"What are the primary things to consider when deciding whether to seek a tenure- or nontenure-track faculty position?"

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Let me begin by commending you for your interest in pharmacy education as a potential career option. Academia is often called "the best job in pharmacy" by many of us who are fortunate to call it ours. We have been fortunate to realize a passion working with pharmacy students and residents, to share new discoveries with our colleagues through research and scholarship, and to serve others and see patients' lives affected by innovative care models in our practice sites. As the number of colleges/schools of pharmacy has increased in recent years, so has the number of faculty positions available. It is important that these positions be filled with individuals who have the knowledge, skills and training, and desire to fulfill the responsibilities associated with faculty roles. It is also key that those of you pursuing academia have a good understanding of the differences in types of positions and the expectations associated with each. According to the 2014–2015 American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy *Profile of Pharmacy Faculty*, about 35% of pharmacy faculty are tenured, 22% are in a tenure-track position, and 43% are in a nontenure-track position. Pharmacy Practice is the largest faculty discipline and currently accounts for more than half of faculty positions in schools and colleges of pharmacy. As a clinical pharmacist, you will most closely align with this discipline, and the percentage of nontenure-track positions in relation to tenure-track positions in Pharmacy Practice departments has increased significantly in recent years. The comments provided differentiate the responsibilities and expectations of Pharmacy Practice tenure- and nontenure-track faculty members.

The original intent of tenure in institutions of higher education was to protect academic freedom and to create a degree of economic security to make the profession attractive. At most institutions, tenure requires a probationary period in which the faculty member must demonstrate achievement of the expectations outlined in the university and school/departmental tenure policies. This probationary timeframe is typically 5 years, with the formal tenure review process taking place during the sixth year. Some circumstances warrant a shortened or lengthened tenure probationary period, the criteria and processes of which are outlined in the university's tenure policy. The award of tenure demonstrates that you as a faculty member have achieved excellence in your performance, as recognized by internal and external peers who reviewed your work, and that the university has confidence in you to continue to sustain contributions and exemplify this performance. On achievement of tenure, the tenured faculty member is recommended each year for reappointment except under extraordinary circumstances, such as financial exigencies, termination, or reduction of programs or units, malfeasance, inefficiency or contumacious conduct, or "for cause." If tenure is not awarded through the formal review process after the probationary period, the faculty member will receive a terminal contract in the following year. This is different from nontenure-track faculty positions, which are typically reassessed and reappointed on an annual basis with contracts for 1-year terms. However, certain institutions provide multiyear contracts for nontenure-track faculty, and this will be important to discern as you explore opportunities for these types of positions. Through the years, there has been debate regarding the value of tenure, and the number of tenure positions has decreased at many institutions.

A primary consideration when exploring a tenure- or a nontenure-track faculty position in Pharmacy Practice is the focus on different areas of the tripartite mission of teaching, research/scholarship, and service/patient care. Promotion and tenure guidelines often require excellence in at least two of these three areas, and scholarship is required for all. For tenure track, there is an expectation of research, including original research, scholarship, and generation of external funding to support research endeavors. Some institutions have specific training requirements for applicants to be considered for a tenure-track position, as well as outlined funding expectations, including the amount or type of grant awards, to achieve tenure at that institution. Asking questions regarding the salary support that must be generated by external grants/contracts, types of external funding that will count toward tenure expectations, and resources that are available to support research programs will be key to understanding the tenure-track positions that will be the best fit for you. There will also be teaching and service expectations for tenure-track faculty, from committee service to clinical responsibilities, which vary among institutions. For those in a nontenure-track position, teaching and service tend to be the primary areas of focus. There is an expectation of scholarship, which may be focused on practice or educational efforts, but the emphasis on original research and generation of external funding is less than that expected of tenure-track faculty.

As you consider tenure and nontenure opportunities, important considerations include:

- If considering a tenure-track position, it is important to understand institutional operational processes such as the probationary period, formal review procedure, impact of favorable and unfavorable decisions, and post-tenure review requirements.

- If considering either tenure or nontenure, it is important to understand the institutional operational processes and performance requirements for promotion to associate professor and, longer term, full professor. These should be outlined in university and school/departmental promotion policies, and most institutions will make these available for your review, if not accessible publically.

- Tenure- and nontenure-track faculty will have some responsibility for teaching. Nontenure-track faculty may have more time allocated to the educational mission, but both will likely have responsibility for some aspect of teaching, from precepting to course management.

- Tenure- and nontenure-track faculty will contribute to the school/college's scholarship mission.

- Those in tenure-track positions will have research as a significant component of work and will be required to disseminate results through peer-reviewed publications. Tenure-track faculty are expected to generate external funding to support research efforts. Certain institutions outline specific types and levels of funding necessary to obtain tenure.

- Nontenure-track positions, in addition to having a significant teaching component, will contribute to the service mission. Although this service may include committee service or participation in professional organizations, it is likely that a large aspect will be through the provision of clinical/patient care services. Individuals who select the nontenure track often see themselves as practitioners and find this aspect of academia very rewarding. The faculty practice serves as a training site for students and residents and provides opportunities for

practice-based research to implement and evaluate innovative services or identify clinical questions requiring further investigation. As you consider a nontenure-track faculty position with a substantial commitment to clinical practice, you should explore the type of practice site, infrastructure and longevity of clinical pharmacy services at that site, expectations for implementing a pharmacy-naive site, and expectations for student/resident training at the site. Often, nontenure-track faculty positions are cofunded by the school/college and the practice site. It is important to be aware of the funding arrangement and the expectations of all parties.

As you begin exploring tenure- and nontenure-track opportunities, you will gain clarity about which best aligns with your area of interest and the balance you desire between teaching, research/scholarship, and service/patient care. I encourage you to talk with pharmacy faculty in both types of positions who can provide a good idea of day-to-day activities and perspectives from the different positions. I wish you the best as you determine your career path in academia!

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