

REMARKS FOR PROVOST TO FACULTY SENATE  
RE: TENURE POLICY CHANGE

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Good morning. I'm Kate Xxxxx, XXXXX University Provost. For anyone I haven't met yet, please say hello before you leave this morning.

As you know, the University has amended its tenure and promotion policy to address what has been recognized by faculty in every state as one of the most urgent needs in the tenure process: increased consistency in decision-making.

One of the most effective ways to elevate consistency, and the one we have chosen to implement, is to bring relevant and respected outsiders into the process. Thus, beginning on June 1, 2015, an external review will become mandatory for all tenure candidates.

We see this change as a positive one that addresses some of the tenure concerns faculty have shared – not only here at XXXXX, but at universities nationwide. Our aim is to strengthen the

process to better advance the interests of our faculty and help them provide the best education possible to our students.

Tenure is awarded because a faculty member's senior colleagues are certain that he or she can perform at a high degree of excellence and independence. Tenured faculty are highly self-motivated people with a great deal of professional pride – pride they have earned through hard work and dedication.

An award of tenure illustrates that XXXXX wants to invest in you – and wants you to invest in XXXXX. The trust implicit in that relationship requires the University to make sure our tenure process is conducted with the utmost clarity, candor and consistency.

As we studied the current tenure process, we found the need to ensure that no matter who the candidate or the evaluator, each tenure decision will be made with the same level of scrutiny, without implicit or explicit bias and, most importantly, with the quality of our students' education uppermost in our minds.

Under the new process, external reviewers will consist of at least three individuals within the candidate's field of study. At least

one of those must be outside the candidate's current college, and at least two must be outside the XXXXX University system. As at other universities where this approach has been successful, these reviewers may come from other higher-education institutions or be recognized as scholars in the relevant discipline.

Why are we making this change?

Tenure, as you know, is an emotionally charged issue. Thus, boosting fairness and consistency are paramount to creating an open, respected process and a cohesive faculty.

Let me assure you that the external review does not and will not replace the faculty-driven process of confirming tenure. The purpose of external review is to advise the University on the broader value of a faculty member's scholarly, creative and research contributions to their discipline, and to confirm the significance of faculty evaluators' results and recommendations.

In the end, this change reflects XXXXX'S desire for the highest standards in all we do.

My office has been working closely with XXXXX deans, faculty and leadership to inspire and explore ideas for creating new programs and improving those we already have. The decision to require an external review for tenure arose from such collaboration.

As we launch this new requirement, we also are creating a centralized process to make implementation at the college and department level easier. The Provost's office will be here to assist any candidate or evaluator who requests it.

Like all of you, I believe in the education we deliver to our students – an education significantly shaped by the people who make up our faculty. It's vitally important, then, to make sure our tenure process meets the most rigorous requirements for fairness and objectivity. The tenure decision has an enormous impact not only on the individual seeking it, but also on those that he or she will teach in the years to come.

You can find more information about XXXXX's tenure policy, including the external review, [DESCRIBE WHERE IT'S AVAILABLE].

Thank you for your attention today. If you have any questions, I encourage you to contact me directly. As always, thank you for what you do for our students.