

Meaning of an appointment “without tenure due to lack of [state] funding”

There are five tracks available for faculty in the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Washington: Academic Clinician, Research Faculty, Teaching Faculty, Clinician Scholars, and Faculty Scientists.

Tenured positions at the University of Washington, which is a state school, are positions in which the University provides salary from its regularly state-appropriated funds. Individuals who are eligible for such funding are considered to be in tenure track positions. In the School of Medicine, the tracks that are considered to be tenure track are Clinician Scholars and Faculty Scientists.

Funded tenured positions in clinical departments in the School of Medicine at the University of Washington are exceptionally rare, as is true for most schools of medicine. For all practical purposes, tenure is not available to faculty in the Department of Pediatrics on these tenure tracks. The reason for this is that the Department of Pediatrics (which has 600+ members) only receives state funds for ~12 tenured lines; the Department standard is that the existing state lines are not assigned to individuals, but instead the funds are used for support of faculty as directed by the Department chair.

Because of the imbalance between the size of our faculty and the state funds available, the appointment letter for associate professors and professors who are in tenure track positions in the Department of Pediatrics reads, “without tenure due to lack of [state] funding.” Also of note, while there is essentially no funded tenure, once someone reaches the level of Associate professor as a clinician scholar or faculty scientist, they have the high level of job security normally afforded to tenured positions. As specified in the Faculty Code, “WOT faculty members have the same rights, responsibilities, and obligations as tenure-track and tenured faculty members at those ranks...such faculty members are not subject to removal, or discriminatory reduction in salary, except for cause.”

<http://www.washington.edu/admin/rules/policies/FCG/FCCH24.html#2440>

Despite our inability to fund tenure for the vast majority of our faculty, the Department of Pediatrics is intensely committed to all faculty, regardless of track. We are dedicated to their career success and are committed to using our available resources to ensure that success. The Department of Pediatrics has other means of supporting faculty in lieu of tenure, including clinical income, philanthropy, endowed professorships and chairs, and institutional support from our clinical partners. Our implicit and explicit commitment begins with recruitment and initial appointment and continues through promotion to associate professor and professor ranks and beyond.