Faculty Veterans’ Advice for WPAF
Fall 2017

Overview
- Especially in your first-year submission – articulate that you’re a good fit for Cal Poly. They hired you, so have clear articulated vision of what your career is going to look like, the goals that you have for your personal journey match well with your college and the university. Explain what you’re going to do to fulfill that vision. Makes it crystal clear from the beginning and clear to your evaluators. Then do it.
- Think of process holistically – easy to focus on checklist. Keeps you from being scattered.
- Find out the culture you live in – failure to succeed in an org is not knowing expectations and not knowing the culture and embrace it.
- Become the person that you want to be, that you can be. You define the relationships with your students, not just following advice from others.
- Add short term component for coming year (as well as plan for tenure) – then reflect on it whether you achieved it or what were barriers.
- Set short term goals, and long-term goals. Achieve short-term goals while working on longer term projects
- Service is avenue for connections, getting to know the university community

Collecting Documentation
- Put things into a folder throughout the year when it happens, you’ll forget otherwise – save everything
- Revise (not rewrite) your approach to teaching each year to show growth – should not be from scratch but should evolve over time
- Build data sculpture to track what you want to do and how it matches goals.
- Keep collecting materials throughout the year in a folder WPAF label
- Whatever you did to get hired, put in the binder. Document person you pretended to be in hiring.
- Keep everything updated, especially when you’re not good at it. First report, not a lot of service – it’s OK. Lecturer – I have to teach. Good to have research/service included beyond expectations. Identify wins, make sure they’re highlighted well in dossier. What’s service – didn’t really know. They said to include attending meetings (dept, college, etc.). prepare in word documents for staff to copy and paste into electronic dossier.
- Include smaller service activity – collect artifacts to remind yourself (easy to forget) so can include. Note in calendar color code service.
- Save everything – you don’t want to have a claim of peer reviewed publication or juried work and don’t have the documentation. On service work, save letter, you never know when you might need to include and show.

Evidence for Teaching
- Invite your senior faculty to observe your classes and give feedback
- Take advantage of CTLT offerings to evolve your teaching
- Take advantage of Mid-Term Chats from CTLT, or do it on your own (midterm feedback process). Consider adding some questions of your own to departmental evaluations.
- When get student evals comparing my scores to dept averages and to your colleagues – spin it. Maybe separate those in major and out of major, find way to explain why they are low or high. Could be the class makeup, size of class (conduct analyses to better understand).
- Go ahead and take some risks in your teaching but note when you reach outside comfort zone.
• Collect syllabi, assignments, examples of student work with your comments, etc.
• Document student work – be proactive collecting examples that can be formatted into report dossier. Provide students with dossier format. Find efficiencies.

Volume
• In past we saw an explosion in the volume of materials – volume doesn’t impress. Clarity of goals (less is more) in alignment with your dept, college and the university. That’s impressive.
• Be concise, you don’t have to throw everything in binder. Context matters, so find out what your department is looking for – ask!
• Clarity critical – as dossiers go up the chain, the volume of materials reviewed increases. Critical thing is that they have about 10 lines in a form to summarize their evaluation in your letter – help them to write an easy review on you. Make things concise and clear to help them. Make it easy to access and summarize. Make sure that they don’t get annoyed at you. Actually summarize teaching evals, can help you to make constructive changes in your teaching as well.

Pacing
• You’ve got to pace yourself – you’re going to burn out at the rate you’re going. Don’t show your best cards the first year, hold something up your sleeve – have something to present the next year and near afterward
• Easy to do too much, but good to have response letter saying don’t do as much from dean
• Want to end with a strong finish – not as much as how low they are (student evals) but are they improving.

Seek advice
• Get as much advice as you can – talk to people about WPAF. We’re here to help, like students going to office hours. Talk to your dean, your dept chair.
• Build relationship quickly when chairs change, let them know what you’re doing
• I asked dept admin what makes successful applicant faculty member, and the response was, “Faculty who have strong connections with students.” There is nothing about that on the official list, it’s not in the written criteria, but connections with students is important. I include lots of pictures in files, in cover or at end (no one has ever said to don’t include them). If you do things with students, show informal connections you make with them.

Perspective
• Recognize we all want you to succeed!
• Everyone is on your side
• Don’t be nervous – people who hired you want you to stay!
• Remember the percent of people who receive tenure at Cal Poly is really high. We swim in places of critical critique in our disciplines – but here actually we’re trying to nurture people to grow. Don’t think as gauntlet but as opportunity to appreciate yourself and things you’ve done.
• Don’t get too nervous about it. It’s actually a pretty cool process to have everything in a binder.