

Different Paths to Promotion and Tenure Competency

PURPOSE: This qualitative study sought to investigate gender differences and similarities in psychological need satisfaction experienced within the promotion and tenure (P&T) process among faculty STEM fields. Drawing from Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) the P&T process is necessarily limited in autonomy, allowing for a strong test of the role of relatedness and competence needs.

- Autonomy**
Experience of acting with a sense of choice and volition and fully embracing one's actions
- Competence**
Belief that one has the ability to influence and master outcomes
- Relatedness**
Experience of having satisfying and supportive social relationships and connections

FOR MEN

"[T]he best feedback that I get in terms of what's important is what's in the Faculty Activity Database. It's like well, if they're asking me to enter information about these four categories of things, and then under those categories are these particular metrics, I feel like that's the only solid feedback that I've gotten about what their expectations are."



OFFERED INFO

"I had a lot of guidance, not necessarily formal mentoring but plenty of senior faculty who were willing to explain the process to me."

To Consider: Do these different routes to feeling competent about PRT matter? Why/Why not?

FOR WOMEN

SEEK INFO

"I asked [another faculty member] if I could use his materials or his templates, just to make sure I was including everything -- like the Research section, a Teaching section -- and what was included in that. And he gave me his whole folder format. So I found that really helpful."

SEEK FEEDBACK

"One of the things that I think would have been helpful for me would've been more feedback in terms of how I was doing. I kind of asked for feedback and it said, 'It sounds like you're doing well. Keep doing what you're doing.'"

Experience of Relatedness

"I didn't really have a mentor within my program. I hate to say this, but to be pretty honest, there's a pretty hostile environment that I found. It wasn't a very supportive ... within the program, I should say. It was a very isolating experience for me. But I did seek mentorship outside the program."
"She reached out...when I first arrived... So it's been great to have her in my academic life."



"I was told to use the Role and Scope document that was in force when I was hired."

COMPETENCY