



WCCFT *Union* NEWS

February 2007

Monthly Newsletter of The Westchester Community College Federation of Teachers



President's Message

Post-Tenure Review: A Faculty-Driven Process

In the contract negotiations for 2001-2004, the Union agreed to work out a plan for post tenure review. This was reiterated in the contract signed between the WCCFT and the College Administration for the years 2004-2008 and a deadline of December 31, 2006 was set for a draft of the review process. A committee of five administrators and five Union representatives was established and proceeded to hammer out an agreement. The five faculty were Anne D'Orazio, Richard Rosell, Judy Langer, Mel Bienenfeld and Ann Pierce. After many meetings and numerous revisions, the documents produced below were completed, subject to the approval of the Union Executive Board and the General Membership of the Union. The post tenure review process, as outlined in these documents, will be presented at the February 7, 2007 meeting of the Union for discussion and approval. It is very important that you attend this meeting. Post tenure review will cover all faculty who have not applied for tenure, promotion or sabbatical in the last five years. Eventually, all faculty will, at one time or another, be subject to this process.

Let me be very clear about the purpose of this review. It is designed as a means by which faculty may reflect on their professional achievements and accomplishments and move forward to

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realize new ideas and ambitions. Faculty should approach the Post-Tenure Review in the most positive way as an opportunity to enhance their pedagogical skills and interests. Under no circumstances can the results of this review be used in any personnel action against a faculty member. Tenure and all its protections remain intact as does the 1983 procedure for handling issues of discipline.

Every employee is wary of evaluation plans, understanding that in a hierarchical system of employment the employer wields ultimate power to hire and fire. The Union did not initiate the idea of establishing a post tenure review of faculty, but agreed to it as a trade-off for the gains we made in the areas of salaries, health care, and other positive benefits. We intend to form a Post Tenure Review Committee to answer questions and to monitor the process to see that it stays a means of peer review and does not in any way venture into the area of personnel action.

In the spirit of the joint labor-management endeavors, post tenure review should be seen as being under the control of both constituencies. Unlike applications for reappointment, tenure, promotion or sabbatical which are contractual personnel matters, post tenure review is not directed solely by the Administration and remains a faculty driven, peer review process.

Please read the documents carefully before the February meeting so that we may have a fruitful discussion of this issue.

The post-tenure review procedure at Westchester Community College provides faculty members with a time to reflect on their achievements and accomplishments as educators and to share with colleagues their ideas and ambitions in furtherance of their professional careers. This process aims to promote faculty development and renewal by establishing an institutional structure for faculty members to support their continued professional growth at the college. The post tenure review process is intended to be con-

Preamble

structive for individual faculty members and to build collegial bonds among faculty as they continue to pursue their academic goals at the College.

The post-tenure review process consists of two parts: summary and plan. The summary is an individual faculty member's retrospective reflection in the areas of teaching (or librarianship, coun-

seling, or academic support coordination), service, and professional development. The plan may focus on a particular area that individual faculty members have chosen for their future professional development.

Post tenure review is the result of a joint labor-management effort initiated in the 2001-2004 contract negotiations. The WCCFT and the College Administration have agreed to the procedures governing the process in a Memorandum of Understanding.



A Monthly Newsletter of
Local 2431 American Federation of Teachers (AFL-CIO)
Affiliated with New York State United Teachers

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Phone: (914) 345-8856

Fax: (914) 345-2761

Newsletter printer

Efficiency Printing Co., A Union Shop
126 So. Lexington, White Plains, NY
914-949-8611

Calendar of Events

Monthly Meetings:
First Wednesday, 11:00 a.m.
Science Building 102

Feb. 7, 2007:
Contract Strategies
Post-Tenure Review

March 7, 2007:
Health & Safety
"Watchdogs"

April 4, 2007:
Election Nominations
Committee Work

May 2, 2007:
Legislative Luncheon
*Westchester County
Board of Legislators*

Agreement on Post-Tenure Review Process

January 16, 2007

The implementation of the post-tenure review process will begin February, 2007.

1. The Associate Dean sends the form letter of notification to the faculty member who is scheduled for post tenure review. This letter outlines the procedures for the post tenure review/plan process.

2. The faculty member then informs the Associate Dean of the selection of his/her WCC colleague who will assist in the post tenure review process.

3. The faculty member meets with the WCC colleague. A work-in-progress, or recently completed project shall be considered an acceptable plan. The review will cover the activities of the faculty member in all three areas of teaching (or counseling or librarianship, or academic support coordination), service, and professional development since the last personnel action/review. The plan may be limited to one of those areas. All rights of academic freedom will attach to the plan. The length of the document is up to the faculty member's professional discretion.

4. The appropriate departmental committee meets to discuss the post tenure review/plan. The departmental committee chairperson summarizes the discussion in writing. The Department Chair will participate in the discussion only as a regular department member.

5. The faculty member submits to the Associate Dean the post tenure review/plan with any feedback the faculty member would like to integrate from the departmental committee discussion and the departmental committee chairperson's summary.

6. The Associate Dean writes a letter to the faculty member with regard to the faculty member's review/plan. The purpose of the letter is to provide constructive commentary and is not intended to indicate disapproval of the plan. This letter will be sent only to the faculty member.

7. The faculty member executes the plan.

8. The faculty member submits a report on the execution of the plan to the appropriate DC Chair and the appropriate Associate Dean.

9. None of the documents involved in this process can be used for any purpose other than post tenure review.

10. The post-tenure review process will first apply to every full-time faculty member after being tenured for five years and the same process will be repeated once every five years. Individual tenured faculty members who are up for the post-tenure review but are in the process of applying for promotion and sabbaticals will be exempt from the post-tenure review process for five years from the decision on that promotion or sabbatical. The initial pool of eligible faculty members within each division will be divided by five and be prioritized according to dates of hire.

Timetable of the post-tenure review process

Due Date/Action that must be completed

February 1 or the next business day/ Associate Dean's letter to the faculty member

March 1 or the next business day/ The faculty member's letter of colleague selection to the Associate Dean

April and May/The faculty member develops post-tenure review/plan and submits it to the departmental committee

September /The appropriate departmental committee meets to review and discuss the faculty member's post-tenure review/plan

October 1 or the next business day/The departmental committee chairperson sends the summary and sign-off to the faculty member

November 1 or the next business day/ The faculty member submits to the Associate Dean his/her review/plan along with the departmental committee chairperson's summary and sign-off.

December 1 or the next business day/ The Associate Dean sends a letter to the faculty with regard to his/her review/plan

Spring semester/The faculty executes the plan

May 1 or the next business day/The faculty member submits a report on the execution of the plan to the departmental committee chairperson and the Associate Dean.

(See accompanying documents on Pg. 4)

L'Etat, Ce Moi

By Richard Rosell

It has always been my understanding that the decision to retire from the college is irrevocable. A 1999 college policy entitled "Pre-Retirement Leave (With Timetable For Implementation)" supports that view. The policy states that "a full-time teaching faculty member who signs a resignation/retirement letter with an effective date no more than 24 months in the future, can, during his/her last semesters work half time for half-pay and full medical benefits." The policy continues: "The College will accept the letter of resignation/retirement dated 12 or 24 months in the future and will begin the steps necessary to fill the line after the end date. This date is *irrevocable* and *cannot be extended (but it can be dropped to an earlier date)*." (Italics added.)

The policy is very clear: once you submit your letter of resignation or retirement, there is no turning back; the decision is *irrevocable*. If you read the policy carefully you will see that the word "irrevocable" appears in the document three times. The administration left no doubt about its intention: 'if you say you are going, you *are* going.' The wording of the policy (i.e., you cannot extend your active employment but you may shorten it) suggests 'if there is anything we can do to get you to retire sooner rather than later, please let us know.' Like a parent whose children have overstayed their welcome, the administration appears willing to do anything (perhaps even pack your bags) to help get you out of the house.

Considering the tone of the policy, I was surprised to learn recently that the administration has reversed its position, and will permit a retiree to return to a full-time, tenured position at the top step of the full-professor rank. President Hankin has decided, without explanation, that he *can* (and will) recommend to the Board of Trustees that the college rehire Dr. John Flynn, who retired from the college two years ago. The plan is for the former Dean/Vice President of Academic Affairs to assume a full-time teaching position in the Behavioral and Social Science department. The irony here is that it was the former Dean/Vice President who penned and signed the Pre-retirement memo making the pre-retirement decision irrevocable.

After hearing that Dr. Flynn was being considered for a full-time, tenured, full-professorship at top step, the Executive Committee of the union carefully deliberated the significance and consequences of Dr. Hankin's plan. While fully recognizing that many of us feel a personal allegiance to and affection for Dr. Flynn, we asked ourselves if such personal considerations are the appropriate basis to make hiring decisions? How, for example, would the public respond if it was reported that we are offering high salary full-professorships to a retiree on the basis of personal considerations? How would the president's decision impact on rights of full-time and senior adjunct members of our bargain-

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ing unit who are currently employed by the college? How would such a precedent affect issues such as promotions and adjunct course selection? Will the presence of a former Dean, close ally of the president, place a damper on the free expression of department members? How does it impact on the criticism the college has been facing in the area of affirmative action? With these and other reasons in mind, the Executive Committee voted unanimously to oppose the president's plan.

In a letter to Dr. Hankin, with copies to the Board of Trustees, we raised these and other important questions. In our letter, we stated very clearly that our opposition to Dr. Flynn's hiring "should in no way be construed as a judgment

on Dr. Flynn, or his fitness for the position." We went on to state that "We oppose this appointment because we believe it deviates from long established practices, principles, and agreements which are critical to the smooth operation of the college, many of which you (Dr Hankin) instituted when you arrived here in 1971."

In addition, we noted that "Westchester Community College has had the good fortune to employ a large number faculty who, after many years of dedicated service, made the decision to retire. In some instances, the college even offered a variety of incentives to encourage such retirements. Yet, at no time did anyone who chose to retire have the expectation or the option return to a full-time position." Our letter then quoted from those sections of the 1999 Pre-retirement memo and its insistence that the process is not irrevocable. The letter was sent on November 27, 2006. To date, we have not received a formal response from the president.

At the most recent meeting of the Board of Trustees, Dr. Hankin raised the issue for the Board's consideration. Reportedly a majority of the Board members at that meeting had reservations about the plan. The Board put off its decision on the issue to a future meeting. Also, at an earlier date, Anne D'Orazio, President of the Union, met with the Chairman of the Board, Tim Carey, and explained the union's reasons for opposing the issue.

I believe that the president's decision takes the college down a very dangerous road. At the very least, the president is saying that the college does not have a uniform set of rules that apply equally to all and that he alone will decide when and how they will be applied. I am convinced that the president believes that he can do as he wishes and that, for the most part, faculty will not hold him up to scrutiny. Dr. Flynn is not the issue here. It is the proprietary attitude underlying the president's actions: *l'etat, ce moi*.

It is certainly appropriate for the college to honor a former dean. Yet it should not do so in a manner that violates the very policies which he authored and enforced or the principle of fairness which we must value above all.

Accompanying Documents

(Continued from Pg. 2)

Associate Dean's Letter to Faculty

Dear Professor,

In accordance with the agreement between the College Administration and the WCCFT regarding post-tenure review, I am writing to notify you that you are scheduled to begin your post-tenure review process this semester. For your information, I have attached a copy of the timetable for this process. Please note that you are asked to develop and submit your individual post-tenure re-

view summary/plan to your Departmental Committee for discussion. The summary portion of your document must reflect the areas of teaching (or counseling or librarianship), service, and professional development. The plan portion of your document, however, can focus on particular topic(s) or area(s) that you have chosen for your professional development.

I encourage you to view the process as a period of reflection and planning.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions. I am looking forward to working with you and to making this process most meaningful and beneficial to your continued professional growth at the College.

Cc:
Chairperson,
Departmental
Committee

Union President's Letter to Faculty

Dear Professor,

The Westchester Community College Federation of Teachers (WCCFT) and the College Administration have entered into an agreement establishing a process of post tenure review. Accompanying this letter is a notification letter from your Dean letting you know that you are now scheduled to begin this process. The review procedures and the timetable for completion are explained fully in an attached document.

The purpose is to provide an institutional structure for personal reflection

and peer review of professional achievements and goals for faculty members who are tenured and not actively pursuing promotion or sabbatical within five years of their last tenure, promotion or sabbatical decision. The results of this review will not be used in any personnel action.

Should you have any questions regarding this process, please do not hesitate to contact the WCCFT Post Tenure Review Committee or me.

Please be aware that the WCCFT has negotiated professional development

funds which are available to you. Please contact the Union's Faculty Development Committee for more information about these funds. You may also wish to speak to your Dean about additional funds available to you through the College.

We hope this will be a positive and productive experience.

Anne D'Orazio
President, WCCFT



**Contract
Business**

WCCFT Membership Meeting

**February 7, 2007
Science Building, Room 102
11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.**

**Lunch
Served**



**Post
Tenure
Review**