

The Faculty Member as
teacher and scholar at a small
liberal arts college

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General points of advice:

- Understand your college/university's requirements for tenure well and know what they mean for your department.
- Have a plan for your research.
- Document what you do.
- To thine own self be true.

Understand your college/university requirements:

- Read your governance manual.
- Talk with your chair and fellow department members, so that you understand how the standards are interpreted in your department.
- Talk with your vice president or dean of faculty, if you feel the need.
- Talk with people outside the department to get a broader perspective on the issues.
- Know where your college put its money. What kinds of research does the college itself offer funding for?

Have a plan for your research:

What counts as research/scholarly activity at Saint Mary's College?

- traditional mathematical research,
- research in the history or philosophy of mathematics,
- work in applications of mathematics or interdisciplinary work.
- research in pedagogy,
- articles/talks for NCTM,
- textbooks,

- software
- designing and leading undergraduate research projects,

Lower on the totem pole

- participating in a seminar on a topic new to you,
- directing senior comprehensive projects in an area outside your specialty and outside the classical grad school prep,

The point is to show that you are not mathematically stagnant – that you are continuing to learn – that you are intellectually engaged – that you are participating in the scholarly life of the mathematical community.

The form scholarly activity takes – public recognition for your work:

- Books or Articles,
- Talks at local, regional or national general meetings – be that the MAA, SIAM, AMS or area-specific – logic, analysis, topology, history.
- Directing Students in research projects.

Ranking of the forms:

- Books, Articles, or Invited Talks
- Refereed Sessions
- Sessions where all talks are accepted

THE KEY: HAVE A PLAN

YOU MUST DEFINE FOR YOURSELF WHAT YOU WANT TO PURSUE. BUT DEFINE IT!!

How to execute your plan:

- Go to national or other meetings.
- Look at the topics for the sessions for these meetings months before the meetings. IF a topic is of interest to you, then commit to speaking at the session.
- Get a collaborator.
- Set goals for yourself – short and long term.

How to document your activity?

Keep a file with programs from talks, articles, etc.

Teaching

- How are the teaching evaluations used?

Essentially to look for patterns of behavior.

- Tips:
 - Be willing to tackle new courses (within your reach). Designing a new course is evidence of excellence in teaching.
 - Invite others to visit your classes
 - Talk with other members of the department about your classes. If someone teaches a course that builds on yours, ask if they found your students prepared.
 - Experiment.
 - Be honest in your reflections on your teaching
 - Use mid-term evaluations to find out from your students how a class is going.
 - IF you have time, take on independent studies.
 - Maintain your standards.

Service

Choose your service commitments carefully. Be involved but be able to say no.

To thine own self be true.

Do what you love in the way that you love. If you are doing everything just to get tenure, it will kill you as a teacher and scholar. Work hard at your profession, but have fun.