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Procedure for Granting Tenure

Submitted by: Clara Krug

1/27/2008

Question:

Administrators have granted tenure to some incoming administrators as part of private personnel/contract negotiations, rather than as part of the procedures specified in the university’s "Tenure Guidelines" (Section 209, "Faculty Handbook 2007-2008"). Why are there different unpublished guidelines for these individuals? How do they comply with/satisfy the published guidelines?

Rationale:

Regardless of the unit in which this practice occurs, it excludes faculty members at the department/school level from participating in the specified published procedures according to which applications for tenure are submitted and recommendations for awarding tenure are made.

Senate Response:

February 14, 2008, Marc Cyr (CLASS) Senate Moderator presented Dr. Bleicken's response to the RFI Dr. Bleicken noted that our Faculty Handbook indicates the following: “In considering the tenure of an academic administrator — vice president, dean, department chair — the immediate supervisor must obtain the appropriate input from the academic department involved” (page 33). Board of Regents’ Policy is as follows “A) Institutions set their tenure guidelines and fee and outstanding distinguished senior faculty member may be awarded tenure upon the faculty member’s initial appointment”( Section 4, BOR Policy Manual).

When there is such a decision to be made on our campus, the chair of the department typically calls together the tenured faculty members of the department. This group reviews the credentials of the candidate and discusses the implications of granting tenure upon appointment. The outcome of that decision and vote up or down is communicated to the dean and in turn communicated here so that a decision can be
made on whether or not to grant tenure on appointment. In addition to vice presidents, deans, and department chairs, we also typically follow this procedure with distinguished chairs.

Dr. Cyr reported a later exchange of emails and phone calls with Dr. Bleicken in which he suggested that it wasn’t always clear to department members that they knew that they were voting on tenure when they were recommending hiring an administrator, and that there may be some difficulties with language in the handbook particularly in regard years of probationary tenure being given upon hiring. In the meantime, he was informed by Jean-Paul Carton, the chair of the Welfare Committee that they are very likely going to be looking at this. He noted that it seems to be a matter of us needing to get our policies and procedures to line up with one another more than anything else.

There followed some inaudible discussion.