

RESOLUTION

TENURE

Whereas the American Association of University Professors has adopted a “1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure” in 1942, as amended in 1990.¹

Whereas the purpose of the “1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure” was to promote public understanding and support of academic freedom and tenure and an agreement upon procedures to ensure them in colleges and universities.²

Whereas institutions of higher education are conducted for the common good and not to further the interest of either the individual teacher or institution as a whole, and the common good depends upon the unfettered search for truth and its free expression in the classroom.³

Whereas academic freedom protects the rights of the teacher in teaching and the rights of the student in learning by advancing truth, inquiry and the exchange of ideas.⁴

Whereas tenure is a means to the legitimate educational ends of freedom in teaching, research and extramural activities, and economic security to attract and retain quality faculty.⁵

Whereas tenure also ensures that faculty will continue to participate in institutional governance and the development and implementation of quality academic programming and policies independent from administrators, boards or legislators.

Whereas tenure is indispensable to the success of an institution in fulfilling its obligations to students and to society.⁶

Whereas, according to WKU’s current Statement of Purpose, “The University places a premium on teaching and student learning. Its faculty engage in creative activity and diverse scholarship, including basic and applied research, designed to expand knowledge, improve instruction, increase learning, and provide optimum service to the state and nation. The University directly supports its constituents in its designated service areas of Kentucky with professional and technical expertise, cultural enrichment, and educational assistance. The University encourages applied research and public service in support of economic development, quality of life, and improvement of education at all levels, especially elementary and secondary schools. In particular, WKU faculty contribute to the identification and solution of key social, economic, scientific, health, and environmental problems within its reach, but particularly throughout its primary service area.”⁷

Whereas the Commonwealth of Kentucky is experiencing budget deficits and state appropriations to higher education are being significantly cut.

Whereas in times of economic uncertainty, concepts such as tenure are often re-examined and attacked under the guise of “financial exigency.”

Whereas the reduction and/or elimination of tenure-track faculty lines will compromise the size and quality of future applicant pools at WKU as well as the ability to retain existing faculty resulting in the decline of valuable research endeavors, free exchange of ideas in the classroom, and the overall student learning experience.

Whereas systems other than tenure are easily susceptible to arbitrary decisions on issues of compensation, continuance and promotion, and have the effect of minimizing the role of faculty in the academic and governance processes.

Whereas precedent exists in this Commonwealth for the abolition of tenure.

Whereas on March 14, 2009, the KCTCS post-secondary education system, by and through its Board of Regents, voted to eliminate tenure for faculty and continuing employment status for staff for appointments effective on or after July 1, 2009, and to end post-retirement health insurance benefits for those appointed on or after July 1, 2009, citing the need for financial flexibility to terminate faculty and/or eliminate programs as state funding decreases.

Whereas the faculty of WKU support their colleagues employed in the KCTCS post-secondary system in denouncing the action of the KCTCS Board of Regents.

BE IT RESOLVED that WKU shall maintain the quality of the student academic experience by protecting the academic freedom of faculty in research and teaching in all college departments, divisions and schools, regardless of budgetary constraints.

TO THAT END, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that WKU shall preserve the institutional commitment to the tenure system as a core staffing principle in all colleges departments, divisions and schools.

April, 2009

¹ American Association of University Professors, *1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure (as amended)*

² Id.

³ Id.

⁴ Id.

⁵ Id.

⁶ Id.

⁷ <http://www.wku.edu/about.html>