

Hamburger's DO'S and DON'TS for Tenure & Promotion Candidates

DO Spend Significant Effort on your Personal Statement

- Your only real chance to make your case for tenure & promotion
- Read by dozens of readers at various levels
- Your opportunity to highlight hidden strengths and explain gaps in your record

DON'T Freak Out!

- You're not entering into a gladiator ring!
- Remember that >90% of P&T candidates succeed
- Keep it in perspective ("There's no such thing as a 'perfect' statement")

DO Consider your Audience!

- Think about who will be reading your personal statement
- Be aware of your weaknesses—pre-empt your critics
- Be Your Own Spin Doctor – contextualize the strategic choices of your career

DON'T Go it Alone!

- Extensive resources available to help
 - DoF, Mentors, Colleagues, T&P handbook, web resources, sample dossiers
- Make sure you get feedback from multiple reviewers (internal AND external)

DO Get Lots of Advice (and at least consider it!)

- Get lots of different perspectives, don't assume there's a single 'correct' answer
- Figure out a strategy that best suits your strengths
- Follow your intuition (unless your intuition is usually wrong!)

DON'T Overdo It!

- Don't make it a chore to read your personal statement (readers at school and campus committees typically have to read numerous statements)
- Emphasize primary areas of strength
- Avoid excessive detail, explain selective examples well

DO Organize & Streamline!

- Simplify, integrate, summarize!
- Use sub-headings as signposts

DON'T Use Excessive Technical Jargon

- Automatic turn-off to readers outside your field
- Explain (simply and clearly) critical terms

DO Emphasize your Strengths

- Convey the excitement of your research & teaching
- Emphasize the broadest implications of your work
- Make the facts talk!

DON'T Ignore your Weaknesses!

- Imagine your worst critics—use your personal statement to undermine their case
- Be honest – acknowledge weaknesses, but demonstrate how you've overcome them

DO Use Illustrations (where appropriate)!

- Graphics can help illustrate complicated concepts
- Improve visual impact of your statement

DO Keep it in Perspective!

- Keep this process in its place!
- Don't let tenure & promotion overwhelm other aspects of your life
- Consider it a challenge, not a hurdle (or land mine!)
- Have fun with it!