

COACHE White Paper: Tenure and Promotion

This is Part III of a series of white papers on the COACHE survey. The Office of the Provost and the Faculty Advisory Group for the COACHE Survey want to share data findings on a number of key areas. White Paper Number 3 is about Faculty Tenure and Promotion.

Summary of Perceptions on Faculty Tenure and Promotion

Tenure. Administrators and faculty alike acknowledge that, at most institutions, the bar to achieve tenure has risen over time. While it is impossible to eliminate anxiety from the minds of all pre-tenure faculty members, or the pressures exerted on their lives *en route* to tenure, academic leaders can improve the clarity of tenure policies and expectations, and the satisfaction of their faculty, without sacrificing rigor. After so much has been invested to recruit and to hire them, pre-tenure faculty are owed consistent messages about what is required for tenure and credible assurances of fairness and equity, that is, that tenure decisions are based on performance, not influenced by demographics, relationships, or departmental politics.

Promotion. While the academy has recently improved many policies for assistant professors, it has done far less for associate professors. Fortunately, new practices--some truly novel, others novel only to this rank--have emerged from COACHE's research on tenured faculty. These include modified duties such as reduced teaching load; sabbatical planning and other workshops; workload shifts (i.e., more teaching or more research); improved communication about timing for promotion and a nudge to stand for full; small grants to support mid-career faculty (e.g., matching funds, travel support); a trigger mechanism, such as a ninth year review; and broader, more inclusive criteria.

Figure 1: Perception of Tenure and Promotion Policy and Practices

	Your results compared to PEERS ◀ Your results compared to COHORT ▶						
	mean	overall	tenured	pre-ten	ntt	full	assoc
Tenure Policies	3.79	◀▶	N/A	◀▶	N/A	N/A	N/A
Tenure Expectations: Clarity	3.57	◀▶	N/A	◀▶	N/A	N/A	N/A
Promotion to Full	3.85	◀▶	◀▶	N/A	N/A	◀▶	◀▶

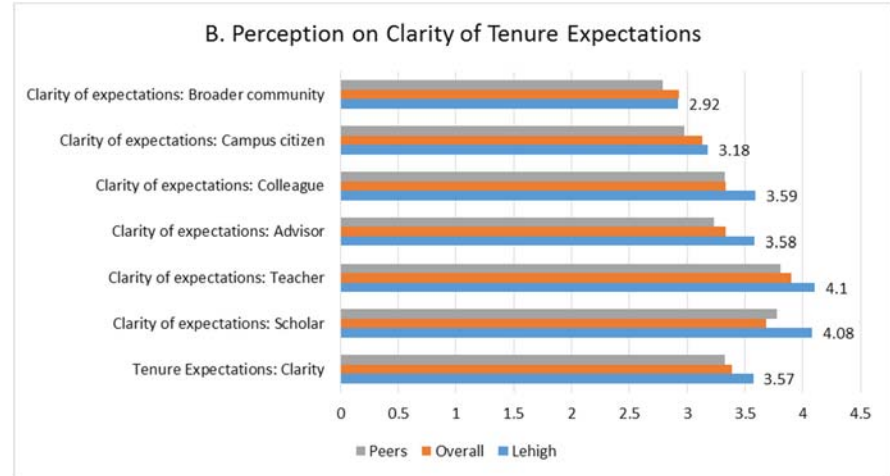
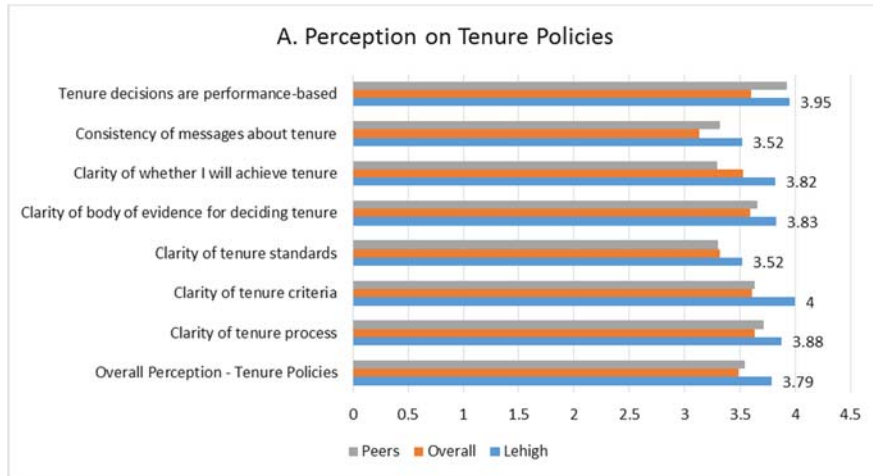
In Figure 1, responses to questions on faculty perceptions on tenure and promotion policies and practices are summarized. Lehigh University scored higher than both peer and overall survey averages for all three dimensions. The responses are not statistically different from the 2014 survey which were also generally very positive.

COACHE has identified that tenure and promotion as an area of strength for Lehigh University. Tenured faculty generally viewed promotion to full more positive than peer and overall survey averages. Pre-tenure faculty members generally viewed tenure policies and clarity of expectations more positive than peer and overall survey average.

Figure 2: Summary of Comparative Analysis - All Faculty



Figure 3 (a-c): Mean Scores of Detailed Items for Faculty Tenure and Promotion



In Figure 3, a through c, mean ratings for the question items that made up each of the tenure and promotion sub-dimension are presented. Lehigh faculty members’ average ratings are consistently higher than both peer and overall survey averages.

There are several items that Lehigh faculty members’ rating are nearly or above 4.0, including: “Clarity of tenure criteria”, 4.0; “Clarity of expectations: Scholar”, 4.08; “Clarity of expectations: Teacher”, 4.1; “Clarity of promotion process”, 3.99; and “Clarity of body of evidence for promotion”, 3.99. A particular item that scored a low rating is “Clarity of expectations: Broader community” which is 2.92.

Overall, tenure and promotion decision processes seem to be rated quite positively by Lehigh faculty members and this is an area of strength for the University.

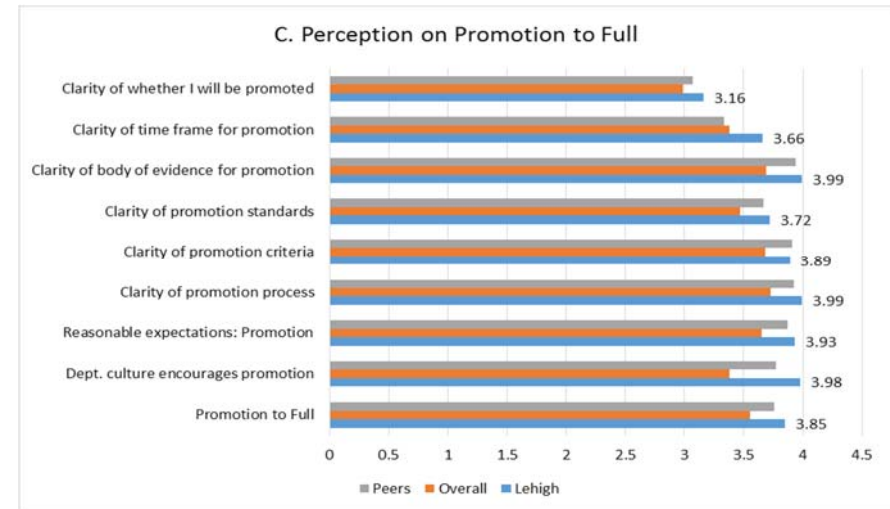
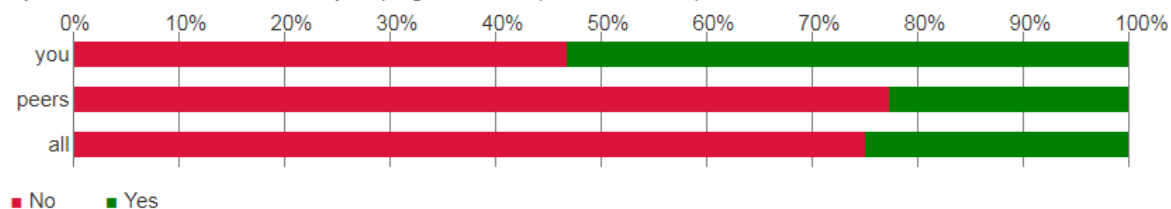


Figure 4: Feedback on Promotion and Tenure Decisions

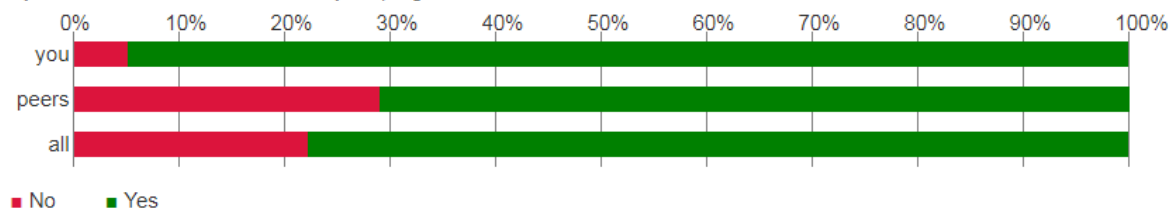
Formal feedback on promotion to full

Have you received formal feedback on your progress toward promotion to full professor?



Formal feedback on progress toward tenure

Have you received formal feedback on your progress toward tenure?



In Figure 4, COACHE asked faculty respondents to indicate whether they received formal feedback from their institutions for their tenure and promotion requests.

In both promotion and tenure decision situations, Lehigh faculty respondents indicated a higher level of “Yes” responses than both the peer and overall survey averages. In “Promotion to Full” decisions, about 54% of Lehigh faculty respondents indicated that they received formal feedback, at least 20 percentage points higher than both peer and overall survey averages.

In “progress toward tenure” process, about 95% of Lehigh faculty members indicated that they received formal feedback, this compares to about 71% of peer average and about 78% for overall survey average.

Overall, based on survey responses, it seems that Lehigh University faculty generally feel more positive about the tenure and promotional policies and decision process on campus. This is an area of strength for the University.