

American Association of University Professors Iowa State University Chapter



Statement on Proposed Changes to Handbook 3.4

The AAUP offers clear recommendations on notice of non-renewal for NTE faculty. These recommendations are important because the ISU Faculty Handbook explicitly supports AAUP principles concerning NTE faculty (3.3.2.1). Moreover, AAUP principles provide the foundation for ISU's policies on tenure, with the Handbook language matching AAUP recommendations nearly verbatim. The AAUP was intimately involved in establishing the Faculty Senate as a body of shared governance at ISU.

The AAUP recommends that faculty receive notice at least "twelve months before the expiration of an appointment after two or more years in the institution." This recommendation applies to all full-time NTE faculty with renewable contracts, explicitly including faculty with year-to-year appointments (see below). The 12 month notice of non-renewal serves three important purposes. First, it protects the academic rights of the faculty member by providing a chance to appeal decisions that infringe academic freedom or are retaliatory. Second, it serves to recognize the reasonable expectation of renewal after years of creditable service. Third, it ensures that a non-renewed faculty member can search for a position for the following academic year and is not, in effect, forced from the profession.

ISU's current policy follows AAUP recommendations in protecting NTE faculty: "Lecturers and clinicians who have been employed continuously at one-half time or greater for three years or more must be given advance written notice of nonrenewal of his or her current contract at least one year before its expiration" (3.4.1.1). In contrast, the proposal before the Senate would introduce a significantly lower standard for notice of non-renewal. This lower standard would reduce protections for ISU faculty and render academic freedom more vulnerable.

From the AAUP Standards for Notice of Nonreappointment, (adopted 1963; amended 1995):

While academic institutions commonly adhere to the Association's Standards for Notice of Nonreappointment with respect to faculty appointments that they recognize as probationary, in many cases they have not considered those standards to be applicable to those full-time faculty members whose service under non-tenure-track appointments has involved more than "a brief association with the institution" and who continue to serve on annual appointments that are indefinitely renewable at the discretion of the administration. Typically, although the terms of their appointments may stipulate that they are for one year only, the faculty members are given reason to expect that, so long as they perform creditably and so long as enough courses remain available, the appointments will be renewed. Frequently, however, at or near the end of an academic year, these individuals are suddenly notified that their appointments are not in fact being renewed for the following year. Despite what may have been an extended affiliation with the institution, the faculty members are not viewed as entitled to the notice of nonreappointment that would be given to colleagues who hold appointments designated as probationary.

Committee A considers all full-time faculty members holding renewable term appointments, whatever their title or status, to be entitled to notice of nonreappointment as called for in the Association's recommended standards. We do not view it as necessary, or indeed as equitable, to deprive full-time "non-tenure-track" faculty members of the safeguards that the standards for notice are intended to provide.