

Tenure and Promotion for Applied Anthropologists: Preparation and Documentation of Scholarship

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Organizers

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Abstract

Applied Anthropologists in academic settings at different career stages with regard to the tenure and promotion process will address the challenges from their home institutions and their own professional careers. In these reports, each panelist will (1) summarize the tenure and promotion guidelines of their home institution with regard to applied anthropological work; (2) describe how their scholarship fits within the guidelines; (3) describe their preparation when they came up for tenure and promotion or as they plan to come up in the future for meeting the guidelines they work under; (4) describe how they document or did document their scholarly achievements considered in the tenure and promotion reviews; and (5) talk about their particular context.

Panelists and their academic affiliations

Sherylyn Briller (Wayne State University)
Kerry D. Feldman (University of Alaska, Anchorage)
Stanley E. Hyland (University of Memphis)
Ann T. Jordan (University of North Texas)
Sunil Khanna (Oregon State University)
Elgin L. Klugh (Montclair State University)
Nancy Romero-Daza (University of South Florida)

Critical points made in panel presentations and discussion:

- As an applied anthropologist, academic life is often “academic life on the edge” and does not necessarily follow in a linear fashion.

- Many aspects of the existing tenure and promotion system need to be reworked.
- Even when tenure and promotion guidelines are clear and have received approval up the line, when there is a change in administration, the basic understandings and support of the ideas behind the guidelines (such as reference to the work of Ernest Boyer) can be challenged, even threatened.
- It is essential for faculty members to turn what they do (such as community outreach projects) into a publication.
- While we tend to be socialized as anthropologists not to be a self-promoter, that is absolutely necessary for success in the tenure and promotion process.
- Understanding the tenure and promotion guidelines at all levels (department, college, and university if they so exist) is essential in preparing the dossier appropriately.
- Being aware of one's surroundings in the university and the wider culture is important in planning scholarly career. This is especially important if the discipline of anthropology isn't broadly understood.
- It is important to know colleagues in other departments and to educate peers about one's scholarly work.
- In advancing the recognition of applied anthropology in the institution, you must change the culture of that institution.
- In defining what are considered "seminal" publications (as publications that make a significant difference), we need to reconsider who reviews and evaluates those publications and their results. Community leaders outside of academia may be considered for this role.
- Institutions often go through changes that redefine the tenure and promotion process and what is expected of faculty members to succeed. Thus, it is important to stay on top of those changes.
- It is helpful to have regular meetings for new faculty members that address issues of progress toward tenure and promotion.
- Document whatever you do, as faculty members!
- What is acceptable and highly valued within one's home department may be not well understood at the college level and, therefore, the narrative about scholarship, etc. needs to address such issues that the college level committee members may not be familiar with.
- Every university has its own personality, and this much be understood in the tenure and promotion process.
- We need a collective community of applied anthropologists to be effective in the external review process. That process (i.e., the external letters) can make or break a tenure and promotion application.

