

KEAN UNIVERSITY

LETTER OF AGREEMENT # 109

Tenured Faculty Research Initiative

The Kean University Federation of Teachers and the Kean University Administration, in an effort to facilitate research and creative works efforts among its tenured faculty who may hitherto have been unable to fully pursue such efforts because of extensive service and teaching commitments, agree to establish the *Tenured Faculty Research Initiative* described in the following document. The terms of this agreement will apply for those faculty who have been awarded Tenured Faculty Research Initiative grants in AY 2004-2005, including paragraph 4 “under policies.”

This agreement is effective beginning AY 2005-06 and will expire AY 2009-2010. Notice of its termination must be announced by June 30, 2007.

Kean University

Kean Federation of Teachers

Date: _____

Date: _____

Letter of Agreement

Prologue:

As of 1997, Kean College became Kean University, and this change in status has brought with it a ‘new’ charge that faculty become more professionally productive – to wit, present regularly at scholarly conferences, publish articles and books, serve as ‘outside’ consultants, and/or produce creative works. Such scholarly and creative activities are essential to a thriving university, but crucial characteristics of Kean as a higher education institution often thwarts or counteract such efforts.

As a *comprehensive teaching university*, Kean levels a four-four teaching load upon its faculty. Kean also demands service and engagement of its faculty to the campus community, often in the form of administrative duties like program directorships, while extensive committee responsibilities (be they on the department, school or university levels) are *de rigueur*.

In addition, Kean culture prides itself on its ‘hands-on’ ‘students matter’ accessibility, and accordingly, faculty have responded by inculcating a teaching and service first – scholarship/creative works second work ethos. This ethos has meant that tenured faculty, most of whom come from renowned research institutions with doctorates, have re-directed their career focus from scholarship to service, often at the expense of developing profiles that would garner them recognition within their chosen fields.

This initiative aims to redress this service/teaching-scholarship imbalance by giving tenured faculty the opportunity to re-engage or newly engage a meaningful research agenda. This initiative is especially designed for tenured faculty who have *not received significant release time awards for research* in the past, and therefore, have not utilized university resources to pursue scholarship and/or creative works. And like the “Untenured Faculty Research Initiative” this initiative establishes a release time program that is autonomous from, but complimentary to, the long-standing “Release Time for Research and Creative Works” program.

Eligibility for Tenured Faculty Research Initiative Funding

Only *tenured* faculty and librarians may receive awards through the Tenured Faculty Research Initiative program (TFRI). No tenured faculty or librarians may receive TFRI and RTR awards simultaneously. Because the TFRI program awards participants *three consecutive years of six credits of release time per academic year*, tenured faculty and librarians may receive a TFRI award **only once** during their Kean careers. Having once received a TFRI award, tenured faculty and librarians can then participate in the

existing RTR program. Tenured faculty and librarians who have received **three or more years of support through the RTR program over the past ten academic years may not apply for a TFRI award.**

Evaluation Criteria & Procedures

The RTR Committee will evaluate TFRI applications, and accordingly, the RTR Committee will utilize a like-minded evaluation criteria that has been previously established for both the UFRI and RTR programs. The TFRI application process and administration will follow the broad parameters of the UFRI and RTR programs, but because of its unique structure (regarding calendar, eligibility, on-going “roll-over” of award from year to year within the life of the three year award, etc.), certain significant alterations are required. These criteria and procedures are as follows:

1. The proposal should be considered on its own merits insofar as possible.
2. The proposal clearly indicates that the tenured faculty member or librarian has the necessary competencies to carry out and complete the proposed project.
3. The methods and/or research “strategies” detailed in the proposal are adequate and appropriate to the successful completion of the proposed project.
4. The proposal details the use (and requisite availability) of all necessary special tools and/or access to research facilities (whether it be labs or specific holdings, etc.).
5. The proposal is likely to result in any or all of the following: in publication; in presentation at professional conferences and meetings; in public performances and exhibitions; in the receipt of external funding.

Important proviso: Because the primary purpose of the TRFI initiative is to help re-invigorate meaningful research “agendas” for faculty and librarians who may not possess established research profiles and records, the RTR Committee is charged with the responsibility of evaluating proposals for their long-term potential. That is, a proposal may indicate that it will not immediately result in publication or presentation or the awarding of grant monies within the course of a single academic year as is the expectation for RTR and UFRI awards. Eligible tenured faculty and librarians who choose to apply for the TFRI may opt to devote the early portion of their awarded release time to laying the necessary groundwork for their research projects. But, continuance of the release time award into the second and third years will only be granted if the recipient demonstrates significant progress in research preparation.

6. Renewal of release time for the second and third years of the award is at the discretion of the RTR Committee. A full review of the recipient’s progress will

be assessed annually by the RTR Committee, and is contingent upon two factors: 1) The recipient's successful progress in meeting specified project goals and deadlines as stipulated in the recipient's initial project proposal; 2) The recipient's attendance and participation in seminars, colloquia and research fairs hosted by Kean University – hence, signaling that the recipient has, is, and will be making a contribution to the Kean University community of scholars and scholarship.

7. Recipients may choose to use their awards as three (3) credits release time in *both* the Fall and Spring terms of an academic year, **or** they may choose to use all six (6) credits release time within *either* the Fall or Spring terms. Such a decision is at the discretion of the recipient in consultation with the recipient's department chair, and in accordance with the scheduling needs of the recipient's department. Recipients may vary chosen release time options over the course of the three-year award period.
8. Because the primary purpose of the TFRI program is to re-invigorate tenured faculty to pursue scholarship and/or creative works, recipients are *strongly discouraged from assuming overload teaching responsibilities during the tenure of their awards*. Should a TFRI program recipient fail to achieve specified research and/or creative works goals at the termination of either the first or second year of the award, the extenuating explanation of *excessive* teaching commitments will not serve to mitigate the RTR Committee's judgment to discontinue support. Concomitantly, excessive service commitments will not excuse the recipient from successful completion of stated research and/or creative works progress. In sum, recipients are expected to re-direct their focuses so that scholarship and/or creative works are prioritized.

Committee Membership, Election of, & Procedures

1. Because the TFRI program will be administered by RTR Committee all procedures for committee membership and election will broadly follow the guidelines laid out for the RTR Committee. One significant procedural modification will follow: in addition to department review and RTR Committee review, proposals will also be read, evaluated, discussed and ranked by school-based sub-committees within the RTR Committee. For example, a School of Liberal Arts sub-committee will initially review proposals from all departments and programs (i.e., History, Philosophy, Music, etc.) within its specific school, and then pass on a ranked recommendation to the entire RTR Committee. The purpose of this additional procedural stage is to ensure that proposals are first evaluated by committee members with like-minded disciplinary backgrounds and expertise.
2. The Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs or his /her

designee will serve as Chairperson of the Committee. The chairperson will abstain from voting on individual proposals, except for in the case of a tie.

3. Two-thirds attendance of the full RTR Committee members constitutes a quorum. Full attendance constitutes a quorum for the school-based sub-committees.
4. The Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs will inform the committee and the University community at large of the total available funds (and therefore, number of awards) for the TFRI Program at the beginning of each academic year – ideally, in September of the Fall term.
5. The Committee's recommendations, in ranked order, will be forwarded to the President, and the President will announce to the University community the TFRI awardees.
6. The calendar for announcement of the TFRI awards, proposal deadlines, committee assessments, appeal periods, and award announcements will be prepared by the Office of the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs. The Office of the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs will also prepare and distribute proposal applications.
7. The Committee may, by majority vote of the full Committee, invite a non-Committee member to evaluate a proposal that does not fall within the general area of specialization of any of the Committee members.

Special Consideration:

The TFRI program will undergo comprehensive review and assessment after the termination of a three-year cycle. The RTR Committee, the Office of the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs and the KFT will collaboratively assess the successes and failings of the program, and accordingly, decide to either continue, modify or end the TFRI program. Should it be decided that the TFRI program is not to be renewed, award recipients in the second and third years of the program will still receive their full awards – that is, second-year first-time recipients will receive funding through year four, and third-year first time recipients will receive funding through years four and five.

