

## *Attachment B*

March 4, 2008

Richard K. Ford, President of Faculty Assembly  
University of Arkansas at Little Rock

Dear President Ford:

The University Committee on Tenure appointed by the Faculty Senate is very pleased to submit to you its draft of proposed changes to the UALR promotion and tenure (P&T) policies and procedures. As you know, our committee has 16 members, including two representatives from each college and two ex-officio members (i.e., a dean and a department chair). As such, we were able to effectively consider and incorporate various perspectives into our proposals. The committee took its charge very seriously and dedicated much time and effort over the past year to develop our recommendations for your consideration.

Our work is an important continuation of the outstanding efforts of the Task Force on Faculty Roles and Rewards. In their report (which was approved by the Faculty Senate in Spring 2007), the task force concluded that possibly the greatest concern expressed by UALR faculty during a series of open meetings was the lack of clear and consistent processes for promotion and tenure.

Two research studies among UALR faculty (one conducted by the abovementioned task force and another conducted by our committee toward the end of the Fall 2007 Semester) yielded strikingly similar results. A key finding of the Task Force survey was that 61% of faculty felt that UALR's current P&T processes were unsatisfactory. In our follow-up survey (which included 121 faculty members representing each college, faculty rank, and experience level), the key concerns of faculty with regard to UALR's P&T policies and procedures included:

- 1) unclear and ambiguous P&T expectations and guidelines.
- 2) inconsistent tenure requirements.
- 3) unwritten policies and traditions.
- 4) a disproportionate amount of influence by chairs, deans, and/or associate/assistant deans.
- 5) little or no tenure guidance, mentoring, and communication of expectations.
- 6) uneven and outdated P&T policies and procedures across departments and colleges.

In addition to systematically gathering faculty input, our committee reviewed P&T guidelines from numerous other universities (e.g., the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, the University of Texas at El Paso, Indiana University,

Purdue University, the University of Maryland). This extensive review allowed us to identify and adopt “best practices” from reputable universities.

Our committee concluded that ensuring consistency in P&T policies and procedures across campus through clearly written guidelines and various levels of review, while allowing flexibility of specific performance evaluation criteria and weights among departments and disciplines, is half the battle in efforts to increase faculty satisfaction. The other major consideration is clearly communicating to faculty exactly what to expect throughout the P&T process (via orientations, annual reviews, mid-tenure reviews, mentoring programs, workshops, application packet examples, and other information and feedback).

Clearly, the proposed changes to UALR’s current P&T policies and procedures are very much needed to help move the university forward. At a time when numerous, widespread retirements are occurring or imminent among UALR’s faculty, we definitely need P&T guidelines that are satisfactory and up-to-date to attract new, outstanding faculty and to help retain current, productive faculty members.

In closing, I would like to express my appreciation and admiration for the hard work and dedication of our committee members. Our proposed changes to UALR’s P&T policies and procedures are extremely important to the university’s future, and we trust that the Faculty Senate and administrators will give our proposals all due consideration.

I would also like to thank you and the Faculty Senate for your faculty leadership and support.

Sincerely,

Gary L. Geissler, Chair  
University Committee on Tenure