

NEWS

UofT report proposes guidelines for changing tenure

by Amber Malik
The Newspaper

The notion of tenure could be changing at the University of Toronto.

In the future, tenure could be appointed on the basis of excellence in research and teaching not as it is now on outstanding achievement in one and mere competence in the other, says the report of the academic appointments review committee at UofT.

There are two functions a UofT professor is responsible for said Cecil Yip of the Banting and Best Department of Medical Research, chair of the review committee. First is the creation of knowledge and the second is its transmission.

Tenure is an academic appointment which protects professors from dismissal (except for cause, including neglect and gross misconduct) and from termination without fault (because of illness or injury, for example).

The report participants, including the committee and the UofT Faculty Association recommends that if such an invaluable appointment is to be granted, it should be so to only those individuals of the highest quality.

Currently a tenured professor may be dismissed for, in the words of the report, "failure to meet the requirements of academic responsibility expected of a professorial teaching staff member."

The proposals says the procedure should state that the requirements include "maintaining reasonable contributions over time among the elements of teaching, research, creative professional activity and university service."

The report recommends these proposed changes to ensure excellence in teaching and continued ground breaking research. The resulting situation would provide students with the best possible education.

Tenure appointments today can be granted to tenure stream assistant professors, as opposed to contractually limited term professors, within five years of employment. Three of those years are probationary.

Yip explained that the report did not by any means try to humble the prestigious appointment as it is granted today.

"If the criteria are high enough in the initial search, the chance of individuals meeting the expectations of a three-year review is very high. We want to prevent a tendency to drift downward."

Stagnancy can take place in a tenured professor's career as it stands now, if he or she is financially driven.

Full professors achieve their positions through merit and therefore, may hold more prestige than associate professors. But their salaries may remain the same, said David Cook, Vice provost of Staff Functions.

Associate professors earn anywhere from \$42,900 to \$77,200 and full professors \$57,300 onwards. Assistant professors start with a minimum of \$35,000 and a maximum of \$59,500.

The perception outside the university that tenured professors are able to slow down or not be productive at all would be counter reacted by these changes to the existing policy, Yip said.

Employment equity objectives and tutor job security also occupy the proposed changes to the policy.

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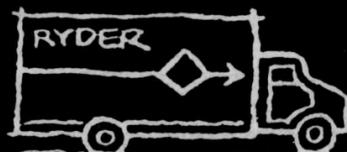
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