

WHY DO COUNTY FACULTY HAVE TO WORK FOR TENURE?

What does it mean to be a University faculty member?

The University expects its faculty to be independent, competent generators and disseminators of knowledge. They do not merely pass on information that someone else gives them. They create educational, information based on the latest research and deliver it effectively through teaching, research applications, and consultation. This competence level is especially important for Extension faculty in the counties because they are on the "front lines" of new issues facing people and communities. They must constantly challenge themselves and their campus colleagues to discover and create answers to increasingly complex problems.

How does the University assure quality in its faculty?

Assuring high quality faculty begins with the hiring process, when candidates are screened in a careful, systematic manner. Positions are widely advertised, usually on a national level; nominations are sought; and a select number of applicants with proven credentials are invited for interviews in which their ideas, knowledge, research plans, and ability to teach are assessed.

University faculty are required to constantly meet standards of excellence, competence, and effectiveness throughout their professional careers. Their performance is regularly subject to peer review by their departmental colleagues and program administrators. The purpose of such review is to assist faculty in the continuing growth and development of their professional skills and to insure continuing excellence in teaching, research and service to the University's many clients.

Faculty are promoted based on evaluation of their performance. Promotion decisions are based on evidence of teaching effectiveness, peer assessments of published research, success in competition to obtain grants, performance of university and community service, and accumulated annual merit reviews that include client evaluations.

During the probationary phase of a faculty member's academic career (a period in Wisconsin that must not exceed seven consecutive years in a full-time position), the most frequent, systematic and formal scrutiny of performance occurs. Probationary faculty may have their appointments terminated with timely notice, may receive renewed probationary appointments, or may be promoted to the ranks of tenured faculty. At the end of the probationary period, an "up or out" decision occurs. A positive decision results in the granting of tenure.

What is Tenure?

Tenure is a formal recognition that a faculty person has met the standards of excellence required to be a long term member of the profession. It results from the careful scrutiny of the probationary period, similar to the trial or internship period of other professions, such as law or medicine. Tenured faculty members have demonstrated their professional worth and a judgment has been made about their future productivity and ability to work independently to create and disseminate knowledge. Tenure is not granted on the basis of seniority, nor is it a lifelong job guarantee. Those who do not continue to perform will not be rewarded, may be disciplined, or even dismissed for cause as a result of continuing systematic evaluation of their performance.

Why have tenure for county faculty?

The tenure process insures that the Wisconsin counties have access to the highest quality person the university and the county can jointly employ. It facilitates the recruitment and retention of qualified and effective educators to serve people. It insures full recognition of county faculty as peers with their campus colleagues: It insures that county faculty have the capacity to bring the most relevant research and knowledge, and university resources to bear on the increasingly complex needs of people in the county ..: issues such as youth at risk, resource management, community development, healthy families, and profitable agriculture.

Tenure also insures academic freedom - the ability for faculty. to express views and deal with controversial issues without fear of reprisal ..

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[possibly early 1980s vintage]