

PROMOTION FOR THE FACULTY MEMBERS HAS BECOME STRICTER

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TKU has tightened the rules for its recently-hired faculty members, in particular, those in the rank of assistant and associate professors by adding two new regulations. The first deals with those who have not applied for any NSC or other research grants two years consecutively. When that happens, they will be given a one-year renewable contract and a freeze in salary in this year. The second concerns assistant professors who may not have their contract renewed if they have not been promoted within eight years of service at TKU. Both regulations were passed on March 29 at the University Affairs Meeting and will come into effect at the beginning of 2006 Academic Year.

Both measures exist to encourage research activities among faculty members and they are in line with the general policy decided by the Ministry of Education, who set these guidelines for universities to promote research and academic quality. Dr. Flora Chang, the President of TKU, personally endorses these measures as she sees some room for improvement for TKU's new employees. She points out that TKU has hired over 150 faculty members in the past five years, but more than half of them have not applied for any research grant since then. Such a result, she says, is not in tandem with TKU's goal, which is to promote teaching AND research among faculties at the same time.

She, in fact, was first considering 6 years, as some other universities have been doing, rather than 8 years as the threshold. However, most faculty members on the University Affairs Committee argued that those universities provide better system in which teachers with particular administrative duties are not burdened with unnecessary teaching load. TKU's newly-hired assistant professors, on the other hand, usually have the heaviest load among all faculty members. Furthermore, grants are scarce

for humanities to begin with, so subjecting teachers of these disciplines to the same requirement can be unfair. How about female teachers who become pregnant during their service? All these factors were taken into consideration at the Meeting and a compromise was reached by extending 6 years to 8 years.

University also promised to look into the issue of teaching overload. President Chang asked college and departmental heads to do any necessary adjustment so that assistant professors would have sufficient time and support to do research. (~Ying—hsueh Hu)