These words are echoed in the documents of many universities.

The continuation of the tenure system along with the denial of its “protection” from “dismissal except for cause” for many of our faculty members is difficult to justify, but my purpose is not to debate the merits of tenure in our universities but to question the inequities that are fostered when differences between nontenure-track and tenure-tracks go beyond protection from dismissal. “Protection” may not be the critical issue since our organizations have formal systems for personnel review, appeals, and due process that protect all faculty members from dismissal without cause.

Nontenure-track and tenure-track faculty members have many fundamental expectations in common: a commitment to high-quality instruction, scholarship (if not formal research), securing funds to support programs, and demonstration of leadership in their fields. However, tenure-track faculty members are often privileged with other benefits in university systems that are not offered to nontenure-track faculty members. Differences in benefits often involve start-up packages, voting privileges, and eligibility for grants or awards.

At our University, nontenure-track faculty members are not extended all the rights and privileges of tenure-track faculty members. Nontenure-track faculty members are not eligible for grants from the research institute, the top university teaching awards, fellowship in some teaching or international programs, and graduate faculty status. In addition, the university does not provide promotion salary increases for nontenure-track, as they do for tenure-track faculty members. Colleagues at other universities report that nontenure-track faculty members have restricted voting privileges, cannot sit on the faculty senate, or are not allowed sabbatical leave.

Large start-up packages are generally given to new tenure-track faculty members who are conducting labora-
Nontenure-track faculty members with clinical responsibilities also have needs for resources, but these are generally not acknowledged or are underestimated. The costs associated with establishing or maintaining a clinical service (office personnel, records management systems, diagnostic equipment, clinic space rental) are usually not recognized or accommodated.

A report from the National Education Association documented that nontenure-track faculty members are consistently paid less than those on a tenure-track at public institutions. However, analysis of salary for nontenure-track and tenure-track faculty members in pharmacy practice from the 2002-3 AACP Profile of Pharmacy Faculty does not demonstrate a similar disparity (Data courtesy of Jennifer Patton, AACP Manager of Institutional Research and Data Systems).

As the ranks of nontenure-track faculty members grow, we risk having a large portion of our colleagues who have limited prospects for academic success because of support restrictions and who are politically disenfranchised because of exclusion from voting, award recognitions, and participation in university governance. If the tenure system is to continue, then we must address these key issues for nontenure-track faculty members and assure that they are provided the resources and recognition necessary to succeed in academics.

Does your institution limit opportunities for nontenure-track faculty members? A search of your university’s web site for the words “eligibility tenure track” may reveal opportunities not available to nontenure-track faculty members. If these distinctions exist we should initiate processes within our universities to open eligibility to all faculty members.

REFERENCES