standards to avoid triggered reviews</li> <li>× Neglects to provide regular, comprehensive feedback to all faculty</li> <li>× Places more emphasis on potentially ineffective annual reviews</li> </ul>

While interviews indicated a broad consensus on post-tenure review policies across institutions, faculty leaders and senior administrators are typically reluctant to impose any significant penalties for underperformance. None of our contacts evidenced any real appetite for “putting teeth” in the policy. One reason is the limited sanctions available to administrators.

### Limited Sanctions for Underperformance Available to Administrators

- Salary freeze or reduction
- Workload modification or reassignment
- Encouragement to resign/ retire
- Probation (first step in progressive discipline leading to dismissal for cause action)
- Demotion in rank
- Removal of resources (lab space, research support, etc.)

Source Licata and Morreale (2006), p. 135

## IV. WHY TRADITIONAL POST-TENURE REVIEW DOESN'T WORK

Post-Tenure Review Policies at Selected Interviewed Institutions			
Institution	Type and Frequency of Review	Individuals Responsible for Post-Tenure Review	Sanctions for Underperformance
<b>University F</b>	Triggered if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requested by faculty member</li> <li>• Requested by supervisor after one negative review</li> <li>• Two consecutive negative reviews</li> </ul>	Elected departmental committee with one external member selected from list proposed by faculty member under review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional development plan</li> <li>• Reassignment of duties</li> <li>• Salary reduction</li> <li>• Reduction in rank</li> <li>• Termination</li> <li>• (If the previous three are recommended, a separate committee must conduct another review)</li> </ul>
<b>University H</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular review every five years</li> <li>• Triggered review arises from a “below expectations” rating during any five-year period</li> </ul>	Departmental post-tenure review committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faculty members who receive poor annual reviews must complete Professional Improvement Agreements</li> <li>• Another review with possible sanctions such as reassignment of duties, loss of sabbaticals, salary freeze, salary reduction, demotion, or dismissal</li> </ul>
<b>University I</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular review every five years</li> <li>• Two consecutive poor post-tenure reviews trigger a comprehensive review (i.e., 10 years of poor reviews)</li> </ul>	Departmental committee	Few sanctions exist for negative post-tenure reviews.
<b>University J</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular review every seven years</li> </ul>	Departmental personnel committee	A three-year professional development plan approved by the departmental personnel committee, department chair, and dean
<b>University L</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular review every five years</li> </ul>	Committee of no fewer than three departmental tenured faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development plans</li> <li>• Dismissal if faculty member under review makes no progress or demonstrates unwillingness to improve</li> </ul>

## IV. WHY TRADITIONAL POST-TENURE REVIEW DOESN'T WORK

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### Studies Find Little Positive Impact on Productivity from Punitive Post-Tenure Review

Higher education scholars began researching the effects and responses to post-tenure review during the late 1990s, including a decade-long study from the American Association for Higher Education that resulted in three published volumes. They found that while faculty and administrators almost universally acknowledged the political benefits of having a post-tenure review process, there was little evidence that the process had measurable impacts on faculty productivity.

Licata and Morreale summarize, “The majority of respondents were neutral on questions related to policy effect [on faculty work, professional development, and career planning]. Only results from two institutions [out of nine case study institutions] showed clear positive impact on faculty performance or development... This result matches previous reported findings by researchers: post-tenure review does not directly improve faculty performance (Ernest, 1999; Johnson, 1990; O’Meara, 2003); is least effective with low-performing faculty (Reisman, 1986); and has little measurable impact on the institution or value to faculty (Wesson & Johnson, 1991; Wood, 2000).”<sup>2</sup>

The problem, they found, lies not so much in the formal process itself but in the fact that ritualistic compliance was commonplace, involving little actionable feedback or meaningful follow-through after the review. They described three major reasons why particular policies were considered ineffective by faculty and administrators:

- The review shows little evidence of positive outcomes
- The review is not taken seriously because there is no significant follow-up action to the review
- The review is not taken seriously because there are no sanctions for poor performance or rewards for outstanding performance

Ultimately, few institutions have found post-tenure review to be a solution to the challenge of supporting faculty productivity. It is too often a perfunctory process that consumes valuable faculty time and attention.

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<sup>2</sup> “Bridging Results to Practice,” pp. 97-115 in Licata and Morreale (2006), p. 100-101. However, other studies point to some tangible results, see p. 102.

## IV. WHY TRADITIONAL POST-TENURE REVIEW DOESN'T WORK

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### Faculty Opposition to Post-Tenure Review

Despite evidence that post-tenure review rarely results in any negative consequences for faculty members, it is still commonly perceived by faculty as a threat to their independence or even to tenure itself. The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) prepared for the widespread implementation of post-tenure review by releasing an opposition statement in 1983, and approved an addendum nearly 20 years later after dozens of institutions, state systems of higher education, and state legislatures adopted the practice. They cite the following concerns which contacts at most institutions also reported as common concerns among faculty. According to the AAUP, post-tenure review may...

- × ... inappropriately facilitate dismissal of faculty members
- × ... shift burden of proof of unsatisfactory performance from administrators to faculty members undergoing review
- × ... hinder academic freedom
- × ... waste valuable faculty time by imposing additional administrative responsibilities
- × ... damage collegiality among faculty, especially in small departments

Source: Post-Tenure Review: An AAUP Response. 1999

<http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/pubsres/policydocs/contents/PTR.htm>

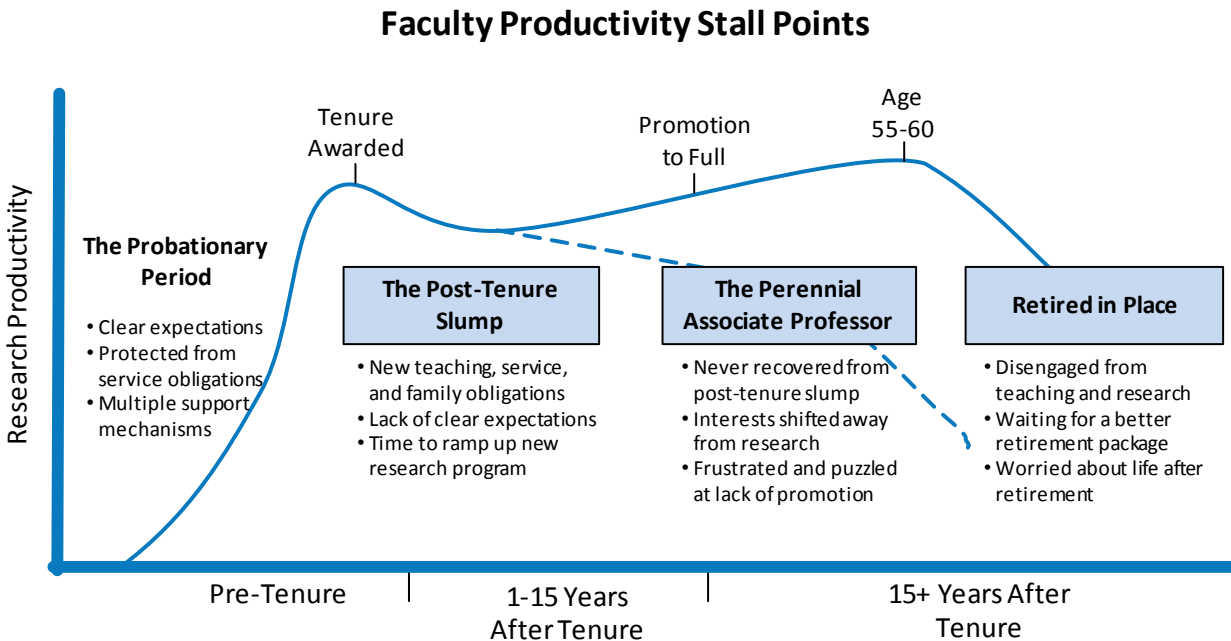
### Still Controversial

*“Nearly a decade later, post-tenure review has not translated into significant firings of either lazy professors or controversial ones. But this extra layer of evaluation continues to split academics. Some credit it with singlehandedly saving tenure; others suggest that it has quietly watered down faculty authority, eroded tenure, and encouraged faculty to focus on quantity over quality.”*

Montell, Gabriella. “The Fallout from Post-Tenure Review.” The Chronicle of Higher Education. October 17, 2002.

## V. FACULTY PRODUCTIVITY STALL POINTS

The typical approach in post-tenure review is to identify underperformers after they have failed to meet expectations for a number of years and then to recommend sanctions or specific development opportunities. The underlying assumption is that the cause of the underperformance lies with the individual and can only be addressed after years of documentation. Research contacts, however, described fairly predictable phases of the post-tenure faculty career when productivity tends to decline for well-known reasons. The chart below summarizes common experiences.



The chart above plots research productivity (however defined) over a typical faculty career. The focus is on research productivity (rather than teaching or service) since it remains the primary consideration for tenure and promotion at research universities. Also, teaching and service productivity expectations tend to vary in less predictable ways across individuals and over a career. Tenure, promotion to full professor, and age 55 to 60<sup>3</sup> (marked in the graph above) represent critical points in a faculty member's career. These three critical junctures approximately mark the beginning of three challenging cohorts: those in a post-tenure slump, perennial associate professors, and "retired in place" senior faculty.

<sup>3</sup> Some senior faculty remain highly productive well beyond retirement eligibility and certainly beyond age 55. The selection of age 55 or 60 as a critical juncture highlights the importance of planning for retirement as a faculty member approaches eligibility.

## V. FACULTY PRODUCTIVITY STALL POINTS

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Contacts expressed that many faculty experience declines in research productivity as they navigate each of these three transitions. Understanding the causes of these productivity roadblocks can help focus reviews and developmental resources on common challenges.

### Productivity Roadblocks Across the Faculty Lifecycle

#### The “Post-Tenure Slump”

*Immediately Post Tenure*

##### Distractions from Research

- Increase in administrative responsibilities (committee work)
- Increased national service opportunities (disciplinary societies)
- Increase in teaching responsibilities
- Increased family responsibilities

##### Loss of Focus

- Need to recover after intensive effort required for tenure
- Lack of formal mentoring
- Lack of clear expectations for promotion to full professor and annual performance

##### Time to Ramp Up New Research

- Takes time to get new research to publication stage
- Need to apply for new grants
- Need resources to restart research
- Need new skills for new, often interdisciplinary research

#### The “Perennial Associate”

*10-15 Years After Tenure*

##### Never Recovered from Post-Tenure Slump

- Took a few years to decide on next research project
- New research project never took off
- Unable to keep up with changing field
- Little progress made on overly ambitious project

##### Interests Shifted Away from Research

- Focused on teaching
- Focused on increasingly time-consuming administrative work
- Focused on public service/ outreach

##### Lack of Clear Expectations for Productivity

- Chair failed to communicate expectations for promotion and annual performance
- No feedback from colleagues on progress
- Annual reviews all positive despite lack of progress

#### The “Retired in Place” Professor

*5-10 Years Before Retirement*

##### Gradual Disengagement from Research and Teaching

- Failure to keep up with changing field
- Failure to update courses
- Unable to maintain excitement after so many years of teaching the same courses
- Lack of connection with students, younger scholars

##### Resistance to Retirement

- Lack financial means to retire
- Concerned about having nothing to do after retirement

## VI. PREVENTING THE “POST-TENURE SLUMP”

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### Managing the Transition from Monitored Focus on Scholarship to an Unguided Balance of Scholarship, Teaching, and Service

Tenure represents a dramatic professional and personal lifestyle transition. During the probationary period, faculty are given very clear research productivity expectations, provided with significant resources and support, and protected from burdensome teaching and service assignments. After tenure, research expectations remain high, but teaching and service expectations increase dramatically. At the same time, many associate professors feel that support from their departments drops off. They are left to navigate the challenges of their new role largely on their own.

#### Faculty Expectations

	Pre-Tenure	Post-Tenure
<i>Research</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant contributions to scholarship in one’s discipline</li> <li>• Successful grant proposals (depending on field)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuing contributions to scholarship</li> <li>• Interdisciplinary collaborations</li> <li>• Financial support for one’s own research as well as for graduate students</li> <li>• Thesis advising</li> </ul>
<i>Teaching</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited course load</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full course load</li> <li>• Design of innovative new courses</li> <li>• Undergraduate advising</li> </ul>
<i>Service</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited service expectations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extensive committee work</li> <li>• Departmental leadership positions (e.g., DGS)</li> <li>• Service to national disciplinary societies</li> <li>• Mentoring junior faculty</li> </ul>
<i>Institutional Support</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start up funding</li> <li>• Formal mentoring</li> <li>• Development and training programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Few formal sources of funds</li> <li>• Little formal mentoring or training</li> </ul>

Source: Education Advisory Board Interviews and Analysis



## VI. PREVENTING THE “POST-TENURE SLUMP”

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Contacts indicate three primary reasons for declining research productivity during the first few years after tenure: distractions from research, loss of focus, and time required to ramp up new research.

### Challenge: Distractions from Research

During the probationary period, faculty are protected from most other duties and allowed to focus almost exclusively on research. After tenure they are suddenly called upon to dramatically increase their teaching and service obligations. Many faculty have also postponed childbearing or ignored other family obligations, such as parental care, during the pre-tenure period and hope to return to a better work-life balance after tenure.

#### Typical Challenges

- Increase in administrative responsibilities (committee work)
- Increased national service opportunities (disciplinary societies)
- Increase in teaching responsibilities
- Increase in family responsibilities

### Tactics to Reduce Distractions from Research

#### Helping Faculty Balance Scholarship and Service after Tenure through Trainings on Academic Life

Tenure conveys new responsibilities on faculty members, and some may not have acquired the necessary skills during pre-tenure periods with their emphasis on individual research with minimal administrative service. Failure to acquire skills such as management, negotiation, evaluation of colleagues, and mentorship may hinder productivity in two primary ways:

1. **Tenured faculty may fail to carefully choose administrative responsibilities, reducing time for research.** According to contacts trainings on academic life, such as those described below, help faculty understand how to balance scholarship and service so that they do not become overwhelmed.
2. **Failure to effectively execute administrative responsibilities such as evaluation and mentorship of colleagues reduces productivity within departments.** Poorly-conducted reviews and insufficient feedback to colleagues contributes to professional stagnation and low research productivity.

Contacts at **University C**, **University O**, and the **University K** indicate that newly-tenured faculty may require training in skills that typically constitute leadership development education. However, few newly-tenured faculty identify themselves as leaders or initially react positively to language about leadership development.

Problems associated with existing leadership development programs include:

- **Leadership development typically focuses on preparation for administrative positions.** Many faculty may avoid these resources because they do not wish to pursue administrative careers. Therefore, administrators should adopt language that focuses on skills required for successful faculty careers.
- **Leadership development training typically neglects to help faculty determine how to balance scholarship and service responsibilities.** Faculty require training to effectively balance new responsibilities associated with tenure. Failure to establish an appropriate balance between scholarship and service may lead faculty to become unproductive and may engender negative feelings among faculty who believe they have more service responsibilities than other colleagues.

## VI. PREVENTING THE “POST-TENURE SLUMP”

### **Redesign Newly-Tenured Faculty Workshops to Focus on Skills that Contribute to Scholarship-Service Balance and Effective Execution of Administrative Service**

When designing workshops for newly-tenured faculty, faculty development administrators at University C renamed a workshop “Leadership and Academic Life” rather than simply leadership development. According to contacts, faculty development administrators should help associate professors understand their roles as leaders. Topics discussed in the “Workshops for Faculty on Leadership and Academic Life” include:

- Mentorship
- Budget management
- Administrative career paths
- Interpersonal negotiation
- Entrepreneurship in academic careers
- Public speaking and presentation skills
- Personal time management

Workshops at University C feature deans, associate deans, senior administrators, and faculty to provide insight from different perspectives. Diversity of experiences on workshop panels reportedly encourages attendance from faculty across many disciplines. In addition, participation of high-ranking administrators and members of promotion and tenure committees reportedly signals to newly-tenured faculty that these panels can support their long-term career development. Contacts suggest that elevating faculty development offices to associate provost rank or higher grants programs legitimacy. Administrators at **University O** also suggest recruiting skilled faculty and administrators to lead workshops. For example, drama and communications faculty lead workshops on public speaking and effective presentations.

### **Provide Training on Skills Necessary for Success as Tenured Professors and Departmental Colleagues**

The **University K**, in collaboration with a private academic leadership firm, the Kardia Group, developed two programs to help faculty understand responsibilities and skills associated with tenure and departmental obligations. These programs reportedly help faculty members adjust to new roles and encourage thoughtful consideration of career paths and skills required of tenured faculty.

- **“Faculty Transitions Program”**, a two-day seminar open to all associate professors, focuses on many topics, such as managing change, negotiating, meeting management, managing large projects, and addressing conflicts. It also helps teach faculty to consciously choose and refuse some administrative responsibilities. Unlike many institutions the **University K** and its LIFT program directly address key challenges faced by newly-tenured faculty. Education and training of newly-tenured faculty will reportedly benefit the institution by helping faculty manage departments more effectively. (*Source:* Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis; University K website. Program name has been altered for anonymity)
- **“Departmental Excellence Program”** invites teams of faculty members to attend a seminar addressing common department conflicts and how to effectively navigate them. Each team develops an action plan to positively change its department. External consultants and faculty development staff serve as neutral instructors in sessions designed to help faculty discuss departmental problems and become more effective departmental colleagues. Session topics include increasing transparency of departmental policies, improving mentoring of graduate students, and increasing a culture of respect among faculty, among others (*Source:* University K website. Program name has been altered for anonymity)

## VI. PREVENTING THE “POST-TENURE SLUMP”

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### Encouraging Attendance through Engaging Panelists and Online Training Options

#### Senior Faculty and Administrator Participation Promotes Workshop Value

Contacts report some difficulty in securing broad representation and participation in faculty workshops. Though the diversity and high rank of panel participants at **University C** contributes to participation, attendance remains a concern. Contacts at the **University K** and **University C** suggest that department chairs and deans should communicate the benefits of participation to newly-tenured faculty during promotion discussions, annual reviews, and professional development planning meetings.

#### Online Delivery Format Enables More Flexible Participation

Contacts at **University C** recognize that scheduling conflicts may prevent many faculty from participating in development workshops. To accommodate time constraints, administrators recently purchased access to resources through Epigeum, an online higher education training firm. Epigeum offers courses on skills required of associate professors such as research project management, personnel management, research integrity, and team leadership, among others.

### Provide Social Activities and Childcare Support for Tenured Faculty

Few contacts have designed family and social support programs specifically for newly-tenured faculty. Contacts at **University O** explain that some newly-tenured faculty may require guidance to reestablish healthy work-life balance after pre-tenure probationary periods. Faculty members may not establish a sense of community within departments or institutions during pre-tenure periods that focus on individual research. In addition, childcare or parental care responsibilities may become more pronounced around tenure decisions as individuals have children and parents age. Commonly-cited methods of addressing newly-tenured faculty work-life balance needs include:

- **Social activities for faculty:** Contacts at **University O** indicate that the institution has begun to offer networking and social events for associate professors. At **University C**, new and early career faculty can attend events that inform about unique features of the campus, such as the Superconducting Cyclotron Lab, the Horticulture Gardens, and other new campus facilities.
- **Social events for faculty families:** **University O** also hosts social events for faculty members to attend with their families. This helps faculty meet colleagues and build a community after spending several years focused on their own research to secure tenure.
- **Conference childcare grants:** Attending conferences presents unique challenges for faculty members with family responsibilities; **University D** offers small childcare grants for faculty who wish to travel to conferences.
- **Workshops on faculty life:** The aforementioned workshops help faculty members determine which service requirements to accept or refuse. Careful consideration of administrative responsibilities may prevent faculty members from becoming overwhelmed with new responsibilities after receiving tenure.

## VI. PREVENTING THE “POST-TENURE SLUMP”

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### Challenge: Loss of Focus on Research and Professional Goals

With so much effort focused on achieving tenure, many faculty struggle to define a clear direction in the aftermath. A well deserved break can sometimes extend for a year or more without clear expectations for promotion and in the absence of formal mentoring.

#### Typical Challenges

- Need to recover after intensive effort required for tenure
- Lack of formal mentoring
- Lack of clear expectations for promotion to full professor

### Tactics for Helping Faculty to Regain Focus on Research and Professional Goals

#### Create Development Plan and Set Promotion Date in First Year After Tenure

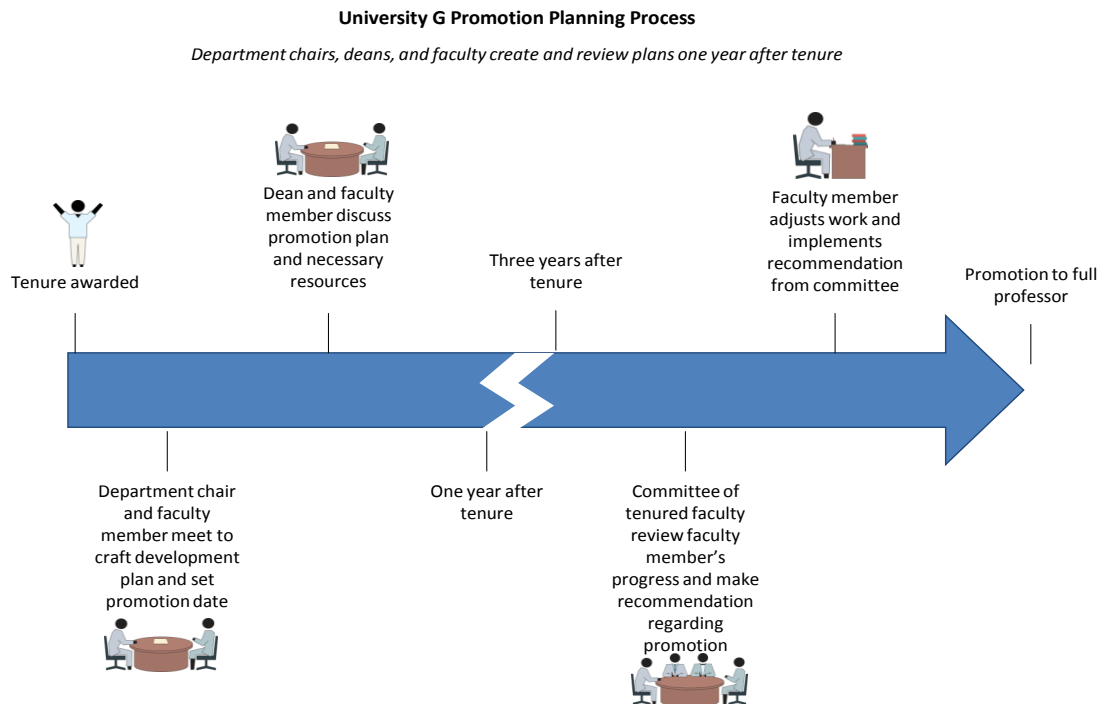
Newly-tenured faculty at the **University K** meet with department chairs within five years of receiving tenure, and faculty at the **University G** meet with department chairs in the first year after tenure to discuss professional goals and steps to achieve promotion to full professor quickly. In addition to communicating expectations, at these meetings **department chairs...**

- **...direct faculty members to appropriate campus resources.** Identification of faculty needs helps department chairs and deans direct newly-tenured faculty to resources that may help them excel as research project managers, mentors, administrative leaders, and departmental colleagues. Referral to campus resources may also increase a faculty member’s engagement with an institution, encouraging more active participation in departmental and institutional service activities.
- **...help faculty prepare proposals for grants, leaves, and other opportunities.** Contacts at **University B** explain that department chairs have recently placed renewed focus on helping newly-tenured faculty apply for grants, leaves, internal funds, conferences, and other opportunities that will help them gain knowledge and skills early in their tenure as associate professors.

At the **University G**, department chairs discuss possible timeframes for promotion to full professor with faculty members after receiving promotion; according to contacts, establishing this target date for promotion review mimics the schedule and the time pressure associated with probationary periods. Contacts describe a collaborative process for professional planning that includes many university constituents. The following process may vary across departments, and the graphic below represents a generalized version of a reported process:

# VI. PREVENTING THE “POST-TENURE SLUMP”

## Creating Deadlines and Time Pressure *Setting Promotion Date Motivates Faculty and Colleagues*



According to contacts at the **University G**, the planning process and written plans developed provide associate professors with justification for declining administrative service requests, as administrative service may unduly interfere with mutually-agreed upon professional plans.

## VI. PREVENTING THE “POST-TENURE SLUMP”

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### Peer Support Groups to Provide Confidential Forums for Associate Professors to Discuss Challenges, Professional Goals

Secondary research and contacts at all profiled institutions indicate that newly-tenured associate professors require attention and feedback from their faculty colleagues. Pre-tenure faculty receive intensive mentoring from a small group of senior colleagues, but approaches to mentoring and professional collaboration change post tenure.

**The University of North Carolina at Charlotte** created a peer mentoring program to address associate professor needs.<sup>4</sup> This program provides small groups of associate professors confidential environments in which they discuss career planning, research or teaching challenges, professional skill development, conflicts with departmental and university colleagues, or other issues that affect working environments. The associate professor support program began as part of an ADVANCE grant from the National Science Foundation. Feedback collected through surveys and interviews indicates some success among peer group participants as demonstrated through:

- Development of additional mentoring relationships
- Improved perception of promotion processes
- Reduced gender-based disparity in perceptions of promotion policies; women were previously more likely to perceive promotion policies as burdensome and difficult.
- Increased attention to career planning

The University of North Carolina at Charlotte, as well as **University B**<sup>5</sup>, **University C**, **University H**, and the **University K**, institutionalized many aspects of ADVANCE grant programs after determining they could benefit all faculty. Though gender disparities complicate the challenges at each career stage, lessons learned from ADVANCE are broadly applicable. Common ADVANCE workshop and training topics are similar to those offered at University C (see above) and may also include:

- Leadership development
- Gender bias
- Lab management
- How to be selective in acceptance of administrative responsibilities
- Negotiating with department chairs

Contacts at the **University L** also suggest that associate professors value peer mentoring groups that facilitate candid, confidential discussions; faculty development administrators can facilitate conversations and provide some resources to create a welcoming atmosphere. Through the University’s Institute for the Arts and Humanities, small groups of faculty meet to discuss challenges and professional goals.

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<sup>4</sup> Kimberly Buch, Yvette Huet, Audrey Rorrer, and Lynn Roberson (2011): Removing the Barriers to Full Professor: A Mentoring Program for Associate Professors, *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*, 43:6, 38-45.; National Science Foundation ADVANCE Grants

<sup>5</sup> University B ADVANCE Web Portal <http://www.brown.edu/Administration/Provost/Advance/index.html>

## VI. PREVENTING THE “POST-TENURE SLUMP”

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### Universalizing the Lessons from Diversity Initiatives

A number of contact institutes first focused on the issues of supporting tenured faculty through a focus on the challenges of women and minorities in the professoriate. Research reveals gender disparities among long-term associate professors at many institutions. According to a study of faculty at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, for example, women were 2.3 times more likely than men to be associate professors for 13 or more years. A study at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte revealed that men and women identify similar challenges to promotion, but women perceive current promotion policies and standards as more difficult to navigate and less clear.

ADVANCE grants from the National Science Foundation encourage administrators to focus on the following tactics to help advance women in STEM fields:

- Mentoring networks
- Institutional hiring policy transformation
- Career flexibility policies to ameliorate conflicts between work and family responsibilities
- Training on tenure and promotion processes

Contacts at the **University H**, **University K**, **University B**, and **University C** explain that reviews of ADVANCE and feedback from faculty revealed that these tactics can support all faculty, not just underrepresented groups. Therefore, these institutions have maintained ADVANCE grant programs after expiration of the original grant. Institutions have not reduced services for individual cohorts, such as female faculty, but they have expanded resources to all faculty.

Examples:

University of Washington ADVANCE Center for Institutional Change Faculty Development Workshops/Resources. These cover many topics, though many focus on gender and academia: <http://advance.washington.edu/apps/resources/results.phtml?topics%5B%5D=5%7CFaculty+Professional+Development&srchType=topicIds>

Change Magazine analysis of ADVANCE/LEAP initiatives at UC Boulder <http://www.changemag.org/Archives/Back%20Issues/March-April%202009/full-advance-project.html>

University of Colorado at Boulder LEAP faculty development programs for all faculty ranks <https://facultyaffairs.colorado.edu/leap>

Peer mentoring groups for women faculty at University B [http://www.brown.edu/Administration/Provost/Advance/peer\\_mentor.html](http://www.brown.edu/Administration/Provost/Advance/peer_mentor.html)

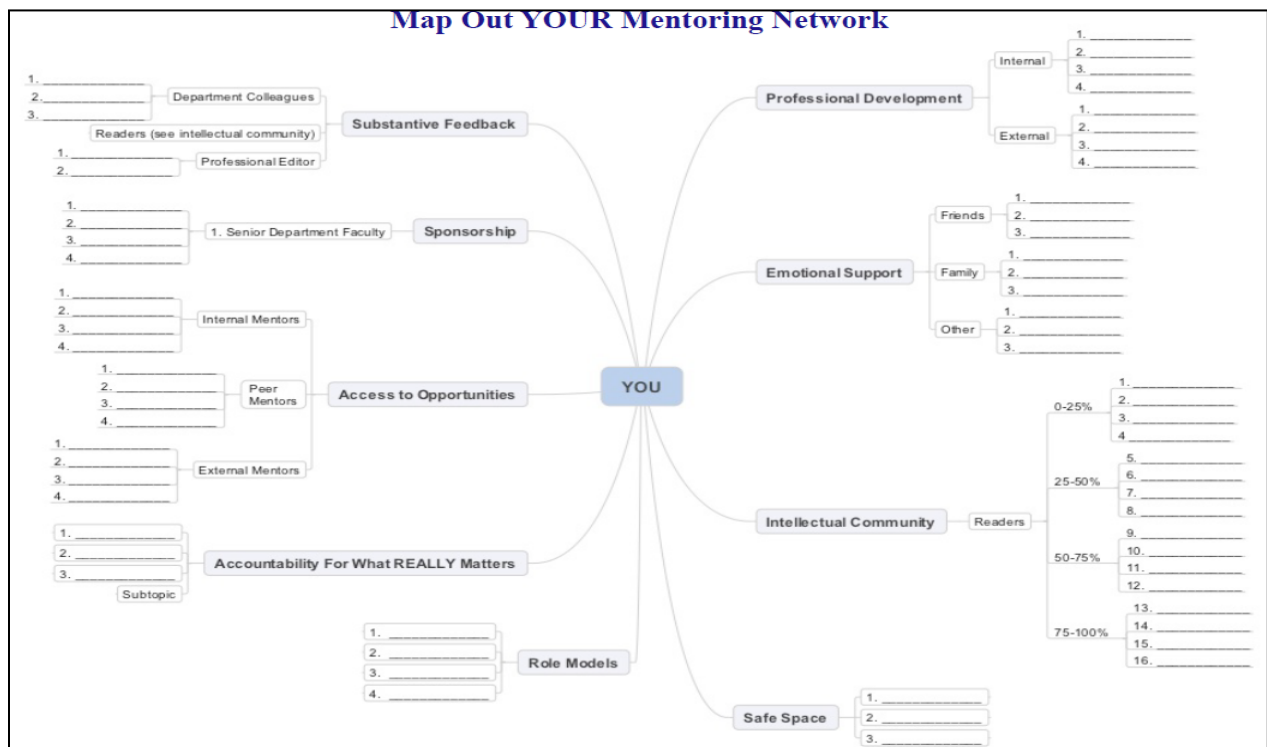
Faculty development workshops at University B <https://wiki.brown.edu/confluence/display/advance/Workshop+Series>

Mentoring network suggestions from CUNY Hunter <http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/genderequity/equityMaterials/Jan2007/facdevel.107.pdf>

# VI. PREVENTING THE “POST-TENURE SLUMP”

## Establish Networks of Mentors to Provide Guidance and Feedback after Tenure

Contacts at the **University L** and the **University K** explain that associate professors may desire less intensive mentoring relationships than those experienced during probationary periods. However, guidance from more senior colleagues and from faculty outside of departments may help newly-tenured faculty navigate new responsibilities and research interests. Instead of one-on-one relationships, contacts recommend mentoring networks comprised of colleagues across an institution or external to it. **University B** helps women of color and women in STEM disciplines identify networks of peers to serve as mentors. The peer groups above may provide mentors, or faculty members may seek them on their own. The National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity provides one example of a mentoring network:



Source: National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity [www.facultydiversity.org](http://www.facultydiversity.org)



## VI. PREVENTING THE “POST-TENURE SLUMP”

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### Challenge: Time and Resources to Ramp Up New Research

Many faculty complete major research projects just before tenure, creating a natural lull after tenure as new projects take time to get started. A faculty member continuing in a similar research vein will still need time to apply for new grants and write up research results. They will often require additional financial resources to launch the new research agenda. And many faculty will use tenure as an opportunity to explore new fields or engage in the type of collaborative, interdisciplinary research that is not always rewarded at tenure. The greater the disparity between the old and the new research the longer it is likely to take a faculty member to demonstrate productivity.

#### Typical Challenges

- Takes time to get new research to publication stage
- Need to apply for new grants
- Need resources to restart research
- Need new skills for new, often interdisciplinary research

### Tactics for Helping Ramp Up New Research

#### Offer Post-Tenure Sabbaticals

Faculty at **University O** receive a one-semester sabbatical after five consecutive semesters of teaching. Additionally, faculty also receive a year-long sabbatical immediately before or after receiving tenure, depending on when an individual achieves tenure. Similarly, deans at the **University N** may approve special leaves for faculty members if a dean believes that the sabbatical will benefit the faculty member and the institution. Conversely, a dean can revoke a regularly-granted sabbatical in response to poor performance.



#### **Effectiveness of Sabbaticals May Be Reduced by Family Responsibilities**

Despite the common use of sabbaticals among contact institutions, administrators at **University C** suggest that sabbaticals have become less feasible as more households rely on two income earners. According to contacts, a faculty member on sabbatical may have more childcare or other family responsibilities than in the past, when faculty members may have been more likely to rely only on a single income. These responsibilities limit a faculty member's time and ability to travel for field research.

#### Create Publicly Available List of Research Resources

Through its ADVANCE program, **University B** provides associate professors with a comprehensive list of research resources that will help them as they advance toward promotion. These resources include faculty mentoring guides, sponsored research support, leadership programs, and more.

#### Create Centralized Associate Professor Development Funds

Administrators at the **University K** created an Associate Professor Fund, a pool of resources dedicated to helping faculty members maintain productivity and reach promotion to full professor quickly. According to contacts, the Fund initially helped long-term associate professors reach full professor. The Fund has reportedly led to a significant decline in the number of problematic perennial associates, and its purpose has shifted to helping newly-tenured faculty. Secondary research suggests that placing support funding outside of direct department control may reduce pressure on department chairs to determine grant

## VI. PREVENTING THE “POST-TENURE SLUMP”

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allocations<sup>6</sup>. Deans or provosts could maintain small discretionary funds and meet with associate professors to discuss applications for institutional grants.

The **University J** also provides grants for its associate professors through its post-tenure review process. Applications for these grants, reportedly averaging approximately \$2,000, form the focal point of the post-tenure review process. Faculty undergoing review must prepare plans for how to utilize the grant, thus encouraging faculty to think about the future of their careers instead of only on the past few years of their work.

### **Balancing Costs and Benefits of Providing Sabbaticals and Grants to Faculty Whose Productivity Has Declined**

Contacts recognize that grants and sabbaticals impose significant costs, but do not guarantee research improvement or productivity. Therefore, contacts at the **University N** suggest that department chairs and deans collaborate with faculty members to develop defined plans for sabbaticals.

Despite challenges, encouragement through release time and small financial incentives for newly-tenured faculty may yield significant benefits in the future, especially by showing faculty members they are valued and encouraging departmental engagement. Demonstrating commitment to a faculty member may foster long-term productivity and more collegial working relationships between a faculty member and his or her colleagues. Contacts claim that engaged faculty produce more research, teach more courses, and more willingly accept administrative service responsibilities.

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<sup>6</sup> Mills, Nancy. “Now that I’m Tenured, Where Do I Go from Here: The Vitality of Mid-Career Faculty.” Council of Undergraduate Research Quarterly. June 2000.

## VII. MOTIVATING THE “PERENNIAL ASSOCIATE”

While most faculty find their way through the post-tenure slump and reach a second peak of research productivity around the time of promotion to full professor, some do not. Some of the most pressing faculty productivity challenges emerge among long-term associate professors, those individuals who have failed to achieve promotion ten or more years after receiving tenure. Several factors contribute to faculty members becoming long-term associates.

### **New Approach to Addressing Long-Term Associate Problems: Focus on Reengagement**

Research interviews reveal that this disengagement and underperformance should not be confused for incompetence or laziness. Instead, academic leaders should recognize that common factors contribute to decreased research productivity. Early identification of these challenges and efforts to address them may prevent faculty from becoming disengaged or resentful.

### **Challenge: Never Recovered from Post-Tenure Slump**

New associate professors may take some time to decide on a new research project. They may select a risky project or a particularly ambitious approach given the security of tenure. And yet if the risk fails to pay off or the project turns out to be too ambitious, they may have very little evidence of productivity to submit for a promotion review.

#### Typical Challenges

- Took a few years to decide on next research project
- New research project never took off
- Unable to keep up with changing field
- Little progress made on overly ambitious project

### **Tactics for Recovering from the Post-Tenure Slump**

#### **Revisit Tactics for Addressing Challenges Faced by Newly-Tenured Faculty**

Those faculty who have lost research momentum and have become perennial associates present some of the most pressing challenges according to contacts. The challenge of never recovering from a post-tenure slump requires similar tactics to those listed for newly-tenured faculty experiencing the post-tenure slump. Career associates who have not reinvigorated their research may require:

- Renewed mentoring support
- Funding to restart research
- Time away from administrative and teaching responsibilities to focus on research
- Demonstrations of support and engagement from administrators, especially deans and department chairs
- Effective feedback from colleagues about how to reinvigorate research
- More effective review processes that encourage professional growth and have resources attached (see Section IX)

## VII. MOTIVATING THE “PERENNIAL ASSOCIATE”

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### A Slow Drift Away from Research

Some associate professors may begin to explore non-research aspects of their role, taking on responsibility for developing innovative new courses, directing academic programs or other administrative units, or focusing on public service or other engaged research. Each of these activities can generate significant value for the institution, but at research universities these are generally considered insufficient for promotion, regardless of their quality.

#### Typical Challenges

- Focused on teaching
- Focused on increasingly time-consuming administrative work
- Focused on public service/ outreach

### Tactics for Accommodating Interests that Have Shifted Away from Research

#### Create Flexible Responsibilities and Workloads Based on Faculty Strengths and Interests

Universities maintain significant flexibility in allocating responsibilities and duties among their faculty. Contacts at most institutions indicated that reassignment of duties to teaching and service instead of research can help long-term associates feel engaged and fulfilled even if they cannot achieve promotion through research.

Ernest Boyer’s Scholarship Reconsidered proposes creating “creativity contracts” that allow faculty to pursue many different types of work while still emphasizing high standards for productivity in those chosen areas. Faculty at the **University H** emphasized the importance of flexibility in their careers as part of a study of the ADVANCE grant and its corresponding LEAP program (Leadership Education for Advancement and Promotion). Faculty want recognition and guidance as they pursue new types of research and work.

*Source:* Boyer, Ernest. Scholarship Reconsidered. Jossey-Bass. San Francisco: 1997.; Laursen, Sandra and Bill Rocque. “Faculty Development for Institutional Change: Lessons from an ADVANCE Project.” Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning. March-April 2009.

#### Create Alternative Routes to Full Professor

Perhaps the most radical version of flexible workload assignments involves creating new pathways to promotion. E. Gordon Gee, president of **Ohio State University\***, called on universities to consider granting promotion to full professors based on teaching, service, or other factors beyond research productivity. Other institutions, such as **University of Southern California\*** and many members of Campus Compact, have revised promotion guidelines to include more support for interdisciplinary research and engaged scholarship. Promotion review committees will now include members from other departments related to the faculty member’s research. These individuals provide additional perspectives on a faculty member’s research. Contacts at the **University L** suggest that alternative pathways to full professor could help faculty place more energy and attention on their strengths, especially if they have lost interest in research. However, we have been unable to identify any institutions who have actually implemented alternative paths to full professor.

*Source:* Education Advisory Board Interviews and Analysis, Berrett, Daniel. “Tenure Across Borders.” Inside Higher Ed. July 22, 2011.; Jaschik, Scott. “Different Paths to Full Professor.” Inside Higher Ed. March 5, 2010.; Campus Compact [www.campuscompact.org](http://www.campuscompact.org);

\*: The Ohio State University and the University of Southern California were not contacted for this report.

## **VII. MOTIVATING THE “PERENNIAL ASSOCIATE”**

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### **Challenge: Lack of Clear Expectations for Productivity**

One of the most difficult problems to rectify is the associate professor who believes they are making progress towards promotion and is surprised when their colleagues do not deem their research worthy of advancement. In the absence of clear expectations and regular feedback, this can be a common occurrence. The result is often an associate professor who becomes disengaged and disgruntled. These faculty not only fail to produce adequate research, but they may also hinder effective departmental operation.

#### Typical Challenges

- Chair failed to communicate expectations for promotion and annual performance
- No feedback from colleagues on progress
- Annual reviews all positive despite lack of progress

### **Tactics for Setting Clear Expectations for Productivity**

#### **Require Full Professors to Review Associate Professors**

At the **University G** and **University M** full professors participate in reviews of associate professors, providing more detailed feedback and depersonalizing the review delivered by the chair. Contacts at the **University M** indicate that all full professors in a department annually review all associate professors in that department. This annual review provides additional feedback to department chairs who ultimately conduct individual annual reviews of faculty. With more information, department chairs can make better decisions about merit-based salary increases and about a faculty member’s development needs. The aforementioned review committees at the **University G** help associate professors identify specific resources to seek and actions to pursue in order to reach promotion.

#### **Link Post-Tenure Review to Development Grants**

At the **University J**, faculty members submit applications for approximately \$2,000 professional development grants when they undergo post-tenure review. According to contacts, applying for professional development grants encourages faculty to think about the future of their careers instead of only on the past few years of performance. Additionally, department chairs and other administrators more carefully conduct reviews because of the need to responsibly award development grants. Providing development grants to long-term associate professors encourages renewed research productivity and shifts the focus of post-tenure review from punishment and scrutiny to development and growth.

## **VIII. OPTIONS FOR THE “RETIRED IN PLACE” PROFESSOR**

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### **Challenge: Gradual Disengagement from Both Research and Teaching**

The American professoriate has become older over the past two decades. As the baby boomers age and as more and more postpone retirement, the overall age of the faculty has increased. While a handful of faculty remain highly productive beyond typical retirement age, most would agree that faculty productivity tends to decline after a certain age. Most contacts saw the challenge not as maintaining productivity among late-career faculty, but in planning for a timely retirement in order to open up positions for younger, more productive faculty. A number of challenges typically arise:

After twenty or more years of teaching and research with no more opportunities for promotion, faculty typically struggle to remain excited and engaged in their work. Updating courses, staying current with the latest research, and connecting with students and younger scholars can be a challenge.

#### Typical Challenges

- Failure to keep up with changing field
- Failure to update courses
- Unable to maintain excitement after so many years of teaching the same courses
- Lack of connection with students, younger scholars

### **Tactics for Encouraging Positive Disengagement from Research and Teaching**

Contacts indicate that few faculty adequately plan for retirement. Though directly targeting individual faculty members for retirement may not be possible due to legal concerns, providing information about retirement to all faculty members after reaching promotion or as they approach retirement may encourage more advanced planning.

#### **Create Annually Updated Five-Year Plans to Encourage Faculty to Consider Retirement**

According to contacts at the **University K**, faculty members create five-year professional plans that they must update each year during the annual review process. Contacts suggest that this tactic encourages older faculty to consider when they may wish to end their careers. Thinking about the next five years of an individual’s career may help faculty set goals that allow them to conclude research projects, adjust to the lifestyle change of retirement, and conduct service responsibilities before retirement.

#### **Offer Phased Retirement Plans to Help Faculty Adjust to Retirement**

Phased retirement programs allow faculty to slowly adjust to this new life stage personally and professionally. Faculty begin to acclimate to life off campus, and they can also conclude research or teaching initiatives. These programs also ease some financial concerns by allowing faculty to earn additional money and to continue contributing to retirement plans for several years before officially retiring.

## VIII. OPTIONS FOR THE “RETIRED IN PLACE” PROFESSOR

Two Phased Retirement Plans				
Institution	Age of Eligibility	Required Length of Service for Eligibility	Maximum Length of Reduced Service	Plan Structure
University L	62 for individuals in the State teachers retirement plan; 59.5 for individuals in different retirement plans	5 years	5 years	Faculty receive half of their previous year’s salary for half of their normally-assigned workload. Half-time service may involve full-time service for one semester and then one semester of no responsibilities.
University O	59	15 years	3 years	Faculty receive half of their previous year’s full salary for half of their normally-assigned workload. Faculty space may be reduced proportionally during the phased retirement program.

Source: <http://intranet.northcarolina.edu/docs/hr/benefits/Phased%20Retirement/PRP-Summary.pdf> and <http://www.yale.edu/hronline/benefits/RetirementFA.html#jump123>

### Maintain a Designated Retirement Contact Outside the Department

Contacts at **University B** suggest that faculty may feel more comfortable discussing retirement with individuals outside of their own department. Administrators, such as an associate provost for faculty affairs or a dean of the faculty, may be perceived as neutral parties in discussions about retirement when faculty members do not wish to reveal plans to colleagues or department chairs. A dedicated contact for retirement issues can also assist faculty members with financial questions and legal issues.

### **Challenge: Resistance to Retirement**

Contacts described two basic reasons why faculty postpone retirement even as their productivity declines. The recent turmoil in financial markets has reduced the value of retirement holdings for many, and the use of sporadic early retirement incentive plans at many institutions has convinced them that if they hold out a few more years they will receive a better package. Moreover, after a lifetime in the same job, many are concerned about what they will do with their time after retirement. Retirement-eligible faculty may fear the loss of a sense of purpose upon retirement. Scholarship and teaching have formed the foundation of their personal and professional lives for decades, and abandoning their life’s work may be a daunting task. Fears regarding loss of friendships and disruption in a faculty member’s sense of place may contribute to delayed retirement.

#### Typical Challenges

- Lack financial means to retire
- Concerned about having nothing to do after retirement

## VIII. OPTIONS FOR THE “RETIRED IN PLACE” PROFESSOR

### Tactics for Reducing Resistance to Retirement

#### Create Standing Early Retirement Buyout Programs that Decline in Value with Age

Typical buyout programs occur intermittently, creating incentives for faculty to delay retirement until a large buyout offer develops, according to contacts at **University C**. Standing early retirement buyout programs allow faculty to accept early retirement without financial concerns and without incentives to wait for a better offer. Some tax concerns exist with buyout programs; the Internal Revenue Service requires tax payments for the entire buyout in the first year, regardless of the number of years over which faculty receive retirement payments. To ease this financial burden, many early retirement plans provide all payment in the first year or a higher percentage of the total payment in the first year.

**University O** maintains an early retirement standing buyout program for faculty who reach 62 years of age. The benefit equals 60% of the participant’s three-year final average salary plus 2% for each year of service with the University over 15. If less, the benefit will equal the amount required to purchase an annuity that would bridge the difference between the annuity which could be purchased with the participant’s current retirement account balance and the annuity which could be purchased with that account projected at 4 percent to normal retirement age

#### Provide Dedicated Space for Retired Faculty to Maintain Physical Connections to Campus

**University O** received a gift to build a physical center for retired faculty with a small staff. Staff members assist retired faculty with technology questions and identification of part-time teaching opportunities, mentoring needs, and other forms of engagement with the institution. Contacts at many institutions also offer office space to retired faculty so that they maintain a physical connection to their departments and campuses. From these spaces, faculty may conduct research or provide support to departments through consulting and informal advice.

#### Establish and Support Emeritus Faculty Social Organization and Activities

Though phased retirement programs and standing buyout offers help faculty prepare for a new stage of their lives, many still desire connections to institutions after they have retired fully. Several institutions provide long-term opportunities for faculty to maintain connections with an institution through faculty emeritus programs. Though not all institutions grant the title of emeritus to all retired faculty, faculty emeriti refers to the entire cohort of retired faculty in this report. For faculty who wish to maintain relationships with colleagues and who value physical connections to a campus, these programs soften the sharp contrast between full-time employment and retirement

*"Retirement for many faculty members is social death. And if it isn't, they think it is."*

Teresa A. Sullivan  
President of the University of Virginia.

Source: Masterson, Kathryn. "Encouraging Faculty Retirement Goes Beyond the Financial, College Presidents Say." The Chronicle of Higher Education. March 13, 2011.

soften the sharp contrast between full-time employment and retirement

Strategies for engaging faculty emeriti include:

- **Retired faculty organization:** At **University C**, retired faculty organized an association for retired faculty. This group organizes events and provides advice to administrators on how the institution can continue to engage and utilize retired faculty.



## VIII. OPTIONS FOR THE “RETIRED IN PLACE” PROFESSOR

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- **Lecture series:** According to contacts at **University C**, a council of retired faculty plans public lectures for its members and for the general public. These events provide social activities for retired faculty and increase their engagement with the institution.
- **Opportunities to teach classes part-time:** Faculty relinquish tenure upon retirement, but they are still eligible to teach part-time at most institutions. They may provide a less expensive instructional option for departments.
- **Assistance reviewing articles and other publications for departments:** Retired faculty can help edit and review papers or other publications prior to submission for publication. Though they may have difficulty with more innovative research with which they are less familiar, contacts indicate that retired faculty can reduce editing and review responsibilities for other departmental faculty.
- **Consulting for administrators:** Retired faculty with many years of scholarly and administrative experience may be able to help department chairs, deans, and provosts as consultants on administrative tasks or initiatives. Consulting opportunities encourage engagement with an institution and help retired faculty maintain professional and social connections to former colleagues.
- **Volunteering or public service opportunities:** Faculty emeritus programs can organize service and volunteer activities. For example, **University C**'s Faculty Emeriti Association organizes musical instrument donation drives, clothing drives for theatrical performances, and library collection campaigns.

# IX. SUPPORTING FACULTY PRODUCTIVITY ACROSS THE LIFECYCLE

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A better understanding of the common causes of declining research productivity can serve to identify the resources and interventions most likely to help faculty navigate the critical transitions they will face over their careers. Below is a summary of some of the support mechanisms that other institutions have found helpful at each stage.

## Supporting Faculty Productivity Across the Lifecycle

### The Post Tenure Slump

*Immediately Post Tenure*

#### Reduce Distractions from Research

- Associate professor training (Michigan State, Yale, Michigan)
- Guidelines for how to choose (and decline) opportunities for service (Chicago)
- Conference Travel Childcare Grants (Northwestern)
- Post-Tenure Sabbatical (Yale)

#### Provide Research Resources

- List of resources for new associate professors (Brown)
- Associate Professor Fund (Michigan)

#### Set Clear Expectations

- Create development plan and set date for promotion in first year after tenure (Chicago and Michigan)
- Peer support groups (UNC Charlotte and UNC Chapel Hill)
- Mentoring networks (UNC Chapel Hill, Michigan, Brown)

### The Long-Term Associate

*10-15 Years After Tenure*

#### Give Credit for Non-Research Activities

- Flexible workload assignments
- Alternative routes to full professor (USC)

#### Set Clear Expectations for Productivity

- Full professors review all associate professors annually (Chicago, Notre Dame)
- Link post-tenure review process to application for development grants (UMass- Amherst)

### The “Retired in Place” Professor

*5-10 Years Before Retirement*

#### Plan for the End

- Start planning for retirement just after promotion
- Create annually updated five year plans (Michigan)
- Phased retirement (Yale, UNC Chapel Hill)
- Retirement contact outside the department (Brown)

#### Reduce Financial Incentives to Wait

- Standing buyout packages (Yale)
- Retirement packages that reduce with age (Yale)

#### Preserve Social Ties Post Retirement

- Office space for emeriti
- Emeritus faculty social club (Michigan State, Yale)

# X. BUILDING A BETTER REVIEW PROCESS

## Guiding Principles for Successful Review Processes

At nearly all institutions faculty undergo annual reviews for merit-based salary increases, and at many public universities they also submit to regular or triggered post-tenure reviews. Yet, contacts and secondary research agree that these reviews are seen by most faculty as a waste of time. Despite significant effort, they rarely result in concrete outcomes.

*“Post-tenure review will not be successful if it is punitive. To get rid of non-productive faculty, you need an annual review process. It won’t work if it’s every five years. You need continuity of feedback.”*

Council Interview

Installing a new post-tenure review process on top of an ineffective annual review process fails to address the fundamental causes of poor performance management. The table below contrasts a typical approach to faculty reviews with lessons learned from more effective approaches at institutions profiled in this research.

**Essential Elements of Effective Post-Tenure Reviews**

Typical Reviews for Tenured Faculty	More Effective Alternatives
Vague or shifting productivity expectations	Clearly defined, discipline-specific performance targets
Backward-looking performance reviews	Annually updated five year development plan
Little constructive feedback from peers	Full professors review all associate professors
Perfunctory reviews from department chair	Training for chairs, review input from broader committee
Few consequences for poor reviews	Explicit outcomes with tasks for both the faculty member and the department chair
Limited resources to support research or faculty development	Small development grants linked to review process
Research output the only path to promotion	Consideration of teaching, service, and outreach
Little feedback from senior administrators	Input and support from deans and other administrators

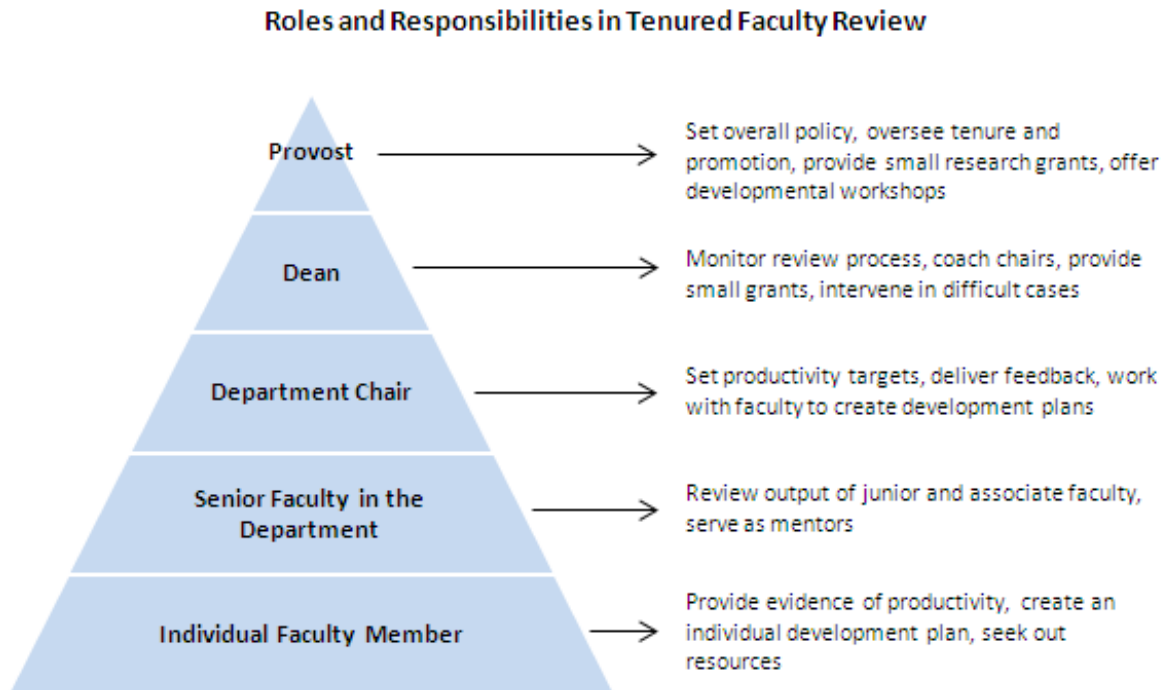
Source: Education Advisory Board Interviews and Analysis

## X. BUILDING A BETTER REVIEW PROCESS

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### The Role of the Provost

While provosts rarely play a direct role in reviews of faculty, their position as Chief Academic Officer gives them the responsibility for ensuring that proper policies are in place and that each of the other actors is supporting the process appropriately.



While all members of the academic administration and faculty have a role to play, contacts indicated that department chairs typically have the most critical, and the most problematic, function. Department chairs may hesitate to deliver negative reviews because they return to normal faculty positions after short terms; they then become subject to review by colleagues who may feel slighted by past negative reviews. Moreover, department chairs are rarely formally trained to effectively evaluate and guide faculty professional development. As the primary individual responsible for these duties within all departments, this lack of preparation may cause stagnation among faculty and missed opportunities for professional growth.

## X. BUILDING A BETTER REVIEW PROCESS

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### **The Challenge of Setting Research Productivity Expectations**

Research contacts and the secondary literature all highlight the critical importance of providing faculty with explicit expectations about research output and overall productivity, yet developing discipline-specific benchmarks that faculty will accept can be challenging. Issues include:

- Finding metrics that capture the quality of the research rather than simply quantity
- Weighting metrics appropriately for each discipline
- Collecting benchmarks from appropriate peer programs
- Valuing multidisciplinary research
- Accommodating short-term fluctuations in productivity

A number of research contacts discussed working with Academic Analytics to develop and implement research productivity benchmarks that address these issues.

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

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- ❖ Will more focused development and review practices alone close the perceived “productivity gap”, or will more culturally disruptive measures like post-tenure review “with teeth” and specialized teaching vs. research career paths have to be implemented at scale?
- ❖ Are there any other classic faculty productivity “stall points” that are predictable and pre-emptable with enlightened trainings and incentives?
- ❖ If your institution could do only one thing from the list of faculty productivity practices described in this report, what would it be?
- ❖ Where could EAB expand this inquiry in the future?

**PROFESSIONAL SERVICES NOTE**

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