

Joint statement of Norman Finkelstein and DePaul University on their tenure controversy and its resolution

Norman Finkelstein and DePaul University issued the following statement today in connection with the resolution of their dispute over the University's denial of tenure to Professor Finkelstein. Except for this statement there will be no public comment regarding the resolution of our controversy or the terms of our agreement.

From Professor Finkelstein: I came to DePaul University in 2001 and was put on a tenure-track position in 2003. To get tenure I had to demonstrate a credible record as a teacher, scholar, and citizen of the university. During my six year stint at DePaul I consistently received among the highest student evaluations in my department. I have published five books to critical acclaim from leading scholars, and they have been translated into 46 foreign editions. I have been recognized as a public intellectual at many of the leading universities in the United States and Europe and have become an internationally recognized scholar in my academic specialties. Based on this record, I should have received tenure. Indeed, after extensive scrutiny of my academic credentials, my department voted overwhelmingly to tenure me as did the college-level tenure committee, which voted unanimously in my favor. The only inference that I can draw is that I was denied tenure due to external pressures climaxing in a national hysteria that tainted the tenure process. The outpouring of support for me after the tenure denial from among the most respected scholars in the world buttresses this conclusion.

Although DePaul's decision to deny me tenure was a bitter blow, I would be remiss in my responsibilities if I did not also acknowledge DePaul's honorable role of providing a scholarly haven for me the past six years. It is a fact, and I would want to acknowledge it, that the DePaul administration kept me on its faculty despite overwhelming external pressures. It is also a fact that my professional colleagues displayed rare rectitude in steadfastly supporting me. It is also a fact that DePaul students rose to dazzling spiritual heights in my defense that should be the envy of and an example for every university in the United States. I will miss them.

It is now time for me to move on and hopefully find new ways to fulfill my own mission in life of making this world a slightly better place on leaving it than when I entered it.

From DePaul: Today we have reached a resolution of our dispute with Professor Norman Finkelstein. As a part of that resolution he has agreed to resign effective immediately. With this issue behind us, we can once again turn our full attention and energy to discharging our most important duty: the education of DePaul students, who have placed in us their trust and faith.

Granting tenure is a guarantee of lifetime employment. DePaul's standards for tenure are demonstrated and sustainable excellence in teaching and scholarship as well meaningful service to the University. Every DePaul faculty member seeking tenure is evaluated by the same standards: it is an evaluation of faculty conducted by faculty.

Throughout the tenure process, our faculty ensured that the established standards for tenure were their only consideration. Upon receiving the recommendations from the lower level faculty committees, the University Board on Promotion and Tenure - DePaul's highest academic committee - voted to deny Professor Finkelstein tenure, and the President of DePaul accepted that vote. We understand that Professor Finkelstein and his supporters disagree with the University Board on Promotion and Tenure's conclusion that he did not meet the requirements for tenure. The system is designed to give every applicant the same opportunity to achieve tenure, and has proven to be fair and effective. In every tenure case, the final decision is one of balancing the various arguments for and against tenure.

Professor Finkelstein has expressed the view that he should have been granted tenure and that third parties external to the University influenced DePaul in denying tenure. That is not so. Over the past several months, there has been considerable outside interest about the tenure decision. This attention was unwelcome and inappropriate. In the end, however, it had absolutely no impact on either the process or the final outcome.

Professor Finkelstein is a prolific scholar and an outstanding teacher. The University thanks him for his contributions and service.

Both parties are satisfied with the resolution of their dispute and wish each other well in their future endeavors.