

# Faculty Senate

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## Faculty Grievance Committee

### Annual Report 2002-03

**Date:** February 3, 2004

**To:** Bruce Sorte and the Executive Committee

**From:** Michael Ingram and Michael Oriard, co-chairs, Faculty Grievance Committee  
(Mark Daeschel, Diane Kaufman, Karel Murphy)

**Re:** Annual Report

The Faculty Grievance Committee heard four grievances from the same faculty member, the first, an appeal of a Promotion & Tenure decision, conducted on September 10, September 11, and October 3, 2002; the second, a request for a third-year and annual reviews, on October 4, 2002; the third, an appeal of an annual review, on January 23, 2003; and the fourth, an appeal of a notice of termination, on February 6, 2003. The fourth hearing had to be continued, but after the faculty member resigned from the university, the grievance became moot. Due to schedule conflicts, Patricia Easley substituted for Karel Murphy, and Bruce Sorte substituted for Diane Kaufman for the first grievance.

From our experience with these grievances the Committee wishes to raise some issues to be considered next year. We would like the appropriate Faculty Senate committees to consider clarifying the wording in the Promotion and Tenure Guidelines regarding early tenure.

- The Guidelines currently state, "Tenure is granted for achievement, not for years in rank, but under normal circumstances faculty will be considered for tenure in their sixth year of service in professorial rank." The intent is clearly to make the sixth year the norm while still allowing for the possibility of early tenure. It is also implicit, but only implicit, that expectations will be higher for early tenure. We recommend that this implicit principle be made explicit.
- The current guidelines allow either the faculty member or the unit head to initiate an early-tenure review. This is a revision from the Guidelines as originally written, presumably at the desire of the administration, perhaps in consultation with the Executive Committee in place at the time. Our Committee is unaware what motives led to that change, but we recommend that only the chair or supervisor be allowed to initiate an early-tenure review. We assume that, in principle, early tenure is offered by the university in order to onto exceptional faculty who are clearly deserving (and perhaps who might otherwise leave). If the chair or supervisor does not feel a member of his or her unit is so deserving, it is hard to imagine the case going forward successfully. The cost in faculty time and ill-will within the department can be considerable in these circumstances. If there is a compelling reason to preserve the faculty member's prerogative to seek early tenure without the chair's concurrence, perhaps this prerogative could be limited to the fifth year. For tenure earlier than the fifth year, only the chair or supervisor could initiate the process. It could well be that the situation which eventuated in the grievance we heard will never occur again, but a revision of the Guidelines along these lines seems reasonable to us in any case.

Finally, the co-chairs of the Committee met with the President of the Faculty Senate, Bruce Sorte, to discuss the possibility that the Faculty Grievance Committee needed more members to share the responsibilities when numerous grievances are filed. For a time it appeared that there would be several more grievances from professional faculty over the consequences of budget reductions. No additional formal grievances were filed, however. The immediate need to expand the Committee has disappeared, but the Committee feels that it would be good to discuss this issue next year.