

Request for clarification from the Handbook Committee on items raised in 2/8/08 memo from Grievance Committee

To: Bob Kolesar, Chair of Handbook Committee
From: Dwight Hahn, Chair of Faculty Council

9/27/2011

I write to request clarification from the Handbook Committee of issues raised by the attached memo of 2/8/08 from Dr. Daniel Kilbride, chair of a grievance committee, to Dr. Miles Coburn who was then Chair of Faculty Council. Dr. Kilbride's memo was written in accordance with Part Four, Section IV of the Faculty Handbook to suggest possible reforms or other measures so that future grievance committees might avoid the problems encountered by the grievance committee that had been chaired by Dr. Kilbride.

As recent successor to the position of Chair of Faculty Council, I believe it important that the issues raised in Dr. Kilbride's memo be addressed. However, before Faculty Council might take action on any of the issues raised in the 2008 memo, I would like to invite the Handbook Committee to provide clarification, as it sees fit, on any or all of the three questions raised in that memo.

The three questions raised in the memo are:

1. Does the language of Part Three, Section IV, E of the Handbook mean that any member of the Faculty, including any member starting at the rank of Instructor with the status of visitor, is to be automatically granted tenure at the beginning of the eighth year of full-time service? That is, do years served at the rank of Instructor or higher with the status of visitor count as years in service toward automatic conferral of tenure?
2. What is the proper relationship as envisioned by the Handbook between the Handbook's guidelines for tenure and a department's guidelines for tenure? Should the Handbook's guidelines "be understood as the binding statement of expectations for candidates"?
3. Who has the "final word" (in the event of conflicting views) when it comes to interpretation of the Handbook?

Clarification on any or all of these three questions—condensed here from the attached memo—that might be offered by the Handbook Committee would be helpful. I suspect that the first issue, involving the conferral of automatic tenure upon those who have accumulated years in full-time service as "visitor," though perhaps perfectly clear, may, in any event, have to be submitted for a formal "interpretation." I would be grateful for any advice that the Handbook Committee or you as Chair might offer as to which, if any, of these questions should be submitted for a formal interpretation.