

# How to Design Your Research Career to Navigate the Tenure Path

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# My trajectory

- **2008** – graduated with Ph.D., began postdoc position
- **2010** – awarded NCI K99
- **August, 2012** – began as Assistant Professor at UIUC in Department of Bioengineering
- **2016** – awarded 2 MPI R01s (NIDDK and NINDS)
- **March, 2017** – applied for tenure (~3 months on application)
- **August, 2018** – received tenure, promoted to Associate Professor
- **April, 2020** – applied for Full Professor (~1 month on application)
- **August, 2021** – promoted to Full Professor
- **September, 2021** – joined Department P&T Committee, received first requests to write tenure case letters

# Tenure process at UIUC

**Start of Year 5** in tenure-track position

- **October–November:** CV informally reviewed by Department Head and Department Promotion and Tenure (P&T) Committee
- **January:** tenure dossier requested
- **March:** tenure dossier submitted
- **April:** P&T Committee reviews documents. Department Head requests letters from external evaluators.
- **July:** Letters are received and P&T evaluates all documents.

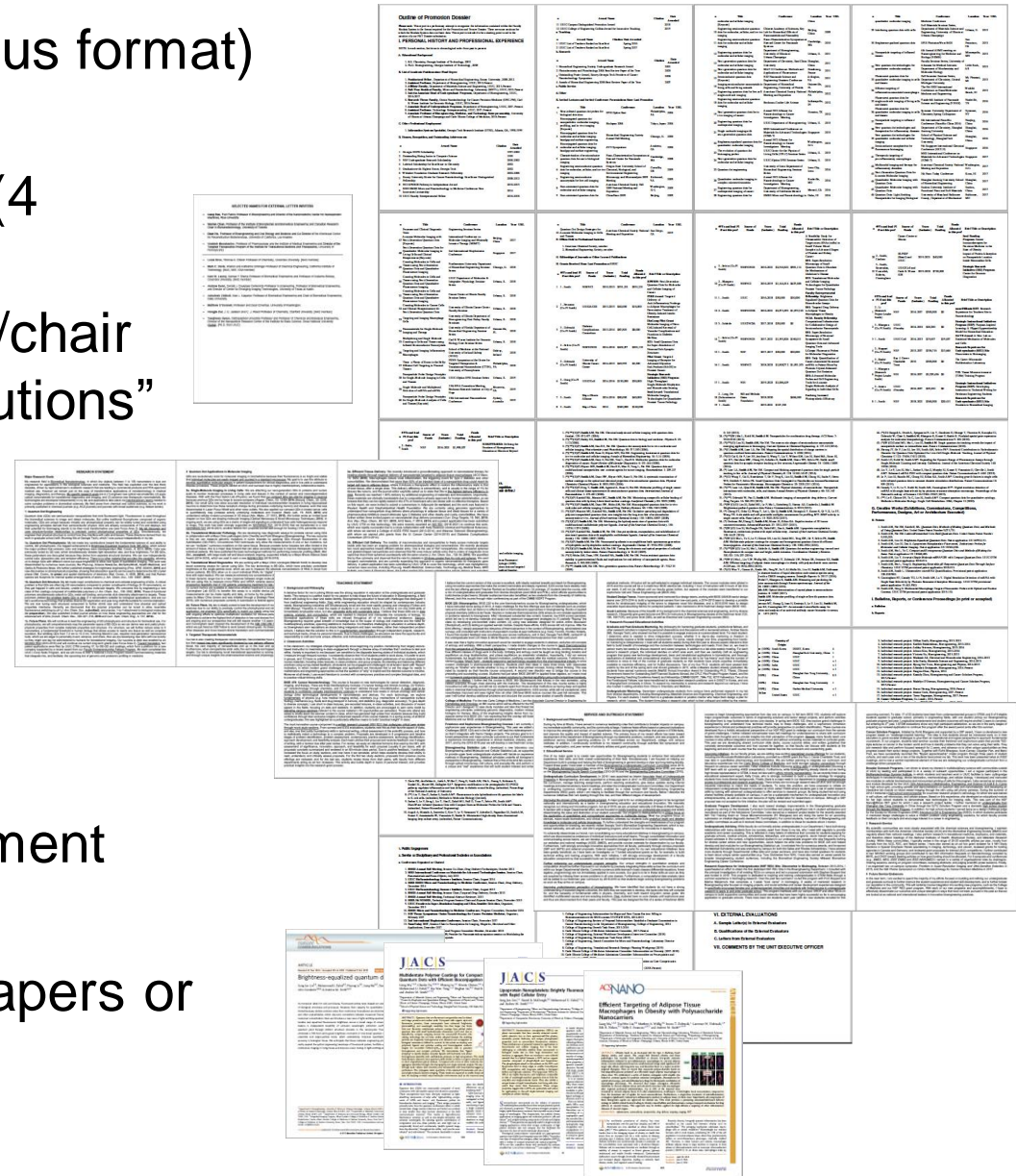
# Tenure process

## Year 6 in tenure-track position

- **September:** Department P&T Committee votes and sends promotion documents and recommendation letter to College
- **December:** College P&T Committee votes and sends promotion documents and recommendation letter to Campus
- **April:** Campus P&T Committee votes and sends promotion documents and recommendation letter to Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs.
- **May:** Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs sends decision letter to deans and directors notifying them of the faculty members who are slated to be recommended to the Chancellor and the President for promotion and tenure.
- **May–August:** informal notification of tenure application result.

# Tenure “dossier” documents

1. Curriculum vitae (campus format)
2. List of 12 letter writers (4 prioritized), ideally Full Professors with named/chair positions at “peer institutions”
3. Research statement
4. Teaching statement
5. Service/outreach statement
6. 4 research products (papers or patents)



# Common recommendations for tenure

- “Pursue your passions and tenure is a guarantee if you do good quality science.”
- “You need at least one paper published in *Cell*, *Science*, or *Nature*.”
- “You need at least 5 peer-reviewed papers published in journals with an impact factor of 10 or higher.”
- “You need an R01 to get tenure.”
- “If you don’t have an R01, you need an NSF CAREER and numerous other grants.”

# My recommendations for tenure

- Expectations differ across disciplines and departments. Talk to P&T faculty in your department about expectations.
- In your first year, consider the dossier and process.  
Get examples for recent successful cases in your department.  
What should be in your documents? Set 4-5-year goals.  
Who is on your Department P&T Committee? Often this recommendation is the strongest determinant.
- Practice concisely stating your unique contribution to science and ask others for feedback.
- Get on an NIH review panel ASAP and listen.
- Collect evidence that your research program is financially sustainable.
- Collect evidence that are respected in your field and that others are acknowledging/adopting your work.
- Don't fret about letter writers.

PROMOTION AND TENURE  
OFFICE OF THE DEAN  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

SECTION	DESCRIPTION
1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE	...
2. APPLICABILITY	...
3. PROCEDURE	...
4. APPEALS	...
5. RECORDS	...
6. EFFECTIVE DATE	...