

Issue AY17-03-F

Faculty Senate Issue Log Form

Date-Submitted: 8/16/2017

Title-of-Issue: A Nationally Competitive Residential Fellowship may be used to stop the tenure clock.

Description: Faculty Handbook, section

Tenure (policy #1411)

### III. Probationary Period

B. The following do not count as part of the probationary period

current language:

5. Time spent on faculty exchanges if the faculty member so chooses.

proposed amendment

5. Time spent on faculty exchanges (including nationally competitive fellowships) if the faculty so chooses.

Rationale: Untenured faculty members, particularly those in Humanities disciplines where the tenure standard is a solo-authored research monograph, sometimes find it advantageous to stop the tenure clock. The purpose of this amendment is to clarify that the decision whether to stop the clock or to let it run lies with the individual faculty member.

Mid- and upper-level administrators have increasingly begun to apply this policy arbitrarily.

Example 1: An assistant professor accepted a residential fellowship at the University of Toronto during the academic year 2015-16. At the time of acceptance, the faculty member considered carefully whether to stop the clock to allow more time for research, writing, and polishing the book. The faculty member made these deliberations under Sentence 5, "Time spent on faculty exchanges if the faculty member so chooses." Ultimately the faculty member opted not to stop the clock but to come up for tenure on the regular schedule. This decision was made in conjunction with the Department Chair and then-Provost Simpson. A substantial amount of fellowship time that could have been devoted to research was instead used to prepare the tenure file.

As the faculty member was on the point of sending up the tenure file, Interim Provost, Chandra Da Silva rejected the tenure file and invoked, against the faculty member's express and stated desire, sentence 4 of paragraph B: "The following do not count as part of the probationary period: 4. Time spent of leave of absence." Both the faculty member and the faculty member's Department perceived to be the Interim Provost's decision to be arbitrary and a violation of the Faculty Handbook.

Example 2: An assistant professor accepted a residential fellowship at the University of Michigan during the academic year 2016-17. This faculty member applied for several nationally and internationally competitive fellowships and won several of them. Developing the

grantsmanship that won these awards, a skill the University strongly encourages as a matter of policy, required considerable time that might otherwise have been spent more directly on the tenure project itself. The faculty member was encouraged by Department colleagues to develop this skill with the express purpose of gaining concentrated research time and, specifically, to stop the tenure clock.

However, when the faculty member was on the point of departing for the residential fellowship, new leadership in the College doubted whether stopping the tenure clock was possible or, from their point of view, desirable.

This amendment will clarify long-standing but now jeopardized University policy that the decision whether to stop the tenure clock ultimately belongs to the assistant professor alone.

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