

Promotion and Tenure Committee Report - 2008-2009

Committee Members:

Drs. Lee Bidwell, Norm Bregman, Vonnie Colvin (chair), Claire La Roche, Eric Moore, and Lissa Power-deFur.

A) The committee supported the following items:

- 1) Implementation of a policy for stopping the tenure clock. This was approved by the Faculty Senate 3/19/09.

- 2) The Tenure and Promotion Committee is recommending to the Senate on April 9 that the following be added to Appendix D of the FPPM:
“Once submitted to the department chair and department promotion and tenure committee for their consideration, the file is considered complete. Additional information cannot be added to the file after it has been submitted at the department level.”

Our “tentative” location for this would be to create a new 2.f and then change the current f, g and h to the next letters.

B) Two other items were referred to the committee. After much discussion, the committee elected not to send them forward to the Senate.

Policy on Stopping the Tenure Clock*

Approved by Senate March 19, 2009

1. **General Provisions:** Tenure-track faculty members normally have a probationary period between the time they begin employment and the tenure decision. Modifications in the length of this period from that specified in the letter of offer take the form of a one-year *stop in the tenure clock*, in which the employee
 - (a) postpones the next scheduled reappointment review for a year, and
 - (b) agrees to a one-year postponement in the latest date for the tenure decision. No more than one extension of the probationary period shall be granted.
2. **Reasons for stopping the clock.** Stops in the clock are neither routine nor automatic. They are possible only in certain exceptional cases. There are essentially two criteria for stopping the clock:
 - a. Childbirth or adoption of a child. One or both parents or guardians may apply.
 - b. Other factors beyond the employee's control that significantly detract from the employee's academic record. Although it is not possible to enumerate all of these factors, a few examples include (a) severe illness or disability, (b) natural disasters such as floods or fires, and (c) faculty who have taken leave under the Family Medical Leave Act.
3. Failure to make adequate progress toward tenure is not an adequate justification for stopping the clock.
4. **The Process:** Stopping the clock requires an explicit, written request from the affected employee submitted to the department tenure committee and the department chair simultaneously. The request must specify the reason for stopping the clock. The written request need not reveal highly personal details; however, the employee should be willing to provide enough information to make a persuasive case under one of the criteria listed above. The department chair must then forward the request, with the independent recommendations of the department tenure committee and the department chair, to the college dean. The college dean then forwards the request, with a recommendation, to the Office of Academic Affairs. The Provost/Vice-President for Academic Affairs shall notify the employee in writing of the decision, and send copies of the decision to the dean, department chair, and department tenure committee. All decisions shall be handled expeditiously.
5. **Additional Information:** The following remarks may help answer some questions that frequently arise about stopping the clock.

- a. Academic Affairs will not approve requests retroactively. The request must be made within one year after commencement of the exceptional circumstances and prior to the submission of the tenure file.
- b. The fact that an employee's tenure clock has been stopped has no bearing on the tenure decision other than its timing. In particular, there is no penalty for stopping the tenure clock.
- c. It is the employee's responsibility to request a clock stop. However, no employee is compelled to ask for or accept a stop in the clock. Department chairs and deans may notify employees of the university's policy when a particular employee encounters an event fitting one of the criteria listed above. For example, it is reasonable to remind a woman who is expecting a child that she can stop the tenure clock.
- d. The clock will not automatically stop during a leave of absence without pay. An employee taking leave without pay may request a clock stop, provided at least one of the criteria listed above applies. In this case the normal procedure is to request the clock stop before the leave of absence begins.

*Policy adapted from University of Wyoming and Western Illinois University.