Tenured Faculty on Soft Money

THE VULNERABILITY OF NONTENURED FACULTY whose salary comes from "soft money" is examined by Marcia Barinaga in her News Focus article "Soft money's hard realities" (22 Sept., p. 2024). This situation is widespread in the academic community, but there is another group of faculty who is vulnerable that Barinaga does not mention: Ph.D. scientists (full-time, nonclinical faculty) in clinical departments of medical schools. These faculty are tenured, yet they receive all or most of their salary from their grants (that is, soft money).

A case in point is the situation at Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine in Cleveland, Ohio. Academic advancement and the award of tenure for such faculty are subject to the same rigor as for faculty elsewhere in the university, and in all various degrees participate in the teaching programs at Case Western. The university has taken the position that it will not be beholden for the salary of faculty whose support comes from soft money such as grants in the event that such ceases, tenure status notwithstanding. Thus, obtaining tenure does not always solve the problems associated with soft money. The "security" held implicit in the concept of tenure is not universal.

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"[O]btaining tenure does not always solve the problems associated with soft money."

No Error in Vote Counts—in Principle

UNCERTAINTY IN ELECTION VOTE TOTALS IS correctly noted by J. F. Bunnett in his Letter (8 Dec., p. 1895), but the uncertainty is not due to the inevitable errors associated with any measurement. An election is neither a measurement nor a sample: it is a count, and counts—even very large counts—can in principle be done with perfect accuracy. If such accuracy is not achieved, the fault is in the inadequacy of our efforts, and not in any natural or mathematical principle of uncertainty. The recent presidential election has indicated that there is room for improvement in the accuracy of counting equipment. However, Bunnett is surely correct in assuming that some ambiguity in vote counts is inevitable at present, because there are several issues on which there may be no consensus, such as the criteria for a legal vote and what authority should set those criteria.

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BUNNETT PROPOSES THAT A STATE'S ELECTORAL votes be divided equally whenever the vote tallies of the top two candidates are within, for example, 0.1%. However, this suggestion only defers the problem to next level: a single vote could push the totals across the sharp 0.1% line and thereby trigger the transition from winner-takes-all to an equal division.

Within an electoral college system, the best that could be done would be to allocate the electoral votes in proportion to the vote totals, as is done, with minor variations, in Nebraska and Maine. In such a case, a single statistically insignificant vote can determine at most the disposition of a single elector. Interestingly, such a system increases the (albeit small) probability of a tie at the national (that is, electoral vote) level.

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CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

EDITORS' CHOICE: "A bilious ionophore" (22 Dec., p. 2213). The article discussed is by P. Bandyopadhyay *et al.*, not Otto *et al.*, as stated. The journal specified is correct.

NEWS FOCUS: "Fossils come to life in Mexico" by E. Stokstad (1 Dec., p. 1675). In the first item entitled "More family life for dinos," the name of Mongolia's capital Ulaanbaatar was incorrectly spelled as two words.

REPORTS: "Historical trends in lake and river ice cover in the Northern Hemisphere" by J. J. Magnuson *et al.* (8 Sept. 2000, p. 1743). The following corrections are necessary. *Affiliation:* Raymond A. Assel is at the Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 2205 Commonwealth Boulevard, Ann Arbor, MI 48105– 2945. *Abstract:* Corrected changes in freeze date and breakup date means are 5.7 days per 100 years later and 6.3 days per 100 years earlier, respectively. *Text:* Some means, *P* values, and confidence intervals change slightly. The corrected changes in the ice data means on p. 1743 are 5.7 days per 100 years later freeze and 6.3 days per 100 years earlier breakup, with an overall mean giving equal weight to freeze and breakup of 6.0 days per 100 years. Inferred temperature changes remain at 1.2°C per 100 years. Other corrections include the following: 37 of 39 records change in the direction of warming; 95% confidence intervals are ±2.4 days/100 years on mean change in the freeze date and ±1.6 days per 100 years on mean change in the breakup date; the mean change for rivers is 7.0 days per 100 years; and the *P* value for differences between changes in freeze and breakup dates is 0.54. On p. 1744, column 2, Lake Suwa freeze dates produce one of the two exceptions for slopes. *Table 1:* Data were incorrect. Site identification numbers (column 1), with freeze date number of years (column 4), respectively, are as follows: 1, 105; 2, 162; 6, 141; 7, 143; 10, 146; 11, 111; 13, 147; 15, 101; 19, 104; 20, 104; 21, 161; 22, 160; 24, 236; 25, 128; and 26, 415. Site identification numbers, with freeze date years (column 5), respectively, are as follows: 1, 1868 to 1991; 11, 1822 to 1985; and 26, 1443 to 1993. Site identification number, with freeze date trend (column 6), respectively, is 24, 7.6, and with freeze date *P* value (column 7), respectively, is 24, 0.019. Site identification numbers, with breakup date years (column 9), respectively, are as follows: 11, 1822 to 1985; 17, 1829 to 1955; 19, 1870 to 1995; 20, 1870 to 1995; and 23, 1831 to 1994. Site identification number, with breakup date trend (column 10), respectively, is 24, -2.1. *References and Notes:* In reference 5, the tabular time series for Lake Suwa (up to the winter of 1953–54) should have been cited as published in work by H. Arakawa [*Arch. Meteorol. Geophys. Bioklimatol. Ser. B* **6**, 152 (1954)], not (*8*).

Letters to the Editor

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