

1-23-92 copy

sent to all

Senators

requested by
C. Atkeson

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS
East Carolina University Chapter

Faculty Senators
East Carolina University

The proposed revision of Appendix D of the East Carolina University Faculty Manual includes the removal of the "six year cap." The six year cap has been in place for approximately sixteen years. It prohibits the continued employment of individuals on a fixed term contract for more than six years. We believe that to remove that cap would be a serious error and we ask that you support the retention of the six year provision.

To make it possible for the university to continuously employ individuals for years in a non-tenured status is to create a second class citizen in the university community. They have no protection in academic freedom since the threat of non-renewal of a contract is always with them. They are open to pressures that are not felt by tenured faculty. They do not participate in the governance system. They are generally left to teach full loads of introductory courses and have little time for professional development. This is not good for them or the university.

The effect on the permanently tenured faculty is not good. Since fixed term people are not available for committee and advisory work the burden on the tenured faculty in these areas becomes greater as the number of fixed term faculty increases. The system of fixed term faculty undermines academic standards and erodes the quality of undergraduate education.

The administration is already moving in the direction of increasing the number of fixed term by imposing a quota of such. The proposed removal of the cap leaves to the administration the determination of whether the use of fixed term appointments is for the purpose of "avoidance" of awarding permanent tenure. If this is accepted it would then mean that the faculty concedes a trust to the administration to do the "right thing." That is a very unstable platform upon which to rest personnel policies. With a stated rule, trust will never become an issue.

It has been argued that the six year cap means that the university loses "good" people at intervals. Granted. But they are not the only good people in the academic world. The cap has been attacked at intervals over the years on those and other grounds and the Faculty Affairs Committee has cogently rejected the contentions in two Faculty Senate Reports, dated January 23, 1984 and February 27, 1985. The American Association of University Professors "Redbook" of 1990 reprints the statement of principle concerning tenure as adopted by the Association and strongly rejects any form of fixed term appointment.

The administration of the university claims to require fixed term appointments for the purpose of budgetary flexibility. There is still no need to remove the cap. An examination of the Faculty Data which may be found in the PROFS system reveals that there are, in reality, very few fixed term people in the Academic Affairs division. We are not facing a sudden overwhelming need to make changes of any sort.

The removal of the six year cap lays the tenure system open to innumerable abuses, not the least of which is the potential of the loss of the system itself. We ask you to listen carefully to the arguments that will be offered during the called session of the Faculty Senate on 28 January 1992.

The Board of Directors
ECU Chapter of the AAUP.