

MEMORANDUM

To: Board of Regents
From: Board Office
Subject: Annual Governance Report on Faculty Tenure
Date: December 6, 1999

Recommended Action:

1. Receive the report.
2. Request that the Regent universities closely monitor the tenure rates in departments where the per cent of tenured faculty exceeds 80% to help ensure their continued vitality.

Executive Summary:

This report is the annual governance assessment of tenure at the three Regent universities. Tenure is a contractual employment status by which faculty appointments are continued indefinitely. Tenure is typically awarded after a faculty member serves a probationary period that usually lasts up to seven years. At most institutions, tenured faculty members are subject to dismissal only for adequate cause or financial exigency.

At the Regent institutions, faculty positions are grouped into three categories: tenured (faculty who have attained tenure), probationary tenure track, and non-tenure track (faculty who are not eligible for tenure).

The Regent universities have a total of 6,411 faculty members in Fall 1999. This is a decrease of 1.9% from the previous year. Of the total, 2,878 are tenured and 840 are probationary faculty members who are on a tenure track. There was a decrease of 71 (-2.4%) faculty members from the prior year who are tenured. There was an increase of 52 (+6.6%) faculty members who are in probationary tenure track positions. The remaining 2,693 faculty members are not eligible for tenure. This is a decrease of 3.9% (-108) from 1998.

The percentage of tenured faculty among those eligible for tenure is 78.4% at SUI, 78.3% at ISU, and 72.3% at UNI. This measure of tenure density decreased at ISU and UNI from the prior year; at SUI, it remained the same as for the prior year.

Tenured appointments are 35.6% of all faculty appointments at SUI, 62.6% at ISU, and 48.8% at UNI. However, the SUI data are skewed by the high number of non-tenure track clinical faculty in the Colleges of Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, and Dentistry. By excluding the 1,309 non-tenure track positions in these four colleges, the university's overall percentage of tenured faculty increases from 35.6% to 54.7%.

- A recent survey by the American Association of University Professors showed that at the national level, 66.3% of all full-time faculty at public universities have tenure. At private universities, 63.2% of all full-time faculty have tenure. As Table 5 (page 13) indicates, at SUI's peer institutions, the range is 59.1% - 79.2%; at SUI, the tenure rate is 76.2%. At ISU's peer institutions, the range is 66.0% - 77.4%; at ISU, the tenure rate is 76.0%. At UNI's peer institutions, the range is 54.2% - 75.4%; at UNI, the tenure rate is 66.6%.

Since Fall 1990, the total number of tenured and tenure-eligible women faculty at the Regent universities has increased (Table 4, page 12); however, the percentage of tenured women in proportion to those who are tenure-eligible decreased at ISU from the prior year. As a proportion of all women faculty members who are eligible for tenure at the Regent universities, more than 60% of women faculty members are tenured. Of all faculty members who are eligible for tenure at the Regent universities, 17.6% are tenured women faculty members and 9.4% are tenure-track women faculty members.

Since Fall 1995, the total number of tenured and tenure-eligible minority faculty at the Regent universities has increased (Table 4, page 12); however, the percentages of tenured minority faculty in proportion to those who are tenure eligible decreased at ISU and UNI from the prior year. As a proportion of all minority faculty members who are eligible for tenure at the Regent universities, more than 56% of minority faculty members are tenured. Of all faculty members who are eligible for tenure at the Regent universities, 7.8% are tenured minority faculty members and 4.4% are tenure-track minority faculty members.

This report addresses the following Key Result Areas (KRAs) in the Board's Strategic Plan:

KRA 1.0.0.0 Become the best public education enterprise in the United States.

Strategy 1.1.3.0 Include meritorious teaching as part of the reward structures relating to salary increases, promotion, tenure, and professional development leaves.

Action Step 1.1.3.2 Report data in the relevant governance reports and presentations to the Board.

KRA 4.0.0.0 Meet the objectives of the Board and institutional strategic plans and provide effective stewardship of the institutions' state, federal, and private resources.

Background:

Most colleges and universities in the United States offer some form of tenured employment for faculty. The specific terms of tenure policies vary among institutions, but they share many features. Each Regent university has developed tenure policies which have been approved by the Board and which guide the awarding of tenure.

Definitions

- Tenure is a contractual employment status under which faculty appointments are continued indefinitely. At most institutions, tenured faculty members are subject to dismissal only for adequate cause or financial exigency.
- Tenure is typically awarded to a faculty member who serves a probationary period that usually lasts up to seven years. After a series of annual retention proceedings, the awarding of tenure requires an affirmative recommendation based on an extensive evaluation process that frequently involves reviews by peers in the field and reviews at the departmental, college, and university levels. The Board formally confers tenure upon individual faculty at the recommendation of the universities.
- At the Regent institutions, faculty positions are grouped into three categories:

Tenured: faculty members who have attained tenure.

Probationary (Tenure Track): faculty members who are under consideration for tenure but have not yet achieved it.

Non-Tenure Track: faculty members who are not eligible for tenure. These positions include adjunct, clinical, fixed-term, and visiting appointments that provide instructional, research, and supervisory services. A substantial majority of non-tenure track faculty are practitioners in various professions (primarily health related) who serve as non-paid clinical supervisors of

students in work-based learning environments.

Analysis:

The Board requires the Regent universities to make annual reports on faculty tenure. These reports present information on the operation of the tenure system at each university and include a current, detailed statistical analysis of all faculty appointments in each department and college by rank, tenure status, gender, and minority status. The complete institutional reports are available in the Regent Exhibit Book.

- Tenure density patterns at ISU and SUI have remained relatively stable during the past decade. The tenure patterns at UNI have shown somewhat greater variation during that time frame.
- At SUI, 78.4% of tenure-eligible faculty have received tenure. At ISU, 78.3% of tenure-eligible faculty have received tenure. At UNI, 72.3% of tenure-eligible faculty have received tenure.
 - This measure of tenure density increased from 72.5% in 1993 to 78.4% in 1998 at SUI; in 1999, it remained constant from the prior year. At ISU, tenure density decreased from 83.2% in 1995 to 78.3% in 1999. At UNI, tenure density increased from 68.3% in 1991 to 75.8% in 1998 and decreased to 72.3% in 1999.
- Tables 1 and 2 on pages 9 and 10 document the numbers and proportions of tenured and non-tenured faculty at each institution. The data illustrate the current tenure statistics at each campus, as well as trends over the past ten years.
- The majority of tenured and probationary faculty is employed on a full-time basis, while the majority of non-tenure track faculty is employed on a part-time basis.

Tenure Density

- Tenure density refers to the proportion of tenured faculty within the broader totals of either tenure-track faculty or total faculty at an institution. Tenure density has implications for academic program planning, the retention of probationary faculty, the opportunities for employment of less experienced faculty, and flexibility in the allocation of human and financial resources.

The following table lists the concentration of tenured faculty by college at each institution. The immediate impact of tenure density is often most acute at the

department level because tenured appointments are traditionally attached to departments.

- At SUI, more than 60% of the faculty in the College of Law are tenured. At ISU, more than 50% of the faculty in the Colleges of Agriculture, Business, Engineering, Family and Consumer Sciences, Liberal Arts and Sciences, and Veterinary Medicine are tenured. In the College of Agriculture, 70% or more of the faculty are tenured. At UNI, more than 50% of the faculty in the Colleges of Business Administration and Humanities and Fine Arts are tenured.

**DISTRIBUTION OF TENURED FACULTY BY COLLEGE
FALL 1999**

	# of Depts.	Total # of Faculty	% Tenured of Tenure-Eligible
University of Iowa			
Business Administration	6	168	82.8
Dentistry	10	237	76.7
Education	4	183	76.6
Engineering	6	123	71.6
Law	1	64	93.2
Liberal Arts	43	1,164	77.3
Medicine	22	1,208	80.1
Nursing	1	193	90.0
Pharmacy	1	282	59.5
Public Health	1	113	73.2
Graduate	1	15	100.0
University Total	96	3,750	78.4
Iowa State University			
Agriculture	15	309	84.2
Business	5	75	73.3
Design	4	126	72.5
Education	4	121	68.4
Engineering	9	243	77.7
Family & Consumer Sciences	5	93	75.9
Liberal Arts & Sciences	20	654	77.5
Veterinary Medicine	5	118	87.1
Library	1	42	70.3
Computation Center	1	0	0.0
University Total	69	1,781	78.3
University of Northern Iowa			
Business Administration	5	82	88.7
Education	8	279	72.5
Humanities & Fine Arts	9	214	76.0
Natural Sciences	8	148	68.3
Social & Behavioral Sciences	8	132	64.9
Library	1	17	46.7
IT Services	0	0	NA
Other	1	8	100.0
University Total	40	880	72.3
Regents Total	205	6,411	77.4

- As a proportion of tenure track appointments, more than 50% of the faculty are tenured in 94.8% of the departments (n=91) at SUI; more than 70% of the faculty are tenured in 73.9% of the departments (n=71). At ISU, more than 50% of the faculty are tenured in 97.1% of the departments (n=67); more than 70% of the faculty are tenured in 75.4% of the departments (n=52). At UNI, more than 50% of the faculty are tenured in 90.0% of the departments (n=36); more than 70% of the faculty are tenured in 62.5% of the departments (n=25).

Table 3 on page 11 provides data on departmental tenure concentrations for the past decade.

Distribution of Tenure by Rank

The awarding of tenure generally coincides with promotion to the rank of associate professor. As the tables below confirm, the majority of professors and associate professors at Regent institutions have tenure, while the majority of assistant professors and instructors do not.

Tenured Faculty Distribution by Rank Fall 1999

	Tenured Professor	Tenured Associate Professor	Tenured Assistant Professor	Tenured Instructor or Lecturer	Total Tenured Faculty
SUI	826	500	9	0	1,335
ISU	631	454	28	1	1,114
UNI	170	195	35	29	429
Regents Total	1,627	1,149	72	30	2,878

Probationary (Tenure-Track) Faculty Distribution by Rank Fall 1999

	Probationary Professor	Probationary Associate Professor	Probationary Assistant Professor	Probationary Instructor or Lecturer	Total Probationary Faculty
SUI	5	38	322	2	367
ISU	4	15	290	0	309
UNI	0	3	137	24	164
Regents Total	9	56	749	26	840

The traditional predominance of tenure among senior faculty assumes additional significance in relation to an aging professoriate.

- Although age-rank correlations are not included in the annual tenure reports of the Regent institutions, recent national and Regent data suggest the possibility of significant attrition in the senior tenured ranks in the near future. Available data suggest that the age profiles of faculty at the Regent universities, similar to national data, have become more concentrated in cohorts above ages 40 and 50, while declining in younger age brackets.
- The percentages of tenured and tenure-eligible women and minority faculty have shown some improvement in recent years. However, the percentages remain lower than those for the total tenured faculty at all Regent universities, as the data on Table 4 (page 12) indicate.
- The annual governance report on diversity (G.D. 11) contains additional information on the number of women and minority faculty at the Regent institutions.
 - The tabulations in the annual governance reports on faculty tenure include academic administrators who hold concurrent faculty appointments. This differs from the methodology used in the annual governance reports on diversity, which group those individuals in a separate category.
 - Among non-tenure track faculty, the report on diversity also excludes appointments that are less than 50% and/or unpaid. All faculty appointments are included in the tenure reports.

Policy Implications of Tenure

The changing structure of and demands on higher education have focused renewed attention on tenure policies and have been subject to regular review.

Tenure is frequently invoked as an essential protection of academic freedom. Academic freedom is a fundamental principle of higher education that is intended to ensure the integrity of research and the curriculum. Faculty must be free to pursue controversial research and teach controversial subjects without fear of political repercussions and non-academic interference.

Regent universities have recently completed comprehensive reviews of the standards, criteria, and procedures which they apply to evaluate and develop their faculty, including aspects of the tenure process and post-tenure review.

The availability of tenure and its application through a well-designed and judicious system of academic peer review plays a critical role in a university's competitive ability to attract and retain talented, productive teacher-scholars. Most informed observers would agree that tenure policies at the Regent universities have generally served the institutions well and have contributed to the strong quality of higher education in Iowa.

There are no national standards to help guide the Board and the institutions on the appropriate levels of tenure at the institutions. Several comprehensive examinations of tenure completed at the national level have concluded that an institution should not allow more than half to two-thirds of its faculty to be on tenure appointments. This conclusion by the Commission on Academic Tenure, for example, was based on the assumption that "a larger proportion of tenured faculty is likely to curtail opportunities for the appointment and retention of younger faculty, with undesirable effects on institutional vitality...and to diminish opportunities for the recruitment and promotion of increased numbers of women and members of minority groups."

A number of the percentages at the Regent institutions exceed this level by some margin. For the reasons noted above, it is recommended that the institutions monitor closely the units where the percentage of tenured faculty exceeds 80%. There may well be good reasons for these high percentages as time and circumstances change; however, these percentages are high enough to warrant some attention.