



Seven is Forever

I love this place. Lots of people, energy, restaurants, movies, college sports, even a museum. Great dance clubs in town too! And I've joined a couple of adult recreation leagues just to keep fit: Tuesday and Thursday it's volleyball for me. Sunday is softball.

Sure, you have to think about your tenure file. I've heard that from my department Chair for two years now. I like the guy; but, hey, he's not my Dad! Look, I've been really working on my teaching. Three new courses designed already with no help from my "senior" colleagues, and I'm working on one now for the department to propose for the New Core Curriculum. I'm guiding four juniors on their undergraduate research projects. I'm teaching the double-size freshmen intro course every Spring. And, there isn't a committee in the department that I haven't either served on or asked to serve on. I attend every colloquium and lecture, even some of the dissertation defenses of our doctoral students. So you can't say that I'm not right there for my department whenever it needs someone. Hey! I'm the guy who took a group of our students to the AIDS walk last year. I organized a special service learning immersion course for sophomores and taught it this past summer and the first summer I was here too. Students all know my e-mail address and I give them my home phone number too – which I don't think other faculty give out – so you can't say that I'm not super-accessible. I actually schedule double office hours just to be sure that I'm there when the students or my colleagues need me.

Yeah, yeah, I know the old joke: What are the three most important criteria for tenure? "Publications, publications, and publications." But, that's not the case. Here teaching is just as important as research, and that departmental service, collegiality, and good citizenship count too.

Look. There's tons of time. This is what? The end of my second year only. What do you expect? Before it's all said and done I'm going to have a grant proposal out and at least two papers too. Maybe I mine a couple of nuggets out of my dissertation. But you know how it is? You can't just keep blasting along. I'm not a machine! You need some down-time. Got to give your brain a rest or it goes berzerko!

I don't know. Maybe I'll go for a summer stipend or something like that. You know, propose to get some new data, do some library work to update myself. Then, if something clicks, then I'll have some ideas and, then, after that, well, then it should be clear sailing. From there you only have to put a manuscript together and shoot it out to some journal or other. Maybe find a co-author. I'm not sure right now. But, like I said, there's time. Seven years is like – forever!



“Seven is Forever” Discussion Questions:

1. You’re this faculty member’s department chair. What suggestions or advice have you given in the first two years and, now, at this point, what additional advice do you have?
2. You’re this faculty member’s mentor from another department. What suggestions or advice do you have for this faculty member at this point? What have you advised in the past?
3. Given the start being made, what would you predict will be the trajectory of this colleague’s academic career?
4. Would you vote to tenure this person in your department? Why, why not?