

Faculty Handbook Revisions Committee

April 17, 2013

Members Present: Cynthia Waskowiak, Bill Roach, Jalen Lowry, Nancy Tate, Matt Arterburn, Richard Martin, Monica Scheibmeir

Discussion:

Nancy presented a draft by the P&T Sub-Committee proposing extensions of the normal tenure review time period. The normal period of tenure review is six years. The proposal outlined extenuating circumstances where a faculty member may apply for an extension. The language from the proposal was taken from a similar KBOR policy and WU's FMLA application.

A member wondered if immigration requirements should be added to the list of situations. The Committee decided that the Leave Without Pay section adequately addressed immigration concerns. That section says the Board of Regents will determine if such leave will count toward required service for Promotion and/or Tenure, so it doesn't need to be listed in this proposal.

The Committee then discussed situation number one, "Giving birth or providing care for a dependent child." We wondered if "dependent child" should be defined, as the intent was unclear. We imagined that care of a child with special needs would be covered by number four and adoption by number two, so we were unsure what number one covers. One member suggested that some people need more time to handle a newborn, like figuring out child care or adjusting to various unplanned changes, or others must unexpectedly care for a relative's child (military or drug-addict situations). We also discussed whether the language of number one should be gender neutral or more specific.

We had a long discussion about the type of environment WU wants to present in recruiting and retaining qualified females and males and family-friendliness, as well as not creating two "classes" of faculty- those with kids and those without. There's concern about faculty not being treated fairly or using this extension unethically. Some felt that leaving these extension decisions to the Dean's discretion could be dicey.

We also suggested the proposal include language about any accommodation under the ADA (for a "clock stopping") must follow the usual process and reference that policy. Situation number seven should be re-worded to reflect current law and be limited to faculty member and spouse.

The intent of the proposal is to empower faculty on the tenure-track and avoid abuse, but the Dean's discretion is pretty broad. We'd like stronger language about the rarity of such an extension being granted and some criteria for the Deans, like the situation presents an unusual circumstance and the pattern of success prior to the event will be considered.

Finally, the process for requesting an extension is confusing as written. We assume that "appeal" means request but it's unclear. The time frame for a request should be sufficiently flexible but not cause undue hardship.

Decisions:

- Cynthia will re-word situation seven and work with Carol to add language about referencing the ADA policy. She will also suggest some language about the Dean's discretion.
- At the next meeting, we will finish the discussion and hopefully send the proposal to Faculty Affairs.

Next Meeting: May 1, Shawnee Room