

Policy on the Tenure Compensation Commitment for P& S Faculty

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Background

The tenure system – whereby faculty members with outstanding scholarly achievements are granted an appointment without stated term (tenure) - is fundamental to the intellectual pre-eminence of universities. Tenure, which ensures that faculty members may engage in scholarly pursuits with academic freedom, represents the institution's commitment to innovative, transformative scholarly achievement. The 1940 AAUP Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure (<http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/pubsres/policydocs/contents/1940statement.htm>) states that "Tenure is a means to certain ends; specifically: (1) freedom of teaching and research and of extramural activities, and (2) a sufficient degree of economic security to make the profession attractive to men and women of ability". Decisions regarding compensation for tenured faculty members are of particular importance, because of the long-term commitment that is required.

The institutional commitment of tenure guarantees some amount of compensation (the Faculty Handbook states that "tenure necessarily implies some financial obligation, it does not guarantee any specific level of compensation"). Columbia University does not define what amount of financial compensation, instead noting that "the various Faculties have separate salary programs for determining the appropriate level of compensation for new faculty and for giving salary increases. Salaries for the same rank may vary from one Faculty to another and among the disciplines making up a single Faculty on the basis of an officer's length of service and professional accomplishments, the prevailing rates of compensation in the discipline, and the need to meet outside offers." The salaries of tenured faculty at P&S have been supported by grant income, endowments and, in some instances, clinical income. In contrast to their counterparts on the Morningside campus, P&S tenured faculty may perform little formal classroom teaching as the majority of their educational effort is tied to post-doctoral research training in the context of a highly productive, externally funded research program. Thus, ensuring that P&S tenured faculty members are compensated fairly with sustainable tenure commitments requires sound financial management as well as continued high academic standards. The following principles should guide the development of tenure compensation policies:

1. Tenure-associated salary commitments must meet the objectives envisioned in the AAUP Statement on Tenure and standards set by University Policy.
2. Tenure-associated financial commitments must be clear.
3. Tenure commitments should be commensurate with departmental activities and responsibilities.
4. Tenure commitments must be consistent with the financial capacity of the department as well as P&S, with each faculty member contributing to the overall financial integrity of the department.
5. Tenure-associated financial commitments must apply equally to all tenured faculty.
6. Any changes in salary, as a result of this policy, would occur with sufficient notice to allow faculty to redefine their academic contributions if they so choose.

With these principles for guidance, P&S undertook an evaluation of the current practices for compensating tenured faculty members, including: (1) a brief summary of the tenure guarantees of peer institutions and (2) an analysis of the source(s) of the salary commitments made to currently tenured faculty.

Rationale for Policy

Salaries of tenured faculty at P&S salaries have been supported by endowments, extramural grants and contracts, other research support, and clinical revenue but not general income, with the distribution among these sources varying widely by department and individual faculty. However, there has been some expectation that, in the absence of any or all other sources of salary component funds, P&S would provide funding to cover any salary deficit created by declines in grant or clinical income. Support defined as “P&S Support” includes funding from dean’s funds and/or department funds. This practice is not sustainable nor consistent with the principles articulated above. As a result, tenured faculty members who do not generate such revenues and do little or no teaching over long periods of time may have salaries that bear no relationship to responsibilities or productivity. In addition, such salaries impose a burden on departmental colleagues who do meet work expectations and whose efforts may sustain widely varying salary amounts even in the same department. The current P&S financial model expects that each department will function as a business unit responsible for balancing costs and revenue. It is thus critical that the costs associated with the long-term commitment of tenure be explicitly quantified and uniformly applied.

At our peer institutions, tenured status carries a variety of salary guarantees ranging from no financial guarantee at all, to 50% of the median AAMC salary for a faculty member’s rank and discipline (currently \$55,000-\$80,000 for basic science faculty, \$113,000-\$125,000 for clinical faculty), to a university-wide minimum salary for a given rank. However, the minimum or base salary is often poorly quantified, and there is considerable variance across our peer institutions. For example, at the University of Chicago, base (tenure-guaranteed) salary is generally set at the median salary for rank as described by AAMC and thus may vary. Chicago also acknowledged, however, that this is done by “common practice, but not defined by policy and base salary may often be negotiated above these levels or set below the levels”. At Johns Hopkins University and Case Western Reserve University, tenure does not include *any* salary guarantee or other financial commitment in any university department or school. At several institutions most similar in caliber and administrative structure to Columbia University, there are defined minimum salaries which are guaranteed. These include Washington University in St. Louis (where the base salary for an Associate or Full Professor has been set at \$70,000), Yale University (where the base salaries are \$76,500 for an Associate Professor and \$85,000 for a Full Professor), the University of Pennsylvania (where the base salaries are \$70,000 for an Associate Professor and \$87,500 for a Full Professor), and Stanford University (where the base salaries are \$84,000 and \$110,000 for Associate and Full Professors, respectively). Thus, although there is considerable variability across institutions in the base salary guarantee, nearly all have no expectation of continued support above and beyond university- or medical center-defined base guarantees in the case of consistent inability by a faculty member to generate salary funding or otherwise contribute in an institutionally-meaningful manner.

Policy

Based on our commitment to rewarding excellence in research and education, to fairness and transparency, and to sound business planning principles, it is critical that the tenure commitment be defined quantitatively, and that it is uniform for all tenured P&S faculty members. In addition, in the absence of fully-funded Columbia University salary lines, or of external funding, or compensation related to specific academic tasks such as teaching, P&S cannot be expected to guarantee a salary greater than this defined base after some specified period of time. To that end, we propose that:

- Each tenured professor will be guaranteed an allocation, either from an endowed professorship or from P&S funds, of \$85,000 at the associate professor level or \$95,000 at the full professor level.

- Faculty members whose extramural grant support is insufficient to fund their salary and fringe will receive support for five years guided by the compensation plan of the unit responsible for their salary.
- After the five - year period, the salaries of faculty who have lost external funding will be reduced to the professorial minimum except to the extent that the faculty member can generate all or part of the gap between their current salary and the professorial minimum from other sources.
- The five - year period before salary is reduced to the professorial minimum for rank is designed to permit faculty time to retool their research or to redefine their academic contributions with the department chair. Faculty might assume a greater educational, administrative or clinical role and thus make up the difference between the professorial minimum and whatever salary is set within the department.

Re-review of the P&S guaranteed allocation amounts will be conducted when necessary in order to ensure continued competitiveness with peer institution. P&S will make an effort to increase opportunities for alternate funding sources (including teaching and administrative duties) in order to help faculty who experience lapses in funding.

This policy defines an equitable financial commitment to our tenured faculty members. Defining the quantitative commitment associated with the award of tenure protects the principles set forth in the 1940 AAUP policy statement and University policy, provides principles to guide equity in salary commitments, and allows departments and P&S to use tenure commitments to build excellence. The five -year period recognizes that academic careers are dynamic and that senior, experienced faculty, by redefining academic activities, may continue to add value to the institution even when research activity declines. The proposal also encourages faculty to consider opportunities for alternate funding by redirecting academic contributions and thus allows P&S to maintain its commitment to excellence in all mission-critical work areas of research, education, clinical care, and administration.

Implementation & Transition Planning

Implementation of the plan will begin with the 2009-10 fiscal year. For faculty who meet the criteria of no external funding for the past three or more years, an appropriate transitional period to allow for redefinition of academic contributions and/or transition to the new professorial minimum salaries will be negotiated on a case by case basis.