

College of Charleston “Stopping the Tenure Clock” Policy

It is accepted practice among many institutions of higher learning to grant extensions of promotional/tenure decisions to faculty who have used a large amount of leave. This is also in line with the College’s expressed FMLA policy, which states “Faculty members who take a substantial amount of leave for personal or family reasons may request to defer tenure and promotion decisions in consideration of the time they have been away.”

With this in mind, the Senate approved the following policy on November 29, 2005. (The policy was approved in the context of changes to the Faculty/Administration By-Laws. While those changes have not yet been incorporated into the on-line version of the FAM, the policy is in place.)

A tenure decision is made only once. Under normal circumstances, this decision is made no later than the sixth year unless exceptions have been granted in accordance with the College’s FMLA and ADA policies. This also holds for the decision on promotion to Senior Instructor.

A faculty member who uses 120 days or more of paid and/or unpaid disability, family, or other college sanctioned leave during any consecutive two-year period may elect to extend the tenure/probationary period by one year. Examples of such leave would include extended absence or disability due to illness, injury, acute family responsibilities, or military service. Unforeseen circumstances in the completion of a terminal degree, such as the death of a doctoral advisor, would also qualify.

A faculty member who adds a child to his or her family by either birth or adoption may elect to extend the tenure/probationary period by one year. This option must be exercised by notifying his or her chair in writing within 90 days of the birth or adoption of the child, but no later than the Monday following the spring commencement prior to the academic year in which the tenure decision is to be made. If this option is exercised in the first two years of the appointment, the third year review shall be postponed one year.

A faculty member who has used less than 120 days of paid and/or unpaid disability, family, or other college sanctioned leave during any consecutive two-year period but who has, nonetheless, taken a significant amount of such leave prior to consideration for an award of tenure or promotion, or who has experienced circumstances which, at the faculty member’s election, could have resulted in a significant period of such leave, may petition the Provost for an extension of the probationary period. Such petition must be made no later than the Monday following the spring commencement prior to the academic year in which the tenure decision is to be made. The decision to grant such an extension of the probationary period shall be made by the Provost, after consulting with the faculty member’s dean and department chair.

If at all possible, the decision to delay tenure or promotion should be arranged with the Provost prior to the commencement of leave.

If such elections as described above are made or if the Provost grants the petition, the faculty member thereby waives the provisions of the Faculty/Administration Manual requiring that a decision regarding the award of tenure be made within six years. Any such extensions shall not supercede the termination for cause at any point in the probationary period as outlined in the Faculty and Administration Manual.

No faculty member may elect to exercise this option more than twice.