

Resolution in Defense of Tenure and Opposition to Kansas House Bill HB 2348

WHEREAS, tenure is a cornerstone of higher education which promotes the stability and continuity of academic programs, fostering innovation, research, and workforce development that directly benefit the state's economy; and

WHEREAS, tenure is a critical mechanism for attracting and retaining highly qualified faculty, who contribute to the intellectual, cultural, and economic vitality of Kansas; and

WHEREAS, the Kansas Board of Regents (KBOR) and Wichita State University (WSU) have established rigorous policies governing tenure, including standards for awarding tenure, post-tenure review, and procedures for addressing underperformance or misconduct (*KBOR Policy Manual*, Chapter II, Section C; *WSU Policies and Procedures Manual*, Section 4.19 and 4.21); and

WHEREAS, tenure rises to the level of an entitlement, right, or property interest, earned through years of rigorous evaluation, demonstrated excellence, and significant contributions to the institution, and protected by due process under KBOR and institutional policies; and

WHEREAS, Kansas House Bill HB 2348 undermines tenure, jeopardizing the ability of KBOR universities to attract and retain top-tier faculty, conduct cutting-edge research, and maintain the quality of education that drives economic growth and innovation; and

WHEREAS, the proposed legislation fails to acknowledge that tenure does not provide unconditional job security; tenured faculty are subject to conditions including post-tenure review, disciplinary measures and dismissal for cause that ensure accountability and high standards for tenured faculty; and

WHEREAS, tenure is a key factor in maintaining institutional accreditation, as accrediting bodies recognize the importance of stable, qualified faculty in delivering high-quality educational programs and achieving institutional goals; and

WHEREAS, the erosion of tenure would harm WSU's ability to achieve its mission of providing high-quality education, advancing innovative research, and serving as an economic and cultural driver for the region and the state of Kansas; and

WHEREAS, the Council of Faculty Senate Presidents (CoFSP) of KBOR institutions has submitted formal testimony in opposition to HB 2348, articulating the critical importance of tenure to the mission of higher education and the well-being of faculty, students, and the state of Kansas;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the WSU Faculty Senate strongly opposes Kansas House Bill HB 2348 and any legislation that weakens or eliminates tenure; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Faculty Senate affirms its commitment to academic freedom and the principle that tenure rises to the level of an entitlement, right, or property interest, as established by KBOR and WSU policies; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Faculty Senate formally endorses the testimony submitted by the CoFSP in opposition to HB 2348 and commends the CoFSP for its leadership in advocating for the preservation of tenure and academic freedom; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Faculty Senate calls on the leadership at WSU to vigorously and publicly defend the right of tenure across the KBOR system of institutions as a fundamental component of academic excellence and institutional integrity; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Faculty Senate calls on KBOR to vigorously defend the right of tenure for its system institutions as a fundamental component of academic excellence and institutional integrity, and to consider changes in leadership if such defense is not forthcoming; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Faculty Senate calls on the Kansas Legislature to reject HB 2348 and uphold tenure as essential to higher education and to WSU's mission; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution be distributed to WSU Leadership, KBOR, the Kansas Legislature, the Office of the Governor, CoFSP, and other relevant stakeholders.

Adopted by the Wichita State University Faculty Senate this twenty-fourth day of February 2025