Directions for Personal Statement for Assistant Professors

The short term goal of this statement is to make clear your tentative timeline for promotion, what you have accomplished towards promotion, and what yet needs to be done. Long term, this statement will eventually be part of your dossier for promotion to associate professor. It should be updated twice a year and reviewed at those times with your promotion track mentor and at least annually with your division chief. It will start small and build over time.

The criteria for promotion to associate professor include continuous and progressive scholarship, peer-reviewed scholarship dissemination, competent teaching (excellence for those on the teaching track), service to the institution/profession, and regional reputation (national for tenure track faculty). Those on the tenure track need to be PI on a national peer-reviewed grant. By the time you go up for promotion this statement should make the case that you have achieved these metrics.

The first paragraph should always state when you were first hired on the UMN faculty on the clinical/teaching/W/tenure track, and when you are tentatively planning to go up for promotion. If you had an appointment prior to being hired at UMN, this is the place to state that “Prior to this I was an instructor/assistant professor for X years at X institution”. The Department of Pediatrics considers a “usual” promotion cycle to be 9 years. Non-tenure track faculty have flexibility, while tenure-track faculty have a maximum of 9 years at the assistant professor level (unless they have had deferrals, for example for the birth of a child or for illness). Some people may need more time to be ready for promotion. Others may be ready earlier, but there is no advantage to going up for promotion before you are truly ready. If you feel you are ready before a typical 9 year cycle, discuss this with your division chief, your promotions mentor, and the chair of the Dept P&T Committee.

The second section should have the header “Scholarly Activities”. It is a brief narrative summary.

- What is your scholarly focus?
- Who is your promotion track mentor and who is your scholarly activities mentor?
- If you are engaged in team science, who are your collaborators and what is your role within the group?
- What is your scholarly product:
  - Publications? The dean is asking for at least one a year. The majority of faculty going up for associate professor have about 16 peer-reviewed publications. For tenure track, a good share of these should be first or last author. For clinical scholar/teaching/W track, the position is not as critical as long as an important role in the work can be documented. For the non-tenure tracks, books, review articles and chapters are also important. For individuals who transferred from other institutions, work done elsewhere counts, but there needs to be evidence that scholarly work has continued and progressed at UMN. High impact journals add extra weight.
  - Teaching track faculty may have curricula or program development as their academic product. It is key that this work be peer reviewed and disseminated. Med Ed Portal is one way to publish such work. Having your curriculum or program accepted for use at another institution is evidence of peer review. Likewise, being asked to teach your peers is evidence of peer review. Evidence of impact is important---for example how many people now use your curriculum or a technique you have taught them?, what do
the evaluations say?, did you help create national standards or change national policy?, etc.

- What is your grant history (particularly important for tenure track faculty)?
  Collaborative grants are increasingly recognized as important--- “Group science” is an emerging buzz word as the NIH is currently emphasizing this.

- Scholarly presentations---where have you been invited to present your scholarly work? Divide into international, national and regional. Look for opportunities to round out this portion of your CV.

The third section should have the header “Teaching and Mentoring Activities”. Briefly describe your activities on the international, national, regional and local education fronts. For those on the Teaching Track, the 2nd section, described above, will state the “scholarship” aspects of your education work, while this section will focus more on teaching per se---who you are teaching, teaching awards, who you are mentoring, and where your mentees are ending up (particularly if they are going into academic medicine).

The fourth section should have the header “Service Activities”. Describe your clinical service (very briefly as this is a University academic promotion), your service to the institution, and your service to the profession.

The fifth section, “Reputation”, should sum up evidence of international, national and regional reputation (divided into those categories). This will ultimately not be separate and will be incorporated into the other sections and your division chief’s nomination letter. For now, however, it is good to pull it out separately, even if it repeats some of what is found in the other sections, so that you can keep track of it and make sure you are progressing along these lines.

The sixth section should have the header “Track Milestones”. The medical school track statements and the department addendums contain lists of activities that demonstrate scholarly accomplishments that add weight towards promotion in each track. Review your track statement (tenure, W, clinical scholar, teaching) annually. This section of your personal statement should be a bulleted list taken directly from your track statement of academic milestones you have achieved. Ultimately your division chief will include this list at the end of your promotion nomination letter.

**Example:**

I joined the faculty of the UMN Department of Pediatrics in 20xx as an assistant professor on the X Track. My goal is to be promoted to associate professor in 20xx+9, which means I need to present my promotion packet to the Department in early 20xx+8 (or change the timing as appropriate—first discuss with your division chief).

**Scholarly Activities** (this will look somewhat different for teaching track faculty)

My scholarly focus is in the area of ...My promotion track mentor is X, and my scholarly activities mentor(s) is X. I am involved in collaborations with X and Y, and my roles within this group include… Very, very briefly expand on your accomplishments and in particular on progression, such as “I did this, which led to that, which led to that, which led to…Long term, my goal is to....” This shows stepwise progression and longevity. As you answer one question or finish one project, it
leads to another. Demonstrate that you are on a scholarly journey---you are following a path which will not end once you are promoted, but will just keep moving on to the next level. This is not meant to be a list (your CV is a list), rather, you are telling a story.

Then summarize: I have published X peer-reviewed manuscripts, X of these as first or last author. (If you are a middle author on projects where you played an important role such as site PI, and particularly if you were involved in making decisions about the project and/or the paper, this would be the place to describe it). The impact factors of the journals I have published in range from X to X (or x% of these papers are in journals with impact factors >x). In addition, I have published X review papers and X chapters. I have presented X abstracts at national meetings (X posters, X oral).

My grant funding has included….I have been invited to present my work at……..

Teaching/Mentoring Activities
At the undergraduate level, ….. At the medical student level, ….At the resident level …At the fellow level, ….I am engaged in mentoring junior faculty/my peers….If you have former mentees who have gone on to academic careers this is the place to mention it. If you have won a teaching/mentoring award mention it here.

Service Activities
My clinical service consists of (very brief, usually just one sentence)….. Locally, I am engaged in…..(committees, policy work, department administration, QI projects ---unless QI projects are part of your scholarly product in which case they go in that section--- etc). At the national /international level….This is the place to mention any special accomplishments or awards from your service work.

Reputation
My international/national/regional reputation is evidenced by…….invitations to speak or review, regional/national committee membership/leadership, invitations to lead programs or help institutions start programs, adoption of curriculum or programs by other institutions, invitations to teach peers, etc. Start with international if you have it, then move to national and then to regional.

Track Milestones
The Medical School X Track statement and the Dept of Pediatrics track addendum give examples of scholarly activities which add weight towards promotion. Of these, I have achieved the following:

- Peer-reviewed papers in prominent journals (faculty on the Clinical Scholar Track do not need first or last authorship positions, but a unique, substantial and indispensable role in the project needs to be documented)
- Invited presentations at national meetings or at other institutions
- Devising new methods or treatments for patient care that are adopted by peers
- A creative and substantial leadership role in community project development and maintenance, with community engagement
- Etc