

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
REGENTS COMMUNICATION

Approved by the Regents
April 21, 2011

ACTION REQUEST

Subject: Proposed Regents' Bylaws Revisions
Action Requested: Revisions to Regents' Bylaw Section 5.09

Background

At the University of Michigan, the governing faculty of each school and college determines the length of the tenure probationary period within that school or college, subject to an upper limit that is prescribed by Regents' Bylaw 5.09. The current maximum allowable tenure probationary period of 8 years has been in place since 1944. To better meet the needs of today's tenure track faculty, the provost and executive vice president for academic affairs proposes increasing the maximum allowable tenure probationary period to 10 years.

The changing nature of scholarship, with its emphasis on interdisciplinary projects, more complex research models requiring the setting up of sophisticated equipment and laboratories, and increased regulatory and compliance requirements, increases the time necessary for completion and evaluation of initial research results. These factors, combined with the fact that many faculty members, especially those from two-career and single parent households, find it increasingly difficult to balance their teaching and research commitments with family obligations, have led to the conclusion that a more flexible tenure probationary period is warranted.

The purpose of the proposed change in Bylaw 5.09 is to provide greater flexibility to governing faculty within individual schools and colleges in setting their tenure probationary periods by increasing the allowable upper limit on tenure probationary periods (including a terminal year) from a total of eight years to ten years. If enacted, schools would not be required to change their tenure probationary period. This decision would remain the prerogative of the governing faculty within each school and college.

Following review of the proposed revision by the Regents' Personnel, Compensation and Governance Committee, the Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs consulted with faculty, executive committees and deans in all the schools and colleges, with the Senate Advisory Committee on University Affairs (SACUA), and a number of other faculty leadership groups. This consultation followed discussions over a number of years about extending the upper limit for tenure probationary periods. The current recommendation was the primary recommendation of a 2006 faculty task force appointed by the provost.

The proposed revised bylaw was then posted in *The University Record* as described in the Regents' guidelines for bylaws revisions. The overwhelming majority of the more than 100 comments received in response to the posting supported the proposed bylaw change.

Recommendation

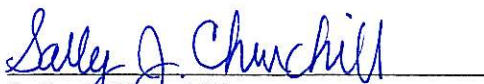
The proposed revision of Regents' Bylaw 5.09 consists of changing one word in Paragraph 1 of the bylaw, as shown:

Sec. 5.09. Procedures in Cases of Dismissal, Demotion, or Terminal Appointment
(revised November 1993)

1. Applicability. The procedures prescribed in this section shall be followed (a) before recommendation is made to the Board of Regents of dismissal or demotion of a tenured member of the University teaching staff or of any member of the teaching staff during the term for which any member of the teaching staff is appointed; or (b) before recommendation is made to the Board of Regents of dismissal, demotion, or terminal appointment of a teaching staff member holding appointments with the University for a total of ~~eight~~ ten years in the rank of full-time instructor or higher. Subject to pursuing these procedures, a recommendation of dismissal, demotion, or terminal appointment may be made for causes accepted by University usage, properly connected with the improvement and efficiency of the faculty, and consistent with the character of the tenure involved.

Therefore, I recommend approval of the proposed revision to Regents Bylaw 5.09, as described.

Respectfully submitted:



Sally J. Churchill
Vice President and Secretary of the University

April 2011