

THE KFT VOICE

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Volume 18 Issue 2

Decelerating Tenure

By James A. Castiglione, President, KFT

The Farahi administration's attack on tenure is a multi-headed beast. And like many a monster of lore, it is hard to control and wreaks havoc on the University.

Mass Denial of Tenure

The vast majority of our ten colleagues up for tenure this fall were rejected by President Farahi even though all but one received unanimous or near unanimous votes at the departmental and college levels.

Only three of the ten will receive tenure effective September 2014 – a 70% denial rate. Since they are part of a cohort of 17 tenure-track faculty hired in September 2009, they represent a pathetic 18% tenuring rate. This accelerates a trend that began when Dawood Farahi became president.

A low tenure rate is the main factor in the precipitous drop of tenured and tenure-track faculty from 397 at its peak a decade ago to 298 today. **The faculty is smaller now than at any time since the 1980s.**

A Decade of Denial

While this year is particularly egregious, the trend under Farahi has been a far lower tenuring rate than his predecessor, President Ronald Applbaum. Applbaum worked with then-KFT President Richard Katz to grow the size of the faculty to be commensurate with increased student enrollments. Applbaum's commitment to providing quality, faculty-led professional development was also instrumental in supporting faculty through to tenure.

Under Farahi the focus shifted from supporting faculty to terrorizing them into submission. For cohorts of faculty hired under Farahi, only one cohort has a tenuring rate

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Passing The Torch; Billie Bailey New KFT Treasurer



JON ERICKSON - BILLIE BAILEY - ELLEN COMERFORD

FIFTEEN YEARS OF FINANCIAL INTEGRITY

Billie brings impressive experience as assistant to the treasurer of her state-wide sorority and is highly prepared to oversee the KFT treasury. For this reason, the KFT Executive Council has appointed her to fill the last year of Jon Erickson's term since he has stepped down to become KFT Vice President.

Help Make Our Community Live

By Jon Erickson, KFT VP

An Improved Two-way Street

The KFT has over the years attempted to create better communication methods to and from the membership. Email has been a successful means of sending information to members. However, the email alerts and newsletters are not confidential and are almost always from the leadership to the members. The result is that events such as reappointment, tenure, program closures or suspensions can occur without the Union leadership's full knowledge or timely notification.

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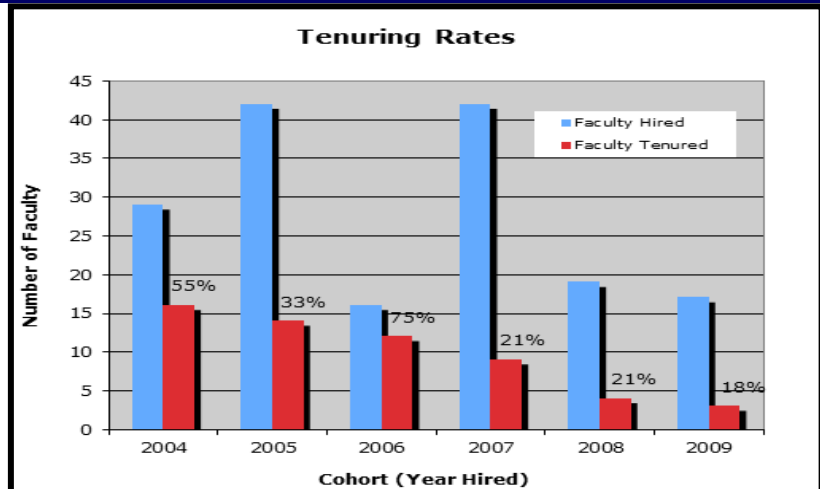
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Decelerating Tenure

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higher than 55%. Under the current VPAA Jeff Toney, the rates have plummeted even more, averaging only 20.5% for the three classes up for tenure under his watch.

The accompanying graph shows this trend over the past decade. The data was compiled by AFT-NJ Staff Researcher Tom Perretti from Open Public Record Act requests he filed with Kean University and our sister institutions last spring. The data show the number of full-time faculty hired at Kean each September and the number from that cohort who received tenure five years later. Note the decreasing percentage of each cohort receiving tenure.



Threatened Layoff of Tenured Faculty

After the Board of Trustees voted this summer to eliminate the Graphic Communications program, the Administration wrote to the two faculty assigned to the

program, Dr. Cyril Nwako and Dr. Greg D'Amico, that they were being retrenched. Retrenchment means that if the faculty are not re-assigned to

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Help Make Our Community Live

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Kean University has changed in many ways over the last twenty years. One of the most significant, but least discussed changes, is a loss of college wide community in which people in the various programs and departments were in contact more often than today. In addition, to committee work more social activities were held and they were better attended. Today there are fewer opportunities for community wide discussion of changes occurring at the

program or department level of the University. Many staff and faculty are relatively isolated from colleagues outside their program or department. This isolation also keeps the Union leadership uninformed about administrative decisions occurring every semester.

The Executive Committee has endorsed a program, department and school representative system to foster both bottom-top and top-down communication that is quick and confidential. The Executive Commit-

tee is asking for volunteers to serve as representatives from their programs, schools and the remaining departments. At a recent general meeting of the Union this idea was discussed and a small number of people volunteered. We still need many more members to step forward. Becoming involved will NOT be a major consumer of your time. If you are willing to contribute to a stronger community, please call Jon Erickson at 732-742-8226.

♦

Complex Negotiation Issues

By Pat McManimon, Local Negotiations Chair

Local negotiations this semester have been difficult as the issues are complex and refer not only to Kean, Union, but the Ocean and China campuses as well. The lecturer reappointment calendar has been approved

and Lecturers should be informed of the timetable to submit their reappointment requests. SIRII's will be completed by hand again and not electronically this semester. Further issues regarding the SIRII's remain open.

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The Legacy of A Decade

The following article, written by Richard Katz, KFT State Council Delegate, was printed in the November 2003 issue of the KFT VOICE entitled, ***Bullying Masquerading as Efficiency***. It is as applicable today as it was ten years ago and punctuates the legacy of both the Kean Administration and the Board of Trustees.

Those members of the campus community who were willing to give Dawood Farahi the benefit of the doubt in Farahi's quest to become Kean University's president did so for a number of reasons.

They believed that, as one of the faculty, Farahi would support faculty work; that he was a good manager and could streamline and improve bureaucratic processes; that he could, through his political connection, enhance the school's funding base; and that he genuinely wanted to make more effective the delivery of services to Kean's students.

Now we all know that Farahi wanted power simply because he enjoys exercising power. But exercising power because you like letting people know that you are in charge is not a strategy. It is not a plan. It is not a vision. And it is not effective.

It is just bullying masquerading as efficiency.

But efficiency is not even what the University needs. For the past seven years, Kean has been the most efficient campus in the state college system.

We offer the highest quality education possible with the fewest full-time faculty members and highest number of adjunct faculty of any institution in the system.

Our full-time faculty to full-time student ratio last year was almost 1 to 23. What we really need at Kean is effectiveness. And that is what is lacking in the Farahi administration.

The Farahi administration has no excuse for confusing efficiency with effectiveness. After all, Farahi became president with an intimate familiarity with the needs of students and with a clear sense that classroom effectiveness is the Kean faculty's strength.

Higher education requires redundancy, not understaffing, especially at Kean with its unique mission as an economic and cultural bridge for its diverse and demanding population. But the Farahi administration's bullying masquerading as efficiency is leading us into an ineffective mess.

The number of adjunct faculty has jumped 10 percent to a total figure of more than 700 this semester, while the number of full-time faculty has declined to a total of less than 370.

The Legacy of A Decade

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Yet student enrollments are now planned to rise to 12,500 FTEs from 8,500 FTEs--an increase of almost 50 percent.

The anticipated tuition and fees will defray the University's new 7.7-million capital debt, according to the bond rating Kean received from Standard & Poor's.

In an incredible move, the provost and vice president for academic affairs, Jose Quiles, has notified some 30 untenured faculty members that they will not be retained after the current school year.

These dismissals are the most ever at Kean and, to be sure, a gross academic misjudgment.

But Quiles' action is not really an academic judgment. It is all about efficiency--a way to show Kean's Board of Trustees that the buyers' market in academe allows him to replace these faculty member with others at lower salaries.

This comes at the cost of effectiveness. Effectiveness, particularly in the classroom, inevitable declines as inexperience proliferates and teaching effectiveness goes undeveloped.

The shortage of chalk in the classrooms and paper towels and toilet paper in the rest rooms, the lack of heat in Willis Hall and the New Academic Building, the dismissal of young faculty, the reduction in promotions, the cut in support funds and administrative released time, the intimidation of employees while demanding their loyalty--all may parade under the banner of efficiency.

But they mask a deep desperation of the part the Administration to satisfy a know-nothing, care-nothing trustee board. The board know nothing about higher education and cares nothing about delivering effective, high-quality instruction.

At Kean we are educating adults, many of whom are the first in their families to attend college. Those who do the education are supposed to be adults, too, not slaves who blindly obey and follow orders out of fear.

It is time to stand up to the bullies in Kean Hall who confuse the exercise of power with true leadership and efficiency with effectiveness

It would be unprofessional--indeed, un-American--if tenured faculty fail to stand up for their students, themselves, and their most vulnerable colleagues--untenured faculty, librarians and professional staff--and challenge the Farahi administration's lack of planning, bogus budgeting and bully-boy tactics. ♦

Postscript: Today, Kean's full-time faculty to full-time student ratio is 1 to 44; the number of full-time faculty has further declined to 299 and adjunct faculty has risen to 1000; student enrollment is about 13,000 FTE's; and the capital debt is 360 million. (Ed.)

"Sad to say, I was too optimistic about President Farahi's leadership. We all feel his contempt for the work we do. But even the mask of administrative efficiency is a proven charade. A revolving door of Deans and Vice Presidents hired and fired, the crippling reduction of full-time tenured faculty, the seemingly endless flow of administration scandals, the erratic course scheduling regimes, the redirection of budget priorities away from the classroom to administration, facilities maintenance, and advertising have crippled our ability to educate. By every measure, except building construction, Kean has suffered."

R.K.

Decelerating Tenure

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another department, they can be laid-off at the end of the academic year. As of the writing of this article, six months into the retrenchment process, they have not been re-assigned despite repeated advocacy by our Union and others to get it done.

These faculty have taught or are qualified to teach dozens of courses across a range of disciplines including management, marketing, fine arts, design and the general education program. They have taught courses in these disciplines at Kean or at other colleges, including such notable institutions as New York University. The background of these two faculty is so strong and inter-disciplinary in nature that re-assignment to another academic program would normally be a foregone conclusion.

Clearly, the reassignment of experienced faculty who have a record of scholarly achievement and strong instructional performance is also in the best interests of our students, especially at a time of declining numbers of tenured and tenure-track full-time faculty. So, given all of the above, why hasn't it taken place? The concern, quite obviously, is that the Farahi administration sees this as another opportunity to attack tenure.

Abuse of Non-Tenure-Track Instructors

Initially, the replacement of tenure-track faculty was accomplished through an explosion in the hiring of adjunct instructors. Under Farahi, adjunct numbers rose from under 400 per semester to over 1200 at its

peak. Adjunct numbers have declined slightly the last two years with declining student enrollment and the increased hiring of Lecturers.

Faculty understand that there is a minimum number of tenured and tenure-track faculty necessary for each academic program to be able to properly serve our students. The Lecturer position, used appropriately, could play an effective role in providing quality education. **But when abused**, such as in the administration's efforts to replace tenured faculty lines with Lecturers, the position becomes another lever for this administration to undermine tenure.

It is important for faculty to make a distinction between the Lecturer position and the Lecturers themselves. While faculty may disagree with the abuse of the Lecturer position, we must remember that the **Lecturers are colleagues, fellow university employees and members of our bargaining unit. It is important that we support our Lecturer colleagues as we argue for an appropriate balance of instructional positions in the academic departments.**

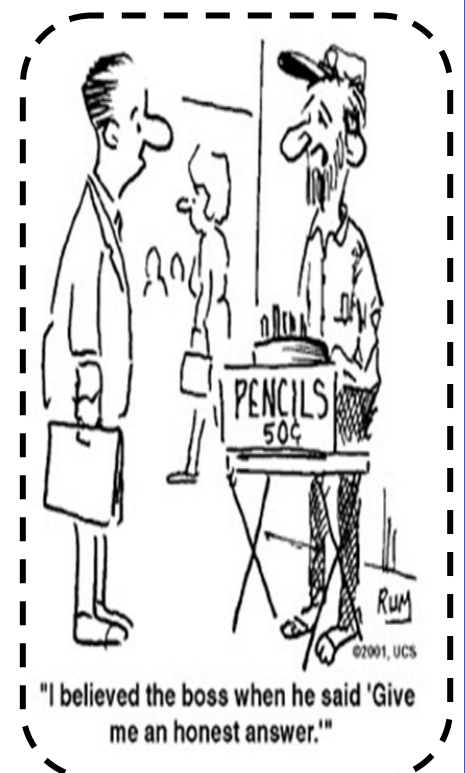
University-wide Havoc

The hollowing out of the tenured and tenure-track faculty has had a number of deleterious consequences for the university. While the administration may say these consequences are unintended, they were, in fact, predicted by our Union and others.

The size of the full-time Faculty was cited by Middle States as a problem that factored into the accreditation Warning and Probation that were so damaging. Worsening student-to-faculty ratios have contributed to Kean's precipitous drop in rankings, such as Kean's recent falling out of the US News & World Report College

Rankings. Unsatisfied students drive the decline in enrollment which the Administration attempts to compensate by lowering admission standards.

Students and faculty alike deserve better! If we want to preserve high quality education at Kean University, now and into the future, we will all need to work together to ensure the stability of the tenured faculty that serves as the foundation on which our academic programs are built. ♦



Complex Negotiation Issues

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One issue close to resolution is the academic integrity policy. Agreement was reached on most aspects of this policy. Each college will have representatives on a fact finding committee selected by lottery which will be conducted by the Senate. The time table for completion and notifications were negotiated and the final version will be available in December/January.

Several issues that are important to faculty are:

- (1) compensation for the mandatory training imposed unilaterally by the Board of Trustees,
- (2) the academic calendar for 2014-2015 and
- (3) Advisement.

The training required by the Board of Trustees must have compensation negotiated. There has been no determination of what the training will consist of and, although the dates for training are reserved, the actual schedule has not been set. Once the Negotiations Committee is aware of the exact dates and number of hours, we can begin negotiating compensation.

The academic calendar issues have not been brought to the table officially, but there was preliminary mention of the Administration's needing flexibility in scheduling the calendar. Presumably this means either an earlier start to the academic year, forfeiting a holiday, or both. The membership will be given details as the Administration proposes a calendar.

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Deliver to:

The Union has made a proposal to alter office hours. The proposal is to have one office hour per class during non-registration periods and during the weeks of active registration to increase office hours for advisement to 8 hours weekly. This was initiated at the November 26th negotiations and awaits a response from the Administration.

There also remains an unsettled issue about whether faculty can work overloads. The administration stated at the November negotiations that there was not a hard cap on overloads. The KFT will monitor this situation for compliance with a grievance won by the KFT.

Finally, there are issues in conducting peer review observations on the Wenzhou-Kean campus. The Administration has requested permitting administrators, who previously held faculty positions, to be permitted to conduct the peer observations. There is a proposal to allow the peer observations to be conducted electronically by uploading a video to the Kean site and have peers evaluate the professors through this medium.

If there are issues that any of the members believe warrants placing on the agenda, please feel free to contact the KFT office. ♦



Kean Federation of Teachers

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