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| Proposed | Draft  Apr. 2, 2010 |
| Remarks by faculty to the WVSU Board of Governors, concerning  Academic Freedom and Tenure |
| Academic tenure is protection for ideas. |

Collegesand Universities are places where ideas can be expressed, investigated, tried out, fought   
over, and revised, without the dire consequences that might accompany such actions if conducted   
outside the academic environment. This activity is so important to the society as a whole that it   
needs to be protected from influences which would inhibit intellectual progress.

Historically, dismissal of a faculty member has been the mechanism used in many attempts to   
squelch investigation and teaching that led to ideas, theories, and facts which upset or offended   
the public or a powerful individual. Academic tenure has arisen as the primary method of   
preventing this kind of anti-intellectual activity.

By academic tenure, we mean the faculty member's right to hold his or her academic   
appointment until retirement, once the professor's competence has been demonstrated, except   
when extreme malfeasance has been demonstrated or when financial exigency causes the   
institution to eliminate positions.

At times such as we are now experiencing, characterized by economic downturn, international   
conflict, and political upheaval, there is more pressure than usual for governments and academic   
governing boards to weaken the protection to scholarship, innovation, and academic enterprise   
which is afforded by tenure.

If academic tenure were simply a fringe benefit of scholarly employment, it would be more   
understandable that it could be removed simply because of economic pressure, but, although in   
the last few decades many other forms of employment have gained seemingly similar job-security   
provisions, often by the actions of unions seeking benefits for their employee members, academic   
tenure has a longer history and a more universal justification.

As early as 1158, Emperor Frederick Barbarossa issued an edict promising various protections to   
scholars in his domain.

In the thirteenth century, the church had charge of issuing university teaching credentials, which   
caused no problem at Oxford or Cambridge, but at the University of Paris, the licensure official   
reserved the right to revoke such licenses, causing a dispute which was finally settled by a papal   
decree compelling the official to award the license only to persons approved by the faculty.

In America, higher education started out in the English tradition of a community of scholars, but   
in the 1600's, teaching and administration began to become separate functions, so that some   
administrators viewed teachers as employees. Then in the 1700's, due to the development of a   
cadre of older, experienced scholars, Harvard reinstituted the practice of granting "indeterminate   
(meaning unlimited) tenure" to certain professors. From then until the early twentieth century,   
there was a wide variety of tenure practices in American higher education, ranging from

permanent tenure to annual rehirings.

In 1900, Stanford University demanded the resignation of an economics professor whose views   
on economics conflicted with those of Mr. Stanford's widow, and in 1913, Wesleyan gave   
similar treatment to an economist because of his off-campus remarks about a religious matter.   
These and similar cases stimulated the formation of the organization known as the American   
Association of University Professors, which in 1915 published its "General Report on Academic   
Freedom and Tenure," including a "Declaration of Principles,"

In 1925, the American Council on Education, an umbrella group which included both the AAUP   
and the American Association of Colleges, called a conference on the topic, which produced the   
1925 Conference Statement on Academic Freedom and Tenure, agreed upon by both AAUP and   
ACE. In 1934, there began another series of AAUP-ACE conferences, resulting in the   
formulation the "1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure", which in later   
years has been endorsed by over one hundred additional scholarly organizations, and has been   
supplemented by several statements extending and interpreting it, the body of which has become   
accepted practice in U.S. higher education.

By giving all this history of the idea of academic tenure, we do not mean to imply that it should   
be maintained as a practice because of its tradition, for there are many traditions that need to be   
eliminated, but rather, that while these principles and practices are not new, they have been   
debated, argued, negotiated, amended, and supplemented, by organizations representing all sides   
of the questions, to meet the needs of the society, and thus should not be taken lightly or cast   
aside without serious thought and reason.

As noted in the introduction to the "1940 Statement": "Institutions of higher education are   
conducted for the common good and not to further the interests of either the individual teacher or   
the institution as a whole. The common good depends upon the free search for truth and its free   
exposition. Academic freedom is essential to these purposes and applies to both teaching and   
research. "

Further quoting: "Tenure is a means to certain ends; specifically: (l) Freedom of teaching and   
research and of extramural activities and (2) a sufficient degree of economic security to make the   
profession attractive to men and women of ability. Freedom and economic security, hence,   
tenure, are indispensable to the success of an institution in fulfilling its obligations to its students   
and to society"

We urge this Board of Governors, if and when it discusses policies relating to academic freedom   
and academic tenure, to keep in mind the idea that, rather than being a fringe benefit for the good   
of the faculty members, or a recruiting tool for the institution, academic tenure serves an   
important purpose for all of society, protecting free inquiry and freedom of learning, in order to   
promote the development, improvement, and dissemination of human knowledge and   
understanding.