Faculty Senate Issue Log Form

Date-Submitted: August 25, 2019
Title-of-Issue: Ability to withdraw from the tenure review process
Description: The Handbook is silent on the question of whether a faculty member may withdraw from the tenure review process. This silence could lead to confusion about whether withdrawal is allowed in the case of an early tenure application. It should be clear either that a faculty member may withdraw or may not withdraw in those instances.

Rationale: Faculty may apply for tenure at any point during the probationary period, including one or more years before the expiration of the probationary period, at which point they would be compelled to apply for tenure. However, if one applies for tenure early and receives negative feedback early in the process, then one could conceivably withdraw and reapply the following year or even later. Hypothetically, a faculty member could apply for tenure early and then withdraw multiple times during the probationary period, until the point at which he/she would be compelled to remain in the process until its conclusion. This seems an abuse of the tenure review system and would place an undue burden on those faculty involved in the review process.

I inquired of the University Counsel about this and was told that at present, the Handbook is silent on the issue of withdrawal from an early tenure review. I asked what would happen if someone attempted to withdraw from an early tenure review and was told that we could argue an application for tenure is like a letter of resignation, in that once it is submitted, it cannot be withdrawn. However, Counsel indicated that would not be an ideal scenario, given we have no policy or customary practice to which to refer.

It seems that it would be advisable for the Handbook to offer clear guidance on whether one may withdraw from an early tenure application, once it has been submitted.

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