

## Revitalizing The Professorate: The Guide to Promotion, Tenure, Merit Pay, and Faculty Workload

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### ABSTRACT

**This article is a book review of the thoughts on promotion and tenure articulated by Ben C. DeSpain and others. The issues of remuneration for outstanding academic achievement and instructional assignments are also discussed.**

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*Revitalizing the professorate.* Houston, TX: National Forum Press.  
DeSpain, B.C., et al. (2006).  
To order contact: atlasbooks.com

*Revitalizing the Professorate* provides a provocative overview of the promotion and tenure process which is an annual occurrence on collegiate campuses across the nation. It is a much needed contribution to post-secondary education literature in that it raises many important questions which pinpoint uncertainties and vagueness in the review process. Additionally, it illustrates these with numerous, diverse descriptions of actual experiences from the author and his associates. These examples exemplify how uncertainty and ambiguity can give the review process an inequitable and undemocratic character.

Readers will find many important, concrete strategies to use in preparing their portfolio for promotion and tenure committee review. These are conveniently provided in tables and lists, which cover the components of teaching, scholarship, service, enhancement of the profession, and collegiality as well as other miscellaneous activities. Readers can gauge the variation in attitudes towards these components by examining survey results provided in the book. The detailed study contains responses from selected deans of Colleges of Education, and assesses their attitudes using a Likert-type scale. In addition, each of the five chapters contains numerous observations, suggestions, hints and comments from the authors. These offer valuable ideas and insights, and they challenge readers to contemplate the reality of how uncertain the review process can be.

An outstanding feature of the book is the primary author's strategy of including articles and commentaries from all his colleagues in the department. This illustrates an excellent method for building rapport and camaraderie in a post-secondary environment. Leading by example effectively enables one to set a tone for cooperative research. Teamwork builds a unified learning milieu, a practice now becoming a reality in progressive colleges and universities with regard to publishing research and securing grants and contracts. This book shows how subliminal efforts to cooperate may impact decisions for promotion, tenure and merit pay.

Especially helpful are the reprints of previously published survey results and case scenarios from the lead author's contemporaries on promotion, tenure and related matters. The authors challenge us and hope that the dynamics and uniqueness of the issues related to tenure and promotion will not remain static. This book is really about reflection, experimentation, faculty activities, and the future of the profession.