

Untenured Faculty Comment (anonymous)

As an untenured faculty, the events unfolding at JCU are truly horrific. I, along with many others, are grueling over our annual reviews, preparing for tenure. We undergo this process to prove to the university that we are quality teachers, researchers, and community members all in the hopes to secure tenure. Tenure allows us to research topics that are relevant to our field of work, which in some instances may be controversial to some. In addition, it allows us to teach our courses to enhance our students' understanding and knowledge of the world, without fear of reprisal. There will always be someone critical of our work, who may not approve of our findings or our teaching. Tenure is there to ensure that we can research and discuss sensitive subjects without fear that an administrator, student, or any other person who may hold different values and beliefs filing a complaint that could result in termination. I chose JCU because it is a Jesuit institution that values social justice. I wanted to teach about social justice in the classroom and open student's eyes to new viewpoints they may not have been exposed to. I wanted to conduct research that advocates for social justice reform. I expect to find, and have found, those who disagree and argue contrary to my teachings. I of course value those viewpoints and address them in a meaningful way, but now am concerned that without secure tenure, I will have to be more careful in what I research and teach.

On top of concerns about teaching and research, it is also disheartening to be going through the tenure process for nothing. Tenure is the most stressful time of an academic's career, but the stress of the process is supposed to come with a light at the end of the tunnel. It now seems that I will stress through this process to get a title that is meaningless. When tenure is undermined, so too is the process that all faculty must go through to obtain it. Like the completion of a dissertation, tenure is supposed to be a significant stepping stone in an academic's career, but now it feels hopeless and pointless. Why should I continue at JCU when I could go to another University where my knowledge and skills are valued and appreciated? Where I can teach and research on divisive issues? Where I can be the quality educator that I want to be? This recent decision has made it very difficult to continue moving forward with JCU. When I started here, I had every intention of staying for the long haul, but now, the future of my career at JCU is not so clear as I must contemplate the repercussions of the board's decision.