

The AECT Tenure and Promotion (T&P) Guide

Purpose & Scope	Definitions	Portfolio	Do's & Don'ts
Local Policies	Where to Publish	Service Opportunities	Personal Statements

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Purpose and Scope

AECT is dedicated to serving its members, and one of the services provided is this basic tenure and promotion guide. Its purpose is to provide a point of departure and a general set of guidelines for those being considered for tenure or promotion. This guide is intended to help orient faculty seeking tenure or promotion and to direct them to other resources pertinent to their specific situations. In all cases, a faculty member seeking tenure and promotion should become familiar with local procedures and expectations and seek the advice of local mentors. A general guide such as this cannot possibly address all of the relevant issues and concerns that exist at any particular institution.

The Association for Educational Communications and Technology recognizes that tenure and promotion are a recurring and legitimate concern of many junior faculty and members of AECT. AECT supports the tenure process as it is intended to preserve academic freedom and contribute to the stability and continuity of academic programs. Not all academic institutions offer tenure-track positions to faculty, but most do. Tenure is often associated with faculty rank such as Associate or Full Professor, although some institutions use different titles and terms for faculty rank and for tenure, which is generally understood to be the expectation of continuing employment as a faculty member. A tenure and/or promotion process typically is conducted within an academic unit with the involvement of external reviewers; the review process is usually based on an individual faculty member's record of scholarship, teaching and service. Faculty committees typically make a recommendation to the Dean who then makes a recommendation to the Provost, President and/or Chancellor. In most cases, the recommendation of the faculty tenure and promotion committee is followed, although exceptions do exist.



Definitions

Tenure is defined differently at different institutions. In general terms, achieving tenure usually means that the more temporary status of faculty employment has been changed to a more permanent status. Before tenure, a faculty member is in the position of demonstrating himself or herself to an academic employer and to academic associates that his/her work is of

consistently professional quality, usually on an annual basis with no guarantee of continuing employment regardless of the quality.

In many institutions, there is a pre-tenure process that occurs around year three to inform the faculty member of progress towards tenure and provide specific guidance. This is a good practice, and the faculty member is strongly encouraged to get outcomes of that review in writing and aggressively respond to any and all recommendations.

To achieve tenure a faculty member usually has to submit a portfolio to support the position that the faculty member's academic work, teaching, and contributions to the institution and the profession has been at or above a given standard and can be expected to continue at a high level. The faculty member's institution generally establishes the relevant standards for tenure and may publish them when a tenure position is opened. While it is the institution's responsibility to establish and publish standards and expectations, it is the faculty member's responsibility to understand the criteria for tenure and the process by which tenure is requested and judged. It is not uncommon for an academic unit to have more specific criteria than those established by the institution, and these may vary with specific positions within the academic unit (for example, some teaching-intensive positions in an academic unit may have different criteria for tenure than for research-intensive positions in the same academic unit),

The faculty portfolio is reviewed and judged by fellow department members, the college in which the department resides, and the university. In addition, three or more external reviewers from the profession may be asked to review and judge portions of the portfolio. External reviewers may be from other academic units within the same institution, while some (or all) may be from entirely different institutions. Some universities insist that external reviewers be from similarly ranked peer universities or institutions. Under normal circumstances positive findings/recommendations by the majority of these judges is required for tenure to be granted. The judgment of external reviewers is especially important, as it represents a voice from the faculty member's specialty field. Tenure decisions are sometimes judged in the light of local department or college criteria as well as institutional standards.

After receiving tenure a faculty member has to continue the same level of professionalism and productivity as before, but continued employment is assumed unless one of the provisions under which tenure was granted is violated. This can include malfeasance, lack of continued productivity, lack of continued quality of work, or violation of the terms of tenure as granted.

Often, tenure is associated with an increase in faculty rank (e.g., from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor) and the expectation of continuing employment as a faculty member, subject to some general considerations such as the financial integrity of the institution and the acceptable behavior (legally and ethically) of the faculty member. In some European countries, the term 'habilitation' is often used to indicate the achievement of a high faculty rank (e.g., Docent, Dr. habil., etc.) that may be associated with the right to supervise doctoral students and the expectation of continuing employment.

Rank Advancement Following Tenure

Once tenure is granted, further rank advancement may be sought. Beyond the rank of Associate Professor, the criteria become more focused on the international reputation of the faculty member, rather than on a set institutional standard. The goal of promotion to Full Professor can serve an incentive to treat tenure and promotion to Associate Professor as an entry to the ranks of the profession rather than an invitation to slacken effort. Some institutions have a level beyond Full Professor that is required for those seeking promotion to Dean and other higher level academic positions. Criteria and expectations for promotion to Full Professor and beyond vary significantly from one institution to another. At some institutions, very few Associate Professors achieve the rank of Full Professor, even though they are productive for many years beyond the award of tenure. At other institutions, many Associate Professors who remain active and productive for more than ten years at an institution are considered qualified for promotion to Full Professor. Again it is advisable to be very familiar with local procedures and practice and elicit the support of a senior faculty member to serve as a mentor, coach and/or local advocate.



Common Components of a Tenure & Promotion Portfolio

The following are typically required in a portfolio submitted to a tenure and promotion committee. It is highly recommended for the candidate to determine exactly what is required locally and begin constructing the T&P portfolio right away. It is generally desirable to maintain and monitor progress of the portfolio periodically with a faculty leader or mentor (e.g., every semester). When it comes time for the review, you may be asked to recommend external reviewers. There are typically institutional guidelines for doing so and these should be followed. Be sure to recommend reviewers whom you have good reason to believe will offer a very favorable review of your work based on the portfolio. You may be asked to recommend external reviewers with whom you have not worked (published, presented or conducted research), in which case the task may be more difficult. Active participation in organizations such as AECT can help in identifying appropriate external reviewers.

Curriculum Vita (CV)

Different institutions have different preferred formats for the CV. Be sure to follow local guidelines and avoid the appearance of padding your CV. The following categories are commonly found in a CV, though not all are required, and some other categories may be appropriate for the local context:

- Education and Certifications – including institutions, dates, specializations, etc.
- Work History – including organizations, positions/titles, dates of service, etc.
- Publications/Scholarly Works – in multiple categories, such as refereed journal articles, technical reports, book chapters, books, etc.; often the local practice requires impact factors of publication venues and numbers of citations.

- Presentations – again in multiple categories, such as keynote addresses, invited national/international presentations, conference presentations, etc.
- Grants and Contracts – typically listing granting agency, role of the individual, scope and focus of the effort, and the period of time involved
- Awards and Special Recognition -
- Courses Taught – local practice may require, titles, dates, enrollments, etc.
- Students Supervised – local practice may require only numbers but some require names, titles of theses/dissertations, dates, etc.
- Professional Associations/Memberships - typically including memberships on boards and committees
- Organizational Service/Leadership – elected as well as appointed positions of prominence in the discipline area
- University Service – typically including service at every level with names of committees and dates involved
- Community Service – this varies significantly from one institution to another with many state-funded colleges and universities placing emphasis on this category

Personal Statement(s)

Some institutions require a single personal statement while some require statements in a variety of categories, such as research, teaching and service. Make sure you follow local practice and try to get samples of successful statements to guide what you write (see below for an example). Different institutions place different emphasis on categories such as research, teaching and service. Be sure that the personal statement is aligned with program, department and institution priorities. For example, in the research category it might be advisable to emphasize a research agenda that addresses issues of importance that can be presented in a step-wise manner building on your prior education and work towards future contributions to the discipline and knowledge base in a particular area. In the teaching category, it might be advisable to emphasize a broad interpretation of teaching that includes both formal and informal interactions with students; student evaluations and informal correspondence with students may be allowed in a portfolio.

Samples of Scholarship

Institutions typically require the inclusion of a number of representative scholarly works. These are shared with the T&P members and any outside reviewers. Follow local guidelines and make an attempt to include works that are recent and in recognized venues likely to have significant impact. Including works co-authored with students is at least as valuable, if not more so, than including works co-authored with your major professor.



General Considerations

The following are some general heuristics to help guide your efforts:

- **Become familiar with procedures, practices, and expectations** of your program/department, college/faculty and university/institution; this includes written rules and policies as well as recent examples of success or failure.
- **Contact key people involved** in the process well ahead of time to gain their perspectives with regard to your situation; ask them about your specific strengths and any aspects of your record that need to be improved; keep records of their feedback; seek a local mentor who will be forthright and help address any and all concerns.
- **Begin building your portfolio** early in the process; include articles published, awards received, grants submitted, complimentary feedback from students and colleagues; organize the portfolio according to local guidelines or create your own organization scheme.
- **Keep your CV up to date** and well organized; do not misrepresent anything in the CV and make no attempt to pad it in any way (e.g., do not include non-refereed publications in a refereed publication category); some want to include nominations for awards whereas others only include awards actually received – ask for local guidance on this issue; the same applies with regard to journal articles submitted but not yet accepted; some will want to include papers under preparation while others regard this as padding – again, best to seek local guidance and avoid anything that suggests a padded CV.
- **Enlist the support of department and college members who have already been through the process.** Your colleagues have an interest in your success. They have invested time and interest in your career, so they will probably be anxious to see you succeed. You may want to use the good ideas used in their portfolios as an example. At the very least, they can help you understand how judgments are arrived at in your institution and what factors are considered most important.
- **Conduct regular reviews of your progress.** Your institution may have a formal process for helping you mark progress to know whether you maintaining a sufficient rate of progress toward your target. If your institution does not have a formal process, initiate one on your own with friends who will level with you. You may wish to keep contact with others in your profession who have received tenure at their institutions, to get their view of your progress.
- **Find a mentor.** Your institution may have a formal process for assigning mentors to young faculty members. If so, use your mentor. If you do not feel you are getting good guidance from your official mentor, pick an unofficial one. Be careful about engaging in departmental politics.
- **Above all, keep a positive attitude.** As a serious scholar, the criteria for tenure should prompt you to do the things you had already planned to do anyway. Do not let tenure drive you, but rather use the tenure requirements as a minimum bar that you already expect to exceed. Have high expectations of yourself, and engage in the activities of your professional life with positive anticipation of success rather than fear of failure. Be a willing and supportive colleague as part of your positive attitude.



Institutional/Local Considerations

As mentioned on multiple occasions, you should follow local practice and policy. Obtain copies of institutional policies and speak with your Chair and Dean about the process. You should also confer with your local T&P committee and your mentor. If you do not have a formal mentor, it is generally a good idea to find an informal mentor – someone you trust and respect who has been at the institution for some time and has been through the tenure and promotion process there. Document all advice that is provided so that you will have clear guidelines to follow. A more elaborate of this T&P guide is anticipated that will include elaborations for the following contexts (please contact Elizabeth Boling – eboling@indiana.edu – if you are willing to contribute to any of these sections):

- Public Universities in North America
- Asian Universities
- European Universities
- Private Universities
- Teaching Institutions
- Vocational Institutions



Where to Publish

Publication is a fact of life for most academics. It is not simply a way of racking up points; it is a way of disseminating ideas you have and research you want to share because feedback will help you improve and contribute to the advancement of knowledge and understanding.

The considerations in publishing are rigor, impact, and prestige. Different publication venues have different uses. You will choose some because they carry prestige; you will choose others because you hope they will give your work a rigorous review; you will choose some because they get a new idea out to a wide audience as quickly as possible and get you rapid feedback or give you a chance to create a community of interest.

Most institutions are aware of a tiered system of journal evaluations and several indexing systems that rate journals on some set of qualities. If your institution requires that you rate your productivity in terms of tiers or indices, be sure you understand this from the beginning and understand how the Tier system and indices are viewed in your institution. If you do not agree with the views of your organization, be careful how much you put yourself at risk. If there is no standard in your organization, you may want to help reviewers by expressing how and why you picked publication outlets. Be aware of how your organization views online publishing. Some accept this kind of publication better than others.

It is always a good idea to publish in multiple venues, especially those that are highly regarded, indexed, and have reasonable impact factors. Impact factors in a niche discipline such as

educational technology will be smaller than those in large disciplines such as physics or psychology. Here are some venues to consider:

Refereed

- [*Asia Pacific Educational Review*](#)
- [*British Journal of Educational Technology*](#)
- [*Computers in Human Behavior*](#)
- [*Distance Education*](#)
- [*Educational Computing Research*](#)
- [*Educational Researcher*](#)
- [*Educational Technology Review*](#)
- [*Educational Technology Research & Development*](#) – high quality AECT journal, considered the premier journal in educational technology research
- [*Educational Technology & Society*](#) (ETS) – high quality, refereed, online journal; case studies, empirical findings, conceptual frameworks, qualitative studies, design and development research, etc.
- [*Evaluation and Program Planning*](#)
- [*Journal of Applied Instructional Design*](#)
- [*Journal of Computers in Education*](#)
- [*Journal of Computing in Higher Education*](#)
- [*Journal of Higher Education*](#)
- [*Journal of the Learning Sciences*](#) – high quality journal focused on multidisciplinary learning research
- [*Innovative Higher Education*](#)
- [*Journal of Research on Technology in Education*](#)
- [*Instructional Science*](#) – outstanding for research (quantitative or qualitative) pertaining learning and instruction broadly conceived
- [*Interpersonal Computing and Technology Journal*](#)
- [*International Journal of Designs for Learning*](#)
- [*International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*](#)
- [*Higher Education*](#)
- [*Performance Improvement Quarterly*](#)
- [*Quarterly Review of Distance Education*](#)
- [*Review of Research in Education*](#)
- [*Simulation & Gaming*](#)
- [*Smart Learning Environments*](#) – a new Springer Open Journal
- [*TechTrends*](#) – AECT journal influential within the educational technology community
- [*Technology, Instruction, Cognition and Learning*](#)

Non-refereed:

- [*Educational Technology*](#) – very influential within the educational technology community
- [*THE Journal - Technological Horizons in Education*](#)

See also combined listings such as:

<http://lrs.ed.uiuc.edu/tse-portal/publication/dans-journals.html> and

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/ccc?key=0AtQrhYg4UkE_cGNyT1IXbk1XNHRzVmpxS1gwaEM2QXc&usp=drive_web#gid=1 .



How to Serve

Service to your professional community is one way of making connections with the leaders in your area of specialty. Through service in a professional organization you can find collaborations, make acquaintance with people you would otherwise never have a chance to meet, keep in touch with professional opportunities, and learn about how things are done at other institutions. Your own department will benefit from your service to the profession, which is why most institutions require you to report your service contributions in your portfolio.

There are a number of professional associations which you can join. These provide good opportunities for presenting papers and making connections with colleagues as well as developing professional service opportunities. Here are a few associations to consider (some offer multiple conferences):

- [AACE](#) – The Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education
- [AECT](#) – The Association for Educational Communications and Technology
- [AERA](#) – The American Educational Research Association (several relevant SIGs)
- [ASTD/ATD](#) – Association for Talent Development
- [EARLI](#) – The European Association for Research on Learning and Instruction
- [EERA](#) – The European Educational Research Association
- [IADIS](#) – The International Association for the Development of the Internet Society
- [IEEE Computer Society](#) – The Computer Society is focused on educational computing
- [ISLS](#) – International Society of the Learning Sciences
- [ISPI](#) – International Society for Performance Improvement
- [ISTE](#) – International Society for Technology in Education
- [SALT](#) – Society for Applied Learning Technology
- [WERA](#) – World Educational Research Association

There are many other national and international associations focused on various aspects of educational technology (instructional systems, learning sciences, performance technologies). Active participation in one or more will probably be considered a service to the profession and is likely to help you keep current with your field and those who are doing innovative work in an area related to your own interest.

Your professional association benefits from your success in the same way your organization does. You will find colleagues in your professional organization(s) who will help you along your path if you will tell them your goals and interests, especially if they also involve service to the organization. Be cautious, however, not to let service to professional organizations to be the mainstay of your professional contributions. Your main work should be your academic productivity.



Example Personal Statement

The following personal statement is included with the permission of the author and was constructed according to local expectations. It should be noted that some institutions require separate documents for teaching, scholarship and service.

Example 1. Personal Statement of Teaching, Research and Service

I came from an Information Science program and had not taught any of the courses that comprise the curriculum in IDD&E. My academic background is in philosophy (epistemology and logic) and my teaching experience had been in philosophy, computer science and information science. As senior scientist for Instructional Systems Research at the Air Force Research Laboratory, I developed a great deal of knowledge and practical experience in the area of educational technology, especially in the area of automated support for instructional design. I began teaching the introductory course in instructional design and special topic courses in areas close to my research and development experience (e.g., collaborative learning environments). I then re-designed the advanced instructional design course and took responsibility for the introductory course in educational technology as a consequence of a vision grant that led to IST and IDD&E co-developing and co-teaching a new introductory course. I also brought distance learning to the program because the job market demands of our graduates skill and knowledge in designing and developing distance learning courses. With one exception, my classes have been small (5 to 25); I am currently co-teaching the introductory online course with about 100 students enrolled. With the exception of this large distance learning course, I believe my teaching has been more successful than not.

Teaching occurs in contexts other than courses. Advising and mentoring are two cases where teaching also occurs. The first year I was here, an IDD&E doctoral student assisted me in editing a volume entitled *Integrated and holistic perspective on learning, instruction and technology: Understanding complexity*. She learned a great deal about the content, the distinguished authors and the publishing process as a result. Last year, I worked with another doctoral student in co-editing a special double issue of a refereed online journal on the topic of technology integration in learning and working. Not only did she help me sort through the 140 paper proposals submitted and select 40 for publication, she participated in refereeing and editing papers, and contributed one of her own. I recently co-edited with a Canadian colleague a special issue of *Evaluation and Program Planning* devoted to the evaluation of educational technology, and I again involved an IDD&E doctoral student in the reviewing, editing, and writing process. I have co-authored several journal articles with IDD&E students, and I have also co-presented with students at national and international professional meetings. I have involved doctoral students in other professional activities as well. One of our doctoral students received the first fellowship to be awarded by the International Board of Standards for Training, Performance and Instruction (*ibstpi*) and worked with me and other Board members on strategic planning for a year. Another IDD&E doctoral student has been appointed an *ibstpi* Research Associate - she is the only active *ibstpi* research associate and is working with the Board to develop competencies for online teaching (her dissertation research area). These are all cases in which teaching occurs outside the context of a classroom. In the educational technology professional community, these experiences are at least as valuable as what transpires in the most inspiring of classrooms.

Another context in which teaching and learning occurs outside the context of a classroom is with regard to projects. IDD&E includes a project requirement in most courses and now requires a project with extensive field work in the introductory course. As part of the strategy to rebuild the technology infrastructure within IDD&E, several student projects in my courses involved technology applications within IDD&E and the School (e.g., develop a knowledge portal to support international students, develop short tutorials on new technologies available in the School, etc.).

Collaboration with students in research activities is yet another way to support teaching and learning outside the context of a course. I am principal investigator on a Mellon Foundation grant investigating effects of different forms of communication in online courses. Several graduate students have been actively involved in this research for the last two years. An IDD&E student helped develop the new introductory course associated with the

collaborative Vision grant with IST. She has since been accepted into our doctoral program and is now teaching an online course for IST.

Since coming to SU, I have submitted a number of other grant proposals (2 to NSF-ROLE, 1 to OERI and 1 to NSFD-EVAL). IDD&E graduate students have contributed to all of these efforts. While only one of these was funded, a great deal of learning occurred in the process of gathering information, writing the grant and reading the feedback from the granting agency. Students have been involved throughout all of these processes. These particular grant proposals have all involved the area of research that I initiated in Norway and wish to pursue at SU - namely, how to reliably assess progress of learning in and about complex domains. I plan to continue seeking grant support for my own area of interest. While I could argue that involving students in these efforts is serving their interest and results in much learning for all of us, the truth is that I have been putting my interest first in these cases. The benefits to students have been incidental, albeit somewhat substantial.

I have involved many students in international collaborative efforts since coming to IDD&E. Much of the attraction of my position in Norway was the significant international collaborations that I developed while there. I have always felt enriched by this kind of diversity - international collaborations nearly always bring different perspectives and new ideas, which I value highly. Upon arrival at SU, I immediately involved an IDD&E doctoral student in a project developing instructional design tools for the aviation industry in Europe - I helped write that project proposal and it was funded while I was in Norway. I have continued IDD&E's tradition of bringing a visiting summer lecturer from the University of Twente. I also brought a visiting Turkish professor to IDD&E in 2001 and some of our Turkish students are still in communication with her. I am collaborating with a German professor at the University of Freiburg in co-developing and sharing specific modules for graduate courses in educational science and technology; both he and I have involved a doctoral student to help facilitate this informal collaboration. Again I have to admit that my primary motives were self-serving since I so enjoy international collaborations. However, there have been benefits to students, and I have made efforts to keep students involved in all of these activities.

I also should note that the benefits flow in both directions. IDD&E has a substantial international student population, which I value highly. I am getting at least as much from these students as I am providing in the form of the incidental benefits noted above. For example, thanks to one of these students, I am an invited speaker at an international meeting on distance learning to be held in Mumbai, India this December. There are also enrichments that come from non-international students, such as learning about a variety of school-based problems in this country. As I said earlier, I am not a K-12 specialist and do not intend to develop K-12 expertise. This does not mean that I am not interested in learning about the variety of ways that educational technologies can be used in school settings - indeed, that is part of my responsibility as the IDD&E vision statement shows.

I have made remarks about service to students throughout this section, partly because I see that kind of service closely intertwined with teaching and research. I shall conclude this section with a few remarks about non-student related services. I shall proceed in accordance with a standard hierarchy: Department, School, Interdisciplinary, University, Profession, Higher Still. I serve the department in a number of obvious ways as Chair. I lead efforts such as developing a vision statement and technology plan. I interview students who drop by to inquire about studies in IDD&E. I have worked with Don Ely in soliciting donations from alumni - Don led this effort and thanks to his generous support we now have funds to support professional development for students and faculty. I contribute to curriculum development, admissions, awards and other standard department activities, although I am fortunate to have dedicated and hard working faculty members who lead these efforts. Service to colleagues goes hand in hand with service to the department. I am doing my best to see that our faculty are treated fairly and properly recognized. There are limits to what can be done in this area, so we have occasional social get-togethers, most often with our students, and most often with international cuisine, so that we can develop mutual understanding and a genuine sense of collegiality.

Last year, we successfully recruited a candidate who was also the number one choice of the best programs in the country (e.g., Indiana and Florida State). While we were unable to match the offers made by those programs, we managed to persuade her that the collegial, international atmosphere of IDD&E was worthwhile. This is one

indication that IDD&E is doing something right with regard to faculty well-being. This collegiality is generated and maintained internally, and I am making an effort to see that this does not change.

With regard to service to the School, I have served as the head of the Technology Committee for two years. This has turned out to be a challenging task given past histories and an inclination to protect one's turf. Nonetheless, I was able to lead this committee to consensus on a school-wide effort to transform the basement of Huntington Hall into a technology support environment for faculty and students in all School programs. To accomplish this has tested my patience. Progress appears to be moving in slow motion, and I have had to set aside IDD&E concerns to take a look at what seems best for the entire School. This includes actively listening to those with their own turf to protect.

I serve on the board of Syrtis, a collaborative venture between University College and the School of Education. IDD&E helped create a shared professor of professional practice position with University College, and we managed to fill that position with a person who is very generous with his time in consulting and advising students on projects, internships and independent study efforts, most of which also support Syrtis activities. I also collaborated with IST and Newhouse in developing the proposal for a Center for Digital Literacy.

I have served on three University committees since 2000. I was on the Technical Committee examining distance learning the first year I was at SU. Last year I was put on the Vice Chancellor's Information and Management Technology spire committee, with service continuing this year. I was also asked by the Vice Chancellor to serve on the Dean search committee this year.

Professional service has become second nature for me. I am the Executive Vice President and Treasurer of the International Board of Standards for Training, Performance and Instruction. I am the incoming President of the Design & Development Division of the Association for Educational Communications and Technology. I am on the Program Committee for ED-MEDIA and serve on other conference program committees. I am the incoming development editor for *Educational Technology Research & Development* and serve on several other editorial boards of prominent journals. In short, I have been active within the professional educational technology community for more than 15 years and remain very active in this community, which I regard as an extended family.

With regard to service beyond the profession and to higher authorities, I have to admit failure. One of the lessons that I have learned from one of my international students is that this is an area that should not be neglected. She remains active in efforts to promote learning and alleviate human suffering in her home country while maintaining a challenging program of study. I now realize that this is part of her nature - my initial inclination was to advise her to focus on her dissertation and reduce extra-curricular activities. She has convinced me that she is simply not able to live that way (it is somewhat ironic that I was advising her to put herself first when I said earlier that I valued the notion of service to others). An outcome of this experience for me is that I now realize that I have neglected such things in my own life.

