

Questions/Concerns and Responses Regarding Instructional Professors Proposal from the Provost

The concept of having a limited number of non-tenure-track faculty members, instructional professors, would give a department the ability to support both the teaching and the research programs of the department by providing high-quality, focused teaching faculty. It would be totally optional, and instructional professors, along with instructors, could account for no more than one-third of the teaching faculty in any given department.

Common questions/concerns and corresponding responses:

- What would be the purpose of this classification?
 - By teaching a 4/4 load, the instructional professors would allow the tenure-track faculty more time for research by taking on a share of the teaching responsibility of the department. The instructional professors would provide a higher caliber level of discipline preparation than the instructor by requiring a terminal degree. Additionally, this proposal would provide for a promotion structure for teaching faculty: assistant instructional professor, associate instructional professor, and instructional professor.
- Have other universities implemented a similar classification of faculty?
 - A number of other universities have successfully implemented the same or a like-named version of non-tenure-track faculty. Some examples are: University of Delaware, University of Missouri, Duke University, MIT, Texas A&M, University of Wisconsin (Madison), and University of Mississippi.
- Would it be mandatory for departmental to implement this classification?
 - It would be entirely optional with the department head, in consultation with departmental faculty, making the decision to implement or not.
- How would the promotion increments for instructional professors be funded?
 - The money for the promotion increment will be provided by the central E&G fund. This is only true now for tenure-track faculty members.
- Do we have the authority to create this classification of faculty? Could this negatively impact MSU's accreditation or Carnegie classification?
 - There is full authority from the IHL for us to establish this category without special permission. It would in no way negatively impact the SACS accreditation of the university. It would not impact the Carnegie Research classification in any negative way.
- I am concerned that this proposed classification would diminish the value of the tenure-track faculty positions at the university and that the proliferation of instructional professors could get out of hand as some departments take advantage of the opportunity.
 - By limiting the number and putting control of the creation of instructional professor positions in the hands of the faculty, it will not diminish the integrity or value of a tenure track position. The dean and the provost would have the ability to monitor and provide a check on the system. The limiting of the percentage of instructors and instructional professors will help to keep the balance under control.
- How would an instructional professor be able to incorporate research experience into the classroom (like tenure-track faculty do)?
 - These faculty members would be as prepared, or perhaps more prepared, than an instructor with a master's degree to keep current in research because of their doctorate. There is a possible danger of the person not being current in the field so the department head will need to monitor this as part of the annual review process.
- How would instructional faculty be evaluated? Will the process be as thorough as the evaluation of tenure-track faculty?
 - It would be the responsibility of the instructional professor to present to the department head in the annual review the activities associated with instruction (classroom teaching, course and curricular development as appropriate, advising as appropriate, service on instruction-related committees, national involvement in teaching pedagogy in professional societies, etc.). They should also present evaluation material such as student-evaluation of teaching, self evaluation, peer evaluation, professional development in teaching, teaching portfolios, etc.