Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty Rights and Responsibilities

A university's professorial faculty is the core of an institution that must contribute to the good of society in ways that go beyond just the advancement of individual faculty members' interests. In this community of scholars tenure is designed (paraphrasing the words of the AAUP's "1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure" and "1982 Recommended Institutional Regulations on Academic Freedom and Tenure") to ensure that the University remains a marketplace of ideas that cannot require conformity with any orthodoxy of content or method in fulfilling its purpose of transmitting, evaluating and extending knowledge for the greater good of society. Tenure is established as a means to maintain freedom of teaching, research and extramural activities. Tenure at Northeastern University is defined in Tenure.

Tenured and tenure-track faculty members carry special responsibilities with respect to creation and maintenance of high quality curricula, research programs, nurture of students in the educational process, and overall governance of the institution. It is incumbent on the University to create and nurture a critical mass of tenured and tenure-track faculty members to maintain the range and quality of its programs.

1. Definition

Faculty members holding the ranks of Assistant Professor, Associate Professor and Professor are considered members of the Northeastern tenure-track and tenured faculty. The remainder of this section applies only to such faculty members.

2. Rights and Responsibilities

From the beginning of their careers, faculty members enjoy academic freedom – the right to teach, study, and engage in research toward the end of transmitting, evaluating and extending knowledge, under conditions permitting independence of thought and expression. In the words of the United States Supreme Court, "Teachers and students must always remain free to inquire, to study and to evaluate, to gain new maturity and understanding: otherwise our civilization will stagnate and die." With the right of academic freedom, faculty members also assume its responsibilities. According to the AAUP "1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure," "College and University teachers are citizens, members of a learned profession, and officers of an educational institution. When they speak or write as citizens, they should be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but their special position in the Community imposes special obligations. As scholars and educational officers, they should remember that the public may judge their profession and their institution by their utterances. Hence, they should at all times be accurate, should exercise appropriate restraint, should show respect for the opinions of others, and should make every effort to indicate that they are not speaking for the institution. Faculty members should, at all times, adhere to professional standards of conduct.

No faculty member, administrator or other representative of the University shall make any representations to, or enter into any agreement with, or act toward any student or other

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person in any manner which is not in conformity with established University policies, practices and procedures expressed in the Faculty Handbook, the Undergraduate and Graduate Student Handbook, University catalogues, the University’s Professional Standards and Business Conduct Policy or other published University documents.

Northeastern expects that tenure-track faculty members will ordinarily launch their careers with a dual focus on effective teaching and on establishing a mature research agenda capable of carrying them to tenure and beyond. Service expectations for tenure-track faculty members at the beginning of their careers will generally be lighter than those for faculty members who are tenured or are close to a tenure decision, and are geared not only toward the needs of the Unit, but toward introducing tenure-track faculty members to the life of the University.

The attainment of tenure is accompanied by greater responsibility to the University. Tenured faculty members have greater latitude and responsibility in shaping their careers within the particular mission of Northeastern. While continuing to focus on the application of their knowledge to teaching and on the expansion of their research agenda, tenured faculty members are expected to provide support and guidance to their junior colleagues and to become increasingly involved in the life and governance of the University. This includes taking on a greater service load and mentoring tenure-track faculty members toward success in their fields and in their quest for tenure.