

Resolution #15 1973-74 Routing #15 73-74

Tenure

Resolution # 14
1973-1974

TO: PRESIDENT ALBERT W. BROWN

FROM: THE FACULTY SENATE

Meeting on April 22, 1974
(Date)

RE: X I. Formal Resolution (Act of Determination)
 II. Recommendation (Urging the fitness of)
 III. Other (Notice, Request, Report, etc.)

SUBJECT: Tenure

(see attached)

Signed AG Butler Date Sent 4/23/74
(For the Senate)

TO: THE FACULTY SENATE
FROM: PRESIDENT ALBERT W. BROWN
RE: I. DECISION AND ACTION TAKEN ON FORMAL RESOLUTION

- a. Accepted. Effective Date May 16, 1974
- b. Deferred for discussion with the Faculty Senate on _____
- c. Unacceptable for the reasons contained in the attached explanation

II, III. a. Received and acknowledged

b. Comment: 5/16/74 Adm. Co: General discussion recommended that the comments of the Appointments and Promotions Committee should be returned to the Deans and Departments on or before January 1, rather than March 1.

DISTRIBUTION: Vice-presidents: Candace Amundson

Others as identified: Fac. Sen.

Distribution Date: _____

Signed: Albert W. Brown
(President of the College)

Date Received by the Senate: _____

May 16, 1974

RESOLUTION ON TENURE

From: Committee on Appointment
and Promotions
Donald McWhorter (Political Sci.)
Chairperson

Part I

JUSTIFICATION FOR TENURE

The tenure question has become a topic of debate in academic circles throughout the country as student enrollments have stabilized and professional openings have become more scarce. Today, some 33 states provide tenure on a statewide basis, and only 4 provide no tenure at all (Saturday Review, March 4, 1972). Since academic tenure provides the most reliable means of assuring faculty quality and educational excellence as well as the best guarantee of academic freedom (AAUP Newsletter, March, 1973), the Faculty Senate Appointments and Promotion Committee strongly supports the rights of an individual to be granted tenure after he or she has passed the tests of time, educational preparation, professional performance and evaluation.

The committee also supports the SUNY Faculty Senate recommendation that emphasis should be placed on the "evaluation process prior to awarding tenure rather than fixing a percentage quota that could possibly prevent the retention of excellent people." The quota system, according to their report, would merely be substituting a mechanical approach for a process of evaluation which should be in effect.

The history of academic tenure has generally centered around the question of academic freedom. Recently, Dr. Joseph H. Hankin, president of Westchester Community College, questioned whether tenure is really necessary any more to protect academic freedom, or has it deteriorated into nothing more than perhaps job security. Other administrators throughout the country have also joined in and started to question the academic freedom argument for tenure.

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At the same time, however, several cases were just recently reported in the March 24, 1974 issue of the New York Teacher in which the teacher's right to teach freely, and to maintain his and her constitutional rights as a citizen equal before the law, was abused. For instance, Cathy Marcato, a Catholic nun from Westchester, who, despite an outstanding teaching record, was dismissed because of her political views on the Vietnam war. In addition, a teacher in North Dakota was recently dismissed for recommending that his students read SLAUGHTERHOUSE FIVE. Finally, a Long Island teacher was dismissed for being an "easy marker."

These are just a few of the situations in which the teacher's academic freedom has been abused and questioned. It is quite clear that despite assertions to the contrary, the problem of academic freedom continues to be a critical issue. The Commission on Academic Tenure in Higher Education (whose year-long project was supported by a \$125,000 grant from The Ford Foundation) said, "So central is academic freedom to the integrity of our educational institutions -- and to their effectiveness in the discovery of new knowledge, in conservation of the values and wisdom of the past, and in the promotion of critical inquiry essential to self-renewal -- that academic tenure should be retained as our most tested and reliable instrument for incorporating academic freedom into the heart of our institutions."

There is also the argument that tenure inhibits staffing flexibility and, at the same time, allows for the protection of incompetents. In addition, the non-supporters of tenure argue that tenure prevents the young, the blacks and women from entering the academic profession. However, most investigations have shown that turnover and attrition rates are sufficiently high to allow for such flexibility as is desirable. Rickie Flanders, in the March 24, 1974 issue of the New York Teacher, states that "the staffing flexibility that would be enhanced by an absence of tenure would generally, one suspects, be unrelated to good academic performance and very much related to passing fads, and chilling conformity to prejudices unrelated to the requirements of academic excellence."

For instance, in situations where non-tenure prevails, staffing flexibility means that the administration could fire those teachers who have, as a result of longer service, reached higher salary scales. The experienced "old-timer" could be replaced with newcomers at much lower rates. However, the young, the blacks and women also age in time and there are always more young, blacks and women to take their place.

It is perhaps true that teacher incompetence can be demonstrated where administration is functioning competently. On the other hand, however, the statement by an Indiana superintendent quoted by Howard K. Beale in ARE AMERICAN TEACHERS FREE is worth mentioning here. "The effect of tenure has not been good here. It has tended to make the teachers more independent." In an article entitled "Tenure and Teaching", by Kenneth E. Eble, English professor at the University of Utah, he says, "Dismissing the incompetent may have less value than trying to reduce the possibilities for incompetence in the first place."

In addition, there appears to be very little evidence to support non-tenured faculty members as making greater contributions to intellectual vitality, improved teaching, or success of the university as compared to the tenured faculty members (Report to SUNY Faculty Senate - February 2-3, 1973).

In summary, it is clear that just as "quotas" fail to answer the demand for more room inside, loss of tenure fails to resolve the problems of a badly constricted job market in academia. The answer apparently lies in extending the space and not in creating a revolving door.

Part II

RECENT SUNY DEVELOPMENTS

Chancellor Boyer has issued a statement on tenure (dated April 2, 1974).

Essentially, the Chancellor is proposing that no rigid quota will be placed on the number of tenured faculty permitted in the system, the process by which tenure

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decisions are made must be strengthened, that criteria and procedure for tenure decisions be clearly set forth; and, the possible creation of non-tenured positions which could be filled on a rotating basis.

In light of this statement, it would seem most appropriate for this faculty to undertake immediately the important task of developing procedures and criteria for tenure which not only takes the Chancellor's statement into account, but also reflect the views of the faculty.

PART III

RECOMMENDATIONS

While it is the view of the Appointments and Promotions Committee that the principles of tenure have not been exacerbated by plateaued growth in the university system and the manifold ramifications from such a situation, we do recognize the need to review the development and application of criteria for tenure. Therefore, it is our recommendation that each academic Department (including the Library) and the appropriate deans submit to the Appointments and Promotions Committee by November 1, 1974 a report outlining the procedures and criteria used to determine whether a faculty member in the Department and Faculty is to be recommended for tenure. These procedures and standards shall be examined by the Appointments and Promotions Committee and returned to the Departments and Deans with comments on or before March 1, 1975. Each Department and Dean shall then submit its tenure policies to the President on or before April 1, 1975, to determine if such policies conform to the requirements related to tenure as have been established by the Board of Trustees and the Chancellor.