

## COACHE 2020 Follow up

### Summary of Interviews of Non-Tenure Track and Tenure Track Assistant Professors

#### Introduction

The COACHE working committee identified clarity of expectations for tenure and promotion as an area of concern based on the survey results. In the spring of 2021, the committee contacted every assistant professor (tenure-track and non-tenure-track) by email asking if they would be willing to participate in a candid discussion about this topic. Faculty members who responded positively were then interviewed individually via zoom by members of the COACHE committee. (See appendix for sample email and set of questions). 105 faculty members were identified as assistant professors or assistant teaching/research professors and 69 were interviewed. The interviews were assigned to COACHE committee members by Dr. Daniel Forciniti and the interviewees were not closely related to the interviewer's discipline.

Questions focused on basic areas related to the clarity of promotion expectations for both tenure track and non-tenure track faculty. There were two sets of questions: one set focused on **short answers** (yes/no) and the second set asked about their **opinions** related to tenure and promotion at Missouri S&T. Committee members asked questions about with whom they had discussed expectations, difficulties or barriers they are facing, ideas about what could help increase their chance for tenure/promotion, mentorship, and level of confidence related to earning promotion/tenure.

#### Results

Demographics. 57% of the faculty who were interviewed were from the College of Engineering and Computing whereas 43% were from the (former) College of Arts, Sciences and Business. 38 % of the faculty who were interviewed were females and 62% were males.

#### Short answer questions

Non-tenure track faculty - 18 respondents

Question/Answers	Yes	No
Do you think that the research expectations for promotion from your Department, College, and Campus are clear? <sup>1</sup>	1, 1, 1 (dept, college, campus) 1 (dept)	1, 1, 1 (dept, college, campus) 1,1 (college, campus)

Do you think that the teaching expectations for promotion from your Department, College, and Campus are clear? <sup>2</sup>	7, 7, 7 (dept, college, campus) 4 (dept)	4, 4, 4 (dept, college, campus) 4, 4 (college, campus)
Do you think that total support from your department will guarantee your promotion?	10	8
Has the Dean (or representative) visited with you or your department to talk about promotion expectations?	2	16
Has the Chancellor met with your department to talk about promotion expectations?	0	18

1. Three NTT research professors answered this question
2. Fifteen NTT teaching professors answered this question

**Summary for NNT short-answer responses**

**General:**

- There were 18 respondents. Only 2 heard about promotion expectations from the Dean and none from the Chancellor.
- 10 of 18 respondents (56%) think that Dept support is enough to be promoted.

**Clarity in research expectations.** Three of the respondents were NTT-Research. 1 Y in all categories, 1Y for the Dept. Chair but not at other levels, and 1 N for all categories.

**Clarity in teaching expectations.** 7 Y (47%) in all categories, 4 (27%) N in all categories, and 4 (27%) Y for department but N for the other two categories.

**Summary:** 73% of the respondents believe that the teaching expectations from the Dept. are clear. 27% of the respondents found a lack of clarity at school and campus levels.

Tenure-track Faculty - 51 respondents

Question/Answers	Yes	No
Do you think that the research expectations for	28, 28, 28 (dept, college, campus)	9, 9, 9 (dept, college, campus)

tenure and promotion from your Department, College, and Campus are clear?	10 (dept) 2, 2 (dept, college) 1 (campus) 1 (college)	10, 10 (college, campus)
Do you think that the teaching expectations for tenure and promotion from your Department, College, and Campus are clear?	34, 34, 34 (dept, college, campus) 8 (dept)	9, 9, 9 (dept, college, campus) 8, 8 (college, campus)
Do you think that total support from your department will guarantee your promotion?	30	21
Has the Dean (or representative) visited with you or your department to talk about promotion expectations?	16	35
Has the Chancellor met with your department to talk about promotion expectations?	2	49
Have you had your third-year review?	31	20
If yes, was it useful?	26	5

**Summary for TT Short Answer Responses:**

**General:**

- Only 2 out of 51 respondents heard about T&P expectations from the Chancellor but 16 from the Dean (mostly at the third-year review).
- 30 out of 51 respondents (59%) think that it is enough to have Dept. support to get tenure.

**Clarity in teaching expectations:** 34 Y (67%) in all categories, 9 N (18%) in all categories, 8 (16%) yes for Dept. chair but not at the other two levels.

**Summary:** 83% of respondents believe that the teaching expectations from the Dept. are clear. 33% of the respondents found a lack of clarity at school and campus levels.

**Clarity in research expectations:** 28 Y (55%) in all categories, 9 N (18%) in all categories, 10 Y (20%) dept chair but no for the other two, 2 Y (4%) Dept Chair and Dean, 1 Y (2%) campus only and 1 Y (2%) dean only.

**Summary:** 78% of the respondents believe that the research expectations from the Dept. are clear. Approximately 40% of the respondents found lack of clarity at school and campus levels.

**Third Year Review:** 31 respondents went through the 3rd year review process and 5 of them found the feedback unrelated to the T&P decision.

**Summary:** 84% found the third-year review process very useful but 16% did not receive useful feedback.

### **Additional opinion questions with common themes**

#### **Question Set 1: Are you facing any difficulties/barriers that decrease your chance of getting tenure/promotion at S&T?**

Many interviewees mentioned barriers related to recruiting good graduate students. Some of this was related to COVID and international travel, but some of this was related to funding.

Faculty in some departments commented that their research expectations were fairly ambiguous, and they would like either more concrete numbers (grants, expenditures, number of PhD students, CET scores) or ranges.

CEC faculty members had heard various thresholds for research expectations (grants and/or expenditures) that seemed to change over time. Some said they had heard \$500,000, others said \$1 million, while others heard that a CAREER grant was necessary for tenure.

Faculty in both colleges (TT and NTT) suggested that having examples of successful dossiers would be helpful.

Clearer timelines were also mentioned as useful information.

There were a lot of questions about pausing the tenure clock (and when/if to do so) related to COVID.

Several interviewees cited limited facilities as a barrier (lab space, appropriate equipment, etc.).

Researchers in both colleges mentioned incentivizing collaboration.

There was a sense among several CASB faculty members that their research was not valued, understood, or seen as useful unless it was connected to engineering.

For NTT faculty, there were some concerns about different systems (and privileges) for the two kinds of promotable faculty. Many expressed feeling disadvantaged due to lack of voting rights.

Some Research NTT faculty didn't feel like faculty.

Some NTT feel fully integrated and fully supported.

**Question Set 2: In your opinion, what are the top actions that dept/college/university can do to increase your chance of getting tenure at S&T?**

Several mentioned their start-up funds: they would either like them to go beyond 3 years (greater flexibility and not having to spend them on "weaker" students to just spend them) or having some additional funds from their departments as they are getting started and recruiting grad students.

Several suggested adding more graduate fellowships on campus (so they don't have to spend their startup funds on things like tuition and stipends).

Some wanted more support or easier processes with OSP

Multiple people indicated that seed funds and/or reduced teaching loads/GTA support would also help them with their research

Many interviewees mentioned the usefulness of having more frequent evaluations.

For some faculty members, CAFÉ was an important resource for supporting their success. Others mentioned CAFÉ, but still wanted more specific information from their departments since CAFÉ was more generalized for all faculty.

Several people mentioned having more peer review of teaching.

**Question Set 3: Do you currently have, or have you had a faculty mentor?**

Almost all did not want a mentor *assigned* to them. They wanted help in seeking out mentors, but preferred building relationships organically. Almost all of them talked about having and/or wanting multiple mentors.

People appreciated having greater opportunities for earlier or more frequent reviews. They also appreciated mentoring committees in the department and regularly scheduled meetings for new faculty with department chairs.

Many faculty identified having an *informal* mentor – often senior faculty or their department chair. Some asked for more formal mentoring structures and opportunities.

Open door policies and proximity (physical location of office, overlapping research areas, closeness in rank) were cited as valuable qualities in a mentor.

### **Final question: How confident are you to get tenure/promotion at S&T?**

Most faculty felt confident or very confident – a few expressed concern

Multiple people felt that there was a difference between the written, stated expectations and the actual expectations. There were also multiple mentions of increasing expectations without increasing resources to meet those expectations.

### **Recommendations**

1. Academic Departments should define the range of research, teaching, and service expectations for tenure track faculty and provide in writing those expectations to incoming faculty.
2. Academic Units, Deans, Provost and Chancellor should have a common set of tenure and promotion expectations and communicate them to the current and future assistant professors (tenure track and non-tenure track)
3. Startup packages must be realistic for the discipline. They should provide the necessary space and equipment to start new research tracks. Startup packages are negotiated by Dept. Chairs, maybe some other constituents should be involved too (for example, active faculty in similar research areas).
4. Best practices suggest that Annual evaluations by Dept. Chairs of untenured faculty and non-tenure track faculty should address their progress towards tenure and promotion. This evaluation may include feedback from peers within the department. Third year evaluations have been, for the most part, helpful for our young colleagues. Maybe a follow up evaluation during the fourth year would be useful for cases with significant concerns.
5. S&T bylaws should be changed to include ranked NTT faculty as voting faculty.
6. Department chairs should facilitate formal and informal interactions between young faculty members and senior members of their faculty to help build productive mentorship relations.
7. The University in coordination with research centers and colleges should organize activities leading to building research collaborations. Research collaborations should be a valuable portion of tenure and promotion or promotion packets.
8. The University and Colleges should carefully examine the tenure and promotion standards published by the academic units to make sure that support from the academic departments is a necessary and sufficient condition to be promoted.

## Appendix

### General Instructions and Initial Contact.

Schedule 45 minutes meeting with the intention of completing the interview in 30 minutes.

**Introduction (First Email).** I am a member of a faculty committee charged to use COACHE survey results and other tools to identify topics that contribute to campus climate and to propose actions to improve it. One of those topics that our group identified is clarity of expectations for promotion. I am proposing to have a candid conversation with you about this topic. If there are topics that you would like to share with our group but you do not feel comfortable talking about it please use this site:

[https://mst.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_3k5CNTxMKmesqZ7](https://mst.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3k5CNTxMKmesqZ7) . Do you think you can spare thirty minutes of your time and have a Zoom chat with me? I am free Today after 4:00 pm and tomorrow from 11 to 12 a.m., 1:00 to 3:30 p.m. and after 4:00 p.m.

**Interview Instructions:** First use the same text as in the Email. Then explain to them that you are going to ask two sets of questions. In the first set you are expecting short answers (mostly yes and no) but that in the second set you are going to ask for their opinions/views about T&P at S&T. You will also tell them that you are going to be taking notes about the conversation but that they will no be identified by name/Dept in the results. Also tell them that If there are topics that you would like to share with our group, but you do not feel comfortable talking about it you will follow the interview with an email having a link to an anonymous survey [https://mst.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_3k5CNTxMKmesqZ7](https://mst.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3k5CNTxMKmesqZ7)

### Interview Script for Tenure Track Faculty

#### Short Answer Questions

1. Do you think that the tenure and promotion research expectations from your Dept., the College and Campus (Chancellor) are clear?
2. Do you think that the tenure and promotion teaching expectations from your Dept., the College and Campus (Chancellor) are clear?
3. Do you think that total support from your Dep. will guarantee your tenure and promotion?
4. Has the Dean (or anyone from the Dean's office) visited with you or with your Dept to talk about T&P expectations?
5. Has the Chancellor met with your Dept. to talk about T&P expectations?
6. Have you had the third-year review? If yes, was it useful?

**Question set 1:** Are you facing any difficulties/barriers that decrease your chance of getting tenure at S&T? If No move to Question set 2. If Yes:

follow up with the following questions:

7. In your opinion, what can your department do to remedy this “....” difficulties?
8. In your opinion, what can the college you are in do to remedy this “....” difficulties?
9. In your opinion, what can the S&T do to remedy this “....” difficulties?
10. Among your colleagues and friends who work at other universities, do you know if they have the same “...” difficulties? If so, how do they cope with it or resolve it?

**Question set 2:** In your opinion, what are the top actions (no more than 3) that (1) your department(s), (2) the College, and (3) the University can do to increase your chance of getting tenure at S&T?

**For each suggested action** from the interviewee:

11. If the interviewer knows resources for that action: provide that information to the interviewees.
12. then, follow up with the following questions:
13. Do you think your suggested action “....” will help other pre-tenured faculty in other departments?
14. Do you think your suggested action would create a fairer working environment in your department, the college you are in, and the S&T as a whole?
15. Among your colleagues and friends who work at other universities, do you know if your suggested action “....” has been implemented at their university?
  - If so, how do they do it? Could you suggest contact information that we can contact to get the implementation details, so we can try to replicate at S&T?
  - If not, are you aware of any other universities that have such action in place to benefit their faculty?

**Question set 3.** Do you currently have, or have you had a faculty mentor?

- For those who currently have a mentor:
  16. What are the most helpful things (up to three) that you received from your faculty mentor(s)?
  17. What are the top things (up to three) that you wished your mentor can provide to you?
  18. Has the mentoring improved or hindered your P&T process?
    - improved: can you elaborate the areas or aspects that your mentor helped in your P&T process?
  - hindered: Can you elaborate on the areas, aspects, or issues that your mentor had not helped in your P&T process?
- 19. Based on your experience, what are the top things (up to three) we should avoid in offering a faculty mentor?
- 20. Would you like to have a different faculty mentor?



- Yes: should the criteria you have provided earlier be used to find a different faculty mentor to
- you?
- for those who **had but don't currently have** a faculty mentor:
  21. Are there any issues or concerns that lead to the discontinued mentoring?
  22. What are the topmost helpful things (up to three) that you had received from your previous faculty mentor(s)?
  23. What are the top things (up to three) that you wished your previous mentor could have done for?
  24. In your opinion, do you feel that the mentoring improved or hindered your P&T success?
  25. In your opinion, what are the top things (up to three) we should avoid in offering a faculty mentor in the future?
  26. Would you like to have a faculty mentor offer to you now?
    - If yes:
      - Do you have any specific faculty mentor that you would like to have in mind?
        - if yes: would you like us to connect you with your wished mentor?
        - if no: should the criteria you have provided earlier be used to find a faculty mentor to you?
    - If no:

. For those who do not have a mentor currently or previously:

27. Had you been offered one before?
  - If yes: what are reasons or concerns that you decided to not accept that mentoring opportunity?
  - If you have not been offered a faculty mentor before, would you like one to be offered to you now?
- If yes
28. What are the top qualities (up to three) that you expect from a faculty mentor?
29. What are the top things (up to three) that you would like the help from a faculty mentor?
30. What are the top things (up to three) we should avoid when offering you a faculty mentor?
- If no
31. What are reasons or concerns that you choose to not have a faculty mentor?

**Final Question.** How confident are you to get tenure in our institution? Are you very confident? confident? not confident?

Thank you for your time to share your thoughts with us

## **Interview Script for NTT Faculty**

### **Short Answer Questions**

1. NTT-Research: Do you think that the promotion research or creative publication expectations from your Dept., the College and Campus (Chancellor) are clear?
2. NTT-Teaching: Do you think that the teaching expectations for promotion from your Dept., the College and Campus (Chancellor) are clear?
3. How often do you talk with your Dept. chair about your progress towards promotion?
4. Do you think that total support from your Dept. will guarantee your promotion?
5. Has the Dean (or anyone from the Dean's office) visited with you or with your Dept. to talk about promotion expectations?
6. Has the Chancellor met with your Dept. to talk about promotion expectations?
7. If you are comfortable discussing this, please explain how valued you feel within your department as an NTT faculty member. Do you face concerns regarding equity, respect, or fairness?

**Question set 1:** Are you facing any difficulties/barriers that decrease your chance of getting tenure at S&T? If No move to Question set 2. If Yes:

Follow up with the following questions:

1. In your opinion, what can your department do to help you to overcome that?
2. In your opinion, what can the college you are in do to help you to overcome that?
3. In your opinion, what can S&T do to help you to overcome that?
4. Among your colleagues and friends who work at other universities, do you know if they have the same difficulties? If so, how do they cope with it or resolve it?

**Question set 2:** In your opinion, what are the top actions (no more than three) that (1) your department(s), (2) the College, and (3) the University can do to increase your chance of getting promoted at S&T?

**For each suggested action** from the interviewee:

1. if the interviewer knows resources for that action: provide that information to the interviewees.
2. then, follow up with the following questions:
  1. Do you think your suggested action “....” will help other NTT faculty in other departments?
  2. Do you think your suggested action would create a fairer working environment in your department, the college you are in, and the S&T as a whole?
  3. Among your colleagues and friends who work at other universities, do you know if your suggested action “....” has been implemented at their university?
    - o If so, how do they do it? Could you suggest contact information that we can contact to get the implementation details, so we can try to replicate at S&T?
    - o If not, are you aware of any other universities that have such action in place to benefit their faculty?

**Question set 3.** Do you currently have, or have you had a faculty mentor?

- For those who currently have a mentor: ,
  1. What are the topmost helpful things (up to three) that you received from your faculty mentor(s)?
  2. What are the top things (up to three) that you wished your mentor can provide to you?
  3. Has the mentoring improved or hindered your promotion process?
    - o improved: can you elaborate the areas or aspects that your mentor helped in your promotion process
    - o hindered: Can you elaborate on the areas, aspects, or issues that your mentor had not helped in your promotion
  4. Based on your experience, what are the top things (up to three) we should avoid in offering a faculty mentor?
  5. Would you like to have a different faculty mentor?
    - o Yes: should the criteria you have provided earlier be used to find a different faculty mentor to you?
    - o No: thank you for your time to share your thoughts with us.

- for those who **had but don't currently have** a faculty mentor:

1. Are there any issues or concerns that lead to the discontinued mentoring?
2. What are the topmost helpful things (up to three) that you had received from your previous faculty mentor(s)?
3. What are the top things (up to three) that you wished your previous mentor could have done for?
4. In your opinion, do you feel that the mentoring improved or hindered your promotion success?
5. In your opinion, what are the top things (up to three) we should avoid in offering a faculty mentor in the future?
6. Would you like to have a faculty mentor offer to you now?

o If yes:

§ Do you have any specific faculty mentor that you would like to have in mind?

- If yes: would you like us to connect you with your wished mentor?
- if no: should the criteria you have provided earlier be used to find a faculty mentor to you?

o If no: thank you for your time to share your thoughts with us.

- For those who do not have a mentor currently or previously:

1. Had you been offered one before?
  - o If yes: what are reasons or concerns that you decided to not accept that mentoring opportunity?
  - o If you have not been offered a faculty mentor before, would you like one to be offered to you now?
  - o If yes
1. What are the top qualities (up to three) that you expect from a faculty mentor?
2. What are the top things (up to three) that you would like the help from a faculty mentor?
3. What are the top things (up to three) we should avoid when offering you a faculty mentor?
  - o If no

1. What are reasons or concerns that you choose to not have a faculty mentor?

**Final Question.** How confident you are to be promoted in our institution. Are you very confident? confident? not confident?

Thank you for your time to share your thoughts with us