

Tenure — friend or foe of freedom?

By JIM HOOD

At one time or another everyone has probably heard or said "I wonder how that professor ever got tenure!" Sound familiar?

How many students know what tenure really entails, why it came about, and what is happening to it these days?

The system of tenuring faculty had undergone many revisions here at Guilford in the past fifteen years and will probably change even more in the future.

Since to be a student at Guilford is to be allowed to become part of the tenuring process, it's worth one's while to find out something about it.

According to Katherine Frazer, Academic Dean, the tenuring system in education "developed as a means of protecting intellectual

freedom."

Not too long ago, debates raged about whether or not it was acceptable to teach Darwin's theory of natural selection.

If a faculty member was tenured (given the right to remain a teacher at an institution except under unusual circumstances) it allowed for the free expression of ideas to students and among faculty.

Tenure constitutes an "institutional commitment" to a faculty member.

Today, however, due to the increase of potential professors who are flooding the job market, tenure seems to carry with it the "additional freight of job security" which has caused a number of people to question its validity.

Institutions across the country deal with the problem of having too many tenured faculty, some of whom

have "dried on the vine," in a number of different ways.

Hampshire College, for instance, does not tenure its faculty. It gives its teachers term contracts that are renewed if the person demonstrates his or her continued potential.

Some colleges have written into their bylaws a clause stating that the faculty will be limited to a certain percentage of tenured members.

The questions and problems of tenure are many. How do we protect the freedom of faculty?

Experience has much wisdom. Does a professor automatically become incompetent when a certain age is attained? The recent decision to extend the age of retirement raises all sorts of new questions.

Guilford tries to deal with some of these problems by having a

stringent process for deciding whether or not a faculty member should receive tenure.

Teachers are subject to second, fourth, and fifth year reviews in addition to tenure review in the sixth year. Also, a certain number of untenured faculty is maintained in order to "keep the young blood flowing."

Today at Guilford, the seventh year contract for a faculty member is either a tenure contract or a terminal one.

The idea behind the review process is a positive one. Tenure should be awarded as a "mark of recognition," remarked Dean Frazer, not as some sort of automatic promotion after a certain number of years of service.

Basically Tenure process can be outlined for Guilford as follows. There are two committees which make recommendations to the

Dean. One committee is composed entirely of faculty and the other of students.

(In years past students who reported to the faculty committee began to feel that their concerns were not being adequately expressed. Thus a separate student committee was established.)

The faculty and student committees work independently of each other trying to evaluate prospective tenure. They look at class evaluations, what sort and how much committee work the person has done, how they relate to other faculty and students, and what interviewed students have to say about the teacher and whether or not they hand out a syllabus.

In general the two committees on promotion and tenure decide if the person will continue to be an asset to the Guilford community.

According to a member of the student committee, they try to determine, for example, if the person has any undue prejudices against certain types of students, how well their lectures or class periods are prepared for, and how fair their grading is.

Amazingly enough, faculty and students often arrive at very similar conclusions.

Recommendations are given to the Dean for review, who in turn gives recommendations to the President, who then advises the Board of Trustees where the final decision rests.

Though the situation at Guilford is by no means unique, most often students report to some kind of faculty committee rather than directly to the Dean.

How well the system works depends more on the students involved and the amount of continuity present over a period of time rather than on what sort of structure exists, according to Dean Frazer.

It is unfortunate that this year, due to what a student committee member described as "lack of communication," students will have little say in whether or not those up for tenure will receive it.

Dean Frazer said that the student committee had experienced a "slow start" and for that reason they would not be allowed as much input concerning tenure as into the two-year reviews completed in the fall.

There is some discussion going on now, particularly in the Faculty Affairs Committee, about whether Guilford should revamp its tenure policy.

One possible solution could be renewable term contracts which would get longer with time. This would provide job security and allow the college to have the option of doing away with what has "dried on the vine."

Mutunhu's goal is cultural knowledge

By SUSAN SHUFORD

Tendai Mutunhu — husband, father, professor — is homesick.

Although he is enjoying teaching African history at Guilford College, Dr. Mutunhu is anxious to return to his native Rhodesia.

"I love my country and I want to go home and help my people," he explained. "I'd like to teach at the university, but maybe I'll become a high school principal, whatever is most challenging."

When that day comes will depend on when Tendai's American wife, Judy, graduates from Guilford, and whether she decides to get a graduate degree. Then, they and their two children will be Rhodesia bound.

Mutunhu came to the United States in 1964 to complete his education. Rather than attend the lone university in his country, he wanted to see other parts of the world before settling down in Rhodesia.

Most of his 15 years in America have been spent in the North. He earned a B.A. in African politics and history at Columbia University

in New York City and his M.A. and Ph.D. in pre-Colonial African history at St. John's in Jamaica, New York.

After getting his degrees, Tendai stayed in the States to teach and pay back the debts he accrued putting himself through college. He joined the Guilford staff in 1977.

As an educator, Tendai feels his purpose at Guilford is to expose white students to the contributions of Africans and black Americans.

"Most white Americans know practically nothing about the contributions of blacks in the United States," he lamented.

"Sure, they know who the black athletes are, and the black entertainers, but as far as the intellectual contributions of blacks go, most people know virtually nothing," he said.

Dr. Mutunhu noted that blacks have played a significant role in world civilization.

"There has been a group of black citizens in the U.S. who have helped

shape the course of American history, and not just slaves, either," he declared.

Mutunhu's goal is to make people aware of these aspects of black culture.

As part of this aspiration, Tendai has published 10 to 15 articles on pre-Colonial African history and is currently writing a book on the subject.

Mutunhu believes that today's racial conflicts are based on stereotypes, misconceptions and misinformation.

Through the dispelling of ignorance will come the dissipation of much of the hatred between blacks and whites, he feels.

Understanding he suggests, is the key.

"Today, the climate for race relationships is improving," said Mutunhu. "People are no longer displaying their prejudices in public. In the 60s before the civil rights movement, no one bothered to



conceal it."

While living in the North, Mutunhu had several firsthand encounters with this type of prejudice.

"Several times I called about an apartment for rent and the owner said it was still available, but when I went to look at the apartment he/she said it had just been rented a few minutes before," he related.

There are a number of positive aspects about the South which Tendai likes. He feels that it is easier to develop meaningful friendships there than in larger urban areas.

"Life isn't as pressured here; people take the time to get to know each other, which I like," he said. "Also, there is very little severe poverty in the South."

"Here, blacks own their own homes, land. It's so much better than the tenements people live in in such urban areas as New York City," he said.

Tendai seems to have a positive attitude toward the possibilities of future racial harmony. "Still, he pointed out, I've heard that the Ku Klux Klan is coming back, so who knows?"

First DC Seminar scheduled

The first meeting to plan the Washington Seminar, on "Current Issues of National Government" to be held during Spring Break, will be Tuesday, January 30th, from 5:00 to 6:00 p.m. in Founder's Small Dining Room. The seminar is open to all Guilford students and carries one hour of credit. The only cost to students, besides meals, is \$12.00 for round trip car pool.

At the meeting the group will

decide what issues should be stressed in the seminar and will plan visits to members of Congress and to other persons of importance in the government.

The group will stay at William Penn House, near the Capitol. Several of the speakers will meet with us during special meals at the house. In addition, there will be visits to committee hearings, meetings of the Senate and House of

Representatives and to various government offices. On Thursday and Friday there will be free time for individual members to pursue their special interests in government or to visit some of Washington's interesting museums.

We still have room for a few more and would like to have students who are interested in their government join the group.