

Charge to the Ad Hoc Committee on Hiring Full-time Faculty without a Terminal Degree

BACKGROUND

The University has faced challenges in recruiting candidates in high demand fields, particularly those with intense competitive or a shortage of qualified candidates (e.g. Cybersecurity, Graphic and Animation Design). In response, there is a need to broaden the qualifications criteria for these positions, allowing for candidates who may not hold the traditional terminal degree while ensuring they receive a competitive salary. Such an adjustment should avoid providing higher salaries to identical “titles.” Instead, it involves integrating these individuals into our more desirable faculty track or establishing a similarly rigorous track that justifies compensation on par with their peers who possess a terminal degree.

CHARGE

This committee is charged with laying the ground work for defining potential pathways to fill full-time faculty positions with individuals who possess the practical experience and/or relevant knowledge within their respective profession or discipline. A broader understanding of how to handle and segregate the different concerns is necessary. Achieving a more comprehensive understanding of how to address and distinguish various concerns is imperative. For instance, questions of “to what extent could this individual maintain ties to their industry” might not be answered by adjustments to the faculty track but rather how the overseeing department defines their own scholarly or professional activities or use of “reassigned time” (reassignment of scholarly activities section III. A5e).

To fulfill this objective, the committee is initially tasked with reviewing the policies implemented by other universities, with a particular focus on Virginia institutions. The aim is to summarize the various approaches these institutions take in handling situations where experts in these fields are hired more frequently. The committee will subsequently report on general trends in how the following aspects are incorporated into university policies, whether they are integrated into track descriptions, established as independent policies, or embedded within departmental guidelines for review and evaluation:

Required Education
Teaching Duties
Scholarly Duties
Service Duties

Work load
Promotion
Tenure

At the same time, the committee is tasked with collecting and organizing feedback from our own departments. This needs to be performed in a way that guides the inquiry into how these above aspects could define an ideal “professional” track within their department.

TIMELINE

We would ask that the committee provide an organized summary of how other institutions define such guidelines for “professional” faculty and how our own creation of such a position would affect various areas of our FPPM then report their findings back to the faculty senate prior to the April 4th, 2024 faculty senate meeting.

COMPOSITION

The Committee is expected to be comprised of 5 members (no more than 2 from each college) with at least the following:

- A representative from the Promotion & Tenure Policies and Procedures Committee
- A member familiar with hiring faculty (Dean or Department chair)
- A full-time faculty member
- A Clinical Educator