

Dr. Carolina López-Ruiz

**Testimony against proposed changes in HB49 substitute budget bill
Senate Finance Committee, Higher Ed Subcommittee Hearing
Thursday May 25, 2017, 9 am
Statehouse South Hearing Room**

Dear Subcommittee Chair Gardner, Vice Chair Williams, Senators Bacon, Dolan, Kunze, Thomas, and Wilson:

I am a tenured Associate Professor in the Classics Department at the Ohio State University, where I have been employed since 2005. I am testifying regarding some of the proposed measures proposed for the **budget bill HB 49**, which affects higher education faculty and staff.

I am going to focus on two issues only. First, concerning the **post-tenure review process** (Sec. 3345.451), it seems like this language ignores how the peer faculty review as well as external reviews of all faculty at different stages work. As an Associate Professor, I have experienced this meticulous and rigorous scrutiny first for my own tenure case and later for my promotion to full professor (approved by the dean and provost and only awaiting the Board of Trustees' ratification in June). These major processes (involving the external evaluation of your work by anonymous world-class scholars in your field), but they are only two major landmarks, while *every year* your department evaluates your performance (teaching, research, and service), and gives you advice and warnings as pertinent if you are not doing well or enough for the next promotion or to even maintain your position. I have also been involved in tenure reviews of colleagues who came up for tenure after me. In my own department, we denied tenure to one faculty member some years ago, although the Dean eventually approved the tenure case. The process was divisive and painful showed that hard as it is your own colleagues can decide against tenure of a fellow professor. On another case before we even went through the tenure review, the faculty member in question decided to look at other employment options after a negative fourth year review (this is, before tenure review). Reviews happen in fact every year even all faculty, tenured or not, who are evaluated by their peers at the higher rank (e.g., Assistants by the Associates and Full professors, Associates only by the Full professors, Full professors only by the Chair, and the Chair by the division's Dean). These evaluations can lead to a resignation, a denial of tenure, or affect the salary decisions made by the chair at any level. Not only is the process rigorous and objective, but I do not see how adding another tenure evaluation outside our existing procedures can be productive or improve in any way the quality of faculty performance. Perhaps an occasional "audit" or "quality check" by the state of the processes done on a given year would be a better idea.

Secondly, new language in Sec. 102.023 proposes that faculty assigning a textbook for a class submit a **financial disclosure form to the Ohio Ethics Commission**. Moreover, it mandates a **\$35 fee** for this disclosure. This mandatory disclosure is both unnecessary and an economic burden for the faculty member. There is quite a misconception about the instructor's motivations are when assigning textbooks. The main concern is which ones are both best for the course's content and which combination of texts is most affordable. In the Humanities at least, books cost very little (this is not the case in the hard sciences as I understand it, where the Textbook

industry plays a different ball game). As a faculty member who has written a handbook of classical mythology, I know the effort and thought that goes into making one of these books work. We clearly do not do it (or are in this profession) for the money. Two/three years of work, simply to put out there a product that is helpful and that fulfills my teaching needs and those of a large community of classicists outside OSU, also bringing some prestige to my department and university. I could have dedicated that same time to produce more selfish pieces of research that would bring me closer to a promotion. Not only did the publishers and myself make sure the book is not costly (\$25 new) but as any student-oriented book, the handbook soon starts circulating in the second hand market, and that is perfectly fine with me and good for the students. In other words, it is much more of an effort to produce one of these books than the money one is ever going to make from them, and the driven motivation is purely didactic not economic.

I appreciate your consideration of this humble testimony and hope your committee hears the concerns of faculty and staff working on Higher Education.

Yours sincerely,

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