

**TO:** College Deans Council: Dean Mark Nelson (JGSM), Dean Kate Walsh (Nolan), Dean Jinhua Zhao (Dyson), Dean of Faculty and Research Suzanne Shu

**FROM:** Tenure Clock Harmonization Committee: Professors Arnab Basu (Dyson), Steve Carvell (Nolan), Helen Chun (Nolan), Sachin Gupta (JGSM, chair), Jura Liaukonyte (Dyson), Beta Mannix (JGSM), and Kristi Rennekamp (JGSM)

**RE:** Recommendation for Tenure Clock Harmonization

**DATE:** April 12, 2022

---

## 1. Introduction and Charge of the Committee

The Dean of the SC Johnson College of Business, Andrew Karolyi, appointed the Tenure Clock Harmonization Committee on December 21, 2021, to fulfill the following recommendation of the Leadership Subcommittee of the Task Force (page 31, item 14):

The different tenure clocks and voting procedures in different schools should be resolved as expeditiously as possible so as to ensure candidates in the same area are treated similarly. The CDC, including the new DFR, should serve as the committee to review and recommend whether or not to harmonize tenure clocks, with input as they deem appropriate from the college faculty. This should be brought before the college faculty for a vote.

### Charge of the Committee

- Standardize tenure clocks across schools within the college.
- Bring recommendation to college faculty for a vote in late spring.
- College Deans Council, including College Dean to make the case for any revised tenure clock to the University Senate.

The committee should engage the SC Johnson College of Business *faculty* community to solicit their input through a series of meetings/town halls.

Provost Michael Kotlikoff affirmed this mandate in his memorandum of October 29, 2021 and provided the following timeline: “Prepare a proposal to harmonize tenure clocks across Schools within the College by July 1, 2022 (with the understanding that the choice of retaining existing tenure clocks will apply to faculty already hired or in the hiring process prior to implementing a change).”

## 2. Process Followed by the Tenure Clock Harmonization Committee

The following are the main components of the process followed by our committee:

- i) We met to deliberate and discuss five times during the Spring semester of 2022, with the first meeting on 1/18/2022 and the last meeting on 3/24/2022.
- ii) We met with College Dean, Andrew Karolyi, and Dean of Faculty and Research, Suzanne Shu, early in the process to clarify the charge of our committee.

- iii) We held three town hall meetings over Zoom at which assistant, associate and full professors from the College were invited separately. The goal of the meetings was to receive feedback and thoughts on the two alternatives that the committee was considering – an eight-year clock and a six-year clock. Separation by rank was chosen purposefully to encourage faculty members to freely express their views. The meetings were attended by 24 assistant professors, 15 associate professors, and 30 full professors, in addition to the committee members. In the meetings we encouraged faculty to also reach out to committee members individually. Several interactions ensued via in-person meetings or email.
- iv) We met with the Deans of the three schools – Jinhua Zhao (Dyson), Mark Nelson (JGSM) and Kate Walsh (Nolan) – to solicit their views on the tenure clock options.
- v) We encouraged the faculty policy committees of Nolan and JGSM and the Executive Committee of Dyson to discuss the tenure clock issue, and all three bodies did. Sachin Gupta attended the faculty policy committee of JGSM as a guest when the matter was discussed.
- vi) We ran an anonymous survey of the college faculty about their preferences for the two tenure clock options as well as sought their feedback in an open-ended question. The survey instrument is attached in Appendix A and summary data are in Appendix C.
- vii) We gathered information about the length of the tenure clock at a set of 14 peer schools that had been identified by JGSM in 2012 in its presentation to the Cornell Board of Trustees to seek approval to use an eight-year tenure clock, rather than the standard six-year tenure clock. Additionally, recognizing that Cornell’s College of Business has elements that are not shared with most traditional business schools, such as the presence of a number of scholars in the agricultural economics and hospitality fields, we also considered tenure standards in peer agricultural economics and hospitality programs. See Appendix D.
- viii) We gathered information on the reappointment review process at the 14 peer schools that had been identified by JGSM in 2012. See Appendix D.
- ix) We obtained historical data relating to tenure cases in Dyson, JGSM, and Nolan from the Activity Insights team and analyzed it to learn about the incidence of early tenure since 2014. See Appendix E.

### **3. University Guidelines and History of Tenure Clock Changes**

#### University guidelines

The length of the time-period prior to review for indefinite tenure is colloquially known as the “tenure clock.” Cornell’s faculty handbook (<https://theuniversityfaculty.cornell.edu/the-new-faculty-handbook/4-tenure-track-promotions/4-1-the-tenure-process/4-1-2-tenure/>) provides the following description of the tenure clock:

#### *Time Period Prior to Review for Tenure*

The initial appointment to the Cornell faculty of a highly qualified person who is already credited with significant achievements may be at the rank of associate or even full professor, but without indefinite tenure. Such appointments are for a limited term of not more than five years, typically in a probationary tenure status. That is, the award of tenure is deferred until the faculty member and the university become well acquainted and a review leading to the long-term tenure decision is possible.

More commonly, however, tenure is awarded, along with promotion to the rank of associate professor, after a person has spent a period in probationary tenure status as an assistant professor. The length of that period depends on the amount of professional experience the individual has acquired between earning the terminal degree in his or her field and the initial appointment as assistant professor. If that period is no more than a year or so, the candidate is usually reviewed for promotion and tenure in his or her sixth year at Cornell, typically the third year of the second term of appointment as assistant professor. Then, if the outcome is negative, a one-year terminal appointment is provided in the seventh year.

According to university bylaws, a faculty member may not hold the position of assistant professor for more than the equivalent of six years of full-time service, unless, in the judgment of the provost, a temporary extension is warranted.

The second and third paragraphs of the University guidelines quoted above describe what we term a “six-year” tenure clock. This can be interpreted as the maximum period of time in service for assistant professors before the university must grant tenure or terminate employment.

The six-year clock currently applies to all appointments of assistant professors in probationary tenure status at the Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management (“Dyson”) and the Nolan School of Hotel Administration (“Nolan”). The six-year clock also applied to the Johnson Graduate School of Management (“JGSM”) up to 2012.

#### Change of Tenure Clock by the Johnson Graduate School of Management in 2012

In 2011 JGSM successfully petitioned the Faculty Senate to extend the tenure clock for appointments at JGSM to an “eight-year” clock. This petition was supported by the Provost who subsequently proposed a change in the Cornell bylaws to the Board of Trustees who approved the change. Accordingly, beginning in 2012 the Cornell Bylaws now state: “For the Johnson Graduate School of Management, the maximum period of service for assistant professors with term appointments shall be eight academic years of full-time equivalent service, continued only for reasons which, in the judgment of the President, are temporary.”

The primary reasons provided by JGSM for the requested extension in the tenure clock are described in a PowerPoint presentation made to the Cornell Board of Trustees in 2012 and shared with us by Dean Mark Nelson (see Appendix B).

#### Current Status of Tenure Clock in the SC Johnson College of Business

As a consequence of the history described above, there are two different tenure clocks in the College of Business, a six-year clock in Dyson and Nolan, and an eight-year clock in JGSM. The Task Force report, dated October 21, 2021, notes this as a significant concern (page 11):

Tenure clocks differ across schools and thus within areas. This creates problems when faculty with similar responsibilities come up for tenure evaluation from different schools because senior faculty do not reliably adjust expectations for clock length. Since productivity is commonly rising at an accelerating rate in the initial years of a research faculty member's career, and especially given long review cycles (commonly measured in years) at top journals in management and economics disciplines, this puts candidates on six-year clocks at a decided disadvantage. The business school market – our college's peer schools – have moved overwhelmingly to 8- or even 10-year clocks (Chicago, Dartmouth, Harvard, Northwestern, Stanford, Yale, etc.) with a substantive “promotion

to Associate Professor without tenure” review at the midpoint. This business school market landscape drove JGSM's tenure clock to switch ten years ago.

#### **4. Evaluation of Alternative Tenure Clock Options**

##### The Two Options

Based on a discussion with Deans Andrew Karolyi and Suzanne Shu early in Spring 2022, we limited consideration to the two alternative tenure clocks that currently prevail in the College: a six-year clock or an eight-year clock. Further, we agreed that the tenure clock that was selected between the two alternatives would apply to all academic areas and all three schools, with no possibility of variations. Although in discussions within our committee as well as in meetings with different groups of faculty members, the possibility of other options such as a seven-year clock, or a different clock for certain academic areas, was brought up, we did not pursue these as viable alternatives. Our primary reasoning was two-fold: first, both alternatives in consideration had a history at Cornell and had received approval from the University, and hence were prima facie viable. Second, the set of possibilities outside these two was potentially large and untested and was unlikely to find broad support.

##### Effects on Decisions of Three Parties

The length of the tenure clock affects the long-term quality of the faculty body by affecting the decisions of three parties:

1. Tenured faculty at Cornell who vote on reappointment and tenure reviews of pre-tenure faculty. Because reappointment and tenure decisions are intrinsically about predicting future performance, which is uncertain, information about past performance helps in making better predictions. The length of the tenure clock influences the amount of information about past performance that is available to tenured faculty, and hence the quality of their votes.
2. Pre-tenure faculty at Cornell who wish to be reappointed and wish to subsequently receive tenure. To do so, they would like to reveal information about the high quality of their research and teaching before being reviewed. The length of the tenure clock influences the motivation of these individuals, including the allocation of effort to different activities and endeavors. Further, since the length of the tenure clock varies across universities, the tenure clock also affects these individuals' choices between staying and being reviewed at Cornell or seeking employment elsewhere prior to being reviewed at Cornell.
3. Faculty candidates considered for hiring at Cornell. Here we must distinguish between “rookies” (those who recently received their PhDs or postdocs) and more experienced assistant professors at other universities. Since the length of the tenure clock varies across universities, this factor may influence these individuals' choices between Cornell versus other options.

The net impact of the decisions of these three parties is manifested in the quality of faculty recruitment and retention outcomes for Cornell in the long run. Therefore, an examination of how the six-year versus the eight-year clocks affect the decisions of the three parties is crucial to the choice of a tenure clock. Such an examination reveals the complexities that arise due to conflicting effects of the length of the tenure clock on the three parties.

The complex set of effects is best illustrated with an example. Consider the effects of choosing a longer tenure clock, namely, the eight-year option in our setting, on the three parties.

Because more information is revealed, in principle, a longer clock allows tenured faculty to commit fewer errors of judgment in voting on reappointment and tenure cases. That is, they are less likely to vote positively on a case that is in fact a poor candidate for tenure or vote negatively on a case that is in fact a good candidate for tenure. Further, the two errors have asymmetric costs for Cornell. An undeserving candidate who receives tenure imposes a very high cost for Cornell, while the opportunity cost of not retaining a deserving faculty member is also high, but arguably not as much. Similarly, the cost of reappointing a poor candidate is to retain this faculty member potentially for nine years (eight years plus the “grace” year), versus seven years in the shorter clock.

At the same time, pre-tenure faculty who are performing strongly at Cornell are likely to receive recruiting interest from peer universities who can offer them tenure before the eight-year mark. This is especially problematic if most peer universities have tenure clocks that are shorter than eight years. This concern can be mitigated if Cornell can react to such competing offers by offering “early” tenure to deserving candidates, or by promoting them to associate professor without tenure, which can serve as a strong positive signal for tenure.

Finally, turning to the group of potential faculty hires at Cornell, for some rookies a longer tenure clock may be attractive but it may be unattractive to others, depending in part on the prevailing tenure clocks at peer schools with whom Cornell competes for faculty candidates. In the “experienced” assistant professor market, for Cornell a longer tenure clock may open up a pool of potential candidates who are performing well, but not well enough to achieve tenure under a six-year clock at their current institution.

This example illustrates that both the six-year and eight-year clocks have significant pros and cons in relation to achieving the objective of long-term faculty quality. Recognizing this, our committee collected opinions from a diverse set of stakeholders – faculty at all ranks and deans of the three schools. We also recognized that preferences of the current faculty are crucial determinants of the success of the tenure clock harmonization initiative and collected preference data in an anonymous survey. Our final recommendation is the net result of weighing all these inputs and vigorous debate in committee meetings.

## **5. Recommendations and Discussion**

Recommendation 1: The SC Johnson College of Business should move to an eight-year tenure clock for all three schools and for all areas.

Recommendation 2: A substantive midterm review should be conducted that allows for three possible outcomes: i) promotion to associate professor without tenure, ii) reappointment as assistant professor without tenure, iii) denied reappointment.

### Discussion of Recommendation 1

As noted, there are pros and cons of both the six-year and eight-year options. We discuss each consideration next.

1. *Quality of tenured faculty vote*: A longer clock allows more information about the quality of the candidate to be revealed on all relevant dimensions: research, teaching, and service. This view was widely professed by our survey respondents. Relatedly,

several faculty members noted in the survey and in town-hall meetings that competition for space in top management journals has increased, leading to greater time to publication, presumably because of more rejections, as well as requests for more studies, more rounds of etc. Furthermore, since evidence of independent scholarship (independent from one's dissertation advisors) is valued, a longer clock allows assistant professors more time to establish this credential. As a result, a longer clock allows tenured faculty members to vote with more information and with greater confidence. An alternative, minority view we heard was that six years is enough time to judge a candidate for tenure. We show data from the faculty survey subsequently in this report.

2. *Research motivation of pre-tenure faculty:* A longer clock allows pre-tenure faculty members to undertake research projects that take longer to complete and are hence riskier but may also be more impactful. To quote a survey respondent, it gives them "more runway to develop a high-quality research agenda." A related view we heard was that a shorter clock combined with long publication lags incentivizes junior faculty to prioritize quantity over quality, which is undesirable.
3. *Retention of high-performing faculty:* A longer clock increases the possibility that high-performing junior faculty will be "poached" by peer schools through competitive offers before the eight-year mark. Notably, this concern only arises if peer schools have shorter clocks. The data we gathered (Appendix D) on the 14 peer schools that were identified by JGSM in 2012 show that the clocks of five schools are 8 years or more, seven schools are at 7 years, and the remaining two schools are at 6 years. These data suggest some room for concern with the longer clock.

This concern is especially significant for the agricultural economics faculty in the Applied Economics and Policy area. Within AEP, there are 4 sub-areas - Food and Agriculture, International and Development Economics, Environment and Resource Economics and Real Estate. In Food and Agriculture, all peer schools have a 6-year track but for Environment and Resource Economics and International and Development Economics at least one of our peer schools (Harvard Kennedy) has a 10-year clock. A number of economists in environment and development economics also reside within the Applied Economics pillar of peer Business Schools like Wharton, Kellogg and Stanford that either have 7 year clocks or are trying to lengthen their existing clocks (from 6 and 7 years).

This concern can be mitigated if Cornell can be responsive to outside offers by initiating early tenure reviews for high-performing faculty, or in general be prepared to preemptively undertake early tenure reviews for deserving faculty members. We recognize that it is not possible to make policy statements about this matter, or obtain broad assurances from academic leadership, since decisions must be made on a case-by-case basis.

Historical data of tenure reviews at the College shed some light on precedent. Our analysis (see Appendix E for details) suggests that early tenure is not uncommon at Cornell (~60% of positive outcomes) but is most common (75% of early positive cases) when the candidate already has experience prior to coming to Cornell.

Another approach to mitigate the poaching concern is to deliver a strong positive signal to high-performing faculty at their mid-term review about their odds of making tenure at Cornell. We discuss this further in the context of Recommendation 2.

4. *Retention of women faculty members:* Our committee heard a view that a longer clock would especially help recruit and retain women faculty members, an area in which the college has faced special challenges. A respondent in our survey noted “While tenure clock extensions for the birth of a child alleviate some challenges in retaining female faculty members, the fact remains that it doesn’t sufficiently give female faculty members enough runway to get their research up-and-running before tenure.”
5. *Retaining underperforming faculty for longer:* A concern with the longer clock is that unproductive faculty members stay at Cornell on average for two years more under the eight-year clock than the six-year clock. This generates an opportunity cost of being unable to hire and replace the faculty member for those two years, resulting in lost productivity in research.

On the other hand, the eight-year clock in principle allows the college to let an unproductive faculty member go at the mid-term review. Since in the eight-year clock the mid-term review should occur later than in the six-year clock (e.g., at four years instead of three), tenured faculty should be able to make a more informed decision about the candidate’s likelihood of being successful. In this view, the eight-year clock could lower the possibility of “being stuck” with an under-performing faculty member. However, to realize this benefit, the mid-term review in the eight-year clock needs to be substantively different from the mid-term review in the six-year clock.

Notably, our discussions with Dean Mark Nelson and available data suggest that the mid-term renewal rate at JGSM did not change before versus after the lengthening of the tenure clock in 2012. This implies that to mitigate the opportunity cost of the eight-year clock discussed here, the structure of the mid-term review needs careful thought. We discuss this further in the context of Recommendation 2.

6. *Hiring rookie faculty:* Whether rookie candidates (fresh PhDs or postdocs) prefer the six- or eight-year clock when they face a choice between two assistant professor job offers is unclear. This question cannot be answered with real-life data because tenure clock length is confounded with many other attributes of job offers. For instance, highly ranked universities like Harvard, Yale and Chicago have longer clocks but also are very different from shorter-clock universities in terms of resources for junior faculty, and teaching, research and service expectations. We considered the possibility of collecting survey data to address this question, but ultimately decided that it would be hard to disentangle the effect of tenure clock length from other attributes. As an imperfect proxy for this information, we could use the clock preferences of Cornell’s junior faculty members. Our survey data revealed that more than half of the assistant professors who responded preferred the 8-year clock, 30% were indifferent between the two clocks, and less than 20% preferred the 6-year clock.
7. *Hiring experienced assistant professors:* A longer clock potentially opens up a pool of assistant professors who are performing well at peer schools with shorter clocks but

have high uncertainty of being successful at making tenure at their current institutions. This group is attractive to Cornell because they have already established a track record elsewhere and recruiting them under a longer clock gives us the opportunity to see their performance for some time before putting them up for tenure. While this pool is still available under the shorter clock, recruiting them to Cornell entails giving them a longer-than-normal clock, which creates inequities relative to rookies who started at Cornell.

8. *Signaling quality to the market:* We recognize that whichever clock is chosen, a subset of the three schools will have to make a change relative to their current status. Choosing a six-year clock would require JGSM to change from its current eight to six years. Choosing an eight-year clock would imply that Dyson and Nolan change from six to eight years. Given the ecological positive correlation between longer clocks and higher prestige universities that is evident in Appendix D, we believe the former change is likely to be more damaging to the reputation of the College of Business.

### Discussion of Recommendation 2

We believe that under the longer clock that we recommend, it is imperative that the mid-term review be more discriminating than it has historically been at all three schools. Further, it is important that standards for the mid-term review be applied uniformly across areas. Finally, we recognize that the design of the mid-term review can be helpful in ameliorating some of the downsides of the longer tenure clock that we are recommending.

Next, we discuss several features of the mid-term review assuming an eight-year tenure clock.

1. *Lengths of pre-tenure contracts:* Our committee considered three primary options in terms of the lengths of the pre-tenure contracts, which also determines the time to the mid-term review: four plus four years; five plus three years; three plus three plus two years. A four plus four structure means that the initial appointment is for four years, at which point a successful mid-term review leads to a second contract of four years.

The 5+3 structure offers the advantage relative to 4+4 that more information about the candidate is available to make the reappointment decision. Another advantage is that a change from the currently prevailing 4+4 structure at JGSM will provide an opportunity for tenured faculty to reassess reappointment standards. To the extent that the unchanged renewal rates before versus after 2012 at JGSM reflect stickiness of (informal) renewal standards that tenured faculty hold, a change in the timing of the reappointment review may “shake them loose.” Finally, the five-year point is also advanced enough to be able to signal strongly to deserving candidates that they are on the path to successful tenure, thereby preemptively averting losses to peer schools.

The 3+3+2 structure bears the clear disadvantage of the substantially higher cost of conducting three reviews in terms of tenured faculty time. On the other hand, the six-year point is also a natural one to send a positive signal to strong-performing candidates in order to retain them.



2. *Options at mid-term review:* We recommend that the College actively consider the option of promoting deserving candidates to associate professor without tenure. When combined with performing the mid-term review at five years, this can serve as a mechanism to send a tangible positive signal to high-performing faculty. At the same time, not being promoted at this point also sends a signal about odds for tenure, which allows candidates to make decisions regarding allocation of effort to various activities and projects, as well as seek alternative employment if they so choose.

Although the option of promotion to untenured associate professor has historically not been used extensively (for instance, currently the college has only 3 untenured associate professors among 149 tenure track faculty), Cornell university policy allows it (<https://theuniversityfaculty.cornell.edu/the-new-faculty-handbook/3-titles-and-appointments-leaves/3-1-titles/associate-professor/>):

In unusual cases, assistant professors are promoted to the rank of associate professor without being awarded tenure. Such actions at Cornell are normally limited to the professional schools, reflecting a practice that is more common in professional schools nationally. These promotions do not extend the probationary period for the tenure decision (and without provost's approval may shorten the tenure clock to five years). They do not require approval by the Board of Trustees, but other than in the professional schools, promotion for assistant or associate professors on the tenure-track does require approval by the provost.

Peer school practices (see Appendix D) vary in this respect. 12 of 14 schools allow promotion to Associate Professor without tenure; in 6 of the 12, reappointment requires promotion.

3. *External Peer Review:* We discussed whether it would be beneficial to invite external peer reviewer letters at mid-term review, if the option of promotion to associate professor without tenure was considered actively. On the one hand there is a real cost to burdening external reviewers who may be better "saved" for tenure review. On the other hand, if the promotion is to serve its role of being a credible signal to the candidate of the possibility of tenure, some external component in the review is desirable. Our committee also thought that external letters could help reduce differences between areas in reappointment standards.

Data on peer schools (see Appendix D) show a mix of practices. All 6 schools where reappointment requires promotion to associate professor without tenure ask for outside letters. Further, Northwestern asks for outside letters even for reappointment as assistant professor. And Columbia and Duke do not ask for outside letters yet allow promotion to associate professor without tenure.

We encourage the CDC to make a carefully considered decision in this important matter.

## 6. Results of Faculty Survey

We received 86 completed surveys from the 149 tenure-track faculty in the college, a response rate of 58%. The distribution of respondents based on school and rank is shown in Table 1. Comparing the lower half of Table 1 with the population distribution shown in Table 2 by eyeballing provides assurance of sample representativeness.

Since the combination of school, rank and area could potentially disclose respondent identities due to small numbers in the population, the question about area membership was made optional to allow respondents to preserve their anonymity. 62 of the 86 respondents chose to provide information about their area membership. Table 3 shows the distribution of these 62 respondents by area and rank.

Tables 4, 5 and 6 show the distribution of preference (measured on a five-point scale ranging from “strongly prefer six-year clock” to “strongly prefer eight-year clock” with a mid-point of indifference) for the 6-year and 8-year tenure clock. To interpret the preference data, we aggregate respondents in the “prefer” and “strongly prefer” categories and term the sum as the number who prefer. In the overall sample of 86, twice as many respondents preferred the 8-year clock as the 6-year clock (55.8% versus 27.9%). At the school level, among Dyson faculty the 8-year clock was preferred slightly (46.4% versus 35.7%), among JGSM faculty the 8-year clock was preferred strongly (77.7% versus 16.7%) while among Nolan faculty the 8-year clock was less preferred by a small margin (31.8% versus 36.3%).

Turning to faculty by rank, faculty at all ranks preferred the 8-year clock: Assistant professors (51.8% versus 18.5%), associate professors (57.9% versus 31.6%), and full professors (57.5% versus 32.5%).

Next, turning to preferences by area, in the sample of 62 respondents, almost three times as many respondents preferred the 8-year clock as the 6-year clock (64.5% versus 22.6%). Further, in every area but one – Operations, Technology and Information Management (OTIM) – more respondents preferred the 8-year clock than the 6-year clock. In OTIM, 44.4% preferred the 8-year clock versus 55.5% who preferred the 6-year clock.

As an alternative view of the preference data, in Figure 1 we show the count and percentage of faculty who preferred the six-year and eight-year clocks in the form of heat maps by school, rank, and area.

## 7. Conclusion

The tenure clock decision is important because it impacts the long-term quality of the faculty in the College of Business. Both the six-year and eight-year tenure clocks have pros and cons, and neither option dominates on all dimensions. Our goal as a committee was to make our recommendation based on careful consideration of relevant data and opinions we gathered, while taking a long-term view. We also took into account the preferences of College faculty members as reflected in the anonymous survey and in town hall meetings.

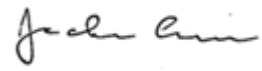
Our conclusion was that the eight-year clock offers advantages over the six-year clock for the College of Business. Nevertheless, it has downsides as well, some of which can be ameliorated by appropriately designing the mid-term review process. Our recommendations are intended to achieve positive long-term outcomes for the College.

Finally, we comment on two issues that came up in our data gathering and deliberations that we agreed should be recorded in this report, although we felt we were not equipped to make

specific recommendations. First, what should be the options available to assistant professors who are at Cornell when the clock change goes into effect? As background we note that when JGSM changed its tenure clock in 2012, all assistant professors were given a one-time option of retaining the six-year clock (which was the contract under which they were hired) or switch to the eight-year clock. We also note that in our survey, over half of the current assistant professors preferred the eight-year clock while less than 20% preferred the six-year clock. Finally, in the town hall meeting, assistant professors urged us to convey the need to give them maximum flexibility in tenure clock options.

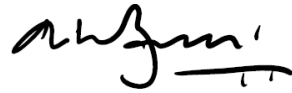
Second, the motivating reason for the tenure clock harmonization was the observation made by the task force that senior faculty did not adequately adjust expectations in reviewing candidates within an area who came from schools that had different tenure clocks. We believe that this concern is part of a much bigger concern about different, ambiguous, and evolving tenure standards in the three schools. Assistant professors in our town hall meeting and in our survey expressed considerable anxiety about the implications of the uncertainty they have endured since the formation of the college. We urge that decisions be made and communicated with as much expediency as possible.

April 12, 2022



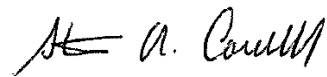
---

Sachin Gupta (Chair)



---

Arnab Basu



---

Steve Carvell



---

Helen Chun



---

Jura Liukonyte



---

Elizabeth Mannix



---

Kristina Rennekamp

## **List of Appendices**


- Appendix A: 2012 Slides of Johnson Graduate School of Management's proposal to Cornell Board of Trustees to extend tenure clock to eight-years
- Appendix B: Survey Instrument for Anonymous Faculty Survey
- Appendix C: Results of Anonymous Faculty Survey
- Appendix D: Peer School Tenure Clock Lengths and Mid-term Review Process
- Appendix E: Analysis of Historical Data of Tenure Outcomes

## Appendix A

2012 Slides of Johnson Graduate School of Management's proposal to Cornell Board of Trustees to extend tenure clock to eight-years

Johnson School Tenure Clock Extension

- Seeking Trustee approval to allow the Johnson School use an eight-year tenure clock, rather than the standard six year tenure clock
- Requires amendment to University Bylaw
- Driven by competitive pressures
- Potential issues and concerns




Cornell University

1

1

What is the tenure clock?

- Junior faculty hired at the assistant professor level can spend no more than six years at that rank
- By the end of that term, must be promoted to the rank of associate professor or leave the university
- This six-year period is known as the tenure clock
- Currently governs all tenure cases on Ithaca campus



Cornell University

2

2

## What are the competitive pressures?

- The unusual demographics of the Johnson School's student body create unique challenges for new junior faculty members
- High demands of older student body require very rapid ramp up in teaching skills
- Exacerbates already difficult challenge of balancing teaching and research expectations
- Most peers deal with these issues through longer tenure clocks



Cornell University

3

3

## Peer Comparison: Business Week top 10 and Close Rivals

University	B-School Clock	How does B-School's Clock Compare to	
		Johnson's clock?	Their university's clock?
Chicago	9	Longer	Longer
Harvard	9	Longer	Longer
Yale	9	Longer	Same
Stern (NYU)	8 (recently lengthened)	Longer	Longer
Columbia	7	Longer	Same
Fuqua (Duke)	7	Longer	Same
MIT	7	Longer	Same
Michigan	7	Longer	Same or Longer
Northwestern	7 (recently lengthened)	Longer	Longer
Stanford	7 (trying to lengthen)	Longer	Same
Tuck (Dartmouth)	7 (recently lengthened)	Longer	Longer
Berkeley	6	Same	Same
Darden (UVA)	6	Same	Same
Wharton (Penn)	6 (trying to lengthen)	Same	Same



4

4

## Effects and Alternatives

Effects: Difficulty recruiting and retaining faculty

- Recruits who turn down our offers typically go to schools with longer clocks (12/13 in last 5 years)
- Strong junior faculty seek clock restarts
- False negatives in tenure decisions

Alternatives: None

- Can't afford to not have junior faculty teach
- Can't extend clock with fellowships/post-docs
- Can't ignore the junior faculty market



Cornell University

5

5

## Concerns about Lengthening Tenure Clock

- Concern – possible confusion and uncertainty if multiple units have different tenure clocks
- Little or no interest by other colleges
- Provost's Restrictive Criteria
  - Unusual circumstances particular to the unit
  - Demonstrable competitive disadvantage
  - Problem relates to the unit as a whole
  - Lack of other options
- No issues at universities with dual clocks



Cornell University

6

6



## Who supports this proposal?

- Johnson School junior faculty (unanimous)
- Johnson School senior faculty (unanimous)
- 3 Deans from peer schools as part of AACSB accreditation
- Provost and other Cornell Deans
- Cornell Faculty Senate's Committee on Academic Freedom and Professional Status (unanimous)
- Cornell Faculty Senate (vote of full senate)



Cornell University

7

7

## Bylaw Change

Section XVII.2.c. – Assistant Professor:

- ...Except in the case of the Johnson Graduate School of Management, the maximum period of service for assistant professors with term appointments shall be six academic years of full-time equivalent service, continued only for reasons which, in the judgment of the President, are temporary. For the Johnson Graduate School of Management, the maximum period of service for assistant professors with term appointments shall be eight academic years of full-time equivalent service, continued only for reasons which, in the judgment of the President, are temporary.



Cornell University

8

## Appendix B

### Survey Instrument for Anonymous Faculty Survey (March 2022)



Cornell University

Dear faculty colleague,

I am writing on behalf of the Tenure Clock Harmonization Committee that consists of Arnab Basu (Dyson), Steve Carvell (Nolan), Helen Chun (Nolan), Sachin Gupta (Johnson), Jura Liaukonyte (Dyson), Beta Mannix (Johnson), and Kristi Rennekamp (Johnson). Our charge is to bring a recommendation to standardize tenure clocks across schools within the College of Business to the College Dean's Council (CDC) by late spring, 2022. The CDC will then make its recommendation to the University. The final decision is made by the Cornell Board of Trustees.

**Please note that the choice of retaining existing tenure clocks will apply to faculty already hired or in the hiring process prior to implementing a change.**

*We request you to participate in this brief, anonymous survey to provide your opinions to our committee. Your opinions will be used by the committee in its deliberations to arrive at its recommendation. Your input is very important.*

#### Privacy and confidentiality

We will not ask for your identity in this survey nor will be it collected electronically.

We will ask for your rank, tenure status, school, and (optionally) area to allow us to analyze the data by sub-groups of faculty members.





Your faculty rank:

- Assistant Professor
  - Associate Professor
  - Full Professor
- 

Your tenure status:

- Pre-tenure
  - Tenured
- 

Your school:

- Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management
  - Johnson Graduate School of Management
  - Nolan School of Hotel Administration
- 

Your area (OPTIONAL):

- Accounting
  - Applied Economics and Policy
  - Finance
  - Management and Organizations
  - Marketing and Management Communications
  - Operations, Technology, and Information Management
  - Strategy and Business Economics
-

Preference for Tenure Clock:

The two options that the committee is considering are:

A **six-year clock** for the entire college. This means candidates will submit their packet in the Summer before the start of the sixth year and the tenure decision will be made in the sixth year.

An **eight-year clock** for the entire college. This means candidates will submit their packet in the Summer before the start of the eighth year and the tenure decision will be made in the eighth year.

Please indicate your strength of preference for the two options by choosing a point on the scale below. Please assume that for both options current university practices will continue to prevail, such as the fact that "early" tenure evaluations are possible but occur infrequently.

	Strongly prefer 6-year	Prefer 6-year	Indifferent between 6-year and 8-year	Prefer 8-year	Strongly prefer 8-year
Please select one:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Additional Feedback:

Please provide below any additional feedback that you think might be useful to the committee. This could include any considerations that guide your response to the question above, your thoughts about the pros and cons of the two options including impact on faculty recruiting and retention, the timing and nature of reappointment (pre-tenure) reviews, differences in reviews between areas, peer school practices, etc.:

## Appendix C

### Results of Online Anonymous Faculty Survey Conducted March 2- 7, 2022

Table 1: Sample composition by school and rank

	Total	Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management	Johnson Graduate School of Management	Nolan School of Hotel Administration
Total Count (Answering)	86	28	36	22
Assistant Professor	27	8	11	8
Associate Professor	19	4	8	7
Full Professor	40	16	17	7
Assistant Professor	31.4%	28.6%	30.6%	36.4%
Associate Professor	22.1%	14.3%	22.2%	31.8%
Full Professor	46.5%	57.1%	47.2%	31.8%

Table 2: College (Population) Distribution of Tenure Track Faculty by school and rank

%	Total	Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management	Johnson Graduate School of Management	Nolan School of Hotel Administration
Assistant Professor	28.2	23.5	28.6	34.3
Associate Professor	22.1	23.6	19	25.7
Full Professor	49.7	52.9	52.4	40
Total	100	100	100	100

Table 3: Sample composition by area and rank

	Total	Accounting	Applied Economics and Policy	Finance	Management and Organizations	Marketing and Management Communications	Operations, Technology, and Information Management	Strategy and Business Economics
Total Count (Answering)	62	6	16	9	9	7	9	6
Assistant Professor	15	3	2	0	3	2	2	3
Associate Professor	15	1	3	4	1	3	2	1
Full Professor	32	2	11	5	5	2	5	2
Assistant Professor	24.2%	50.0%	12.5%	0.0%	33.3%	28.6%	22.2%	50.0%
Associate Professor	24.2%	16.7%	18.8%	44.4%	11.1%	42.9%	22.2%	16.7%
Full Professor	51.6%	33.3%	68.8%	55.6%	55.6%	28.6%	55.6%	33.3%

Table 4: Preference for Tenure Clocks by School

Row Labels	Strongly prefer 6-year	Prefer 6-year	Indifferent between 6-year and 8-year	Prefer 8-year	Strongly prefer 8-year	Grand Total
Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management	6	4	5	10	3	28
Johnson Graduate School of Management	2	4	2	12	16	36
Nolan School of Hotel Administration	7	1	7	3	4	22
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>86</b>
			Percentages			
Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management	21.4	14.3	17.9	35.7	10.7	100
Johnson Graduate School of Management	5.6	11.1	5.6	33.3	44.4	100
Nolan School of Hotel Administration	31.8	4.5	31.8	13.6	18.2	100
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>17.4</b>	<b>10.5</b>	<b>16.3</b>	<b>29.1</b>	<b>26.7</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 5: Preference for Tenure Clocks by rank

Row Labels	Strongly prefer 6-year	Prefer 6-year	Indifferent between 6-year and 8-year	Prefer 8-year	Strongly prefer 8-year	Grand Total
Assistant Professor	3	2	8	8	6	27
Associate Professor	4	2	2	4	7	19
Full Professor	8	5	4	13	10	40
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>86</b>
			Percentages			
Assistant Professor	11.1	7.4	29.6	29.6	22.2	100
Associate Professor	21.1	10.5	10.5	21.1	36.8	100
Full Professor	20	12.5	10	32.5	25	100
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>17.4</b>	<b>10.5</b>	<b>16.3</b>	<b>29.1</b>	<b>26.7</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 6: Preference for Tenure Clocks by area

Row Labels	Strongly prefer 6-year	Prefer 6-year	Indifferent between 6-year and 8-year	Prefer 8-year	Strongly prefer 8-year	Grand Total
Accounting				3	3	6
Applied Economics and Policy	3	2	2	9		16
Finance			1	1	7	9
Management and Organizations		2	1	4	2	9
Marketing and Management Communications	1	1	2	2	1	7
Operations, Technology, and Information Management	4	1		2	2	9
Strategy and Business Economics			2	3	1	6
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>62</b>
			Percentages			
Accounting	0	0	0	50	50	100
Applied Economics and Policy	18.8	12.5	12.5	56.3	0	100
Finance	0	0	11.1	11.1	77.8	100
Management and Organizations	0	22.2	11.1	44.4	22.2	100
Marketing and Management Communications	14.3	14.3	28.6	28.6	14.3	100
Operations, Technology, and Information Management	44.4	11.1	0	22.2	22.2	100
Strategy and Business Economics	0	0	33.3	50	16.7	100
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>12.9</b>	<b>9.7</b>	<b>12.9</b>	<b>38.7</b>	<b>25.8</b>	<b>100</b>

Figure 1: Heat Map of Preferences of Faculty for Tenure Clocks

Note: "Support" includes those who prefer or strongly prefer a particular clock. Respondents who indicated they were indifferent between the two clocks are included in the denominator

Area	Total Number Voting			% Supporting 6 Year Clock			% Supporting 8 Year Clock		
	Dyson	JGSM	Nolan	Dyson	JGSM	Nolan	Dyson	JGSM	Nolan
Not Declared	9	8	7	44%	25%	57%	22%	63%	14%
Accounting		5	1		0%	0%		100%	100%
Applied Economics and Policy	14		2	36%		0%	57%		50%
Finance	2	6	1	0%	0%	0%	100%	100%	0%
Management and Organizations	1	4	4	100%	0%	25%	0%	100%	50%
Marketing	1	3	3	0%	33%	33%	0%	67%	33%
OTIM		6	3		50%	67%		50%	33%
Strategy and Business Economics	1	4	1	0%	0%	0%	100%	75%	0%

Rank	Dyson	JGSM	Nolan	Dyson	JGSM	Nolan	Dyson	JGSM	Nolan
Assistant Professor	8	11	8	25%	9%	25%	38%	82%	25%
Associate Professor	4	8	7	25%	38%	29%	75%	50%	57%
Full Professor	16	17	7	44%	12%	57%	44%	88%	14%

## Appendix D

### Peer School Tenure Clock and Midterm Review Information

		Information in 2012	Information in 2022				
					Midterm Review(s)		
	University	B-School Tenure Clock	B-School Tenure Clock	How compares with rest of university?	Reappointment Year	Promotion to Associate without tenure possible?	Outside Letters?
1	Chicago	9	9	Longer	4 years	Yes (the only option)	Yes
2	Harvard	9	8	Not sure	4 years	Yes (the only option)	Yes
3	Yale	9	9	Longer	3 years, 6 years	Yes (the only option at six years)	Yes
4	Stern (NYU)	8 (recently lengthened)	8	Same	6 years	Yes (the only option)	Yes
5	Columbia	7	7	Same	Before 5 years	Yes	No
6	Fuqua (Duke)	7	8	Same	4 years	Yes	No
7	MIT	7	7	Same	4 years	Yes (but usually separate from reappt)	Yes if promotion is sought
8	Michigan	7	7	Longer	4 years	Yes (but rarely done)	Yes if promotion is sought
9	Northwestern	7 (recently lengthened)	7	Same	4 years	Yes	Yes
10	Stanford	7 (trying to lengthen)	7	Same	4 years	Yes (the only option)	Yes
11	Tuck (Dartmouth)	7 (recently lengthened)	7	Not sure	4 years	Yes (the only option)	Yes
12	Berkeley	6	6	Same	3 years	No	No
13	Darden (UVA)	6	7	Same	4 years	Yes, but very rarely done	No
14	Wharton (Penn)	6 (trying to lengthen)	6	Same	3 years	No	No

Source: Information gathered in February-April 2022 via email correspondence with one faculty member or administrator in each peer school.



## Appendix E

### Analysis of Historical Data of Tenure Outcomes

We obtained data from the Activity Insight team at the College of Business for this analysis. Of 38 individuals who were assistant professors as of July 1, 2014, 23 were reviewed for tenure before April 1, 2021. The rest left Cornell before being reviewed for tenure. For each of the 23 individuals we determined the expected tenure review date taking into account all extensions that were granted by the Provost (typically Parental Leave). We then classified each case as “early” if tenure review occurred before the expected tenure review date, and “on time” if not. 13 of the 23 cases were granted tenure, and 8 of the 13 (61.5%) occurred early.

To understand the characteristics of the early tenure cases, we computed the “academic age on date of Cornell hire” as the years elapsed since receiving PhD at the time of initial appointment as assistant (or acting assistant) professor at Cornell. This variable was used to classify individuals as having previous experience (i.e., those who had positive academic age) versus not when they joined Cornell. The average academic age of the 13 individuals who were granted tenure was 3.3 years and 9 (69%) had previous experience. Further, the average academic age of the 8 individuals who received early tenure was 3.5 years and 6 of the 8 (75%) had previous experience. By contrast, the average academic age of the 10 individuals who were denied tenure was 2.2 years, and only 4 (40%) had previous experience.