

## **Report of the Provost's Commission on Continuing Non-Tenure-Track Faculty**

**31 March 2015**

For the past decade, the University of Delaware has developed a high-quality continuing non-tenure-track professoriate. We are distinctive in offering appointments that both carry professorial rank and provide parity in benefits and base pay at each professorial rank. These practices are expressions of our institutional values and serve as a national model for research universities striving to fulfill their complex and varied missions in our economically challenging environment. By our practice, UD has demonstrated that a diversified professoriate does not have to be a divided one. Rather than rely on large numbers of temporary teaching contracts, UD is committed to developing an excellent, engaged, full-time faculty to meet our teaching mission.

At UD, academic appointments outside the tenure track have grown substantially in the last several decades. In 2015, about one-fifth of all full-time faculty hold continuing non-tenure-track (known as CNTT, but hereafter abbreviated as CT) appointments. The growth in CT faculty numbers reflects a change in the nature of academic employment as well as in the academic enterprise as a whole.

In May 2014, the faculty senate passed a resolution in response to administrative actions regarding new CT appointments. In response, Provost Grasso established a Commission to address a number of issues relating to the development of our CT faculty, which included the important issues of titling and promotion process. The deans of the seven colleges voluntarily declared a moratorium on new CT appointments while the Commission considered these issues. The Provost appointed a chair for the Commission and nominations for membership were submitted by the Provost and Faculty Senate leadership; the chair invited eight members to serve from the joint list of names, and the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs was added *ex officio*. The Provost charged the Commission on 31 July and it began its work, concluding in this report and the accompanying draft resolutions. By appropriately addressing the issues considered by the Commission and establishing best practices, we will position UD as a national leader in developing and supporting CT faculty.

During the fall of 2014, the Commission gathered perspectives from faculty and administration in a series of focused meetings of administrators (department chairs, deans, deputy and associate deans, deputy and vice provosts), special meetings of faculty stakeholders (faculty senate, AAUP, several academic units with large representation of CT faculty members) open listening sessions, and an online survey. Faculty members and administrators discussed their expectations and concerns about CT appointments and how they should be handled in the future. The survey was designed by the Commission and launched on 11 Nov 2014 and closed on 26 Nov. In total, there were 602

respondents, 52% men, 46% women. The respondents represented all colleges, with 59% CAS, 11% COE, 10% CHS and others less than 10%. The academic ranks of those responding were distributed as follows: 35% Professor, 27% Associate Professor, 27% Assistant Professor, 10% Instructor. 68% of the respondents were tenure-track, 28% continuing-track, and 4% temporary non-tenure-track NTT.

The Commission reviewed CT faculty roles, titles, and promotion practices at the University of Delaware and other research universities in the United States. We found that CT faculty members at the University of Delaware are outstanding educators and researchers, most with terminal degrees. We also found that criteria and processes for professional advancement were often not well-understood. In some academic units, documents for promotion of CT faculty do not exist or are unclear. This situation creates several problems including unequal treatment and lack of opportunities, whether perceived or actual. Such problems undermine faculty morale and pose an obstacle to achieving UD's full potential as a model for other major research universities.

We chose the following principles to guide our work:

- Minimal disruption to existing CT faculty members
- Fairness and consistency
- Transparency
- Appropriateness for the University of Delaware
- Flexibility for administrative and fiscal decisions

Based on the above principles, the Commission makes recommendations on the following elements of its charge:

1. To define more completely and explicitly the purposes and roles of CT faculty members as part of our overall faculty portfolio.
2. To consider potential changes to classification and titles of CT faculty to be fair, representative, appropriate for UD, and transparent.
3. To recommend guidelines for hiring and promotion of CT faculty, with clear expectations in job descriptions and clear and appropriate promotion criteria stated in the UD Faculty Handbook.
4. To create a system for rank progression and corresponding titles for non-terminal degree faculty.
5. To develop actionable items (*e.g.*, resolutions) for consideration by the Faculty Senate for matters involving responsibilities of the Senate (*e.g.*, promotion criteria and recommendations for changes to the UD Faculty Handbook).

In addressing the charge, we consistently confronted a specific difficulty to which we draw particular attention: schools and colleges have their own needs and cultures, but an

integrated view of the University is needed for achieving interdisciplinary cooperation and transparent decision-making. There is an inherent tension between proposing University-wide solutions and allowing different units reasonable latitude to chart the path that makes sense to them. We have tried to steer a middle course, formulating principles that are applicable across the University while providing flexibility for individual colleges.

We summarize our recommendations below, organized by elements of the charge to the Commission, followed by elaboration of how our recommendations were developed.

**Charge Element 1. Define more completely and explicitly the purposes and roles of CT faculty members as part of our overall faculty portfolio.**

1. The classification Continuing Non-Tenure Track (CNTT) should be changed hereafter to Continuing-Track (CT).
2. New CT faculty appointments should meet demonstrated needs of a department or program, including scholarship, teaching, and service roles.
3. For new appointments, CT faculty members should have service and, for those with professorial ranks, scholarship (broadly defined) in their assigned workloads.
4. For new appointments, CT faculty members should have assigned workloads that differ substantially from TT faculty within a department or school.

The title of CNTT has been problematic because it defines those faculty members by what they are not rather than by defining them in affirmative terms. In other words, the “N” in CNTT has tended to eclipse the “C.” This emphasis is unfortunate because the “C” is what really matters: these are *continuing permanent* faculty, not temporary ones. Therefore, we propose that Continuing Track (CT) replace CNTT as the classification. This makes the name an affirmative statement instead of a negative one, and ensures that there is an appropriate parallelism between CT and TT as our faculty classifications.

Faculty members, TT and CT, are the long-term stakeholders and stewards of the University. Service commitments are one of the ways that faculty members show their investment in the University. Service distinguishes CT faculty members from temporary faculty members and involves them in contributions to self-governance and other work of the academic unit. Therefore, service should be part of all CT faculty members’ workloads.

The Commission believes that engagement in scholarship (broadly defined<sup>1</sup>) is a fundamental role of a faculty member at the professorial ranks at the University of Delaware; this common activity defines and unifies all professors at the University. Thus, scholarship should be a part of the CT faculty members' workload at the Assistant Professor rank and higher. Two-thirds of the CT faculty members who completed the survey support the inclusion of scholarship (broadly defined) in their workload. Nearly half of the TT faculty members responding to the survey agreed or strongly agreed with including scholarship in CT faculty workloads. Full-time, non-temporary faculty members at the professorial ranks are expected to be a part of the intellectual life of the university and contribute to its mission of scholarship. Accomplishments in scholarship—at a level appropriate for one's workload and in an area relevant to one's work—would then also be expected for promotion to the senior ranks of Associate and Full Professor.

For new appointments, CT faculty members should have workloads that differ substantially from typical TT workloads within a department or school, as represented in the unit's workload document. While workloads may change over time, CT faculty members should be hired to serve a clear need in the area of teaching, research, or service and should therefore have a workload that matches that need.

**Charge Element 2. Consider potential changes to classification and titles of CT faculty to be fair, representative, appropriate for UD, and transparent.**

5. CT faculty appointments at the professorial rank will carry the standard professorial titles (Assistant, Associate, or Full Professor) or, in certain cases, one of two modified titles: Clinical Assistant (Associate or Full) Professor, or Assistant (Associate, or Full) Professor of Practice. As appointments with modified titles fall outside of the roles and responsibilities of typical faculty, they must meet special conditions and be assiduously maintained:

a. For Clinical faculty, the faculty candidate must educate students in a clinical setting by means of significant contact with patients, as a central part of his or her professional role.

b. For faculty of Practice, the faculty candidate must have prior professional practice in industry, business, or public service essential for the faculty role.

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<sup>1</sup> *Scholarship broadly defined* includes the scholarship of teaching and service. The scholarship of teaching may include giving professional presentations, publishing articles in journals of pedagogy of the field, writing of textbooks, developing innovative ways of teaching, introducing of new technology in teaching, etc. The scholarship of service could include creative and innovative advisement, scholarly articles on service, or developing innovation in service.

We recommend the modified titles of “Clinical” and “Practice” because each conveys something specific and important about the faculty described by these titles. In the case of Clinical faculty, the modifier describes the special nature of their teaching including where their teaching takes place (hospitals and clinics) and the type of instruction (involving interaction with actual patients). In the case of professors of Practice, the modifier describes the special nature of their preparation to teach at the college level with professorial rank. Rather than traditional academic preparation, Professors of Practice are qualified to teach due to their professional experience, often in business and engineering fields.

6. All classifications of faculty should be clearly denoted on faculty rosters presented on department/school/college websites and the central UD HR personnel directory. On website rosters, all CT and TT faculty members should be listed together alphabetically in a unified manner, with classification identified CT or TT for each faculty member, rather than by way of divided sections of the roster or other denotations.

The presentation of website rosters and directories with identification of faculty classifications was repeatedly heard as an important administrative consideration to indicate the diversity of faculty roles at UD. We recommend that a standard and consistent approach be adopted. Classification is made clear in the initial appointment letter of each faculty member and its presentation on rosters and directories is a reasonable administrative expectation.

7. Temporary non-tenure track faculty on one-year contracts can have the following modified titles: Research (Assistant, Associate, or Full) Professor, (Assistant, Associate, or Full) Professor of Instruction.

**Charge Element 3. Recommend guidelines for hiring and promotion of CT faculty, with clear expectations in job descriptions and clear and appropriate promotion criteria stated in the UD Faculty Handbook.**

8. Two-year and four-year peer reviews should be required for contract renewal.
9. Units with CT appointments must have clearly defined promotion criteria at all ranks for CT faculty as part of their units’ approved P&T document. In addition, clear criteria for CT faculty promotion must be included in all college and University P&T documents.
10. Promotion of CT faculty is to be based on excellence in one role, aligned with preponderance of assigned workload. CT faculty would need to demonstrate high

quality performance in other roles represented in their workloads (*e.g.*, excellence in teaching and high quality in service and scholarship).

11. CT faculty should be externally evaluated for promotion to Associate or Full Professor. When the predominant role in the workload is teaching or service, appropriate *external* evaluations can be performed locally, but should be *external* to the academic unit. When scholarship is the predominant role in the workload, the *external* evaluation should be performed by individuals outside the University community, as is the case with TT faculty appointments.
12. Units, colleges, and the University should provide mentoring for CT faculty that supports and guides them in the contract renewal and promotion processes.
13. A senior (Associate or Full Professor) CT faculty member should be appointed to the University P&T committee for reviewing CT faculty promotion dossiers.

Currently, CT faculty members are reviewed by the chair of their unit at the two-year and four-year contract renewal reviews. Having peer reviews instead of chair reviews would provide CT faculty members with the feedback needed to prepare them for their six-year contract renewal, which is already a peer review process.

CT faculty members communicated in the special meetings, listening sessions, and survey that they are not clear about promotion criteria at the department, college, and University levels. Specifically, promotion criteria remain unclear at college and University levels to the majority of CT faculty.

We recommend that promotion of CT faculty members be based on excellence in their predominant role in their workload. It is important to note that if the workload for teaching and service is higher than scholarship, then excellence in scholarship should not be expected in order to be successfully promoted, and that this expectation should be reflected in the appropriate P&T documents. There was broad agreement among CT and TT faculty members who completed the survey, who do not believe that CT faculty must meet the same criteria for promotion as TT faculty; rather, in the focus groups and listening sessions it was felt that promotion should be based on workload, which is consistent with the Collective Bargaining Agreement (11.4). Nearly half of CT and TT faculty members (40% and 46%, respectively) agreed on the survey that CT faculty members should have external evaluations (letters) as part of the promotion procedure, but should not have to demonstrate a national reputation as part of the CT promotion procedure.

When the predominant role in the workload is teaching or service, external evaluations can be performed by local instead of national reviewers. However, the evaluations

(letters) should be *external* to the unit. For example, UD faculty members outside of the unit may be qualified to assess the performance of CT faculty members, especially if they are CT faculty members who have a similar workload in another unit. These evaluations outside of the unit enable independent reviews of the CT faculty members' performance.

When scholarship is the predominant role in the workload, the *external* evaluation should be performed by individuals outside the University community. CT and TT faculty should be reviewed on their scholarship in a similar manner to maintain consistent standards across the University. However, the promotion criteria and expectations for scholarship should be aligned with workload. For example, CT faculty with a 5% workload in scholarship would not have the same expectations of scholarly productivity as TT faculty with a 50% workload in scholarship.

Units, colleges, and the University should provide mentoring for CT faculty that supports and guides them in the contract renewal and promotion processes. TT faculty receive support and guidance for their promotion at these three levels, and CT faculty would benefit from this same assistance with the development of P&T criteria at all three levels. CT faculty members also need to be informed about the expectations for contract renewal and associated benefits of their position. For example, 20% of the CT faculty who completed the survey were not aware that they are eligible for a sabbatical.

Having a CT senior faculty member on the University of Delaware's Faculty Senate Committee on Promotion and Tenure would provide a voice from the perspective of CT faculty, which will be helpful in gaining a better understanding of the CT faculty members' workload. The member would be selected in accordance with the University P&T guidelines (e.g., the CT faculty member could not vote on a candidate from the same department). The vast majority of the CT faculty (97%) and TT faculty (76%) indicated on the survey that a CT faculty member should be on the University P&T committee when a CT promotion case is being discussed.

**Charge Element 4. Create a system for rank progression and corresponding titles for non-terminal degree faculty.**

14. Upon successful peer review at the end of the third two-year contract, Instructors will be promoted to the rank of Senior Instructor. Upon successful peer review at the thirteenth-year review, Senior Instructors will be promoted to the rank of Master Instructor entering onto the rolling five-year contract.

Currently, appointments of CT faculty who lack the terminal degree in their field are at the title of Instructor. These faculty members currently work with no explicit path for progression, and should be recognized with title advancements reflecting the quality of their contributions and commitment to UD.

In conclusion, the members of the Commission are pleased to have had an opportunity to consider the important issues of CT appointments that were raised over the past few years. Our recommendations and draft resolutions are offered in the spirit of advancing the University of Delaware and developing a strong united faculty. Our resolutions will require significant changes to the Faculty Handbook; these changes will be best handled by an additional set of resolutions. Following adoption of our first four resolutions, the Commission stands ready to draft the necessary changes to the handbook for consideration by the Provost and Faculty Senate.

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## **Appendix – Four Draft Resolutions**

### **Resolution 1.**

WHEREAS faculty members employed on continuing contracts, but not on the tenure-track, are currently known as Continuing Non-Tenure Track (CNTT) faculty members, and

WHEREAS it is better to describe these faculty classifications by what they are rather than by what they are not, therefore be it

RESOLVED that these faculty members of the University of Delaware employed on continuing renewable contracts be known as Continuing-Track (CT) faculty members.

### **Resolution 2.**

WHEREAS most CT faculty members at the professorial rank fulfill typical academic roles of the professoriate, namely, a combination of scholarship, teaching, and service; and

WHEREAS some current and some future CT faculty members may fulfill special roles in a clinical setting, namely, where they educate students by means of significant contact with patients; and

WHEREAS some current and some future CT faculty members may have prior professional practice in industry, business, or public service essential for the faculty role; therefore be it

RESOLVED that CT faculty members may continue to be appointed to all professorial ranks with the typical unmodified designations “Assistant [Associate, Full] Professor;” and be it further

RESOLVED that CT faculty members who fulfill a special role in a clinical setting where they educate students by means of significant contact with patients may carry the modified title “Clinical Assistant [Associate, Full] Professor;” and be it further

RESOLVED that CT faculty members who have prior professional practice in industry, business, or public service essential for the faculty role, may carry the modified title “Assistant [Associate, Full] Professor of Practice;” and be it further

RESOLVED that the aforementioned criteria for assigning the two modified titles “Clinical” and “of Practice” must be assiduously maintained.

**Resolution 3.**

WHEREAS CT faculty members should have a clear and appropriate path to promotion, and

WHEREAS an appropriate review of any CT faculty member for promotion should include a specific understanding of CT roles and accomplishments; therefore be it

RESOLVED that one senior (Associate or Full Professor) CT faculty member should be appointed to the University Promotion and Tenure Committee for review of CT faculty promotion dossiers, and be it further

RESOLVED that two- and four-year peer reviews should be required for contract renewal of newly-hired CT faculty members, and be it further

RESOLVED that units with CT faculty members must have clearly defined promotion criteria at all ranks for CT faculty as part of their unit's approved Promotion and Tenure document, and be it further

RESOLVED that clear criteria for CT faculty promotion must be included in all college and University Promotion and Tenure documents, and be it further

RESOLVED that promotion of CT faculty members is to be based on excellence in one role, aligned with the preponderance of workload during the period at current rank. For promotion, CT faculty members will need to demonstrate at least high quality performance in other areas presented in their workload, and be it further

RESOLVED that CT faculty members be externally evaluated for promotion to Associate or Full Professor. When the predominant role is teaching or service, appropriate external evaluations can be performed locally, but should be external to the academic unit.

**Resolution 4.**

WHEREAS some CT faculty members are hired without terminal degrees, and

WHEREAS these faculty members are titled as Instructors, and

WHEREAS these faculty members currently work with no explicit path for progression,  
and

WHEREAS these faculty members should be recognized with title advancements  
reflecting the quality of their contributions and commitment, therefore be it

RESOLVED that upon successful peer review and contract renewal at the end of the third  
two-year contract, an Instructor will be promoted to the rank of Senior Instructor. Be it  
further

RESOLVED that upon successful peer review and contract renewal following the  
thirteenth-year review, a Senior Instructor will be promoted to the rank of Master  
Instructor upon beginning the rolling five-year contract.