A goal of every new faculty member at Adams State University (ASU) should be to eventually become a tenured full professor. How can you do this? Here are some suggestions.

- First of all, become familiar with the information regarding tenure and promotion in the Faculty Handbook (available at [http://www.adams.edu/pubs/media/fac-handbook-current.pdf](http://www.adams.edu/pubs/media/fac-handbook-current.pdf)). ASU, like other higher education institutions, relies on achievements in the traditional academic areas of teaching, scholarly activity, and service. Of these three, by far the most important at Adams State is teaching. However, you cannot become a tenured full professor without significant successful efforts in the other areas as well.

- Consult with your department chair to see if the department has a set of guidelines for earning tenure and promotion (preferably a printed/electronic document rather than an informal/"understood" set). Visit with senior faculty members in your department and in other departments on campus to get specific examples of appropriate scholarly activity and service.

- Remember why you are here – students are of utmost importance to our existence as faculty. Treat them with respect, but have high expectations for them to earn appropriate grades. There is a difference between being friendly to students and being their best friends. Keep the professional distinction, lest you lose the ability to critically judge students’ abilities.

- Students at ASU really value professors’ attendance at their extracurricular events (athletic contests, music concerts, theatre productions, poetry readings, art shows, etc.). You don’t have to go to all events, but if you can attend a few each semester, your students will comment on your caring attitude. Get involved!

- Good teaching is paramount to earning tenure and promotion at ASU. Thus, you must make every effort to do a great job in the classroom. Take advantage of workshops, seminars, etc. sponsored by CELT; visit with a mentor (if you do not have a mentor, but would like to have one, discuss this with your department chair); find out who in your department is considered to be an excellent teacher and arrange to sit in on that professor’s classes a few times to pick up some pointers. Some faculty have found that informal mid-course student evaluations are quite useful in order to get the students’ perspectives on how the class is proceeding while there is still an opportunity to consider appropriate changes.

- Encourage your students to complete the web-based end-of-semester evaluations. Low response rates (<30% of the class completing the evaluations) give skewed results – both low and high – that may be misinterpreted by readers of the evaluations. Ideally, response rates should be >75%. This is not easy to achieve, unless you have a small enough class that your administrative assistant can take all the students to a computer lab to complete the evaluations at once. You can’t really coerce or threaten the students to fill them out, but you can remind them frequently of the importance of these evaluations for improving the class.

- Once you get copies of your end-of-semester evaluations back from your department chair, review them carefully for both comments and numeric ratings. It is common for one or more of the areas which are rated numerically to be lower than all the others (e.g., clarity of explanations; clearly defined grading scheme). If there are also specific comments, pay particular attention to those areas when considering how to improve your teaching. Look for trends – more than one or two comments that mention the same thing – and think about how to address those issues when you are planning your courses for the next semester. Single positive or negative comments are probably not representative and can be ignored.
• Scholarly activity is also required for tenure and promotion. Scholarly activity is painted with a broad brush at ASU, ranging from original, publishable research to development and dissemination (at professional meetings or education-oriented journals) of new pedagogical approaches to education to writing of grants to writing of professional books to …… This is the area that will require the most consultation with your department, since there is no common, campus-wide definition. Remaining active in scholarly pursuits will benefit not only you, but your students as you share with them current developments in your field.

• Service should be professional in nature (e.g., for a chemist, being an officer in the local chapter of Trout Unlimited would not be considered professional service, but monitoring stream pH in collaboration with the Division of Wildlife would be) and can encompass departmental/program, college, community, region, national (particularly with professional organizations) levels. Committee work, whether a standing or ad hoc committee, and advising of students (and/or student groups) are two good ways to get started. Service is less important during your first year or two, but becomes increasingly important in the third year and beyond. There are many ways to provide service – seek out opportunities throughout the campus and community.

• Take the time to do a careful job preparing your retention, tenure, and promotion (RTP) folder. Think critically about what you’ve done well and what needs to be improved. I have always greatly valued my untenured colleagues’ thoughtful assessments of the work they accomplished the past year. Be certain you include all of the material stated in the faculty handbook and turn in the evidence folder on time. The RTP folder is a living document. You will add each succeeding year’s material to the very first one you submit. Your RTP committee members will not all be English professors, but grammar and spelling are important. If you are sloppy with your RTP folder, your committee members may think that is typical for your classes as well. Conversely, if you are thorough and conscientious with the folder, your committee members will get the impression that you approach your teaching, scholarly activity, and service the same way.

• Although it is not a formally evaluated category, collegiality is important for earning tenure and promotion. The golden rule, “treat others (fellow faculty, staff and administrators) as you would want to be treated yourself” applies to life on campus as well as at home. Adopt a positive attitude in your dealings with students and colleagues. As the old bluegrass song made famous by the Carter family states, “Keep on the sunny side of life”. Our profession is one we have deliberately selected (after much effort and sacrifice), so we may as well have fun while working!

• Once tenured and promoted to associate professor, you’re halfway home. Now is the time to step up to the plate and begin to assume leadership roles on campus. Set a good example – become the person who helps others achieve success. Do not assume that tenure means you can coast and do a poor job of teaching – there is a mechanism in the Faculty Handbook for post-tenure review and consequences should the review reveal deficiencies. Once promoted to full professor, you must not become complacent, but instead consider what new challenges you can undertake to improve your teaching, scholarly activity, and service.