

MEMORANDUM

To: Board of Regents
From: Board Office
Subject: Annual Governance Report on Faculty Tenure
Date: December 3, 1998

Recommended Action:

Receive the report.

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 often subject to dismissal only for adequate cause or financial exigency.

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.

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 6,538 faculty members in Fall 1998. This is an increase of 2.3% from the previous year. Of the total, 2,949 are tenured and 788 are probationary faculty members who are on a tenure track. There was a decrease of 21 (-0.7%) faculty members from the prior year who are tenured. There was an increase of 11 (+1.4%) faculty members who are in probationary tenure track positions. The remaining 2,801 faculty members are not eligible for tenure. This is an increase of 6.0% from 1997.

The percentage of tenured faculty among those eligible for tenure is 78.4% at SUI, 80.8% at ISU, and 75.8% at UNI. This measure of tenure density has decreased at ISU for the past three years; it decreased slightly at SUI from the prior year; at UNI, this measure has increased since 1993.

The total number of tenured and tenure-eligible women faculty at the Regent universities has increased since Fall 1997; however, the percentages of tenured women in proportion to those who are tenure eligible have decreased at SUI and UNI. The total number of tenured and tenure-eligible minority faculty at the Regent universities has also increased since Fall 1997; however, the percentages of tenured minority faculty in proportion to those who are tenure eligible have decreased at each university. As a proportion of those women and minority faculty members who are eligible for tenure at the Regent universities, more than 60% of minority faculty and women faculty members are tenured.

Tenured appointments are 34.4% of all faculty appointments at SUI, 64.7% at ISU, and 52.1% 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 1,519 non-tenure track positions in these four colleges, the university's overall percentage of tenured faculty increases from 34.4% to 56.7%.

Tenured faculty represents more than 50% of the total faculty in several colleges. 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 colleges of Agriculture, Engineering, and Family and Consumer Sciences, 70% or more of the faculty are tenured. At UNI, more than 50% of the faculty in the colleges of Business Administration, Humanities and Fine Arts, and Natural Sciences are tenured.

As a proportion of tenure track appointments, more than 50% of the faculty are tenured in 93.8% of the departments (n=90) at SUI; more than 70% of the faculty are tenured in 72.9% of the departments (n=70). At ISU, more than 50% of the faculty are tenured in 92.9% of the departments (n=65); more than 70% of the faculty are tenured in 75.7% of the departments (n=53). At UNI, more than 50% of the faculty are tenured in 97.6% of the departments (n=40); more than 70% of the faculty are tenured in 73.2% of the departments (n=30). Tenure density has implications for academic program planning, for the retention of probationary faculty, and for flexibility in the allocation of human and financial resources.

A recent survey by the American Association of University Professors showed that at the national level, 65% of faculty at public institutions have tenure. At public and private doctoral level universities, 67% of the faculty have tenure; at public and private comprehensive universities, 62% of the faculty have tenure. The Regent institutions are at or below these national figures.

This report addresses the following strategy and action step in the Board's Strategic Plan:

- 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.

Highlights

- This memorandum summarizes the Regent universities' annual governance report on faculty tenure. The institutional reports are available in the Exhibit book.
- The 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.
- 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, 80.8% of tenure-eligible faculty have received tenure. At UNI, 75.8% of tenure-eligible faculty have received tenure.
- This measure of tenure density increased from 72.5% to 78.4% from 1993 to 1998 at SUI. At UNI, tenure density increased from 67% to 75.8% from 1993 to 1998. At ISU, tenure density decreased from 82% to 80.8% from 1993 to 1998.
- The number of tenured and tenure-eligible faculty women increased since Fall 1997; however, the percentages of tenured faculty women in proportion to those who are tenure eligible decreased at SUI and UNI. As a proportion of those faculty women who are eligible for tenure at Regent universities, more than 60% of women faculty are tenured.
- The number of tenured and tenure-eligible minority faculty increased since Fall 1997; however, the percentages of tenured minority faculty in proportion to those who are tenure eligible decreased at all Regent universities. As a

proportion of those minority faculty who are eligible for tenure at Regent universities, more than 60% of minority faculty are tenured.

- The total number of tenured and probationary tenure track faculty positions at the three Regent universities decreased by 10 (-0.2%) from Fall 1997 to Fall 1998.
- The total number of faculty positions that are not eligible for tenure (such as adjunct, visiting, and clinical appointments) increased by 158 (+6.0%) from Fall 1997 to Fall 1998.

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.
- Most colleges and universities in the United States offer some type of tenured employment for faculty. The specific terms of tenure policies vary among institutions, but they share many features.
- 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: 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.

Recent Patterns and Current Distribution

- The Regent universities have a total of 6,538 faculty members as of Fall 1998. This is an increase of 2.3% from the previous year.

- Of the total, 2,949 are tenured and 788 are probationary faculty members who are eligible for tenure. There was a decrease of 21 (-0.7%) faculty members from the prior year who are tenured. There was an increase of 11 (+1.4%) faculty members from the prior year who are in probationary tenure track positions.
- The remaining 2,801 faculty members are not eligible for tenure. This is an increase of 6% from the prior year. 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.
- Tables 1 and 2 on pages 10 and 11 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 full-time, while the majority of non-tenure track faculty is part-time.

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, and flexibility in the allocation of human and financial resources.
- Tenured appointments are 34.4% of all faculty appointments at SUI, 64.7% at ISU, and 52.1% at UNI.
- The high number of non-tenure track clinical faculty appointments in the colleges of Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, and Dentistry skews SUI data. The majority of these faculty members are unpaid and part-time. By excluding the 1,519 non-tenure track positions in these four colleges, the university's overall percentage of tenured faculty increases from 34.4% to 56.7%.
- At SUI, 78.4% of tenure-eligible faculty members have received tenure. At ISU, 80.8% of tenure-eligible faculty members have received tenure. At UNI, 75.8% of tenure-eligible faculty members have received tenure.

- The following table lists the concentration of tenured faculty by college at each institution. As a proportion of all faculty appointments, more than 60% of the faculty are tenured in the college of Law at SUI. At ISU, more than 50% of the faculty are tenured in six colleges; more than 70% of the faculty are tenured in three colleges. At UNI, more than 50% of the faculty are tenured in three colleges.

**DISTRIBUTION OF TENURED FACULTY BY COLLEGE
FALL 1998**

	# of Depts.	Total # of Faculty	% Tenured of Tenure-Eligible
University of Iowa			
Business Administration	6	149	81.1
Dentistry	10	242	79.2
Education	4	172	75.8
Engineering	6	113	71.8
Law	1	61	90.5
Liberal Arts	44	1,123	78.2
Medicine	23	1,285	78.9
Nursing	1	466	86.4
Pharmacy	1	251	58.3
Non-College Units	0	11	100.0
University Total	96	3,873	78.4
Iowa State University			
Agriculture	15	311	85.3
Business	5	73	72.9
Design	4	121	73.2
Education	4	119	67.6
Engineering	9	237	81.8
Family & Consumer Sciences	6	94	82.5
Liberal Arts & Sciences	20	676	80.9
Veterinary Medicine	5	124	87.9
Library	1	42	73.7
Computation Center	1	0	0.0
University Total	70	1,797	80.8
University of Northern Iowa			
Business Administration	5	89	84.8
Education	8	259	74.1
Humanities & Fine Arts	9	216	80.7
Natural Sciences	8	141	74.5
Social & Behavioral Sciences	8	133	68.4
Library	1	15	53.9
IT Services	1	2	100.0
Other	1	13	100.0
University Total	41	868	75.8
Regents Total	207	6,538	78.9

- The immediate impact of tenure density is often most acute at the department level because tenured appointments are traditionally attached to departments.
- As a proportion of tenure track appointments, more than 70% of the faculty are tenured in 72.9% of the departments at SUI. At ISU, more than 70% of the faculty are tenured in 75.7% of the departments. At UNI, more than 70% of the faculty are tenured in 73.2% of the departments.
- A recent survey by the American Association of University Professors showed that at the national level, 65% of faculty at public institutions have tenure. At public and private doctoral level institutions, 67% of the faculty have tenure; at public and private comprehensive universities, 62% of the faculty have tenure. The Regent institutions are at or below these national figures.
- Table 3 on page 12 provides data on departmental tenure concentrations for the past decade.

Distribution of Tenure by Rank, Gender, and Minority Status

- 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 1998**

	Tenured Professor	Tenured Associate Professor	Tenured Assistant Professor	Tenured Instructor or Lecturer	Total Tenured Faculty
SUI	833	491	10	0	1,334
ISU	660	467	35	1	1,163
UNI	174	211	38	29	452
Regents Total	1,667	1,169	83	30	2,949

**Probationary Faculty Distribution by Rank
Fall 1998**

	Probationary Professor	Probationary Associate Professor	Probationary Assistant Professor	Probationary Instructor or Lecturer	Total Probationary Faculty
SUI	5	43	315	5	368
ISU	2	13	258	3	276
UNI	0	2	121	21	144
Regents Total	7	58	694	29	788

- The traditional predominance of tenure among senior faculty ranks assumes additional significance with the issue of 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 number of tenured and tenure-eligible women and minority faculty has shown some improvement in recent years. However, they remain lower proportionately than those for the total faculty at all Regent universities, as the data on Table 4 (page 13) indicate.
- The annual governance report on diversity (G. D. 12) 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. Active discussions of tenure are occurring at national and state levels.
- Across the country, faculty members are engaged in serious, constructive discussions about the most effective ways to ensure the continued integrity of research and the curriculum in the context of other legitimate concerns about the changing academic enterprise. Similar discussions are occurring at Regent universities.
- These discussions are focusing on a variety of issues, including reform of tenure standards, accountability of tenured faculty, and the benefits and limitations of the increasing use of adjunct and part-time faculty.

- 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.
- Freedom of academic inquiry may be distinguished from freedom of expression and diversity of thought, which are widely recognized hallmarks deserving protection for all members of a vibrant learning community.
- Both critics and defenders of the current tenure system acknowledge that it has become an established component of academic culture. The cultural force of tenure exerts broad influence on the higher education environment.
- There is currently a contention that advanced applications of telecommunications technologies will significantly redesign the existing structure of university faculties. New forms of distance education may challenge traditional roles and organizational models in academe.
- 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. SUI and UNI have already submitted their policies. ISU's A-8 presents their proposed document for evaluation/review and promotion and tenure of faculty at the December Board meeting.
- 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 teach-scholars. Most informed observers would agree that tenure policies at the Regent universities have served the institutions well and have contributed to the strong quality of higher education in Iowa.