

Proposal for the Creation of a New Category of Faculty at MSU: Instructional Professors

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Part 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Concept for Instructional Professors

It is proposed that an additional category of instructional professors be added to the non-tenure track faculty ranks at MSU. These faculty members would have terminal degrees in their discipline and would have a primary responsibility of teaching. The new category of proposed faculty members would include individuals whose titles would be: assistant instructional professor, associate instructional professor, and instructional professor.

1.2 Background

The faculty members of Mississippi State University continue to be the main foundation on which the university's reputation and national stature is based. It is desirable and advisable to maintain and increase the absolute number and percentage of the faculty composed of tenured/tenure track faculty members. However, there may be instances when the addition of non-tenure track faculty in teaching can assist the tenured/tenure track faculty by helping them meet the teaching responsibilities of the academic degree programs.

Tenured/tenure track faculty members have responsibilities in teaching, research, and service. Non-tenure track faculty members with the prefix of "research," "extension," or "clinical" (used with the ranks of assistant professor, associate professor, and professor) have singular responsibilities in either conducting research, providing outreach and extension services, or providing clinical and instructional services, respectively. It is proposed that we consider adding a prefix for faculty ranks for non-tenure track faculty members whose primary responsibility is instruction.

1.3 Rationale

Tenured and tenure track faculty can only devote a portion of their time to the instructional programs at MSU because of additional responsibilities in research and service. It would be to the university's advantage to have individuals with terminal degrees in non-tenure track positions with a primary responsibility in teaching. Rather than having a yearly teaching load of 4 or 5 three-hour courses, these instructional professors would have teaching loads of 8 three-hour courses or the equivalent. Analogous to the research professor ranks where faculty members deliver increased research output, the instructional professor rank would provide us with increased instructional output and help us meet our increasing teaching demands. We have authority from IHL to create this new title for non-tenure track faculty members and grant such faculty members

renewable contracts of up to four years in length. In fact, the clinical professor title at MSU is very similar to this proposed title but differs in that it connotes an association with a discipline associated with a clinical science.

Part 2. SPECIFIC DETAILS REGARDING INSTRUCTIONAL PROFESSORS

2.1 Required Qualification(s) for Instructional Professors

All instructional professors will have terminal degrees in the field in which they are teaching. A department may request an exception consistent with the guidelines developed to satisfy SACS requirements, contained in MSU AOP 13.09, in which significant commensurate experience in the same or related discipline may substitute for the terminal degree in qualifying them to teach at the undergraduate level.

2.2 Hiring of Instructional Professors

Instructional professors will be hired on nine-month appointments with renewable contracts that may be one, two, three, or four years in length. The typical contract will be one year in length. However, it is recognized that in order to attract some individuals to the university that a longer commitment may be necessary. Therefore, departments may request to issue a contract up to a period of four years for instructional professors. (Note that IHL Board Policy 404.01 allows for non-tenure track faculty in instruction research or service with renewable contracts up to four years in length).

Once an instructional professor position has been established in a department (see section on Creation of Instructional Professor positions), a department may request to fill that vacant, funded position, provided that no more than one third of the full-time teaching faculty are instructors or instructional professors. Note that the department head with support of the tenure-track faculty and the dean may request at any time to convert a vacant, funded instructional professor position to a tenure-track position.

Instructional professors are free to teach in any shortened term outside of their contract period for additional pay. They will be paid in the same manner as nine-month tenured and tenure-track faculty members.

Typically, a new faculty member without teaching experience will be hired as an assistant instructional professor with the capacity to be promoted to associate instructional professor and then to instructional professor. If the person to be hired has teaching or professional experience, the promotion and tenure committee may recommend that the individual be appointed at a higher rank or be granted some years of credit toward the next promotion to fulfill the minimum time in rank. Minimum time in rank is six years, with no maximum time in rank.

2.3 Creation of Instructional Professor Positions

The following four options state the methods by which instructional professor positions can be created.

Option 1 – A department may propose the creation of a new assistant/associate/full instructional professor with self-generated funds. This request would come with the support of the majority of the tenure-track faculty with approval by the department head. No more than 1/3 of the total full-time teaching faculty can be either instructors or instructional professors.

Option 2 – A department may request the conversion of a vacant instructor line into a new assistant/associate/full instructional professor. No more than 1/3 of the total full-time teaching faculty can be either instructors or instructional professors.

Option 3 – Once a commitment has been made by the Provost to add an additional faculty member to a department (either a non-tenure track assistant instructional professor or a tenure-track assistant professor), then the faculty and department head with input from the dean will decide whether they want to add a tenure-track or non-tenure track position. No more than 1/3 of the total full-time teaching faculty can be either instructors or instructional professors.

Option 4 - A non-tenured assistant professor may request to be converted from tenure-track to non-tenure track up to the end of the fourth year of the probationary period. Conversion of his/her position to a non-tenure track assistant instructional professor position would require the support of the majority of the tenure-track faculty with support by the department head and dean and approval by the provost. After the end of the fourth probationary year, it would not be possible to convert a tenure-track position to a non-tenure track position. However, a person in a tenure track position is always able to apply to a separate, open position with separate funding. No more than 1/3 of the total full-time teaching faculty can be either instructors or instructional professors.

Note: If the total of the full-time faculty who are either instructors or instructional professors were to exceed the 1/3 figure cited above, there would be no obligation or pressure to layoff or terminate non-tenure track faculty to reduce this ratio. The ratio would be eventually reduced by hiring additional tenure-track faculty members or by voluntary attrition.

2.4 Responsibilities of Instructional Professors

The responsibility of instructional professors will be consistent with the instructional mission of the department and the university. They will typically teach eight three-hour courses or the equivalent per academic year. Undergraduate and professional programs teaching will be the focus of such positions but there may be occasions when a department may utilize an instructional professor to teach graduate classes if the individual is qualified and current in the field.

Just as with tenured and tenure-track faculty, along with the teaching responsibility there will be an expectation of advising and departmental and university service related to instruction. Instructional professors at all ranks will typically be involved in curricular development and new course and program development, as appropriate. Individual departments will establish expectations for office hours and time spent on campus, consistent with the culture of the department. Instructional professors are expected to remain current in their discipline.

2.5 Promotion of Instructional Professors

The minimum time in rank at each level for instructional professors will be six years, with no maximum time in rank. Promotion decisions will be handled through the same promotion route as tenure track faculty. Decisions will be based on responsibilities related to the instructional mission of the department, college, and university. Assistant instructional professors will be given a three-year review while in the assistant instructional professor rank.

Instructional professors will be reviewed annually by their department heads and judged on the basis of their contribution to the instructional mission of the department, college, and university. The department head should indicate his/her judgment about the faculty member's contribution in teaching and the potential for future promotion. The faculty member should submit appropriate documentation about their contribution to the instructional programs to include but not limited to: student evaluation of teaching, self-assessment of teaching, peer-review of teaching, professional development activities, advising activity, recognition for teaching excellence, creative and innovative approaches to learning, contributions to curricular development, participation in teaching grants, example course syllabi and exams, or study abroad activity.

Salary increases for instructional professors who are promoted will be \$5,000 for promotion to associate instructional professor and \$7,500 for promotion to instructional professor. The central E&G fund will provide the funds to the academic departments for the promotion increments.

2.6 Continuation of Employment

There will be no tenure possible for instructional professors. Thus, there is no guarantee for employment beyond the period of the hiring contract. It will be possible to renew the contracts of the instructional professors.

2.7 Non-continuation of Employment and Termination Due to Lack of Funds

Notice of intention not to renew instructional professors at any rank shall be furnished in writing thirty (30) days prior to the expiration date of the contract.

Notice of termination of instructional professors at any rank prior to expiration of the contract due to a lack of funds shall be furnished in writing thirty (30) days prior to the termination.

2.8 Service on Graduate Committees

Service on graduate committees would not be an expected responsibility of an instructional professor. However, there may be occasions when such service may be appropriate and the individual is given an appointment on the graduate faculty. Service on graduate committees should not interfere with the primary teaching responsibility of the instructional professor.

An instructional professor cannot ever serve as a major or minor advisor or as a thesis or dissertation director.