

Mistakes New Professors Make—And How to Avoid Them

The tenure track years will be the most intense and stressful of your professional life. You will be anxious, frantic, and exhausted. You will feel overwhelmed, frustrated, and resentful. Remember: The tenure clock is really 4 and a half years, not seven. The decision is made in year six. Materials are sent to evaluators at the end of the fifth year.

Mistake 1. Failure to negotiate properly

You can not only negotiate salary, but moving expenses, travel and professional development funds, your tenure clock, start date, course load, start-up funds

Mistake 2. Failure to manage time properly

Don't take on too many service responsibilities and be wary of joint appointments.

Mistake 3 . Problematic teaching

Mistake 4. Failing to keep your eye on the ball

Understand what it takes to get tenure. A huge mistake is failing to prioritize publication. Without publishing, it is impossible to earn tenure. Your publications are your union card. If you ever want to move, you'd better publish. Don't become a permanent associate professor. Or worse, don't become an untenured non-professor.

Mistake 5. Letting yourself become overinvolved with students

Mistake 6. Venting your frustration

Don't share weaknesses and problems

Mistake 7. Involving yourself in departmental and campus politics

Mistake 8. Refusing to be collegial and a good departmental citizen

How to Thrive:

1. Find mentors: Senior profs can help you publish, get grants, get on scholarly panels, get you involved in professional associations

2. Keep your focus: Focus on those things that matter most to your professional success. Track your time. Rethink your time expenditures. Limit class preparation time to two hours per lecture.

3. Be selfish: Your priority must be to earn tenure and promotion

4. Don't look for love in the wrong places: Your students will not provide you with lasting love. Remember, you are a professor, not a



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grad student.

5. Suppress your anger: Sure you know how to make your new institution better. Sure you are indignant about various wrongs. Don't become consumed in departmental dramas and campus conflict. This will come at the expense of your research and writing.

6. Be strategic: Limit your commitments. Write every day.

7. Get out there and shake it: Don't expect your new colleagues to welcome you with open arms. Don't expect them to invite you to life or offer to read your work or to become your mentor or to initiate stimulating conversations. Extend yourself. Initiate relationships. Reach out. Be proactive.

- Ask colleagues for advice
- Take them to lunch
- Talk to them about your research

8. Hedge your bets: The academy can be a cold hearted place. Don't put all your eggs in one basket. Be a pro. Extend your network. Maximize your productivity. Write every day. Go on the market.