

Tenure at Northeastern: Principles and Processes

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Northeastern
University

Principles

What is Tenure?

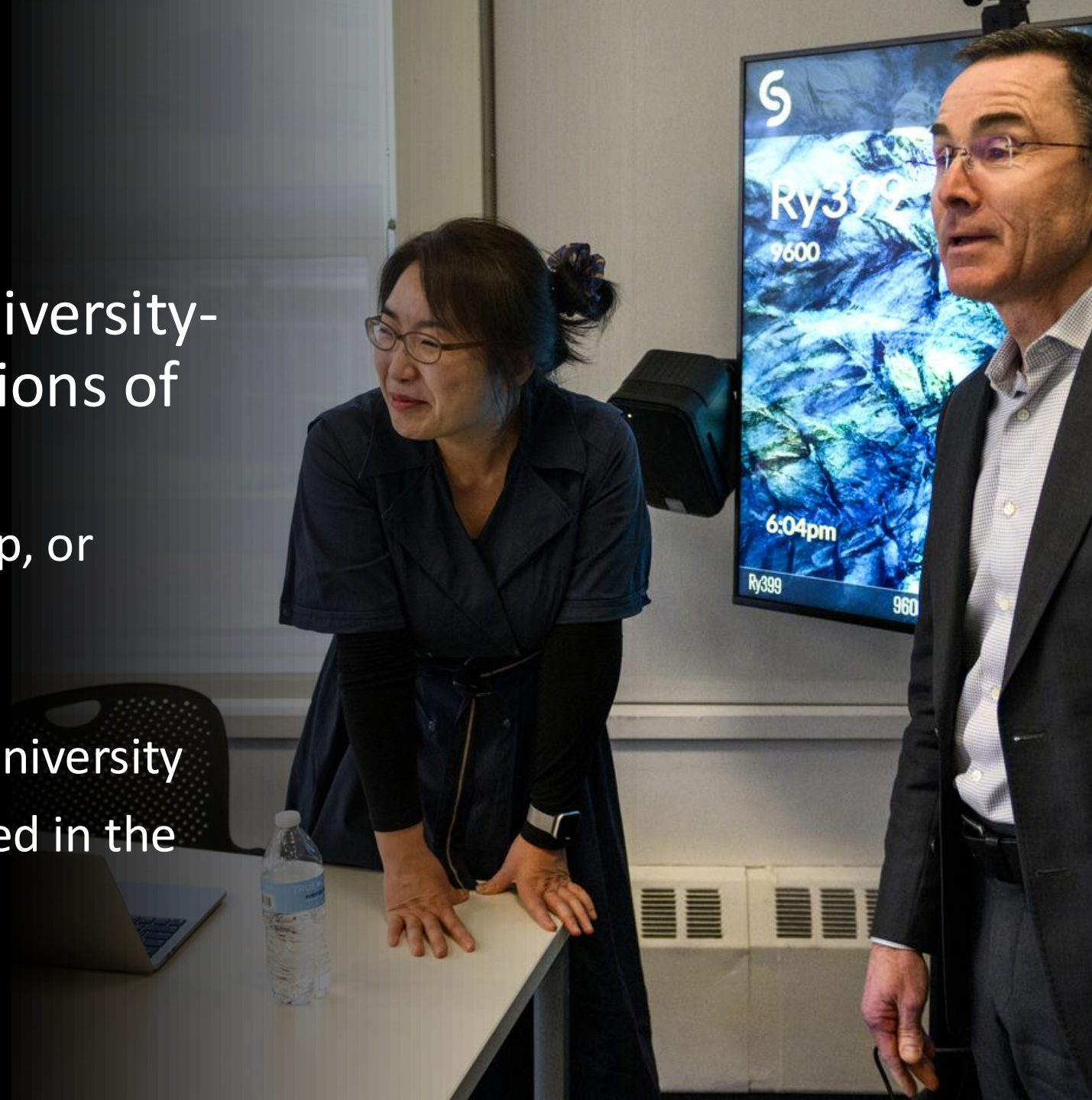
- A long-term commitment to the career of a faculty member
- A key support of academic freedom
- A process of review and assessment on both sides
- A process that vests tenured faculty members as full citizens of the university



Principles

What are Northeastern's university-wide performance expectations of tenure-track faculty?

- Excellence in research, scholarship, or creative activity
- Excellence in teaching
- Rank-appropriate service to the university
- Performance expectations included in the Faculty Handbook



Appointments, Promotion and Tenure

Tenure¹

☰ APPOINTMENTS, PROMOTION AND TENURE

[Rights And Responsibilities](#)[Performance Expectations](#)[Compensation](#)[Appointments, Terms and Reappointments](#)[Tenure](#)[Tenure and Promotion of Jointly Appointed Faculty](#)[Promotion](#)[Sabbatical](#)[Leaves of Absence and Vacation](#)

A. Definition of Tenure

Tenure at the university, unless otherwise specifically defined in any individual contract between the university and a faculty member, means the continuing right of a faculty member to receive annual employment contracts on an academic year basis. In addition, the faculty member is subject to the university's right to terminate such faculty member by reason of adequate cause, financial exigency, or bona fide discontinuance of a program or unit of instruction.

B. Eligibility

Only faculty members holding the ranks of Professor, Associate Professor, and Assistant Professor are eligible for tenure.

A recommendation for tenure of a candidate holding the rank of assistant professor carries with it a recommendation for promotion to associate professor. In the School of Law a recommendation for tenure of a candidate holding the rank of associate professor typically carries with it the recommendation for promotion to full professor. A faculty member who is denied tenure will not be promoted.

C. Tenure Criteria

In awarding tenure, the university recognizes the faculty member's significant professional achievement and contributions as a member of the university community and the community of scholars. The university expects the faculty member to continue to develop in the role of a fully vested citizen of the university. In making a tenure decision, the university will consider the candidate's performance in the areas of teaching, scholarship (including research and creative activity), and service. The performance standards (see Performance Expectations) are the basis for this judgment. In addition, the university will consider the extent to which the candidate's performance enhances the quality and effectiveness of the unit, in light of the university's mission. Because the grant of tenure bestows the continuing right to receive annual contracts, the university will also consider the candidate's promise for future professional development, the long-range needs of the unit, the college, and the university, and the extent to which the faculty member contributes to the university's academic distinction.

D. Annual Review of Progress toward Tenure

1. ANNUAL PROGRESS-TOWARD-TENURE REVIEW

In addition to the annual merit review conducted for all faculty members, tenure-track faculty members will be reviewed annually by the tenured faculty of the unit following procedures developed by the unit and approved by the provost. These annual progress reviews, which must be separate from merit reviews, will be based upon the specified tenure criteria of the university and the faculty member's academic unit. Following the procedures they have established, the tenured faculty of the unit will systematically seek out information to aid in their assessment of the candidate's progress toward tenure.

The Tenure Process: Six-Year “Clock”

2025-2026: 1st annual review of progress toward tenure in the spring term

2026-2027: 2nd annual review

2027-2028: 3rd year review of progress toward tenure, spring term of third year, culminating in departmental recommendation

2028-2029: 4th annual review

2029-2030: Preparation for tenure review begins in spring term with notification of candidates and selection of external referees

2030-2031: Tenure review by unit, college, Provost and President; Positive recommendations brought to Board of Trustees in June



Delay of Tenure Consideration

Six-year probationary period may be extended:

- Birth or adoption of a child
- Family leave
- Medical leave
- Compelling circumstances delaying expected professional development



What will my tenure dossier contain?

- Documentation of accomplishments in research, teaching, and service
- All details can be found on the Office of the Provost website
- Annual workshops about the tenure process



Interfolio

- The software package from Interfolio will be used for both dossier submission and dossier review
- Simple straightforward program much like manuscript submission process
- Training available from your associate dean for faculty (when the time comes)



How do I get there? Pre-Tenure Review

- Annual review
- Third-year review



Getting off to a good start

- Make time for research/scholarship from the outset
- Take advantage of resources for learning to teach smarter
- Assess your record-keeping habits and make them serve you
- Use your mentors, internally and externally

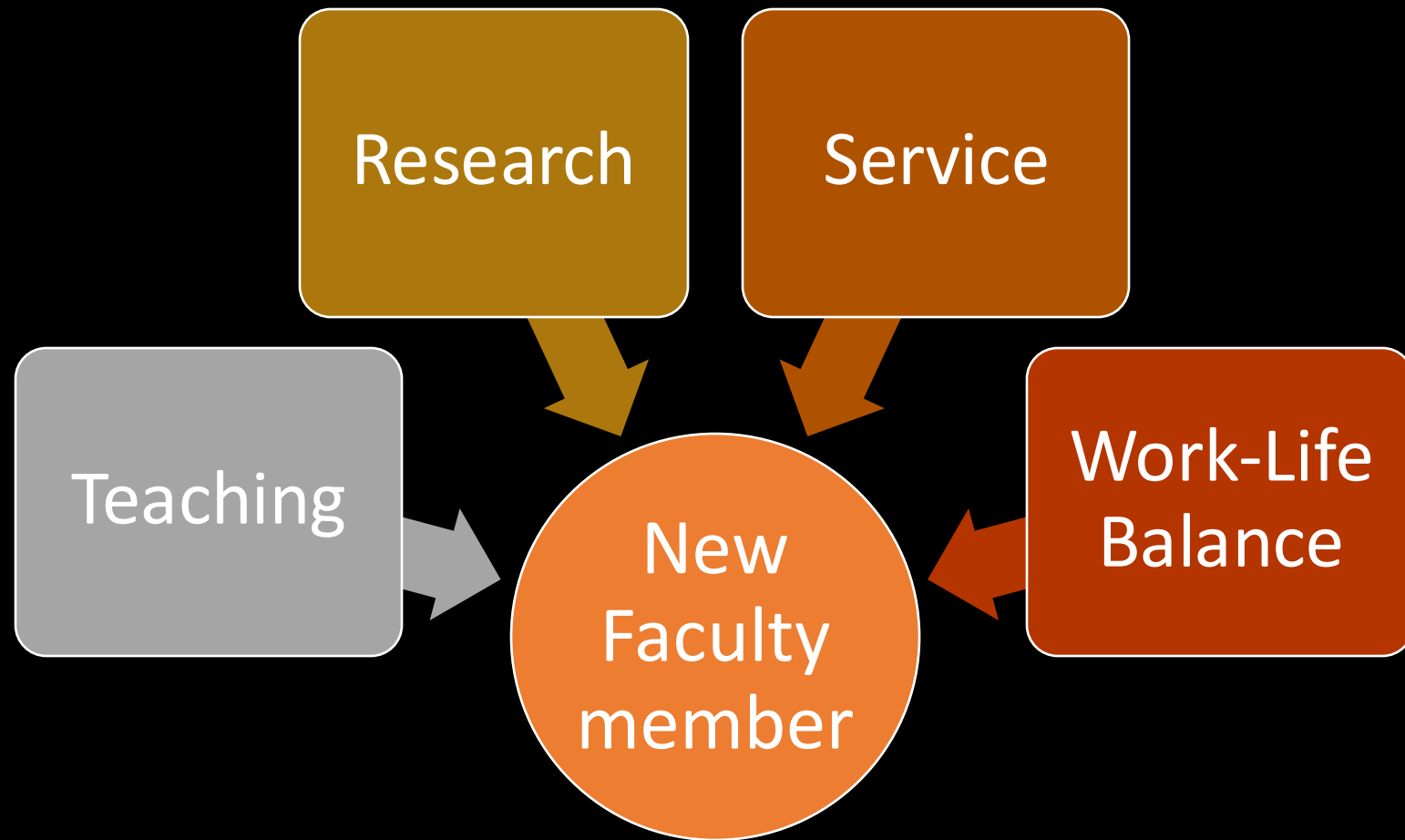


Formal and informal mentoring

- Workshops on tenure process, funding opportunities, teaching resources offered through Provost's Office
- All tenure-track faculty members have at least one departmental mentor "on the record"
- In some colleges, external mentor(s) also formalized



Multiple Mentors



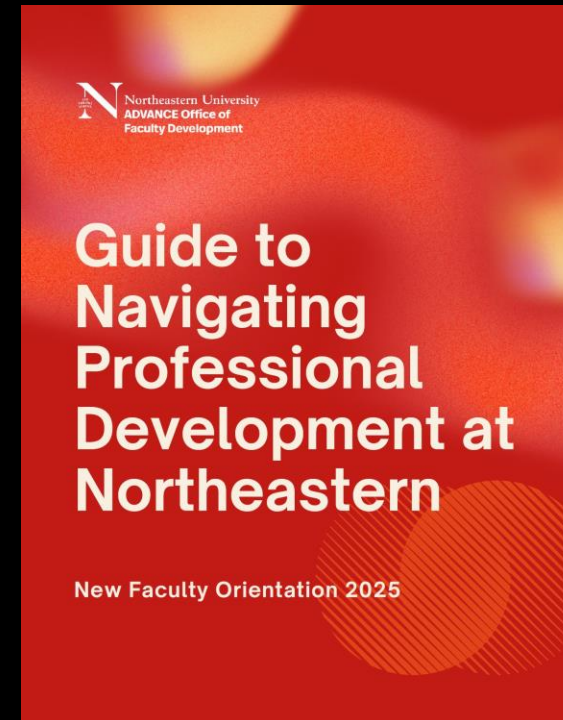
Resources

- Mentor / Chair / Dean's office
- Center for Advancing Teaching and Learning through Research
- ADVANCE Office of Faculty Development



ADVANCE: Office of Faculty Development

- Support faculty through professional development programs
- Fall 2025 calendar (ADVANCE website)
- Contact:
 - Diedra Wrighting, Executive Director
 - <https://faculty.northeastern.edu/advance>
 - In person: 490 Renaissance Park
 - Email: nuadvance@northeastern.edu



National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity (NCFDD)

- Online access to mentoring, tools, and support to thrive in the academy
- 14-Day Writing Challenge
- Video library and webinars
- Become a Member at: <https://www.facultydiversity.org/>



Recently Tenured Faculty Panelists

- **Zhenyu Liao**, Associate Professor, Management and Organizational Development, D'Amore-McKim School of Business
- **Wei Xie**, Associate Professor, Mechanical and Industrial Engineering, College of Engineering

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