Crafting the self-reflection

Faculty handbook guidelines:
“The application includes... A reflective formative self-evaluation comprised of three sections outlined in the Promotion Policy: Teaching Requirements, University Service Requirements, and Professional and Scholarly Requirements. The self-evaluation must cover accomplishments and achievements in these areas as well as areas for further development and growth. Part of the purpose of the self-evaluation is to ensure that candidates who will become eligible for promotion are making progress toward it... The entire self-evaluation should not exceed 1500 words.” [There is no word limit for rank advancement applications.]

Tips:
You are applying for a future contract. Your reflection should be looking to the future, based on your experience since the last contract renewal application.

Don’t sell yourself short. Use this opportunity to present your best self. You’re not applying for the job again, but you also shouldn’t assume people know what you’ve been doing.

Remember that the personnel committee includes faculty of different disciplines. Your self-reflection should be intelligible to the educated layperson. Avoid over-use of discipline-specific jargon or “speak.”

Address the comments in your student evaluations. The personnel committee members know from experience that everyone gets negative comments sometimes. The committee is looking for patterns over time, so if it’s not continuously repeated over multiple semesters, don’t stress about it.
Examples:
4 - Instructor is adequately accessible to students after class or during office hours
   If the averages are really low here, talk about why that might be and what you might do differently.
9 - Students are encouraged to express their own ideas and/or question the instructor
   If the averages are high here, celebrate that and talk about the intentionality.

Your curriculum vitae lists your accomplishments and service. There is no need to repeat that listing in your self-reflection. However, the self-reflection is where those items come alive. Use them as examples to illustrate specific points in your reflection. You don’t need to use them all in the reflection.

The ideals of the teaching scholar:
“...distinction among ranks is made by evaluating the faculty member’s potential or progress toward achieving or fulfilling the ideals of a teaching scholar. Teaching scholars should be recognized scholars in their fields, should serve as role models for junior faculty, and should fulfill the requirements of all three categories” [teaching, scholarship, service] to the level of achievement appropriate to rank.”
Keyword: ideals. It’s a goal.
How do you integrate the three areas of the teaching scholar: teaching, scholarship/professional development, service?

**Consider…**
What challenges did you encounter? How did you address them? How do you know if you were successful?

What are your plans and goals for development in teaching, scholarship, and service? Explain how these goals would be accomplished. Illustrate with examples of the process of continuous improvement.

Your past goals: did you meet them? What evidence can you provide?

Questions to apply where appropriate:

- Why is this important?
- How does this enhance student learning?
- Did you make revisions or implement something new based on what you learned?
- How is this experience valuable to your professional development?
- What would you do differently in the future?

*Statement:* “This was a great learning experience for me.”
Why? What did you learn?

*Statement:* “I have continued developing teaching and learning strategies that will engage students in understanding the concepts and applications of x to their lives and professional development.”
Example of strategy & how it engages students. How do you know they are engaged?

*Statement:* “My plan includes spending more time in service to the university in general.”
Which committees are you interested in and why? How would that capitalize on a strength, or enhance an undeveloped area?

*Statement:* “I served on the faculty development committee which reviews sabbatical applications and faculty development applications.”
What did you learn from this experience?

*Statement:* “I have continued doing design commissions out of my professional studio.”
How does this add to your professional reputation? How does this activity circle back to the classroom?

Nedra Peterson, Nov. 2014