She's Got a Ticket to Ride:

Strategies for Switching from Non-tenure to a Tenure-track Position at UW-Madison

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December 3, 2006

Internal Evaluation Report—Do Not Cite or Circulate

This material is based on work supported by the National Science Foundation under Grant No. 0123666. Any opinions, findings and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation.

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Introduction

The following report summarizes the results of interviews with twelve faculty members and administrators who were intricately involved with two tenure-conversion cases at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (UW). The interviews were conducted on behalf of the Women in Science and Engineering Leadership Institute (WISELI), a research center that was created with funding from the National Science Foundation.[1] In the original grant proposal, the Principal Investigators, staff and the leadership team envisioned the campus as a living laboratory to promote gender equity for women in science and engineering by conducting "issue studies," carrying out extensive research and evaluation, and by developing campus initiatives and programs. The following report documents the third and final issue study—an investigation of obstacles to tenure conversion for non-tenure track faculty and staff, and the identification of strategies to overcoming these obstacles.

There has been little reported in the literature about actual tenure-conversion circumstances, but there is emerging documentation showing a substantial increase in the proportion of faculty who hold full-time non-tenure track positions. During the 1980's, about 12% of full-time faculty held non-tenure-eligible positions, but by 1993 that figure had risen to approximately 27% (National Center for Education Statistics, 1993). More recently, institutions have increased the number of non-tenure track positions. Among senior faculty (those with more than seven years of experience), 16.5% of full-time individuals hold non-tenure track positions, while 33.2% of junior faculty (those with seven or fewer years of experience) are ineligible for tenure, indicating a significant change in the way faculty positions are created and filled (Chronister, Gansneder, Harper, & Baldwin, 1997; Finkelstein, Seal, & Schuster, 1998). Further, data from a number of sources indicate that full-time non-tenure-track positions are disproportionately being filled by women. From 1975 to 1985 the percentage of women on the tenure track rose from 18.3 to 20.7%, while the percentage of full-time non-tenure track women rose from 33.6 to 40.3% (American Association of University Professors, 1995). El-Khawas and Knopp (1996) noted that while 52% of institutions reported a net gain in women faculty from 1994-1995 to 1995-1996, only 48% reported an increase in tenured women in the same period.

The disproportionate growth in number and proportion of women among full-time non-tenure track faculty in most recent years has prompted concerns. Full-time non-tenure track faculty are "among the lowest paid and lowest in total earnings of full-time faculty" (AAUP, 1995, p.75), and they are likely to be clustered in the lowest faculty ranks. Often there are disparities in offer letters, terms of appointment, titles, salary, voting rights, administrative and secretarial support, laboratory space, physical location of offices, and eligibility for professional development programs. Differences in their positions are exacerbated by lack of career mobility paths and arbitrary rules and regulations regarding employment. Research and travel funds are usually unavailable and there is no systematic process for recognizing and evaluating their work. Consequently, there seems little hope for them to attain a tenure-track position, regardless of their accomplishments.

[1] NSF SBE – 0123666, $4.75 million provided from January 1, 2002 to December 31, 2006; the ADVANCE Program is subtitled "Increasing the Participation and Advancement of Women in Academic Science and Engineering Careers."

Increasing financial and political pressures on institutions make it likely that there will be more, rather than fewer faculty hired who are ultimately ineligible for tenure (Harper, Baldwin, Gansneder, & Chronister, 2001). Because of this trend, institutions will need to create policies to address the changing structure of the professoriate. Currently, there are strategies that may be considered for those contemplating a career as a tenure-track faculty member that may enhance chances for securing such a position. It was the purpose of this investigation to discover obstacles to tenure track conversions experienced by non-tenure track faculty members and to identify strategies for overcoming those obstacles.

Case Methods

In the spring of 2006, WISELI researchers approached the Executive Director of WISELI and requested contact information for women who had attempted tenure-track conversions at the UW in recent years. Ultimately, two females were identified and contacted regarding their willingness to participate in the investigation. One individual was originally hired at UW in 1979 in the College of Letters and Sciences in a non-faculty position, as a part-time lecturer. The other individual was hired in 1984 as an assistant scientist in the medical school. Upon their consent, these two individuals were selected for case study. One individual case was identified as an unsuccessful attempt and the other was identified as a successful attempt at a tenure track-conversion. The following research question guided the development and analysis of the case studies:

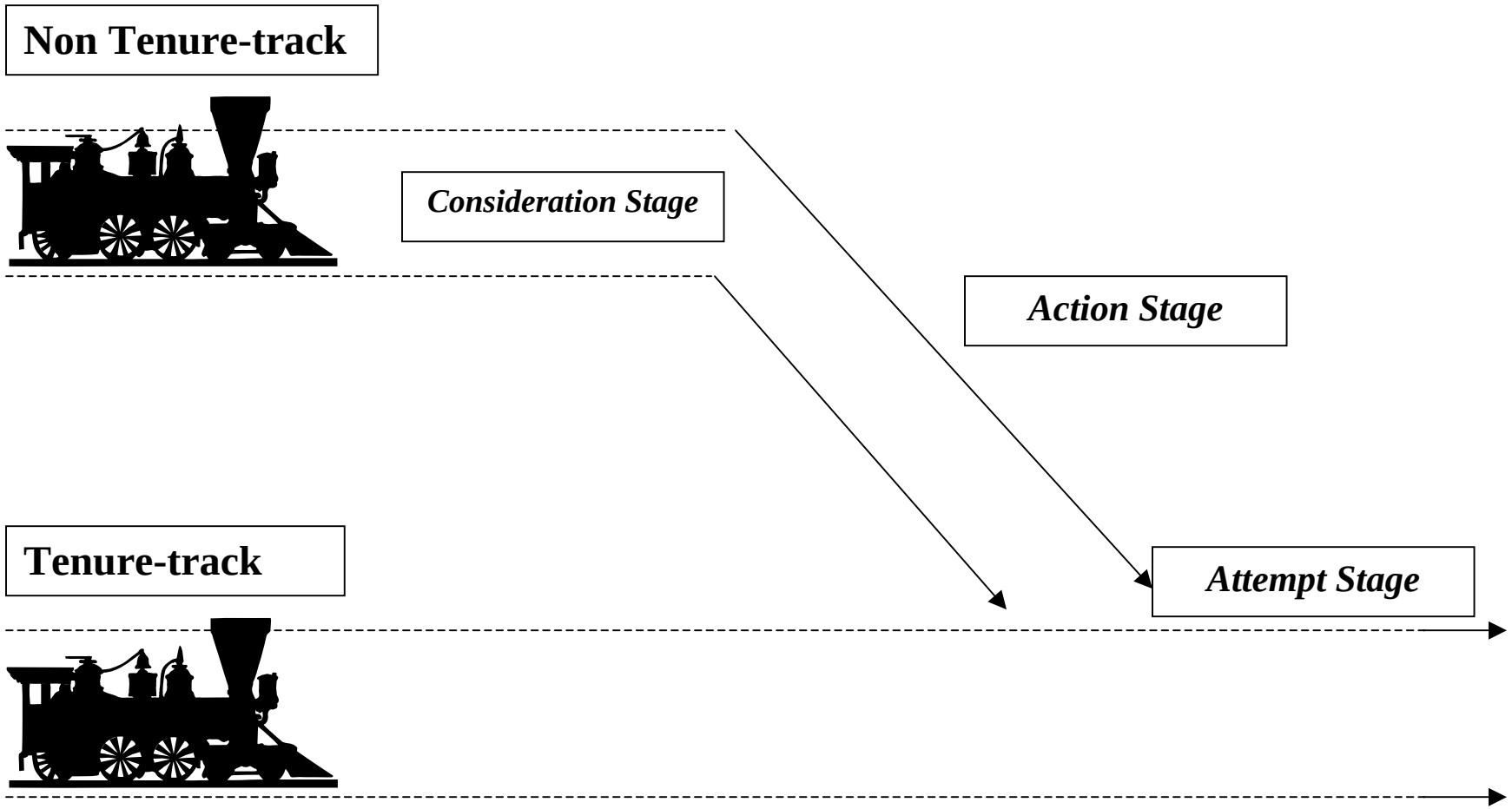
> ***What are the strategies that lead to a successful tenure-conversion attempt by a non-tenure track staff member at UW?***

Collectively, there were twelve people[2] interviewed for the investigation. The two case individuals were interviewed and then, through snowball sampling techniques, were asked to identify individuals who were familiar with their cases. These individuals were contacted and asked to participate. The final group of interviewees included seven current UW-Madison faculty members and three administrators (four men; six women); along with the two women on whom the cases are based, Susan and Linda (full case study descriptions are found in Appendices A and B).

Each interview took between 60 and 90 minutes to conduct and was completed by the same researcher. All interviews were conducted in person and taped using recording equipment to capture both the interviewer and the interviewee (interview protocols are found in Appendices C and D). The resulting tapes were transcribed; these transcripts were coded and analyzed using ATLAS.ti, a qualitative data analysis software program. During the process of analyzing the data, the researcher identified a number of common themes identified by the interviewees. Once analyzed, the researcher utilized member checks with each of the cases to verify the accuracy of the identified themes. These themes are categorized into the fifteen strategies described below, and can be further understood in the context of the process of converting tracks (see Figure 1). When this process is broken down further, three stages emerge—Consideration, Action, and Attempt.

[2] Pseudonyms are used throughout this report to ensure anonymity of the interviewees.

Figure 1: The Process of Conversion from a Non tenure-track to a Tenure-track Position



Stages and Strategies for Switching Tracks

The goal of this study was to identify strategies in overcoming obstacles that may be present during the process of a staff member converting to a tenure-track position, either successfully or unsuccessfully. By using case study research methods about two women at UW-Madison, the following fifteen strategies emerged. These strategies can be further understood within the process of a conversion, the stages of which include *Consideration*, *Action*, and *Attempt*.

Consideration Stage

Most of the interviewees acknowledged that the best advice they can give is to make sure an individual is on the correct career track early. Ensuring this is ultimately easier than attempting a track switch later in their career. There will be circumstances, however, in which a professional staff member wishes to convert tracks; and in these instances, the earlier they attempt, the easier it may be. This may enable them to begin using some of the following strategies during the Consideration stage.

Strategy 1: Get on the Right Track Early

Gary, an administrator, discusses early career considerations and how pursuing a Ph.D. program may actually limit options for individuals, rather than enhance them:

> *In some ways you should examine it before you get into a Ph.D. program. Of course every year that you're in it, you are a little more deeply enmeshed… You do well in school and then you go on to graduate school—all along the line, you're sort of given this impression that you're opening your options, then suddenly you realize as you're getting the Ph.D.—'WHOA! We haven't opened any options here!'*

He talks further about early career considerations for young academicians and the infrequency of tenure conversion:

> *So first of all, it's pretty infrequent. In the eight years that I've been in the college, I'd say either directly or just indirectly in the college, there have been maybe no more than three or four. When people get onto the tenure track it's pretty much right out of their Ph.D. program or within a couple of years. And so it means that you're into this combination of research/teaching mode that is both a straightjacket, as well as a career path that allows you to focus on your scholarship area. And so, if focusing on one very narrow part of your discipline is your passion, then what greater freedom can you want, but a tenure track line? But the reason I call it a straightjacket as well, is that really if you deviate from that fairly narrow scholarship path, there's all kinds of controls that really tell you not to do that—the reward system in terms of promotions and merit, and so in the conversion cases, I think they're so infrequent because there tend to be different career tracks within academia.*

He elaborates on the concept of 'tenure as straightjacket':

> *If you really have that passion for single-mindedly pursuing your scholarship area then being in a tenure track position gives you the resources to do that, because there are no*

other expectations other than meeting your classes. But, if you are one of these people that would feel constrained by such a focus, then I would argue that tenure's not really the path, the career of fulfillment. And I think that in some of the cases that have come up, there is a perceived hierarchy between the tenured faculty and those who are very important in research or teaching functions in the academic staff. But as I said, there comes with the tenure track, this straightjacket that isn't what everybody wants. So again, it's two different career paths in academia.

These differences would ideally be explained early in one's career and would be the result of experienced and intentional mentoring. Gary, however, explains how the early socialization process influences career guidance and may be the result of an advisor's needs:

So one of the thoughts that comes to my mind is that faculty advisors invariably want to see you go into a tenure track position; partly because one's own worth and value as a scholar are reflected by whether your students are able to push your scholarship agenda…There is always the desire to see the graduates of the program go out and replicate oneself. And the Ph.D. is such an apprenticeship style of program that just by being in it, you've pretty much cast your lot. I think this is one reason why there's this, at least in certain fields, there's a bias, that if you don't go into a tenure track job that you've failed.

Sometimes young academicians are not familiar with differing tracks and what they mean in regard to their long-term careers. This confusion can be compounded if they apply and are hired into a position that is the wrong track for them professionally. Clearly, this is important for an individual to understand prior to negotiating a contract; but interviewees also noted that it is inherent on administrators, such as department chairs, to ensure that they understand the long-term consequences of a particular path. Samantha emphasizes this as she discusses one of the cases:

How do you know? I mean you're so junior, you don't really know the different titles – a Scientist, that sounds good, or Lecturer you know they all sound good and you really don't know the huge difference it's going to make twenty years from now if you go on an academic staff or a faculty track. You're clueless if nobody mentors you.

Once hired, new faculty members are provided mentors who are senior faculty. Academic staff members, however, are not mentored in the same fashion and not as early as those hired into faculty positions. Jane explains:

If an individual is considering a track change, they need better and good mentoring and earlier in their position. Advice needs to be provided early on. So in that sense it's hard to see how an academic staff's case relates to the same issues that one would have if a woman were coming up for tenure decisions having been an assistant professor for five or six years and had gotten mentoring for that particular kind of position. Academic staff don't get mentoring like early track faculty.

It is very difficult for individuals who have been hired as academic staff to perform their job duties and also meet the rigors required of assembling the credentials for a tenure package. Susan shares her experience and the difficulty of simultaneously attempting to perform her job duties and fulfill tenure requirements:

> *I was extremely busy at the time. I was teaching a course as an overload. I was teaching my regular kind of context course. I was teaching other courses. I was trying to do all the things I usually do and also engage in this tenure thing.*

Richard, an administrator, discusses the difficulty of attempting the conversion when the responsibilities of the tracks are quite different. He also raises the issue of how one may be competing with others who do not have similar academic staff constraints:

> *Well you know it's a tough jump from academic staff into a faculty position because the duties are quite different. If you have done things that represent clear new directions and you have established national and international credentials for doing that, well then it can happen. But that's tough to do as an academic staff person because that's not been your focus. That's not really part of your job, but determined people still manage to have that happen. But you're competing with the question of bringing in somebody from the outside who's been a faculty member and give them tenure at this place and they've been working really hard as well, but they've been working from a faculty member's point of view*

It is important for administrators to recognize that some individuals hired within their departments may desire to switch tracks at some point in their future, depending upon emerging personal and professional goals. In these circumstances, accommodations or adjustments may need to be made in their responsibilities so that they can begin to address the necessary components for tenure conversion.

<u>Strategy 2: Address Isolation</u>

It became evident throughout the interviews that isolation is continually a struggle, and a particularly difficult experience for women who may not have expected it. Some may not recognize when it is occurring or consequently know how to deal with it once it surfaces. Unfortunately, as Fred shares, many talented people leave due to circumstances of isolation in their environment:

> *A good friend of mine, who's a woman, left here a couple of years ago after training in some terrific places on the East Coast. She spent some years being both a clinician and working in the lab of a well-known person. So she came here superbly trained as a scientist. She was given reasonable resources when she got here in terms of infrastructure – a decent lab and so forth and some money to hire a technician. She came from working in an environment in a sort of communal lab with ten, fifteen people to working entirely by herself. Complete failure. I mean her environment changed in a dramatic, dramatic way and nobody thought about getting in there and helping her. So she'd sit in her office kind of wringing her hands and just not knowing what to do and what had become…It's just an example of how contexts change and there are other*

> *people who flourish working by themselves and that's fine, but there was no thoughtfulness about how she needed to work and what she needed to be successful. And I think it's a terrible waste. And so she wound up going to a strictly clinical practice in another city and it was a terrible waste of a talent and a terrible waste of time on her part…I mean doing science by yourself, unless you're the kind of person who really wants to do science by themselves – you know most of us are more social than that – is a very hard thing to do.*

And while some administrators may work to offset isolation, others may contribute to a lack of integration. Many of the interviewees offered advice, essentially encouraging people to make a conscious effort to reduce isolation. Margaret suggests the following:

> *I guess what I would say is that if you are a person who is somehow underrepresented in the context of your department, so if you are a women in a department where there aren't very many women or an underrepresented minority in a department where there aren't very many underrepresented minorities or whatever; it is very easy to fall into the trap of saying, 'I am not well integrated because I am different.' And you may have to make more of an effort to integrate, but in the end you've got to do it. Because the cost of not doing it is too high. And however you do it, it doesn't really matter, but I think you have to become integrated. And the best way to do that is to identify what it is that you care about in the context of the department, and then do your part…be a good citizen of the department and get to know people.*

When discussing her experience, Linda described feelings of isolation within the department and the absence of others to exchange ideas with:

> *Do you know that I'm the only Ph.D. woman, tenured professor in* [this department], *which is the largest department? So right there, that was a feeling of 'Gee, recognition, satisfaction, I did that'…but, I'll tell you what, it's like the loneliest place in my life…there's no one else. Fortunately, I have colleagues who I feel support me, but there's no person equal to me in terms of my status in the department that we can say 'oh, here's some issues for this position and this situation.' You're not at all strengthened by camaraderie or partnership or equal partnership. You have no one else to voice with you, on that same level. It's an interesting place to be.*

She further explained the unfortunate gap between the passion she feels for her research and the accompanying isolation:

> *It's all that sustained me professionally. I love doing research! I love finding out new information! I love not proving my own hypotheses and getting some surprise that I have to work with, and move in new directions! It's just the biggest kick and so, my work really makes me feel good, but I've been quite isolated in that role.*

Susan shares similar frustration with departmental isolation and actively sought out alternative places where she receives encouragement and support.

> *So what keeps me going? It's buddies in other places and it's some wonderful people on campus. I can't count on one hand the number of those who are faculty in this department.* [They] *don't seem to either want me in their sandbox or playing with their toys in their sandbox. They say—one man, one sandbox.*

Fred, now an administrator, shares that it was ultimately isolation that drove him out of research and believes that isolation is not a situation known only to women:

> *Middle aged white men are* [isolated]*… I see it as a more generic blindness or problem than for women—I think we treat our men just as badly, if not almost as badly.*

Individuals in departments need to courageously find ways to break out of their isolation; no matter how difficult circumstances may appear. Administrators, however, can work wonders by purposely giving attention to their departmental climate and designing intentional strategies to integrate and bring faculty together.

Strategy 3: 'Act' Like a Faculty Member

Many beginning academics enter the university without much understanding of how *things* work, especially in regard to achieving tenure. They are expected to learn the rules of the game without receiving much, if any, guidance or assistance. Further, while new faculty attempt to learn the rules of the game, they are expected to do so while *fitting in*. Figuring out how to *act* is an important strategy that enhances the outcome for successfully achieving tenure as a faculty member, and perhaps a conversion as a staff member. Margaret shares her thoughts:

> *If you want to be a faculty member, you have to act like a faculty member. So you have to figure out what that looks like.*

Samantha further states:

> *Well, you have to understand we don't just give faculty positions to people because they're nice…They have to do all this stuff to look like faculty.*

Being a tenured faculty member requires extensive research and publications, particularly in the sciences. For individuals seeking a conversion, discovering early the kind of research your department has defined as appropriate is key; and in regard to publishing, the questions of how much and where are essential.

When asked, the interviewees noted that to achieve tenure the individual needed to demonstrate the capacity to produce new directions in research; and publish scholarly reports that identified these new pathways. Research regarding *teaching* is held to the same threshold; new pathways must be being demonstrated and publishable. Publications must be accepted in peer-reviewed journals; and it should be noted that it is not merely the quantity of publications that is important, the prestige of the publication sites are also scrutinized.

Gary, an administrator, shares:

> *Well one thing I appreciate about the University of Wisconsin is the expectation here is for scholarship. We don't measure your worthiness just based on the number of dollars that you bring in. Now, that may be splitting a pretty fine hair because there are a lot of fields where you can't possibly be successful in your scholarship unless you're able to raise the funds to pursue it. But nonetheless, our emphasis is on the scholarship. And yes, it's not good enough to just know it for yourself, you have to be willing to tell the world. You have to have publications. And publications are the coin of the realm in terms of* [tenure] - *peer-reviewed publications for demonstrating your value as a scholar.*

Margaret shares her perspective on the importance of research for tenure conversion from her experience as a sitting member on a divisional tenure committee:

> *I have sat on the divisional committee through several conversions, successful conversions. But what characterized those as successful conversions, and I think what would characterize a successful conversion in our department, was a very significant research enterprise, independent research enterprise and that's not to say that it couldn't be about education, but it would need to be similar to the kinds of records that I've seen.*

Even though faculty members are required to do research, as well as teach, the interviewees often discussed the importance given to each. In other words, individuals hired as academic staff may find a considerable amount of their time spent in teaching, as opposed to research. Is it acceptable then, for exceptional teaching to circumvent the traditional requirements of research? The departmental faculty and administrators interviewed for the study felt strongly that it does not. Margaret summarizes the sentiment expressed by most:

> *This is a department that takes its teaching mission extremely seriously. And I have been extraordinarily impressed with the department in terms of how seriously it does take its teaching mission. That being said, we are a department where even our [ ] education faculty do not get tenure just on the basis of their teaching. So what I would say is it's not that teaching is more valued over research, but we're a department where you're never going to get tenure just for teaching. So you can be stellar; many of our faculty have stellar evaluations and lots of them have won teaching awards. So that's not sufficient, you know that's just expected.*

It appears that some staff members spend valuable time and effort conducting research that will ultimately not be held in esteem by their departments. This holds true for publications, as well. Research and publishing are integral, if not *the* integral, aspects in "acting" like a faculty member. Many departments do not have well-articulated standards about research and publications, yet individuals are evaluated based on these subjective expectations. It is helpful if the department has reached consensus about these expectations so that they can share these with faculty and staff members alike. This would help not only those attempting conversion, but also newly hired faculty.

Strategy 4: Prioritize Time and Energy

The interviewees frequently talked about the ever-increasing demands placed upon them and the importance of prioritizing one's time and concentrating on the things that *count*. For example, several of the interviewees felt that during the course of a week, they had been asked to do things that did not necessarily contribute to meeting the requirements of their tenure package. This is particularly true for those attempting a tenure conversion. The interviewees suggested that all junior faculty aspiring for tenure downplay their commitments to things that *don't count.* However, doing this may be particularly difficult for those who are juggling responsibilities that do not lend themselves to conducting research and publishing.

Margaret, a faculty member, describes the conflict between being invited to present at seminars and the push to publish:

> *I can sometimes fall into this trap myself, as you get called on to do a lot of workshops and things like this that don't count. And the reason they don't count, I mean they count – I always have to go out and give talks about my* [discipline]*—but giving a talk is not the same as publishing an article.*

Tom summarizes the importance of knowing what *counts* toward tenure and being able to realistically prioritize one's time:

> *To be successful, is to know what work you need to get done and get it done… realistic goals of what you can get done in what time period.*

Essentially, spending too much time on the things that don't count, at the expense of things that do, can affect the outcome of tenure or a tenure track conversion. As mentioned previously, integral components of the tenure requirements are research and publications, and as discussed in the next section, funding to support one's research.

Strategy 5: Secure and Maintain Funding

Securing and maintaining external funding has become increasingly critical in the requirement for tenure. As in the case of publishing, the prestige of the funding agency and the amount of the funding play a role in the significance it is afforded. Higher profile institutes and agencies, as well as higher dollar awards, are viewed more favorably by those evaluating tenure proposals.

Linda discussed her early focus on securing grant funding and how that, combined with her research and publications, helped to secure her successful tenure track conversion.

> *I had been NIH funded my whole career, so I used the NIH ladders since the day I got my post doc, from the NIH, well the day I got my dissertation I think I'd already written a post doc application knowing that's where I wanted to be funded by. Then I got a new investigator award, then I got an RO1, so I was going up the NIH ladder, which to me indicated…that's the tenure track. And I also was getting* [ ] *grants, so I was successful in research. I was paving new ground, I knew that.*

She met and exceeded the tenure criteria and when considered for the conversion, an administrator shared this statement:

> *She's an example of somebody who, just kind of laid it down. I mean she had a successful track record of funding and published research and I think if you go to the divisional committee with that, no matter where you're coming from… It's getting there – that's the problem.*

Of interest here is that Linda was initially placed in an academic staff track and had to request her own track conversion. As discussed previously, this confirms the importance of administrators recognizing and placing people in the appropriate track initially.

Strategy 6: Learn What Your Colleagues are Doing

It is important for those considering tenure or a track conversion to know how other colleagues within their department are performing, especially if they have been successfully tenured, to enable the individual to understand and meet similar standards. This can be difficult however, given the isolated nature of academic work. Margaret describes this:

> *I know from my observations of the divisional committee that we are really one of the very best* [ ] *departments on campus and we do a really, really good job of doing really, really great things. And although it's hard for me – I mean so I have learned, I do things to try to find out what are my colleagues doing. You know, we don't publicize this in the department, but like what's our level of – what's other people's level of funding? What's other people's publications rate? How many talks are they giving a year? What are they getting invited to do? So you get a sense of what you need to be doing because you want to be – I mean we want the department to be great and so you want it – every person needs to contribute at their own level.*

She further shares:

> *Knowing what I know about the tenure process here and how we do tenure evaluations in general, both at the* [ ] *divisional level and the department, I have found it hard to be able to compare myself to my colleagues and know whether I'm performing at the level that I'm expected to. And that's because we don't publicize a lot of information about what we do. I actually think that's a mistake and that there are ways to publicize things in general ways, so that people have a sense of how they measure up in the department. I say that in part because I'm also a member of another department that has an interesting way of doing that and essentially setting it's own standards, and then also always working to try to improve. Our department sets an extraordinarily high standard for itself.*

Sarah echoed Margaret's thoughts and emphasized the importance of understanding what your colleagues are doing and what departmental expectations are:

> *I think it's really important to find out about what your department, you know sort of what the history of the department is – have they done this before? How much experience do they have putting up people for tenure? What do your faculty look like? What is the*

faculty doing and what does it mean to be a faculty member? It's really hard to find out from the outside but you've got to find that out because the individual who wants to go through this process has to have a sense of what's going to be expected of them on the other side too. So you know if I haven't taught, maybe I should. Maybe I should ask for an opportunity to teach because if I don't, I've not got any teaching record. You know, have somebody look over my publication record. Is this a publication record that looks like its tenureable? You've got to do these and you have to ask – you have to ask people – you have to find people who you can ask honestly.

Each department will have its own criteria and standards for performance and evaluation; hopefully, these will be documented to minimize subjectivity. The individual considering tenure or a track conversion needs to evaluate how they are performing relative to the rest of the faculty with whom they will be compared.

Action Stage

Once a staff member has considered the previous suggestions and makes the decision to attempt converting to a tenured position, the following strategies may be useful.

Strategy 7: Transfer National Recognition to Local Respect

National recognition may inherently come as a result of paving new paths in research and is consequently important in tenure and track conversions. Once this recognition is achieved, however, it does not always guarantee respect locally. As we discovered from one of the cases, though she had achieved national recognition in her discipline, the tenure conversion attempt was not successful departmentally. It appears that national recognition is necessary to ensure tenure, but it alone is not sufficient.

Fred, an administrator, talks about the importance of national recognition, which is essential in new research and ultimately tenure:

In order to be successful on the tenure track and as a scientist, you almost have to get to that national level of prominence and recognition.

Why then, is it that once national recognition is achieved, it may still not be rewarded locally? Linda, although ultimately successful in her conversion, shares the following:

I was recognized nationally as a leader in my clinical research, but I was not valued locally at all. And so perhaps it was that national recognition, and I don't know what other words to use. There were an awful lot of opportunities offered to me at the national level, that I thought well something different ought to be happening locally.

Interestingly, why is it that Linda is recognized nationally as a leader in her research, but labeled trouble here at home? She states:

And there's a lot of reward like I said in some of the things I do, but really a lot of the reward is also at the national level…it's being awarded another grant by the [ ] *or by the NIH or being invited to come speak at the NIH. You know, speaking at state meetings*

> *now is nothing. I turn them down all the time. So, the kicks that keep you in there change and as you become more successful, they satisfy you at a different level. But locally, I have been made to feel that I'm a problem. I don't feel that I've earned that or warranted it. You have to over analyze, you have to act very judiciously because I view myself as labeled as trouble locally.*

If individuals within departments are recognized nationally, and in many instances internationally, for their groundbreaking research, why are they not recognized locally within their departments through promotion and reward and even sometimes labeled as trouble? This is an important question for administrative consideration because for faculty to successfully become tenured or make the track conversion, their national recognition must be acknowledged and translated to local rewards.

Strategy 8: Align Champions From Within and Outside the Department

Aligning champions from within and outside of the department is crucial when considering tenure or a tenure-track conversion. Once national recognition has been established, people at this level may be beneficial in advocating on one's behalf. For instance, they may be asked to write external letters as an important part of the tenure package. However necessary and supportive champions outside of the department are, it is the support from within the department that will ultimately determine one's success. Those within the department are the individuals who will ultimately decide whether the request will proceed further to the divisional committee level.

There are occasions, unfortunately, when internal champions cannot be found. In these instances, it may be necessary to seek assistance from people outside of the immediate department. Linda shares her experience:

> *For me, I had to go outside my line of command to get what I thought was justice. So, in doing that, it doesn't get easier because it's not your line of command that's putting you forward, as their idea.*

Tom shares how he struggled with whether to seek outside help or not, and how that ultimately influenced his final decision:

> *If I would have used* [person outside of the department] *and his influence, and taken it with him to the department or bypassed the department and demand the school to look at this, I guess that would have pretty much sealed my fate as a true maverick, and I would have had probably even less rapport with the faculty than I would have been pissing them off to begin with. And I was trying to choose the path of least resistance. They don't want to hear the truth, but then going above and beyond them and going behind their backs, I guess that's where I chose the battle. So I just chose to not pursue it I guess.*

It is also important to note that departments in these situations do not care for interference or to be dictated to from outside the unit. Richard, a department chair, illustrates this point when discussing help from external sources:

But in terms of getting the department to do it, I think that it was not helpful in the sense that if people within the department feel that this was being done because someone else wanted us to do it, that really would have turned some people off. If anything, I think it would have had a negative role to play within the department. I guess I was clear that that would have been the case.

He continues:

The fact of the matter is in the context of my department, no amount of external pressure from anywhere is going to have any influence, and it was something that needed to be considered internally. Champions outside the department – those are useful, but in the end, the ultimate decision-making comes from the department.

Linda proposes another consideration in aligning champions, relative not only to tenure-conversions, but in overall institutional transformation. Given that a large percentage of men comprise departmental numbers, and consequently leadership within those departments, it is imperative to align champions in 'multi-gender teams:'

We have to view ourselves as multi-gender teams, men and women who will take this on together. I always say, it's not going to change by just making committees or institutes or research centers of women. You need to have the men at the table. You have to have men doing all the jobs too, because when men and women share it, then we'll make the change. And I think there are some out there who are more willing than they used to be. I don't know what the incentives are because we are really talking about a cultural shift.

Strategy 9: Identify Mentors

The strategy of establishing a mentoring and support network seems apparent and is important surrounding issues of tenure-conversion; but like most strategies discussed, is helpful in many other professional circumstances. When considering this strategy, however, is that one may need to actively seek out their mentors and surround themselves with those who can provide guidance.

Fred, an administrator, feels that mentoring is really the best predictor of success in this environment:

You know almost everybody who walks through the door I think has the intellectual horsepower to be successful in almost anything they choose. You have to. If you think about it these are bugs who have been challenged all their lives and certainly there are people who are geniuses, and some who are just kind of regular smart, but I think almost everybody has the ability to be successful in almost anything they choose to do. So much of this has to do with first predilection; you know, is research something that somebody's aspired to forever? But I think most importantly in all this stuff is role modeling and mentoring. And I think that that's far, far in a way the most important determinant of success.

Most of the women interviewed discussed the importance of having several mentors, including both women and men. Having a woman role model administratively, who had moved along the

system and paved the way in a university was important, but rare. Having mentors locally was something that was desired, but not always present in their daily lives. They discussed the importance of choosing mentors carefully, as Linda shares below:

> *Definitely have several mentors. Choose carefully. Choose several mentors, men and women. I think that's really important. I had few and I had none here locally. So, I think surrounding yourself with people that you will view as mentors and that they will view themselves as your mentors and facilitators is very important.*

Linda also talks about the inspiring messages that mentors affirm:

> *Having a woman role mode, who I think was moved along the system okay, but I think saw people who weren't, and really was an activist, was important. I lost my mom, you know, twenty years ago, so you find people to fill different roles for you. And so my mentor became extremely important to me and kept confirming what my mother said, which was 'anything you want to do, you can do.' But there I saw a woman, a professional woman, my mentor, trying to pave a road in a university to do that. Yeah, so that was a big influence.*

It is important to note, however, that the mentor that Linda describes here was not at the UW. This particular mentor guided her through her graduate training prior to being hired, and disappointedly, Linda shared that she did not have a mentor until well into her second decade at the UW.

Richard discusses varying mentoring structures and his questions give rise to the notion of differing models of mentoring and promotion. This is an important issue for administrators to address, especially with staff who may have an interest in a future track conversion:

> *And so questions of things like mentoring, what kind of mentoring structure was there for the person? Did the person's mentoring focus on them as an academic staff person rather than developing them as a faculty member?*

Linda lends to the conversation another issue related to mentoring. She addresses the importance of women helping and mentoring other women:

> *You see a lot of cutthroat stuff now among women, which is really the saddest thing ever. The saddest thing of all! Oh yeah, they get jealous of each other. That's sick. I think some of us allow ourselves to be used by the men. I don't know how conscious it is, but I see women do the men's bidding for them. And that's a way they get ahead. Remember I said people are moved ahead for doing what needs to be done, even if it's not something excellent. So the men who are in administrative roles now, I think will manipulate women to get certain things done that they need to get done. And the women will do it and it may not be very good for other women. I see that a lot. And that's something that I think we need to talk more about as women professionals, when we succeed, to help women recognize the challenges. Women don't accept the issues at a young age in their career.*

They want to deny it, but how to do this is interesting. How to get to women at the right stage of their career to help them not get into the hole…to have to get out of?

In addition to mentoring, support from family and friends plays a prominent role in not only the day to day challenges of work, but as Linda describes here, tackling the inequities and injustices in the environment:

The other thing is I come from a family…my husband… he has always been so supportive of what I do, and he thinks my career is remarkable. So I think, and he always thought that, not only would he support me, but that perhaps there was an injustice happening, as well. So that support at home was awfully important. And the third thing is that my parents always said to me 'whatever you want to do, you can do. You know the sky is the limit.' And I bought it. And it became astounding to me when I was here, that it was being questioned, because I was doing what I wanted to do, but it didn't feel quite in line with what I saw other people accessing in terms of opportunities in position…

She continues:

And I do have to say the underpinnings at home are so important to success at work. They are…and it sounds like such a female thing but it's not…what have males been doing for years? They've had support at home…well the same things holds for women. And you know, gosh, what he puts up with I can't even begin to tell you.

Linda also describes the importance of confronting the injustices presently in the environment so that the future will be a more hospitable place for young women 'coming up' within academic systems. Her drive for justice encompasses making the climate equitable for the women around her and the young women that will come after her.

<u>Strategy 10: Seek Out Administrative Support and Guidance</u>

Obtaining administrative guidance and support is integral in seeking tenure and tenure-track conversion. Ideally, one hopes to have an administrator who is savvy in departmental politics and policy and can act as an advocate for the track conversion. However, it is important to know administratively who is an advocate and who is willing to help in the quest for a track change. Unfortunately, not everyone may be supportive; as Susan shares from a conversation with her department chair:

I tried unsuccessfully on my own too when [ ] *was chair, saying, 'I'd like to be a faculty member'. He says to me 'Why would you want to be that?' And it seemed to be a stupid question. It forced me to articulate and I think the metaphor I used with him was like it was trying to work with one hand tied behind my back. He said 'Let me do a little probe experiment.' And by probe experiment, he went out and he asked 10 of his buddies in the department and then he came back and reported and he said ' it's pretty clear that they're going to turn it down. So rather than put you through it, let's not do it. I've already gotten the answer.'*

For administrators, it is important to consider a tenure conversion for certain staff members as a way to support their professional development. Though this may be a rare circumstance, it is important to recognize it as a viable option for certain individuals within the department. It is also important to understand that, at times, upper level administrators may be in favor of promoting tenure conversions and offer resources such as start-up packages and additional commitments that might normally be offered to faculty recruited from elsewhere. But again, difficulty may arise at the departmental level, which may not ultimately support the conversion. Consequently, it is important to cultivate relationships at the local departmental and administrative levels.

Sarah offers:

> *We have to be offering guidelines to their mentors, their department chairs, their friends, their whatevers – deans, sometimes deans are supportive of this kind of thing and the departments aren't, and the dean can kind of navigate if he or she has some ideas and guidelines. Because it just shouldn't always fall to women to promote themselves and so it would be nice if it affected a few administrators or just faculty who could lead the charge.*

Sarah provides additional insight regarding the importance of the strength of the departmental chair and the overall climate in regard to the support of a tenure conversion.

> *Look at the ones that have been successful and get a sense of one thing—the strength of the chair. My guess is that's the most important variable in success; and then, the overall climate in the department for women and for everything else, just the collegiality of the group. So I guess that's what I would be looking for is the sort of turn keys that made the difference and my bet is it's not about the women. It's the context that they're in that determines success. I guess using the information carefully about previous experiences the department has had with the same kind of thing. So I think looking for cues from the past, which of course you don't want to damn a department forever because of certain decisions they've made. Every case is different. But my guess is that the past is more of a predictor of the future than some of us have naively noted.*

Linda shares her thoughts on the importance of communicating with and helping administrators understand what staff and faculty experiences are and have been like:

> *I'm starting to understand, I think, I used to think the men, all men, who are in the control positions were actively preventing movement upward for women. Now I think there's a subgroup of men in control positions who are good; who are just recognizing that they can help the problem. So, my hope is that it will become less adversarial. It's been very 'we/them.' And I'm getting a sense from my continued movement that if you can identify some people in the administrative positions and open their minds, that's a better way to change.*

She continues:

Or that we can influence them to be willing to help. I don't think there are many men who are just there willing to help. I think we're getting a little bit better. My understanding of the situation is maturing to the point that I'm realizing…they need to be more informed about what's really going on…they didn't even know…when my new department chair who came into being last July heard about some of my circumstances, he just said to me, "What?" You know, like, had no idea some things that had been happening. So, instead of seeing everything as black and white, I'm hopeful, that we can teach some of these people in administrative positions what they need to do to advocate for us. They didn't know the issues, I think, or how bad it was.

As an administrator, Fred speaks about the ultimate importance of paying attention to these issues of climate and setting people up for success within their environment.

We're not Machiavellian about it; that is, we're not cunning about this. We just don't get it, I mean we don't understand how important it is for people to come here and be placed in an environment that is helpful to them and this is very variable. I think that there are leaders who do a wonderful job of this. So it's really a local phenomenon I think and unfortunately probably at the local level we're more unsuccessful than successful, but there are certainly exceptions to this thing where local leader section heads, division heads or chairs who do a great job of cultivating young people and I think the results actually speak for themselves.

Attempt Stage

Once an individual decides that they would like to be considered for a tenure conversion, the following strategies may help them successfully attempt this endeavor.

Strategy 11: Maintain the Highest Professional Standards

This strategy appears straightforward, but in the words of the interviewees, it is *critical*. Linda describes her perspective on being really good at what one does and the drive and passion to do so:

I think you have to be really good at what you do and you have to do it better than men and you have to be more committed. I think everything has to be at a different level than normal— women need to go at things at some sort of average or better than average level. But there are some that are really driven. I think I'm one of them. So that kind of commitment and passion about not only my science and my clinical work and my contributions, I definitely had that all along, as well as the passion also of justice. It's about justice.

Tom, Linda's colleague, shares these observations about her success:

I guess the parallel is she's also someone that I should consider…I was going to say who gives a shit. I mean she really cares about what she does, she cares about the project, she cares about the people she works with, she cares about the patients, she's engaged and asked to see those people and asked to work on these projects and perhaps that's what

gets her in difficulties, she actually gives a shit. And her progress over the years, high intensity, bulldogged determination, extremely high end, cutting edge, everything that I can see – led to her success.

Sometimes however, as Samantha points out, this can serve as a detriment for women with the people that surround them:

Well you know it's almost like every stereotype – you will hear people say she is difficult to work with. And you know why they'll say that, I think because she has extraordinarily high standards and she's unimpeachable. I mean she has very high standards and she's a woman, so she's not easy to work with. If she was a man, nobody would think twice – if she was a man they would say 'wonderful'. Yeah, they'd say, 'he is a great researcher-oh yeah, he's renowned.' That would be the sound bite, rather than 'oh yeah he's difficult to work with.'

Sarah offers another perspective on how being exemplary can sometimes work against women:

I sometimes think that the women in the middle do the best in this environment because the women at the bottom get chewed up. You know there's just no tolerance for really bad research from women even though we have plenty of bad researchers who are men. And the women at the top, the stars are really threatening and they hit a glass ceiling sooner than women in the middle because the things that would by fairness go to them, are things that are being essentially taken away from men and I think that's very hard for this environment to do – to give raises to women when it's a zero sum game and that means that there's a man who's not getting that money, giving space to the most successful women – men look like gluttons all the time without space. When women start looking like gluttons, it's not seen as very becoming for instance, it's seen as piggy and aggressive and needy and all sorts of things. Whereas the man it's 'Wow doesn't he have a lot of grant money?' So I think those characteristics have to be very carefully calibrated and I'm not sure the stars are the ones that have them calibrated. It may be more people in the middle. On the other hand, we all say you have to be able to do things a lot better than the men to get the same credit for it, so of course it does help to be really good in that set of standards. But there are definitely situations where it doesn't work to be the best for women.

Strategy 12: Be Vocal about Individual Accomplishments and Professional Goals

This strategy is important because, as mentioned previously, the rules of the game are not always apparent and may need to be discovered. To this end, one may need to be assertive about uncovering the rules such as understanding departmental policy, differences between tracks, and the workings of salary negotiations. This strategy also entails the individual being comfortable with making their accomplishments known, as long as they meet the standards of the department. Margaret describes:

I think that the department would be willing to promote someone or convert someone they felt had risen to the standards of the department. They could be blue, white, purple or

pink. They're going to set a certain set of standards and expect people to meet those standards.

Often individuals will need to be assertive about initiating their own track switch, particularly if they do not have a proactive administrator. Linda shares her experience:

> *I think in my circumstance, and perhaps everybody is different, the track switch idea was something that I initiated. I don't know if it usually comes from others or from the faculty member themselves, and in that alone, you're potentially rocking a boat because nobody is offering you a track switch. So you're asking for something…again, I don't know how most people track switch, but I went from* [academic staff] *to tenure track, which feels like you're asking for something pretty substantial. Now I felt extremely justified in asking for it, I had no doubt that I was going to be awarded a tenure track status given my track record. But just the fact that you have to ask does something to you psychologically, that the supervisor, whoever that is or the person above you, isn't recognizing that your work is worthy of that. So I can't even imagine making that track switch, asking for that and then have it not work out…that would be very debilitating.*

Linda, unfortunately, shares that there were people in her same department that were making that switch that were not needing to ask:

> *Yeah, I heard section heads saying 'Oh, we're going to try and move so-n-so to tenure track now, occasionally I'd hear that. They were all men…male section heads…male faculty. I didn't necessarily have a willing Chair and section heads saying 'ah yeah, you're so right, let's do this.' So, it doesn't get easier or it didn't, I can only speak for my case because when you go through, as a woman, like I said, I watched men putting men up to go into new tracks. It didn't seem that they had to work hard to instigate that thought into their supervisor's head.*

Gary, an administrator in another college, appeared to verify Linda's assertion as he discussed several males within his college that were accelerated for track change without much, if any, prodding from the actual individual. He indicated that these individuals were "pushed" into tenure track from their academic staff positions. Their accomplishments, like Linda's, included groundbreaking research and securing multi-million dollar grants. The only instance of a female being granted tenure conversion, which he cited, resulted as part of a dual-hire package in which a department wanted to keep the husband.

Finally, though this may be difficult unless the individual has had mentoring previously, one needs to be assertive in negotiating the appropriate track at the outset, regardless of what the supervising administrator may suggest. This may mean seeking out information and talking with respected others up front, but the time and energy invested in understanding these differences and their long-term consequences is academically and financially prudent. Almost everyone interviewed confessed their lack of understanding regarding these issues when initially hired. In retrospect, collectively their advice was to find out track information at the outset of new employment. Samantha refers to Linda's situation in the following and illustrates the importance of knowing about track placements early and upfront:

> *And when she was put on an academic staff appointment, I really didn't get the huge difference. And I remember right away she was kind of asking 'well why would I be on academic staff track, I'm a researcher.' And I remember* [her supervisor] *said 'well it was easier to do and we didn't have to do an open recruitment. It was just easier and we'll think about tenure in the future'. So she stayed on academic staff track for a number of years and I don't think she was ever quite happy with it. I remember when she was nominated by our chair for one of these academic staff research awards – the chancellor's research award- and the chair called her up and said 'I really want to nominate you for this award.' And she said 'I don't want to be nominated for that award. I want to be tenure track with a faculty appointment. That's just a bone you're handing me.'*

Strategy 13: Be Persistent

Once the decision to switch tracks is made, the interviewees used many adjectives to describe the persistence needed to make the conversion—hardy, thick-skinned, and bull-dogged, were but a few. The interviewees were frequently told 'no' or discouraged to make the conversion, yet successful individuals interpreted being told 'no' to mean creatively finding another way to achieve the desired outcome.

Linda shares advice she often gives to others:

> *But I always tell women, if you do good work and you have endurance and perseverance, there's probably a good future, but I would never say just good work. No, you have to endure an awful lot. And I don't think I'm atypical—that's the sad part. I mean these women have left recently… Well, I am atypical…I keep staying and fighting - that's what's atypical. So, nothing changes if you leave. And so, I keep recovering and deciding…I evaluate all the time…is it time to stop? Is it time to leave? Is it time to go on and push another battle? And the only way we're going to change things is by getting back up and making change happen.*

Margaret agrees that persistence is important, but to also choose which issues to confront:

> *I basically have always taken the attitude—I'm going to do what I'm going to do and if they don't like it, it's their tough luck. I mostly don't let things bother me and having said that – there are faculty meetings that I will never forget where things have been discussed that either are illegal or should never be discussed, are offensive, you know whatever it is…*

Margaret decided to not push all of the issues, just the ones that were important to her. In that way, her persistence was complemented by the ability to also be politic.

Strategy 14: Be Politic

Generally, individuals who are successful also understand power dynamics and have the ability to *read* individuals and adapt their behavior using environmental cues. Unfortunately,

individuals without this capacity have tremendous difficulty in navigating their landscape, and consequently, in achieving their objectives.

Sarah offers the following explanation about being politically savvy and if these skills are inherent or can be learned:

> *Both- again like everything else, I think it's a mixture. Some people inherently know the right thing to say – some people learn very, very quickly from feedback in their environment and they realize what's working for them and what's not and I always call them sort of social experimentalists – that they're constantly putting out signals of some sort and then monitoring the data that comes back and then changing their behavior in response. I think that's probably the most common successful phenotype, or mode of being really good at it, because most people don't have that knack of being right off the bat, because universities are just such bizarre and different political environments – social environments, I don't know why people would know how to navigate in them intuitively. And I think the people who seem to know intuitively are the ones who just are good experimentalists and they learn really fast and so it appears that they knew right off and some people are unteachable. And then some-they just won't learn. That's just not their personality. Then others want to learn, but they just can't do the things that are needed. They're just uncomfortable with those things. And that's what really irritates me and those are the cases that I find the most disturbing, because they may be women who are completely politically un-savvy and can't say and do the kinds of things that they need to in order to fit in the environment, but they're fabulous scientists, so who cares if they're politically savvy or not. They shouldn't have to be – that's not a job requirement. Nobody puts it in the ads. So those are the ones that I find the most upsetting.*

Sometimes, being politic requires one to challenge traditional structures, like committee assignments. Linda relays an example of how particular committees can be powerful and how even being placed on one can be political:

> *They should be putting me on committees, should they not? To be doing things to be representing the UW? They never put me on university committees until I inquired 'why?' And it didn't even strike me for years that the normal thing is to be put on university committees, because again, I was a little bit of a fish out of water, I was alone, and I started wondering why I've never been on some of these major committees that I have to look to…and believe me, I don't need more work, but like IRB. I've probably have written more IRB's than most people in the* (department) *and successfully, but nobody's ever thought or voiced to me the idea of putting me on the IRB committee, which is a very powerful committee. I've probably had over a hundred IRB's approved. Yeah, but those doors are never opened.*

<u>Strategy 15: Assemble a Stellar Tenure Package</u>

Finally, a successful tenure-track conversion is aided by assembling an appropriate and solid tenure package. It is important to know what to include, and will subsequently vary from one department to the next. It is, however, up to the individual to discover the expected contents and presentation preference. The presentation and organization of the tenure package and its content

are inextricably linked. Ensuring a thorough and meticulous representation of all accomplishments is important in helping the department and divisional committees understand the depth and breadth of the work being presented.

Margaret offers the following specific advice:

> *I think that one of the most important pieces of advice I would give to somebody is to try to get some materials from other people or go up to the divisional committee office and get and look at the sanitized tenure cases, so you get a sense of what a tenure case looks like. The big thing I think is that one needs to have a sense of…I think it's hard for assistant professors to know what it is that…they have this sense that there's a mysterious set of criteria out there, right? And they don't know what those criteria are. Everyone would like to have a clearer idea of what those criteria are. The fact of the matter is, the reality is, that the criteria aren't very easy to describe, which I think is very hard. It's easy for me to understand from my perspective now, having looked a lot at these things, but it's not easy for people who haven't seen this before to know and it's hard to say to someone you just know. You know you can tell.*

She further advises:

> *What you want to get a sense of is what do a variety of successful cases look like – what it's like in your own department, so if you ask some people who've recently, ideally, people who've recently been through tenure, that you can ask them, 'Hey can I see where were you when you got tenure? Do you have your CV from that time?'*

Jane, another faculty member in Margaret's department, shares expectations from their department and the importance of understanding these expectations. She also cautions about the submission of subjective types of material into the presentation:

> *The tenure package must have logical organization, a research question, publications, an implementation plan, and outcome measures and not be personal and anecdotal. You need to understand the expectations of the community. Is there a disparity between the department's benchmarks and the individual's interests? One needs to find out what is required and expected.*

Sarah, a faculty member in another department, shares the importance of knowing who will be evaluating your materials:

> *It's hard to underestimate the importance of knowing who the people are who are going to do your evaluation. If you don't know your colleagues and talk to them and get some sense – at least you have to have some people who you talk to and say, ' hey, do I look like I meet your criteria', right? I think it's hard to ask that question, but you have to ask especially if you want to go through a conversion process. Because the way I would imagine these conversion processes taking place most successfully is if the department as a whole essentially comes to the conclusion that this is what it wants to do, right? But*

that requires work to get to that point. Work on the part of the individual and their champions in the department.

Gary discusses another important aspect to be considered in the tenure package—referee letters:

Another important component for making the tenure case is what your colleagues say about you, so the five to eight extra referee letters are critical to a tenure case.

Jane adds that reference letters submitted to the UW should be uniquely considered because of its status as an RIA institution. In other words, consideration should be given to where external letters are emanating from and their level of significance relative to the UW:

I mean we are a Top 10 University, as opposed to the 'top 30 or top 50.' It's the reputation of the department. I mean if you get a good letter from [ ] *State, it's not the same as here.*

Much consideration and deliberation should be given to every individual item included within the tenure package. The bottom line, according to the interviewees, is that it must be stellar.

Conclusions

One cannot address issues of tenure-track conversion without examining structural constraints and barriers within the institution. These issues emerge at the intersection between tradition and the tension of needing to meet demands placed on the university of today. It is inherent on administrators and leaders to find new and creative ways to address these needs, especially in regard to moving more women into the sciences and engineering.

Addressing these issues may encompass examining, a) the perceived two-tiered system between faculty and academic staff, and b) policies and structures of the promotion and rewards system. Interviewees discussed the desire to redesign the present system and be able to place, and consequently reward, professionals where their passions and talents lie. Ultimately they envision putting people where they fit best and where they want to be, and as one administrator shared, 'implementing recognition and rewards to ensure square pegs in square holes.'

Change the System

Fred, an administrator within the medical school, illustrates this point with the following thoughts:

I think we do a terrible thing for people, we kind of tell them what the currency is and then kind of wave that in front of them and make them go in the direction that we – it's not me, but that culturally the academic health center thinks is right and I think we pull people away from doing the things they really love and we get them confused and we get them unhappy and I think it's one of the reasons why people are not staying at academic health centers. They're just torn in too many directions and don't feel as free as I think they should to pursue their interests. I believe there's value in all the things we do from

clinical work done in a scholarly way to bench research. But there's not general acknowledgement that that's true.

He continues with what he would do if he 'ran the world:'

My own view is that our real problem is that we have a caste system – in our medical school that really does delineate between three different classes if you will – the clinical track, the CHS track and the tenure track. And it's my belief that in a modern medical school, this kind of class system is based on a false premise which is that one of these activities is more important than the others, and I simply don't believe that's true. So my goal, if I ran the world, is not to have people aspire to get into the better class, but aspire to be in the right class and for that route to be equivalent, whichever group it was, to the other two groups. So I think this is a matter of not striving to get to the top, but striving to be in the group that is the best reflection of your professional interests and talents. So again, I think the best system would be to take everybody in and I'd get rid of the classes. Take everybody in, let them do whatever serves them best and wherever their talents lie and then sort it out down the road as they start to present the picture of what their professional lives are going to be like.

Gary, another administrator, discusses the importance of university rankings and the oversupply of Ph.D.'s, which contribute structurally to the perceived *caste* system:

Now, more and more faculty don't want to teach. And so you see this increasing number of either full-time or part-time lecturers. And so, then what's left is the research. And the reason that I think this has happened is that among the top 20 research universities, particularly since rankings came out—everybody is driven by rankings, you've got to be—if you drop down in the rankings, then the good graduate students don't come, if the good graduate students don't come, then the good faculty don't come. And the way you get rankings is through scholarly reputation. Well, you only have 24 hours in a day, and so I think it's that pressure from all institutes, it's an Arms Race, to get higher and more visible faculty research. And so this is why we've off-loaded these other activities onto professionals. And so we've become more specialized, as an academy. So this probably also contributes to this tier-system because look at what is most rewarded among scholars themselves-your scholarly reputation. Look at what the faculty 'chose' to off-load; clearly that creates a hierarchy. But those are the external forces that conflict, so if you're a department chair and you have new lecturers-it may be the intellectually honest thing to do to say, 'Look, we've created a system where we're very efficient at generating Ph.D.'s-I read once the average physics professor will generate a dozen Ph.D.'s. You need one to replace yourself, you need two to be the research scientists in industry, maybe another couple in the liberal arts colleges. What about the other half dozen? So the academy has produced enough qualified people to ensure an oversupply for these other, you know, to fulfill all of the obligations and responsibilities that a university has to do. And so would you say, 'Well, you're part of the oversupply?' It makes it a very competitive system.

Create Objective Policies

Administrators and faculty referred to the tenure process as being vague and ambiguous. If the tenure process is perceived as such, converting from an academic staff position to a tenure-track position is even more so. There do not appear to be any policies that departments can refer to when these circumstances arise. Articulating consistent and objective policies is an important step to address the subjectivity associated with conversion requests. Objective criteria and guidelines may work to eliminate bias, such as the personality and gender of an individual.

Samantha relays the subjectivity associated with departmental decisions:

> *Well you know my experience has been that if a department doesn't want a person, it doesn't matter what the person does, they'll make a way to not let them in, or if they want them they'll make a way to let them in.*

And Susan shares how her request for tenure conversion could have gone either way:

> *And then you come back to what the two people said to me. One is 'Don't set your mind on things too high for you.' And two, 'It's very hard to get tenure in this department.' By their rules, a hundred percent, they're right that they denied me tenure. But let me give the other half of the sentence. By their rules they could also be a hundred percent right in granting me tenure. In other words, they could have done it either way by their rules and they'd be right. So you could say completely, of course we said 'no.' And then you could also take the exact same playback because I think I would have gotten by the divisional committee. I don't think they would have stopped me. I got stopped at the department. I think also by their rules, I've seen how quickly they can work when they want to do something. Had they wanted to do it, they could have opened the door and rolled out the carpet. So I think it really has come down to they didn't want to. So I think basically they didn't want to and they didn't.*

Richard, an administrator, shares how his department initially struggled but ultimately came together in determining criteria for tenure conversion situations:

> *What emerged from all of that was a clearer picture of what the case really was. And broad outline, it would be what is the nature of a faculty position versus a staff position? And so almost everyone struggled with this question about what are the appropriate requirements for being a faculty member. What defines a faculty member as opposed to an academic staff member? And it really came down to their own judgment about what is the nature of this department and what is the nature of a faculty member in this department, in particular a tenured faculty member.*

Institutions must work to develop new policies that support performance and promote the ongoing professional development of its staff. Once policies are established, it is important that they be documented and accessible for individuals considering a conversion. It is also imperative that department chairs have an accurate understanding of tenure and promotion criteria and are able to articulate them to their department members.

In addition, although we have identified strategies for overcoming obstacles to tenure-track conversions, there are significant concerns for women once this has been successfully achieved. Linda raises the following concerns, which ultimately, require further investigation and subsequent action:

> *Once these obstacles are hurdled, and a woman is moved to tenure track, the issues and obstacles merely continue on the other side of that appointment. That is "tenure" is denied any practical meaning-nothing at all has changed in my case and the hurdles just continue, but we have a new "title." It is exhausting because we are not ever admitted into the "men's leadership network." Tenure doesn't crack open the door at all unless they WANT it to*…[Essentially] *the success in that switch was extremely limited-it was a conversion we "extracted" with little positive result; certainly nothing ensued that facilitated my work, subsequent to that switch.*

It is inherent upon administrators to recognize that when the personal and the professional must compete, optimum performance and creativity are stifled over the long-term. Finding a way to restructure policy so that personal and professional priorities coexist will ensure an energized and vibrant department. Changing the present system will require strong and innovative leadership. It is beyond the scope of this paper to explore alternative architectural systems, but will be critical for administrators to address and will certainly vary from one environment to the next. Creative solutions will need to be discovered locally and fit the unique needs of each department.

Appendix A: The Case of Susan

Susan came to the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1972 for graduate school after Cornell University, where she graduated Phi Betta Kappa. During her time in graduate school, she held an esteemed Danforth Fellowship, which allowed her to combine her passions for teaching and chemistry. Her ultimate personal and professional desire was to teach chemistry in a way that empowered people and made a difference within the world they lived. Following the completion of her graduate degree in 1976, she accepted a position as an untenured assistant professor in the state of New York. Here she spent the next few years, but because of the national peaking baby-boom trend, and subsequent declining university enrollment, she felt that achieving tenure locally would be unlikely. She returned to UW in 1979 with her husband and was hired in a non-faculty position as a part-time lecturer. She worked with Minority/Disadvantaged students as part of an academic support program called the Chemistry Tutorial Program. The program was founded to provide support for students in their first year chemistry courses. Her role was primarily as tutor. She describes herself as feeling as though she was "underemployed," but glad that she and her husband were able to secure Ph.D.-level employment. During this time, and consequently over the next ten years, Susan was issued what she terms "hire/fire" contractual letters. These are appointment letters that hire staff, but limit them to annual contracts. These letters come with no presumption of future employment. In the early 1980's, when a reorganization of state employees occurred, Susan's part-time position became part of the instructional academic staff, a separate track from the legal faculty. In the 1990s, she taught general chemistry and a graduate seminar on teaching. She also was appointed an author for Chemistry in Context, a national project of the American Chemical Society. Her chemistry courses rapidly grew in enrollment. She became the full-time Director of the Chemistry Learning Center (previously the Chemistry Tutorial Program). In 1989, she added to her credentials by receiving a Master's degree from the UW-Madison School of Education.

In 1998, Susan decided to pursue converting her academic staff position to that of tenured faculty status. She approached her department chair with her request and he asked her "Why would you want to be a faculty member?" He suggested to her that he do a departmental "probe" to obtain preliminary feedback. When he returned, he reported to Susan that it was clear that the department would turn her request down and he encouraged her to not pursue the tenure conversion, particularly because he did not want to "put her through it."

In 2004, Susan decided to pursue the tenure conversion request once again, this time with the help externally from the Women in Science and Engineering Leadership Institute (WISELI). At this time, Susan was performing her regular job duties, teaching an overload and attempting to put her tenure package together. She found this to be a difficult and lonely circumstance. For example, one tenured member of her department discouraged her attempts by saying, "Don't set your mind on things that are too high for you." She pressed to pursue the conversion, but even with the outside assistance of WISELI, the final departmental vote was not successful. Her department chair at the time came to her and said, "I think that you already know this, but we have voted as a department not to tenure. You've been turned down. It's very, very hard to get tenure in this department".

Susan has continued in the role of an academic staff member. Her current title is Distinguished Faculty Associate and maintains her position as Director of the Chemistry Learning Center. She also now teaches a science course in the Integrated Liberal Studies (ILS) Program. She has continued to design, supervise and teach in programs for students that are underrepresented in the sciences, as well as enhance her professional interests in supporting women in science, science across cultures and instructional technologies. She is active in several national science education projects such as Science Education for New Civic Engagements and Responsibilities (SENCER) and the UW-System Women in Science Curriculum Reform Institute. She serves on many national advisory boards, such as the American Association of Colleges and Universities, Project Kaleidoscope and Montana's Rural Women and Girls in Science Project. She has been elected to the national board of the Association of Women in Science (AWIS). She has received numerous local and national awards including the national 2006 American Chemical Society Award for Encouraging Women in Careers in the Chemical Sciences. She has continued numerous publications of various kinds from textbook chapters to journal publications and is the likely candidate to serve as the next Editor in Chief of Chemistry in Context. She holds the rank of sandan in Aikido, and also teaches Aikido to aspiring students. She looks forward to continuing her scholarly work and also toward retirement where she and others have already begun collaborative efforts for future research endeavors.

Appendix B: The Case of Linda

Linda came to the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1984 following the completion of her Ph.D. from Northwestern University and a post-doctoral fellowship (NRSA-NIH). She was hired by the Department of Neurology as an Assistant Scientist and arrived with an NIH grant in hand. She essentially created her own position by virtue of the NIH grant, which covered her salary and part of the salary of a neurologist and other co-investigators. She became an Associate Scientist in 1988 and was told at that time, by her Chair of Neurology, that she would not ever be moved to the faculty track. Interestingly however, male PhD's in that department were being hired on the CHS track. In 1991, the gerontologists/geriatricians in the Department of Medicine approached her and requested her assistance in writing their re-submission for a Veteran's Administration (VA) – Funded Geriatric Research Education and Clinical Center (GRECC) because they believed her area of research would be unique and important in obtaining the grant. At this time, she moved to the Department of Medicine where she was switched onto the CHS track as an Associate Professor with appointments in two sections of the department: Gastroenterology and Geriatrics/Gerontology. The re-submission of the grant was successful and the department was awarded the GRECC. Linda then assumed the Associate Director for Research position at the center as a responsibility of her UW Associate Professor (CHS) appointment. She questioned her placement in this CHS track, believing that she was performing tenure track work. Given Linda's credentials including research, publications and funding, she felt inappropriately placed. She had continuously maintained Primary Investigator (PI) status on NIH funding for over a decade (1984-1996). Not surprisingly, she was recognized nationally in her research and had received several awards. Interestingly, those interviewed for the purposes of this case shared that her recognition went well beyond the national stage, and quite frankly, was global. According to those interviewed, only three individuals exist globally within her arena of groundbreaking research. In addition, because she was a clinical researcher, she was also seeing patients.

Eventually her frustration with the initial unjust placement, prompted her to challenge and seek the appropriate track conversion. She shares the following story, which is both humorous and courageous:

> *I woke up one day long ago when this happened and it was 8:00 o'clock and I was just getting ready to come into work, the phone rang at home and it was the dean's assistant, somebody who worked very closely with him, and she had the happiest voice and said she had great news. "Dr. [name]" she said "you have been nominated for the Chancellor's Award for Best [academic staff] Researcher, and it's an honor annually and the Chancellor is awarding this." And I remember saying, "Well, thank you very much, but really what I want to hear is that I will be moved to tenure track." That was the first time I ever uttered the words, so I think that call motivated me to say, "that's the wrong award for me." And, I didn't take that award and that was the beginning of my deciding that I would make a mission of changing tracks to the appropriate track. It didn't feel, it just didn't feel right to take that award. It would have felt so much better to be awarded Chancellor's Award for Tenure Track Research. So it was kind of an interesting beginning. I think she was floored, I mean the sound of her voice was 'now what do I say and do?' I was gracious. I said 'let me think about this, but I don't think this is the right*

thing for me' or something like that. That to me was a very remarkable day that started things going in a new direction for me. I already realized what I wanted to be doing but that was the moment that pushed me to do it.

As in the first case, Linda sought external assistance from outside of her department. In 1996, she met with the new Vice Dean for Gender Equity who felt that her case warranted the track conversion and enthusiastically lobbied on her behalf. This administrator strongly agreed that Linda had been placed in the inappropriate track early in her career and advocated for the tenure conversion. Given the significant research endeavor, publishing, and funding, Linda's conversion was successful and went without incident. The vote was unanimous and was labeled as a "no brainer." She was switched to Associate Professor with tenure in 1996. One might argue that her conversion really did go without incident. Once she was awarded tenure, unlike many who receive salary adjustments, staff or laboratory space, Linda was given a clock (yes, a clock). Everything since then, she still refers to as a battle and has had to endure new sets of inequities:

Nothing's gotten easier. You feel a small level of satisfaction that you broke through a glass ceiling, but there's a glass ceiling right above it too. So you break through one and then there's another one right there.

Linda was awarded full professor in 2003. Her story about the academic staff research award though illustrates the struggles that persist:

I think that award was being awarded to me to appease me. I think they were saying, "Well, if we give it to her, she'll get something. We're keeping her on the CHS track. We'll give her an award. She'll be happy." And I feel a long history of that, of people just trying to appease me…of me being sort of a thorn, when really all I'm doing is wanting equal status for equal work that my male counterparts are doing; be it recognition on a track or a salary or a variety of things.

Appendix C: Interview Protocol #1

1. What is your present status (title/rank)?

2. Can you describe your present workload? Time allocation? Productivity?

3. How does this (see above answer) compare to your colleagues at other institutions? Within your profession?

4. Can you talk about when & how you came to the UW?

5. Were you hired in a part-time or full-time position?

6. Were you part of a dual or spousal hire?

7. When you were hired, were you given the option to convert to a tenure track position?

8. Were you interested in converting to a tenure track position? Was it negotiable?
9. Was it negotiated?

10. Are there delineated policies your department has for tenure conversion situations?

11. Did your department head discuss with you the option or criteria for converting to a tenure track position?

12. Were you offered a start-up package when you began? If so, what did this entail?

13. How did your conversion attempt unfold (plot & timeline?)

14. What were the circumstances that led to the conversion outcome?

15. What do you perceive as obstacles to your conversion?

16. In hindsight, do you have thoughts on how these obstacles may have been overcome?

17. What were the surprises for you along the way?

18. How are things the same/different for you since before your attempted conversion?

19. How do you identify career success and recognition?

20. Who else would you suggest that we talk to in regard to your particular case that can help us to understand this issue?

21. What should I ask, that I haven't yet at this point, to help us understand the situation of tenure conversion? What do we need to know up front? What is the moral of the story?

Appendix D: Interview Protocol #2

Administrators/Colleagues

*Background and present position? Experience in administration?

1. What has been your experience with attempted tenure conversions?

2. Is there a precedence of tenure conversion in your College?

3. Does your College (do department's) have documented policies on 'tenure conversion' situations?

4. What do you think is the overall attitude on the part of administrators in regard to tenure conversion? Is this a good thing or not?

5. Do department chair's actively work to promote understanding of policy, development, encouragement, etc.?

6. What is your perception about why these happen/succeed or, conversely, don't?

7. Obstacles and Barriers?

8. Strategies for overcoming these barriers?

9. Characteristics of individuals who make the conversion successfully?

10. Characteristics of the environment surrounding those who convert successfully?

11. Are the successful one's generally provided salary adjustments, space, resources, staff, etc.?

12. Suggestions (from someone in administration) for those who may be considering this type of track switch? Do's and Don'ts?

13. Are there perceived differences between the worlds of faculty and academic staff?

14. If there are perceived differences, how might these be overcome?

15. Is UW same or different from other places?

16. Mentoring regarding how the tenure package should look? Plus, mentoring on 'doing what counts'? Research, Publishing, Funding, National recognition?

17. Anything else that you would like to tell me, that I have not asked, that would be important for me to know?

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