



THE CODE

OF

THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

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CHAPTER VI - ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND TENURE

SECTION 600. FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY IN THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY.

(1) The University of North Carolina is dedicated to the transmission and advancement of knowledge and understanding. Academic freedom is essential to the achievement of these purposes. The University therefore supports and encourages freedom of inquiry for faculty members and students, to the end that they may responsibly pursue these goals through teaching, learning, research, discussion, and publication, free from internal or external restraints that would unreasonably restrict their academic endeavors.

(2) The University and each constituent institution shall protect faculty and students in their responsible exercise of the freedom to teach, to learn, and otherwise to seek and speak the truth.

(3) Faculty and students of the University of North Carolina shall share in the responsibility for maintaining an environment in which academic freedom flourishes and in which the rights of each member of the academic community are respected.

SECTION 601. ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY OF FACULTY.

(1) It is the policy of the University of North Carolina to support and encourage full freedom, within the law, of inquiry, discourse, teaching, research, and publication for all members of the academic staffs of the constituent institutions. Members of the faculty are expected to recognize that accuracy, forthrightness, and dignity befit their association with the University and their position as men and women of learning. They should not represent themselves, without authorization, as spokespersons for the University of North Carolina or any of its constituent institutions.

(2) The University and its constituent institutions shall not penalize or discipline members of its faculties because of the exercise of academic freedom in the lawful pursuit of their respective areas of scholarly and professional interest and responsibility.

SECTION 602. ACADEMIC TENURE.

(1) To promote and protect the academic freedom of its faculty, the board of trustees of each constituent institution shall adopt policies and regulations governing academic tenure. Policies adopted by a board of trustees regarding academic tenure and promotion shall be effective upon review by the senior vice president for academic affairs and the vice president and general counsel, and approved by the president. The chancellor shall review the constituent institution's tenure policies periodically, but at least every five years, and shall report to the president whether or not amendments or revisions are appropriate. The chancellor shall involve the faculty in this review.

(2) In all instances, the tenure conferred on a faculty member is held with reference to employment by a constituent institution, rather than to employment by the University of North Carolina.

(3) The tenure policies and regulations of each constituent institution^[1] shall prescribe the

procedures by which decisions concerning appointment, reappointment, promotion, and the conferral of permanent tenure shall be made. The length of terms of appointment that do not carry permanent tenure and those faculty ranks or titles whose holders shall be eligible for permanent tenure shall be prescribed. The institutional policies and regulations also shall prescribe the intervals at which the review of candidates for reappointment and promotion, including the conferral of permanent tenure, shall occur. The tenure policies and regulations of each institution, which shall include the complete text of Chapter VI of *The Code*, shall be published by the institution and distributed to its faculty members.

(4) The tenure policies and regulations of each institution shall set forth the general considerations upon which appointment, reappointment, promotion, and permanent tenure are to be recommended. The institutional regulations shall provide that these considerations shall include an assessment of at least the following: the faculty member's demonstrated professional competence, the faculty member's potential for future contribution, and institutional needs and resources.

(5) The institutional policies and regulations shall specify that permanent tenure may be conferred only by action of the president and the Board of Governors, or by such other agencies or officers as may be delegated such authority by the Board of Governors.

- (6) Institutional tenure policies and regulations shall distinguish among the following:
- (a) the nonreappointment (or nonrenewal) of a faculty member at the expiration of a specified term of service;
 - (b) the discharge or suspension of a faculty member with permanent tenure or of a faculty member appointed to a specified term of service before that term expires for reasons based on incompetence, neglect of duty, or misconduct of such a nature as to indicate that the individual is unfit to continue as a member of the faculty;
 - (c) the termination of employment for reasons of institutional financial exigency or major curtailment or elimination of a teaching, research, or public-service program of a faculty member who has permanent tenure, or of a faculty member who has been appointed to a specified term of service before that term expires; and
 - (d) retirement for physical or mental disability.

(7) Institutional tenure policies and regulations shall provide that the appointment, reappointment, or promotion of a faculty member to a position funded in whole or in substantial part from sources other than continuing state budget funds or permanent trust funds shall specify in writing that the continuance of the faculty member's services, whether for a specified term or for permanent tenure, shall be contingent upon the continuing availability of such funds. The institutional tenure policies and regulations may make one or more of the following exceptions to the foregoing contingency requirement:

- (a) That such a contingency shall not be included in a promotion to a higher rank if, before the effective date of that promotion, the faculty member had permanent tenure and no such condition is attached to the tenure.
- (b) That such a contingency shall not be attached to the faculty member's contract if the faculty member held permanent tenure in that institution on July 1, 1975, and the contract was not contingent upon the continuing availability of sources other than continuing state budget or permanent trust funds.
- (c) That such a contingency may be waived for health affairs faculties because of the unusual dependence of programs in the health professions on income from sources such as clinical receipts.

If a faculty member's appointment is terminated because of the nonavailability of these funds, the institution will make every reasonable effort to give the same notice as set forth in Section 605 B (1). This notice shall include the pertinent data upon which the termination is based.

(8) The tenure policies and regulations of each institution shall be subject to approval by the president. The president periodically shall review and re-evaluate these policies and regulations and report findings and recommendations, if any, to the Committee on Personnel and Tenure and through the committee to the Board of Governors.

SECTION 603. DUE PROCESS BEFORE DISCHARGE OR THE IMPOSITION OF SERIOUS SANCTIONS.

(1) A faculty member, who is the beneficiary of institutional guarantees of tenure, shall enjoy protection against unjust and arbitrary application of disciplinary penalties. During the period of such guarantees the faculty member may be discharged or suspended from employment or diminished in rank only for reasons of incompetence, neglect of duty, or misconduct of such a nature as to indicate that the individual is unfit to continue as a member of the faculty.^[2] These penalties may be imposed only in accordance with the procedures prescribed in this section. For purposes of these regulations, a faculty member serving a stated term shall be regarded as having tenure until the end of that term. These procedures shall not apply to nonreappointment (Section 604) or termination of employment (Section 605).

(2) The chief academic officer of the institution, however titled, shall send the faculty member a written statement of intention to discharge the faculty member by a method of mail or delivery that requires a signature for delivery. The statement shall include notice of the faculty member's right, upon request, to both written specification of the reasons for the intended discharge and a hearing by an elected standing faculty committee on hearings.

(3) If, within ten days^[3] after receiving the notice referred to in paragraph (2) above, the faculty member makes no written request for either a specification of reasons or a hearing, the faculty member may be discharged without recourse to any institutional grievance or appellate procedure.

(4) If, within ten days after receiving the notice referred to in paragraph (2) above, the faculty member makes written request, by a method of delivery that requires a signature for delivery, for a specification of reasons, the chief academic officer shall supply such specification in writing by a method of delivery that requires a signature for delivery, within ten days after receiving the request. If the faculty member makes no written request for a hearing within ten days after receiving the specification, the faculty member may be discharged without recourse to any institutional grievance or appellate procedure.

(5) If the faculty member makes a timely written request for a hearing, the chief academic officer shall ensure that the hearing is accorded before an elected standing committee of the institution's faculty. The hearing shall be on the written specification of reasons for the intended discharge. The hearing committee shall accord the faculty member 20 days from the time it receives the faculty member's written request for a hearing to prepare a defense. The hearing committee may, upon the faculty member's written request and for good cause, extend this time by written notice to the faculty member.

(6) The hearing shall be closed to the public unless the faculty member and the hearing committee agree that it may be open. The faculty member shall have the right to counsel, to present the testimony of witnesses and other evidence, to confront and cross-examine adverse witnesses, and to examine all documents and other adverse demonstrative evidence. A written transcript of all proceedings shall be kept; upon request, a copy thereof shall be furnished to the faculty member at the institution's expense.

(7) The chief academic officer, or counsel, may participate in the hearing to present evidence, cross-examine witnesses, and make argument.

(8) In reaching decisions on which its written recommendations to the chancellor shall be

based, the committee shall consider only the evidence presented at the hearing and such written or oral arguments as the committee, in its discretion, may allow. The committee shall make its written recommendations to the chancellor within ten days after its hearing concludes.

(9) If the chancellor concurs in a recommendation of the committee that is favorable to the faculty member, the chancellor's decision shall be final. If the chancellor either declines to accept a committee recommendation that is favorable to the faculty member or concurs in a committee recommendation that is unfavorable to the faculty member, the faculty member may appeal the chancellor's decision to the board of trustees. This appeal shall be transmitted through the chancellor and be addressed to the chair of the board. Notice of appeal shall be filed within ten days after the faculty member receives the chancellor's decision. The appeal to the board of trustees shall be decided by the full board of trustees. However, the board may delegate the duty of conducting a hearing to a standing or ad hoc committee of at least three members. The board of trustees, or its committee, shall consider the appeal on the written transcript of hearings held by the faculty hearing committee, but it may, in its discretion, hear such other evidence as it deems necessary. The board of trustees' decision shall be made within 45 days after the chancellor has received the faculty member's request for an appeal to the trustees. This decision shall be final except that the faculty member may, within ten days after receiving the trustees' decision, file a written petition for review with the Board of Governors if the faculty member alleges that one or more specified provisions of the *Code of the University of North Carolina* have been violated. Any such petition to the Board of Governors shall be transmitted through the president, and the board shall, within 45 days, grant or deny the petition or take such other action as it deems advisable. If it grants the petition for review, the board's decision shall be made within 45 days after it has notified the faculty member that it will review the petition.

(10) When a faculty member has been notified of the institution's intention to discharge the faculty member, the chancellor may suspend the individual at any time and continue the suspension until a final decision concerning discharge has been reached by the procedures prescribed herein. Suspension shall be exceptional and shall be with full pay.

SECTION 604. APPOINTMENT, NONREAPPOINTMENT AND REQUIREMENTS OF NOTICE AND REVIEW.

604 A. Notice of Reappointment or Nonreappointment.

Effective January 1, 2004, for appeals of decisions not to reappoint made on or after January 1, 2004, 604 A shall read as follows;

(1) The decision not to reappoint a faculty member at the expiration of a fixed term of service shall be made by the appropriate institutional faculty and administrative officers early enough to permit timely notice to be given. For full-time faculty at the rank of instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, or professor, the minimum requirement for timely notice shall be as follows:

- (a) during the first year of service at the institution, the faculty member shall be given not less than 90 calendar days' notice before the employment contract expires;
- (b) during the second year of continuous service at the institution, the faculty member shall be given not less than 180 calendar days' notice before the employment contract expires; and
- (c) after two or more years of continuous service at the institution, the faculty member shall be given not less than 12 months' notice before the employment contract expires.

(2) Notice of reappointment or nonreappointment shall be written. If the decision is not to reappoint, then failure to give timely notice of nonreappointment will oblige the chancellor thereafter to offer a terminal appointment of one academic year.

604 B. Impermissible Reasons for Nonreappointment.

In no event shall a decision not to reappoint a faculty member be based upon (a) the exercise by the faculty member of rights guaranteed by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, or by Article I of the North Carolina Constitution, or (b) the faculty member's race, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, or honorable service in the armed services of the United States, or (c) personal malice.

604 C. Special Faculty Appointments.

All appointments of visiting faculty, adjunct faculty, or other special categories of faculty such as lecturers, artists-in-residence, or writers-in-residence shall be for only a specified term of service. That term shall be set forth in writing when the appointment is made, and the specification of the length of the appointment shall be deemed to constitute full and timely notice of nonreappointment when that term expires. The provisions of Sections 602 (4) and 604 A shall not apply in these instances.

604 D. Subject to limitations contained in the Policies of the Board of Governors, a faculty member may appeal to the Board of Governors the decision of a chancellor not to reappoint the faculty member.

SECTION 605. TERMINATION OF FACULTY EMPLOYMENT.

605 A. Definition.

The tenure policies and regulations of each institution shall provide that the employment of faculty members with permanent tenure or of faculty members appointed to a fixed term may be terminated by the institution because of (1) demonstrable, bona fide institutional financial exigency or (2) major curtailment or elimination of a teaching, research, or public-service program. "Financial exigency" is defined as a significant decline in the financial resources of the institution that is brought about by decline in institutional enrollment or by other action or events that compel a reduction in the institution's current operations budget. The determination of whether a condition of financial exigency exists or whether there shall be a major curtailment or elimination of a teaching, research, or public-service program shall be made by the chancellor, after consulting with the academic administrative officers and faculties as required by Section 605 C(1), subject to the concurrence by the President and then approval by the Board of Governors. If the financial exigency or curtailment or elimination of program is such that the institution's contractual obligation to a faculty member may not be met, the employment of the faculty member may be terminated in accordance with institutional procedures that afford the faculty member a fair hearing on that decision.

605 B. Timely Notice of Termination.

(1) When a faculty member's employment is to be terminated because of major curtailment or elimination of a teaching, research, or public-service program and such curtailment or elimination of program is not founded upon financial exigency, the faculty member shall be given timely notice as follows:

- (a) one who has permanent tenure shall be given not less than 12 months' notice; and
- (b) one who was appointed to a fixed term and does not have permanent tenure shall be given notice in accordance with the requirements specified in Section 604 A(1).

(2) When a faculty member's employment is to be terminated because of financial exigency, the institution will make every reasonable effort, consistent with the need to maintain sound educational programs and within the limits of available resources, to give the same notice as set forth in Section 605 B(1).

- (3) For a period of two years after the effective date of termination of a faculty member's

contract for any of the reasons specified in Section 605 A, the institution shall not replace the faculty member without first offering the position to the person whose employment was terminated. The offer shall be made by a method of delivery that requires a signature for delivery, and the faculty member will be given 30 calendar days after attempted delivery of the notice to accept or reject the offer.

605 C. Institutional Procedures.

Effective January 1, 2004, for terminations arising on or after January 1, 2004, 605 C. shall read as follows;

The institution shall establish regulations governing termination procedures. These regulations shall include provisions incorporating the following requirements:

(1) If it appears that the institution will experience an institutional financial exigency or needs seriously to consider a major curtailment or elimination of a teaching, research, or public-service program, the chancellor or chancellor's delegate shall first seek the advice and recommendations of the academic administrative officers and faculties of the departments or other units that might be affected.

(2) In determining which faculty member's employment is to be terminated for reasons set forth in Section 605 A, the chancellor shall give consideration to tenure status, to years of service to the institution, and to other factors deemed relevant, but the primary consideration shall be the maintenance of a sound and balanced educational program that is consistent with the functions and responsibilities of the institution.

(3) An individual faculty member whose employment is to be terminated shall be notified of this fact in writing. This notice shall include a statement of the conditions requiring termination of employment, a general description of the procedures followed in making the decision, and a disclosure of pertinent financial or other data upon which the decision was based.

(4) A reconsideration procedure shall be provided that affords the faculty member whose employment is to be terminated a fair hearing on the termination if the faculty member alleges that the decision to terminate was arbitrary or capricious.

(5) The institution, when requested by the faculty member, shall give reasonable assistance in finding other employment for a faculty member whose employment has been terminated.

(6) A faculty member whose employment is terminated pursuant to this Section 605 may appeal the reconsideration decision to the board of trustees of the constituent institution.

SECTION 606. RETIREMENT OF FACULTY.

Faculty may retire in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 135 of the North Carolina General Statutes ("Retirement System of Teachers and State Employees").

SECTION 607. FACULTY GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE FOR CONSTITUENT INSTITUTIONS.

(1) The chancellor of each constituent institution shall provide for the establishment of a faculty grievance committee. The faculty grievance committee shall be elected by the faculty with members elected from each professorial rank. No officer of administration shall serve on the committee. For purposes of this section, "officer of administration" shall be deemed to include department chairs and department heads.

(2) The committee shall be authorized to hear and advise with respect to the adjustment of grievances of members of the faculty. The power of the committee shall be solely to hear representations by the persons directly involved in a grievance, to facilitate voluntary adjustment by the parties, and to advise adjustment by the administration when appropriate. Advice for adjustment in favor of an aggrieved faculty member may be given to the chancellor only after the dean, department

head, or other administrative official most directly empowered to adjust it has been given similar advice and has not acted upon it within a reasonable time.

(3) "Grievances" within the province of the committee's power shall include matters directly related to a faculty member's employment status and institutional relationships within the constituent institution. However, no grievance that grows out of or involves matters related to a formal proceeding for the suspension, discharge or termination of a faculty member, or that is within the jurisdiction of another standing faculty committee, may be considered by the committee.

(4) If any faculty member has a grievance, the faculty member may petition the faculty grievance committee for redress. The petition shall be written and shall set forth in detail the nature of the grievance and against whom the grievance is directed. It shall contain any information that the petitioner considers pertinent to the case. The committee shall decide whether the facts merit a detailed investigation so that submission of a petition shall not result automatically in an investigation or detailed consideration of the petition.

(5) If, before this section is established, the faculty of an institution has adopted a faculty grievance procedure that in its judgment is adequate to its needs, it may retain that procedure in place of the one specified above.

(6) If neither the relevant administrative official nor the chancellor makes an adjustment that is advised by the faculty grievance committee in favor of the aggrieved faculty member, then the faculty member may appeal to the board of trustees of the constituent institution. The decision of the board of trustees is final.

SECTION 608. STUDENTS' RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

(1) The University of North Carolina affirms that the first goal of each constituent institution is to educate the students admitted to its programs. The freedom of students to learn is an integral and necessary part of the academic freedom to which the University and its constituent institutions are dedicated. Each constituent institution shall provide, within allotted functions and available resources, opportunity for its students to derive educational benefits through developing their intellectual capabilities, encouraging their increased wisdom and understanding, and enhancing their knowledge and experience applicable to the effective discharge of civic, professional, and social responsibilities. No constituent institution shall abridge either the freedom of students engaged in the responsible pursuit of knowledge or their right to fair and impartial evaluation of their academic performance.

(2) All students shall be responsible for conducting themselves in a manner that helps to enhance an environment of learning in which the rights, dignity, worth, and freedom of each member of the academic community are respected.

(3) In applying regulations in the area of student discipline, each constituent institution shall adhere to the requirements of due process as set forth in Section 502 D(3) of this *Code*.

SECTION 609. APPELLATE JURISDICTION OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS.

609 A. Discretionary Review.

Nothing contained in Chapter VI, or any other chapter of the *Code*, shall be construed to limit the right of the Board of Governors to make such inquiry and review into personnel actions as it may from time to time deem appropriate.

609 B. Hearings.

The Board of Governors may in its sole discretion conduct hearings. Any hearing, whether before the full board or a designated standing or special committee of the board, shall be limited to such matters as the Board of Governors shall deem appropriate.

609 C. Appeals by Non-Faculty Exempt Employees

A non-faculty employee who is exempt from the State Personnel Act whose employment is terminated and who alleges that the termination was illegal or violated a Policy of the Board of Governors may appeal the decision in accordance with procedures established by the constituent institution. If the employee is a professional member of the president's staff, as provided for in Section 500 A(2) of this *Code*, then the employee may appeal to the president. Subject to limitations contained in the Policies of the Board of Governors, an employee who alleges that the termination of the employee's employment was illegal or in violation of Board of Governors Policy may appeal the final decision of the constituent institution, or the decision of the president, to terminate the employment to the Board of Governors.

609 D. Transmission of Appeals

All appeals addressed to or requests for hearings by the Board of Governors, from whatever source, shall be transmitted through the president.

[1] Because of the unique character and mission of the North Carolina School of the Arts, the requirement that the institution adopt tenure policies will be satisfied at that institution by an employment system based on renewable contracts, which system need not provide for the traditional faculty ranks. Wherever the phrase "tenure policies and regulations" is used in this chapter, it shall mean, for the School of the Arts, the faculty employment policies of that school. Wherever the phrase "tenured faculty" is used in this chapter, it shall mean, for that school, a faculty member holding a fixed-term contract.

[2] Retirement for reason of disability shall be in accordance with North Carolina statutes and regulations governing retirement for faculty who are members of the state retirement system. A faculty member who is not a member of the state retirement system and who is mentally or physically disabled, but refuses to retire, may be discharged because of that disability only in accordance with the procedures of this section.

[3] Wherever it is used in this chapter, except when calendar day is specified, the word "day" shall mean any day except Saturday, Sunday or an institutional holiday. In computing any period of time, the day in which notice is received is not counted but the last day of the period being computed is to be counted.

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