



PRAIRIE VIEW A&M UNIVERSITY

A Member of the Texas A&M University System

25 March 2015

Dr. George C. Wright, President
Prairie View A&M University
Office of the President
PO Box 519, MS 1001
Prairie View, TX 77446

Dear President Wright,

On Friday, March 13, 2015, the Faculty Senate passed a motion to send the following recommendations to you regarding multiyear contracts for contingent faculty members. These recommendations are consistent with TAMUS Policy 12.07: Fixed Term Academic Professional Track Faculty (see attached). We ask that you consider these recommendations closely and provide, prior to the Senate's next meeting on April 10, a written response that indicates your position on the issues raised herein, the rationale for your position, and any course of action that you have taken or intend to take.

Background

According to data publicly available within the accountability reports published annually by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), a full 50% of PVAMU's faculty is employed on a contingent basis. These faculty members teach 58.5% of all undergraduate semester credit hours, most of them within the core curriculum. In short, they are the chief point of contact between the institution and the student. Among this faculty population, however, there is a high rate of turnover as instructors find better pay, better conditions, and/or more job security from other employers or in other sectors. Consequently, many department heads find themselves scrambling to hire contingent faculty even as classes are getting underway and, in their desperation, often have to sacrifice quality in order to avoid canceling classes.

Needless to say, these situations have profound effects on the quality of education that we offer our students and, consequently, have ripple effects on things like retention, matriculation, and overall student performance. At the same time, however, all departments employ contingent faculty members who are reliable and talented educators and who make important contributions to their programs and the institution in a number of other ways. We need to do a better job of retaining these valuable members of our academic community and attracting others like them. The Faculty Senate believes that one *necessary* step in accomplishing this is to offer better job security to our high-performing contingent faculty members.

Recommended Procedures

The first step in providing adequate job security for our contingent faculty is to make sure that their positions are labeled appropriately. All departments need the flexibility to hire faculty members on an adjunct basis to fill unexpected or temporary needs, but many of our talented, full-time faculty members have been employed for a number of years while retaining the Adjunct Instructor title. As Provost Nave has pointed out to Senators on several occasions, this is a problem that needs to be addressed. To do so, the Faculty Senate proposes that the following procedure be adopted across all colleges:

Adjunct "Promotion" Procedure

Any full-time Adjunct Instructor who has received a ranking of "Very Good" or "Excellent" (80% or higher) on two consecutive Faculty Performance Evaluations (FPEs) will be automatically

transitioned to either a new or preexisting Instructor or Lecturer II line for the term of the next contract they are offered. The determination of whether that line will be an Instructor or Lecturer II line will be based on the recommendation of the department head and approval of the dean.

- This procedure should be enacted retroactively so that current Adjunct Instructors who have scored “Very Good” or “Excellent” on their two most recent Faculty Performance Evaluations will be transitioned during the term of the next contract they are offered.
- This policy should not interfere with deans’ existing prerogative to transition an Adjunct Instructor to an Instructor or Lecturer II line at any time without regard to FPE scores.

The second step in providing adequate job security for our contingent faculty is to offer multiyear contracts to high-performing faculty members. As such, the Faculty Senate recommends the following procedures be adopted across all colleges:

Multiyear Contract Procedures

1. If an Instructor, Lecturer II, or any full-time faculty member with an “adjunct” or “visiting” title scores “Excellent” (90% or higher) on two consecutive FPEs, the next contract they receive will be a three-year renewable contract, meaning that it will be automatically renewed for three academic years pending the acceptance of the faculty member each year. In the case of an Adjunct Instructor, this contract offer will come in addition to his/her automatic transition to an Instructor or Lecturer II line.
2. An Instructor, Lecturer II, or any full-time faculty member with an “adjunct” or “visiting” title who scores “Very Good” or “Excellent” (80% or higher) on two consecutive FPEs will be eligible to receive a three-year renewable contract based on the recommendation of the department head and the approval of the dean. Any such faculty member who is offered a contract for 12 months or fewer may appeal this decision through the formal grievance process as outlined in the Faculty Handbook.
3. If a faculty member scores “Excellent” on the two FPEs that they receive during the term of a three-year renewable contract, the next contract that they receive will automatically be another three-year renewable contract.
4. Any faculty member who scores “Very Good” or “Excellent” on the two FPEs that they receive during the term of a three-year renewable contract will be eligible to receive another three-year renewable contract based on the recommendation of the department head and the approval of the dean.
5. During the term of a three-year renewable contract, a faculty member may be dismissed for adequate cause as outlined in the TAMUS System Policies.
6. During the term of a three-year renewable contract, a faculty member will be eligible for merit raises or any other appropriate salary adjustments.

The third step in creating adequate job security for our teaching faculty is to create two new faculty titles that are frequently used in other institutions:

Creation of New Faculty Titles

1. Any Adjunct Instructor, Instructor, or Lecturer II who scores “Very Good” or “Excellent” on four consecutive FPEs will be eligible to be considered for a “Senior Lecturer” title, which would come with a raise comparable to that received by tenure track faculty when they are promoted. Senior Lecturers will be employed on five-year renewable contracts.
2. Deans will be empowered to create “Teaching Professor” lines that are tenure-track positions with little emphasis on research. The requirements, expectations, and pay scales for these faculty lines will be comparable to similar faculty lines at other institutions and may vary by discipline.

Thank you for considering these recommendations from the Faculty Senate. We look forward to receiving your formal response and to continuing our collaborative effort to enhance the PVAMU experience for all stakeholders.

Sincerely,

Dr. Clement E. Glenn
Speaker of the Faculty Senate

12.07 Fixed Term Academic Professional Track Faculty



Approved September 26, 2008 (MO 327-2008)

Revised August 8, 2013 (MO 192-2013)

Next Scheduled Review: August 8, 2018

Policy Statement

This policy establishes an option for the universities (academic institutions) of The Texas A&M University System (system) to provide long-term stable academic positions for non-tenure track faculty whose focus is heavily weighted toward either teaching or research.

Reason for Policy

Faculty who have a singular focus or area of expertise in teaching, research or service may experience impediments meeting the necessary requirements of the tenure track process and, as a result, are restricted to positions with little or no long-term stability. This policy is designed to provide a means to recruit and retain faculty whose excellence in teaching, research or service make them beneficial members of the system academic institution, while providing them with stable, long-term employment.

Procedures and Responsibilities

1. FACULTY DIFFERENTIATION

- 1.1 It is imperative that members of the faculty at system academic institutions are able to meet and sustain the highly competitive requirements necessary to excel in their positions. The granting of tenure is a recognition of excellence in the areas of teaching, research and service (See System Policy *12.01, Academic Freedom, Responsibility and Tenure*). And, while system academic institutions are able to recognize the contributions that these individuals make, it is also essential that recognition be given to faculty whose interest, excellence or discipline does not include all three areas required for tenure.
- 1.2 The creation of the non-tenure track of Assistant Professional Track Faculty, Associate Professional Track Faculty, and Senior Professional Track Faculty provides a means of securing and retaining faculty who bring to the system academic institution excellence in teaching, research or service. This would include faculty whose position is in applied or clinical settings. These individuals provide a specific, professional skill to the system academic institution, faculty, staff and students. In creating these new

ranks, the system academic institution is acknowledging that its skills are an essential part to the overall success of the system academic institution and its mission.

2. PROFESSIONAL TRACK FACULTY RANKS

- 2.1 Assistant Professional Track Faculty. This is an entry-level rank. Appointment to this rank generally requires the appropriate terminal degree. Promotion criteria include excellence in teaching for faculty with teaching responsibilities, or excellence in research or service, as appropriate for other appointments. Overall superior performance and potential for development are also expected as criteria for promotion.
- 2.2 Associate Professional Track Faculty. Appointment to this rank generally requires the appropriate terminal degree. It also requires significant experience related to the position responsibilities. Individuals holding the rank of Assistant Professional Track Faculty are eligible to be considered for promotion to the rank of Associate Professional Track Faculty after at least five years as an Assistant Professional Track Faculty.
- 2.3 Senior Professional Track Faculty. Appointment to this rank generally requires the appropriate terminal degree and a record of sustained excellent performance in all areas of appointment. Individuals holding the rank of Associate Professional Track Faculty are eligible to be considered for promotion to the rank of Senior Professional Track Faculty after at least five years as an Associate Professional Track Faculty.
- 2.4 System academic institutions may adopt titles that vary from those listed above as long as they are differentiated from tenure track faculty titles.

3. APPOINTMENT OF PROFESSIONAL TRACK FACULTY

- 3.1 All new Professional Track faculty members shall be provided with an appointment letter stating the initial terms and conditions of employment. Any subsequent modifications or special understandings in regard to the appointment, which may be made on an annual basis, should be stated in writing and a copy given to the faculty member. The appointment letter shall explicitly indicate the necessary teaching, research and/or service requirements expected of the Professional Track faculty member. Essential job functions for a position may vary depending upon the nature of the department in which the faculty member holds expertise, external funding requirements attached to the position, licensing or accreditation requirements, and other circumstances. It is, therefore, important that essential job functions for each faculty position be listed in the initial appointment letter. For example, all of the following that are applicable should be listed: teaching responsibilities, responsibilities for advising students, independent and/or collaborative research responsibilities, engaging in patient care, committee assignments, conditions imposed by external accrediting agencies, conditions for holding a named professorship or endowed chair, or a position that combines academic and administrative duties, and any other specific essential functions for the position in question. All appointment letters must indicate that the appointment is non-tenure track, and will expire upon the completion of the appointment, unless the appointment is extended pursuant to Section 3.2 of this policy, or unless the faculty member is dismissed pursuant to Section 5 of this policy.

- 3.2 Professional Track faculty member appointments may be made for periods not to exceed five years in length. If, during the course of an existing appointment, the system academic institution chooses to extend the duration of an existing appointment, the extension may not exceed an additional five years. For beginning Assistant Professional Track Faculty, an appointment of no more than three years may be appropriate.
- 3.3 The system academic institution shall notify faculty members annually, in writing, of their salary. Any other changes or additions to the appointment also should be included.
- 3.4 Faculty members are expected to fulfill the terms and conditions of employment for the following year unless they resign prior to thirty (30) calendar days after receiving notice of the terms. This provision should be included in all letters of appointment and annual reviews.

4. EVALUATION OF PROFESSIONAL TRACK FACULTY

All Professional Track academic faculty will be reviewed on an annual basis by their department head or supervisor. Such review will include all requirements established in the initial letter of appointment and any additional requirements added during annual reviews.

5. DISMISSAL OF A PROFESSIONAL TRACK FACULTY MEMBER

- 5.1 Professional Track Faculty members whose appointment has not expired may be dismissed for cause on the same basis that tenured faculty may be dismissed for cause under System Policy *12.01*, Section 4.3.
- 5.2 System academic institutions shall follow System Policy *12.01*, Section 6, when dismissing a Professional Track faculty member for cause.
- 5.3 Professional Track faculty members may be placed on administrative leave pending investigation as described in System Policy *12.01*, Section 5.
- 5.4 Professional Track faculty are subject to the provisions of System Policy *12.01*, Section 9, relating to financial exigency or termination or reduction of existing programs, and may be dismissed subject to this policy.

Related Statutes, Policies, or Requirements

[System Policy 12.01, Academic Freedom, Responsibility and Tenure](#)

Member Rule Requirements

No rule is required to supplement this policy.

Contact Office

Office of Academic Affairs
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