

James W. Larrick
Palo Alto Institute of Molecular Medicine,
2462 Wyandotte Street,
Mountain View, CA 94043, USA
E-mail: jwlarrick@aol.com

Tenure Study

In Constance Holden's article "Tenure turmoil sparks reforms" (News & Comment, Apr. 4, p. 24), Lawrence Poston is described as an English professor at the University of Illinois's Urbana-Champaign campus "who headed a Chicago panel." Poston is a professor and an associate dean at the University of Illinois at Chicago. He headed a panel comprising faculty from the University of Illinois campuses at both Urbana-Champaign and Chicago.

The article quotes the University of Illinois Seminar on Tenure (the same entity as the "panel" above) as saying post-tenure review would be "enormously wasteful of faculty time and effort." Our report said "a blanket 'post-tenure' review ... across all faculty ranks every three to five years" would be wasteful. The quoted recommendation also says that review mechanisms and practices should be used

more, not just for narrow purposes, but to guide each faculty member's development. It adds that where existing procedures suggest a substandard performance, a more focused appraisal should be engaged. Our faculty senates are discussing how to implement this recommendation.

Sylvia Manning
Vice President, Academic Affairs,
University of Illinois,
Urbana, IL 61801, USA

I am writing to correct a statement about American University that appears in the article about tenure of 4 April. The article quotes Judith Gappa (of Purdue University), who visited our campus in 1995, as saying that we are "making greater use of full-time nontenured appointments with titles such as 'senior distinguished lecturer.'" I believe that Gappa was referring to a very small group of colleagues in our School of Public Affairs who hold the title "Distinguished Adjunct Professor." Until recently, there were five such appointments, and this year there are four.

Ivy E. Broder
Dean of Academic Affairs,
American University,
4400 Massachusetts Avenue, NW,
Washington, DC 20016-8025, USA

Science by the Country

In a recent Policy Forum, "The scientific wealth of nations" (7 Feb., p. 793), Robert M. May compares the scientific output of several countries based on data from the Science Citation Index (SCI) established by the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI). Some interesting patterns arose when output was standardized by the country population size or investment in research and development (R&D). The analysis focused on the top 15 countries ranked by total number of papers produced in the last 14 years. When the percentage of citations was taken into account, the rankings were similar except for India and China. Two possible reasons come to my mind to explain this result: (i) papers produced in those countries are of lower quality than the others, or (ii) discrimination occurs against papers from Third World countries, a possibility that has been invoked elsewhere (1).

It is difficult to demonstrate that such discrimination is (or is not) actually occurring, but it would be worth investigating. One could begin by comparing the mean number of citations of papers published in journals such as *Science* and *Nature*. If one finds significant differences between the mean number of citations of papers pub-

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Terri Davis is a cellular
biochemistry technician
working in New York, NY.

