

March 25, 2020

TO: Members of the Board of Trustees

FROM: John A. Elliott, Ph.D.
Interim Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

RE: By-Law Change to Provide Tenure-Track Faculty with a Tenure Clock Extension

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board of Trustees consider a temporary change to the University bylaws stating the following:

“An automatic one-year extension to the tenure clock will be provided to tenure-track faculty members impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. This extension shall apply to tenure-track faculty members who were employed by the University on March 1, 2020 and did not submit their dossier for consideration for promotion and tenure during the 2019-2020 academic year.”

BACKGROUND:

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused significant disruption to normal University operations, including, but not limited to, slowing down the progress of research, curtailing faculty travel, and imposing an additional burden to rapidly transition in-person classes to an online mode of teaching. In recognition, a one-time circumstantially-driven change to the By-Laws is recommended, which will provide currently employed tenure-track faculty who have not yet submitted their dossier for consideration for promotion and tenure with an automatic one-year extension to the tenure clock. The additional year will be administered in a similar manner to the automatic tenure clock extension for FMLA-related leave. Individual faculty members will have the option to decline the use of this additional time and be considered for tenure on the normal timeline.

This action has been discussed with the University of Connecticut Chapter of the American Association of University Professors, and the parties have entered into a Memorandum of Agreement concerning implementation of the tenure clock extension in accordance with the collective bargaining agreement.

DRAFT Resolution

BE IT RESOLVED

The following revisions (reflected in red) are hereby made to the By-Laws of the University of Connecticut, in accordance with the reasons set forth in the attached memorandum.

ARTICLE XIV – The University Staff

C. Academic Appointment and Tenure

4. Beginning with appointment to a full-time, tenure track position, the probationary period shall not exceed seven years, except when the original appointment is in January or as provided elsewhere in the University By-Laws. When the original appointment is in January, the probationary period shall not exceed seven and one-half years.

For faculty with primary appointments in the Schools of Medicine or Dental Medicine, the probationary period shall not exceed nine years, including within this period full-time service in all institutions of higher education, except when the original appointment is in January. Then the probationary period shall not exceed nine and one-half years.

New appointees to tenure track positions with prior service in a tenure track position at another university may, in consultation with their deans and department heads, be granted up to a full probationary period at the time of hire. The probationary period agreed upon in the candidate's offer letter will be viewed as the tenure track period.

Ordinarily, a leave with or without pay awarded for the purpose of pursuing scholarly research activities shall be included in the probationary period toward tenure.

A leave of at least one semester for personal or other reasons ordinarily will not be included in the probationary period toward tenure. Such leaves must be requested in writing by the faculty member and granted in writing by the department head, dean, and the Provost.

Faculty members who provide timely notice to the University that they have experienced a qualifying major life event, as defined under the Federal Family and Medical Leave Act, prior to their mandatory tenure evaluation year will receive an automatic one-year extension of the tenure clock.

An automatic one-year extension to the tenure clock will be provided to tenure-track faculty members impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. This extension shall apply to tenure-track faculty members who were employed by the University on March 1, 2020 and did not submit their dossier for consideration for promotion and tenure during the 2019-2020 academic year.

For faculty with primary appointments in the School of Medicine, significant life events may be allowed to increase the probationary period leading to promotion or tenure for a maximum of twenty-four months. An increase in the probationary period leading to promotion and tenure is automatically awarded when the faculty member takes leave documented and approved under the Federal Family Medical Leave Act, the State of Connecticut Family Medical Leave Act, or the State of Connecticut Workers' Compensation Act. Alternatively, the faculty member may request an increase in the probationary period to promotion and/or tenure even when the above criteria are not met, but when the faculty member's productivity is affected by a significant life event. Such requests must be approved by the Department Chair and the Dean or his/her designee per the School of Medicine By-Laws.

Faculty who wish to be considered for promotion and tenure before the end of the probationary period will be evaluated by the same standards applied to faculty who have taken the full probationary period.

The University ordinarily requires of all new appointees a probationary period of at least one year in this institution, but tenure may be granted at any time thereafter and before the expiration of the maximum probationary period by vote of the Board of Trustees or for faculty of the Schools of Medicine and Dental Medicine, by vote of the Board of Directors. In appropriate circumstances, tenure may be granted by the Board of Trustees or for the faculty of the Schools of Medicine and Dental Medicine, by vote of the Board of Directors upon arrival at the University at the rank of Professor, and, in special circumstances, at the rank of Associate Professor.

Following an award of tenure, a faculty appointment shall be terminated only for adequate cause or under extraordinary circumstances of financial exigencies.