

CHANGE IN FIRST REAPPOINTMENT SCHEDULE: AAUP Executive Committee Concerns

The AAUP's intention in changing from an initial two-year to a three-year contract was to eliminate the necessity of reviewing the same faculty member in two successive years. Previously, the review for the first reappointment had to be made by December of the second year and the review of the second reappointment had to be made in the third year (the reason for this being that after two years of employment, a year's notice has to be given for non-reappointment). The change from an initial two-year to an initial three-year appointment satisfied that intention although, it does not provide any additional time for the candidate to build up a record of accomplishment prior to the initiation of the review for the first reappointment.

Although initiating the review in the spring rather than the fall semester would give the candidate more time to build a record of accomplishment, there are other factors that must also be considered. Whereas, previously, the entire initial reappointment process was restricted to less than one semester, with a decision from the Board due to the faculty member by December 15, the process now runs over two semesters. The review schedule for the initial reappointment now allows time for a more thorough review and provides adequate time for both the faculty member and the FPB and/or UAB to provide a response to any concerns that are raised. The confined, one-semester review was troublesome in several respects that would be duplicated if a spring semester review were to be substituted for the old fall semester review.

First, one of the problems that has become more prevalent in recent years is the fact that the review committees - the FPB and UAB, in particular - have had difficulty in meeting and, subsequently, many personnel decisions have been late, with "denials without prejudice" occurring with increasing frequency. This outcome leaves the candidate in limbo without any set date at which a decision will be made and, aside from the fact that it is very disheartening for the candidate, results in many candidates spending what would be productive time frantically pursuing other positions. With a condensed spring review, any problems would almost assure this outcome since the schedule does not allow the 21 days a candidate is allotted to respond to each step in the process and provides no "wiggle room" for delays in the recommendations.

With a two-semester review, however, there is not only sufficient time for the candidate to respond to any concerns but enough time to accommodate delays should additional data be deemed necessary. Except for the August 31 notification date, these dates are "target dates", not deadlines, and the CBA makes accommodation for needed delays, e.g., to provide for more peer observations (See Article 5.17 (c)). Other advantages include the fact that all faculty committees, including the UAB, meet prior to the end of the spring semester (after which it is difficult to convene these committees), the notification is prior to the summer conferences of several disciplinary associations at which candidates not

recommended for reappointment might seek employment opportunities and, in addition, is prior to the tenure notifications, which would take priority were there to be delays at the UAB or Provost's level.

We would all like to see meaningful reviews but we hesitate to say that, until now, the reappointment reviews were not meaningful. Most departments took them very seriously and made meaningful recommendations - but there were definitely problems with the condensed review schedule. Despite the arguments that starting the process in the spring rather than the fall would give the faculty member more time to build up a record of accomplishment, the AAUP Executive Committee and the Negotiations Steering Committee are not convinced that another condensed process that starts a few months later would be any more meaningful. We believe it would reinstate all of the problems of a condensed review. DPCs should be reviewing the faculty member's accomplishments in view of the time they have had to complete those accomplishments and, if there are questions, they still have the option of delaying their recommendation until receipt of additional information.

Additionally, we are concerned about making changes in ratified contract language: the CBA is a legal contract that protects us and although there are many items in the CBA that could be improved upon, it is in our interest to keep changes to a minimum.