

Dear Colleagues,

This is the second installment of the 2015-16 WSUFA Action Committee's "Did You Know?" series. The purpose of these notices is help you understand and exercise your rights and opportunities under the IFO/MnSCU contract.

Our grievance officer and negotiator, Dr. Matt Hyle asks:

Did you know there is a great deal of confusion and misinformation about "early tenure?"

The purpose of this "Did you know" is to provide succinct and accurate information. There are two parts to this did you know. Part 1 concentrates of the facts. Part 2 is provides the IFO perspective on this process

THE FACTS

The tenure process is spelled out in Article 25 of the IFO/MnSCU Master contract. Every faculty member has a specified probationary period. The usual span is 5 years – while uncommon, it is possible under the contract for faculty to be hired with shortened probationary periods. Early tenure refers to an application for tenure before the last year of the specified probationary period.

The criteria for the decision to award tenure is based on a demonstrated:

record of positive performance and professionally competent achievement over the duration of the probationary period that is consistent with the goals and objectives of the university/college/department/program and with the goals outlined in Article 22. (Article 25, Subd. 1)

Any faculty member may apply for tenure after one year. Conceptually, a faculty member can apply for tenure every year after the first year during the probationary period. There is no contractual prohibition against applications for tenure before the end of the probationary period and there is no penalty for an early application for tenure. If a faculty member goes up for "early" tenure and is denied, there is no reduction in the probationary period.

The tenure process insures that that applicant receives feedback at every step. All recommendations from all sources must give rationales for the recommendation. The decision to award tenure or to deny tenure must provide reasons for that decision.

IFO PERSPECTIVE

Faculty should apply for tenure when they think they merit tenure. The responses in the PDR should guide each faculty member as to when they think they merit the award of tenure. The decision to award (or deny) tenure should be based on achievement not time in service. This is an important but nuanced difference. It is a contractual violation to recommend (or decide) to deny tenure based on the number of years in service. It is not a contractual violation to

recommend (or decide) to deny tenure based on a lack of achievement in one or more of the 5 criteria for tenure and promotion.

While someone might feel they are giving helpful advice when telling faculty that early tenure is not possible, that advice is both contractually and factually incorrect: faculty do merit and earn early tenure.

“Going up early” may invite valuable feedback from colleagues and administration on the merits of the application. Recommendations and a decision against tenure must give cogent rationales which a faculty member can incorporate into their subsequent PDPs and PDRs in future years.

If you are receiving signals that early tenure is not possible or will not be supported, or if you know of colleagues that are receiving such information, please inform the WSUFA. The only way to dispel this type of damaging misinformation is to deal with it at the source. —

If you have questions about tenure and/or promotion contact Grievance Officer/Negotiator, Matt Hyle mhyle@winona.edu or WSUFA President, Darrell Downs ddowns@winona.edu

Action Committee

Colette Hyman, Chair
Tamara Berg
Ruth Charles
Patrick Clipsham
Joyati Debnath
Darrell Downs
Matt Hyle
Mary Jo Kinker
Kendall Larson
Fred Lee
Bill Ng

Darrell Downs, Ph.D.
President, WSU Faculty Association
Professor, Political Science and Public Administration
Winona State University
117 Minne
507-457-5405
ddowns@winona.edu