Draft RFPT Recommendations

Introduction

The Roadmap to the Future of Promotion & Tenure explored how current promotion and tenure systems at academic institutions in the state of Maryland recognize scholarly works in ways that promote and support openness, equity, diversity, and inclusion. The aim of the research was to identify changes and strategies for implementing those changes that could enhance how those values are recognized and rewarded. The methodology included a literature review, an online survey of Maryland faculty, and a set of Delphi exercises conducted in-person and remotely with a panel of faculty and administrators selected from the participating institutions. The following recommendations were informed by the results of each of those methods.

Recommendations for the evaluation of scholarly output

Take steps to:

- Mitigate unconscious bias in P & T.
- Increase the value of open access in P & T
- Increase the value of additional forms of scholarly output (e.g., community engagement, technical reports, and web presence) in P & T

Roadmap for the change process

Mandates from university administration:

- Require all faculty to take an unconscious bias test and attend unconscious bias training.
- Require all departments to develop methods of addressing unconscious bias during the P & T process to include in their P & T procedures.
- Require departments to consider methods of increasing the value of open access works in P & T

Discussions and decisions at the department level:

- Discuss unconscious bias in P & T and develop processes to mitigate it to include in their P & T procedures.
- Discuss and evaluate the relative value placed on various formats of work, particularly technical reports, web pages, and social media, in their P & T process, and make appropriate changes.

Barriers to Change

- Perception of what others in the field think should and should not be rewarded.
- Peer pressure to conform to the norms of the field.

  These related barriers to change can be addressed by research demonstrating that individual researchers' perceptions of what should and should not be rewarded no longer align with

evolving norms of scholarly output types and methods. Although the focus of these recommendations is on scholarly output, it is worth noting that these barriers relate not only to the kinds of research outputs rewarded but also to the uneven distribution of service expectations found on many campuses. These incongruences, when proven, should both motivate change, and bring down these barriers.

- Personal or organizational vested interest in the current process

  Those who have accumulated a body of works for their P & T review must be judged by the same values as when they started. New values should apply after review when the faculty member again begins accumulating works for the next review, or only to new hires.

Limitations of Research

This project's survey results were not statistically significant. This project looked at values across faculty in different disciplines and did not address values within disciplines. This project also focused on the role of scholarly output in the promotion and tenure process. It is difficult to fully separate this from considering the role of these values and the impact of unconscious bias when the distribution of teaching and service expectations may be distributed unevenly. Sex, gender, race, and ethnicity may all play a role in the amount of service that is expected of them thus impacting the remaining time available to produce scholarly output. Additionally, when considering openness, the project largely focused on the faculty members publications and did not fully explore the role of Open Educational Resources (OER). In the June 2020 edition of College & Research Libraries News, Lyon et al. (p.294-297) discussed their own experience and goals for library involvement in influencing the adoption of OER including through financial incentives for faculty. One area for future research may include the feasibility of incentivizing OER adoption in teaching through recognition within the P & T process.

Next Steps

- The project team should connect with existing campus and system-wide groups to make recommendation to administration on unconscious bias mandates.
- The shift in values toward open access should be further cultivated, and this should be explored as a single research project.
- Incongruence between evolving disciplinary norms, what individual researchers within those disciplines value, and what current P & T guidelines currently valued should be investigated on a national level to motivate and enable change.