Resolution on Tenure and Indefinite Status
Faculty Personnel Committee

Approved Unanimously On 11/3/15

Whereas, WI Act 55 has removed statutory protections for tenure and shared governance, and given all effective authority to the University of Wisconsin Board of Regents and individual campus Chancellors, and

Whereas, state law has not removed the ability or responsibility of Regents and Chancellors alike to uphold the standards of tenure and academic freedom, in practice and policy,

And whereas, Governor Walker has also called for further study regarding whether or not to prohibit probationary and indefinite status appointments for academic staff.

Therefore, be it resolved that we encourage UW System Chancellors and the Regents to affirm and practice the following principles in regard to probationary and tenured faculty, in maximal accordance with both the state standards established by law and administrative rules immediately previous to WI Act 55, as well as the national standards summarized in the American Association of University Professors’ document “Recommended Institutional Regulations on Academic Freedom and Tenure”:

1. Tenured and probationary faculty should be terminated only for just cause, with a rigorous procedure of faculty review to uphold that standard.

2. Tenured and probationary faculty should not be laid off due to budgetary changes unless a financial emergency exists, as declared after detailed consultation with appropriate faculty governance bodies. A financial emergency is a severe financial crisis that fundamentally compromises the academic integrity of the institution as a whole and that cannot be alleviated by less drastic means.

3. The faculty as a whole, or an appropriate committee thereof, should primarily determine all program changes for their campus, including any changes that might lead to layoffs. Program decisions should be based essentially upon educational considerations. Educational considerations do not include cyclical or temporary variations in enrollment, but rather must reflect long-range judgments that the educational mission of the institution as a whole will be enhanced by the change.

Be it further resolved that the principles and practices of tenure, and the academic freedom which they enact, should be upheld equally throughout the System, without differentiation between campuses.

Be it further resolved that we also call upon UW System Chancellors and the Regents to oppose any and all attempts to abolish or attenuate indefinite status appointments for academic staff.

Be it finally resolved that upon approval, copies of this resolution shall be transmitted to UW System President Ray Cross; UW Regent Chair Regina Millner; UW Regent Vice President
John Behling; and of the members of the UW System Tenure Task Force (Lopa Basu, UW-Stout; Greg Diemer, UW-Stevens Point; Dorothy Farrar Edwards, UW-Madison; Katy Heyning, UW-Whitewater; Sarah Mangelsdorf, UW-Madison; Patricia McManus, UW-Madison; Ken Menningen, UW-Stevens Point; Steve Meyer, UW-Green Bay; Gary Miller, UW-Green Bay; Mittie Nimocks Den Herder, UW-Platteville; Christine Roth, UW-Oshkosh; James Schmidt, UW-Eau Claire; Bradley Seebach, UW-La Crosse; Jonathan Shailor, UW-Parkside; Robert Smith, UW-Milwaukee; Kristene Surerus, UW-Milwaukee; Alan White, UW Colleges; Dean Van Galen, UW-River Falls).