

Blog

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When Even Tenure Isn't Enough

by Daniel Luzer

Academic tenure isn't always job security, apparently. Last year [Florida State University](#) laid off 21 tenured faculty.

Due to [budget cuts](#) in the Florida higher education system many schools have been making rigorous cost-cutting measures. But FSU has terminated more tenured professors than all other schools in the state system combined, according to [an article](#) in the *Tallahassee Democrat*.



American universities can usually only let go of faculty with academic tenure in cases of misconduct by a professor. This is generally a long and wearisome procedure for both the university and the professor. This occurs very rarely, like in the case of Madonna Constantine, who was [fired](#) from a tenured position at Columbia University's Teachers College in 2008 after the school found that Constantine had plagiarized material written by her colleagues and students.

But while tenure protects professors who hold academic positions, it does not protect the position itself. If a university is in financial trouble and finds it necessary to downsize, it can eliminate tenured positions, according to the [American Association of University Professors](#). This was apparently the case at FSU, which eliminated several positions in 2009 when it merged the departments of oceanography, geological sciences, and meteorology in order to save money.

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