

Resolution on Renewal Reviews for Term Faculty

Resolved:

ISU should allow term faculty the option to defer renewal reviews and take a one-year extension on their contracts. Advancement reviews are always optional, so no extensions are necessary. Term faculty who wish to undergo renewal review may still do so.

Rationale:

The deferral of renewal reviews is justified for comparable reasons to the tenure clock extensions. The University offered tenure eligible faculty an additional year on their tenure clocks due to the many ways that their scholarly and creative programs were disrupted by the COVID crisis. Given the importance of scholarship in tenure decisions the option of an extension was necessary and appropriate. Term faculty, and indeed all faculty, have faced a similar disruption to their teaching which provides the basis for decisions about whether to renew the contracts of most term faculty. As a matter of fairness and parity extensions are appropriate.

We lack good data on the quality of teaching. We should resume gathering student evaluations of teaching, and all faculty should continue to be subject to annual reviews. Performance evaluations of term faculty, especially those in teaching intensive positions, will not give us the information that we need to make a good decision about retention and renewal.

- Many term faculty are teaching online for the first time
- Many term faculty who teach coordinated courses are required or expected to do so using lectures, assignments, and other materials assembled by some other faculty member who designed the course, complicating evaluations
- Student evaluations of teaching from the spring of 2020 may not be used in evaluations
- Many term faculty face additional complications related to the instability of childcare and online delivery of K-12 education
- Term faculty on one year contracts would be evaluated primarily on their performance this semester, which is not indicative of their overall ability to contribute to the teaching mission of the University
- Many term faculty on three year contracts receive their renewal reviews during the second year of those contracts. So, evaluation of their performance under the current contract would include this year and last year, the data for which is also corrupted by the COVID crisis

Many faculty members are struggling with the increased demands on their time in teaching, research, service, and work/life integration. The time and effort spent by term faculty assembling dossiers to prepare for renewal reviews, and the time spent by the faculty conducting those reviews may not be justified given the quality of the information gained.

National AAUP Statement:

“Some higher education institutions gave tenure-line faculty the option to suspend their tenure clocks for a year. Institutions gave this option for many good reasons: conferences postponed or canceled, limited access to research resources and facilities, and the inability to provide in-class observations. These are all excellent reasons to extend the rehire or promotion process for a year for any contingent faculty member who wishes to make that choice.” ([AAUP Contingent Faculty and Global Pandemic](#))

Non-renewal and the budget:

The University is also facing an unprecedented financial challenge. The administration may still need flexibility to align the size of the faculty with projected enrollment. Nonrenewal or notice of intent to not renew may still need to be issued to some term faculty whose positions are financially tenuous. Ideally, the University will continue to explore alternatives to nonrenewal. The University should be clear that any non-renewals driven by the budget would not be for cause.