

June 17, 2004

Resolution In Response to Chancellor's Proposal to Extend Tenure Clock

Whereas tenure was established to protect academic freedom and derives from the recognition that such freedom is essential to the mission of universities; and

Whereas the 1940 legislation establishing tenure at CUNY (Section 6212.3 of the New York State Education Law) is one of the landmarks in the history of tenure in this country, having been won through mass action and political advocacy by students and faculty, including the Legislative Conference, one of the precursors to the PSC; and

Whereas the Chancellor's Office has announced its intention to introduce legislation to lengthen the untenured period from five to seven years; and

Whereas the Chancellor's Office has gone directly to the State Legislature without consultation with those who would be affected—faculty and staff of the colleges—and without negotiation with the PSC about the impact of such a change on the terms and conditions of employment; and

Whereas the introduction of the tenure question at this moment of a conservative political climate gives opponents of faculty rights and academic freedom an opportunity to make an assault on the open public university; and

Whereas there is no indication that CUNY's rate of successful tenure is lower than the national norm, approximately 85 - 90%, a rate that testifies to the way peer support and guidance, typical at CUNY, has enabled the majority of tenure candidates to meet the requirements of teaching, scholarship, and service; and

Whereas the legislation proposed by the Chancellor's Office is an opening for the opponents in the legislature to attack job security for faculty, as has occurred across the country, where only 35% of all college faculty currently serve in tenure or tenure-track positions; and

Whereas CUNY's five-year tenure clock is appropriate for an institution that uniquely encompasses two-year and four-year colleges; and

Whereas the proposal to extend the untenured period emanates, in part, from the state's unwillingness to fund CUNY and the concession and resignation of the CUNY administration to this circumstance; and

Whereas loss of state support has resulted in too little funding to support faculty research, scholarship and creative work; and too little funding for

provisions such as start-up packages for scientific laboratories, adequate parental leave and childcare; and

Whereas there is no evidence to indicate that lengthening the tenure clock benefits women, as has been claimed by management, although there *is* evidence that providing research support, reasonable course loads, childcare and adequate parental leave *does* benefit women; and

Whereas stretching the tenure clock lengthens the time when faculty may not feel fully protected by academic freedom and the opportunity to participate in the full life of the campus; and

Whereas an increase in the probationary period decreases job security, delays promotions and raises in salary, increases the period of most intense managerial control, increases the time during which dissenting voices may be silenced, and weakens the University as whole; and

Whereas the PSC believes that this is not the moment to open a debate on tenure but rather a conversation on what is needed at CUNY to make it possible for faculty to succeed, namely adequate research leave, manageable course loads, access to childcare, and ample parental leave, support for scientists conducting research in labs; therefore be it

Resolved, that the Professional Staff Congress oppose the Chancellor's proposal to extend the untenured period; that the membership and leadership actively oppose the legislation; and that we call on Chancellor Goldstein and the Board of Trustees to withdraw their tenure proposal and instead join the PSC in advocating for investment in the forms of support that have been *demonstrated* to promote scholarship and research.