

12.07.01

Fixed Term Academic Professional Track Faculty

Approved May 5, 2009

Supplements System Policy 12.07

Introduction

Individuals who are appointed to a Fixed-Term Faculty rank are carefully-selected, uniquely-qualified faculty who provide specialized services in support of the mission of the University. Appointment and promotion of Fixed-Term Faculty at West Texas A&M University are based upon the experience and academic background of the candidate as well as the programmatic needs of the academic department. Fixed-Term Faculty rank is available for faculty who have a singular focus or area of expertise in teaching or research and may not be used for positions that largely replicate those of tenure-track faculty who have responsibilities in both teaching and research.

While all current and future faculty at West Texas A&M University are eligible for Fixed-Term Faculty appointment, the opportunity is limited by the recommendation and review processes described herein.

1. Titles, Credentials, and Ranks

An individual appointed to a Fixed-Term Faculty position will hold a title commensurate with the individual's responsibilities (e.g., lecturer, research scientist, performing artist, etc). The title selected must be approved by the dean and Provost/VPAA and must not be readily confused with traditional tenure and tenure-track designations. Within the title, the individual's rank will be designated commensurate with the individual's credentials and/or experience (assistant, associate, or senior).

Appointment to any Fixed-Term Faculty rank ordinarily requires completion of the appropriate terminal degree. Variance from this requirement may be made only by permission of the university President. Individuals appointed to Fixed-Term Faculty positions are not eligible for tenure. Those tenured or in tenure-track appointments must forfeit their tenure position to be appointed to a Fixed-Term position. The process for determination of promotion from one rank to another is addressed in Section 3 of this rule.

- 1.1. Assistant (e.g., Assistant Lecturer, Assistant Research Scientist). This is the entry-level rank and normally requires the completion of the terminal degree in a discipline related to the position responsibilities. Appointment to this rank may be made of individuals with a master's degree in fields where the masters is not the terminal degree only with the approval of the President. Promotion criteria include a consistent "Excellent" or higher rating in the faculty member's area of responsibility (e.g., teaching or research), and a consistent "Excellent" rating in professional service. Potential for development is also expected for promotion.
- 1.2. Associate (e.g., Associate Lecturer, Associate Research Scientist). Appointment to this rank ordinarily requires the appropriate terminal degree and significant

experience related to the position's responsibilities. Individuals pursuing the Fixed-Term Faculty rank of "Associate" are eligible to be considered for promotion to this rank after at least five (5) years at the Fixed-Term Faculty rank of "Assistant." Promotion criteria include a consistent "Excellent" or higher rating in the faculty member's area of responsibility (e.g., teaching or research), and a consistent "Excellent" rating in professional service. Potential for development is also expected for promotion. Initial appointment at the Associate level may be made with the approval of the President.

- 1.3. Senior (e.g., Senior Lecturer, Senior Research Scientist). Appointment to this rank ordinarily requires the appropriate terminal degree and evidence of outstanding performance in the academic field. Individuals pursuing the Fixed-Term Faculty rank of "Senior" are eligible to be considered for promotion to this rank after at least five (5) years at the Fixed-Term Faculty rank of "Associate." Promotion criteria include a consistent "Outstanding" or higher rating in the faculty member's area of responsibility (e.g., teaching or research), and a consistent "Excellent" rating in professional service. Potential for development is also expected for promotion. Initial appointment at the Senior level may be made with the approval of the President.

2. Appointment of Fixed-Term Faculty

- 2.1. Appointment to Fixed-Term Faculty position shall begin with the department faculty. The department head, in consultation with the faculty in the program area affected, will request of the dean, via memo, that the position be defined or redefined as a Fixed-Term Faculty appointment. The memo must include a brief justification for why a Fixed-Term appointment would be more desirable in this specific situation rather than a tenure/tenure-track appointment. The dean shall review the request and, if agreed, shall request of the Provost/VPAA that the position be defined or redefined as a Fixed-Term Faculty appointment. The Provost/VPAA shall review the request and, if agreed, shall define or redefine the position as a Fixed-Term Faculty appointment.
- 2.2. All Fixed-Term Faculty members shall be provided 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 provided to the faculty member. The appointment letter shall explicitly indicate the necessary teaching or research and service requirements expected of the faculty member. Essential job functions for a position may vary depending upon the nature of the department and position. 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 2.3 of this rule, or unless the faculty member is dismissed pursuant to Section 4 of this rule.

- 2.2.1. Fixed-Term Faculty shall be appointed to terms (e.g., nine (9) month, ten and a half (10.5) month, twelve (12) month or some other variation) as determined by the dean in consultation with the Provost/VPAA.
- 2.2.2. Fixed-Term Faculty with instructional duties shall carry a 5/5 teaching load (fifteen (15) adjusted credit hours per term), unless reassigned for other defined responsibilities.
- 2.3. Fixed-Term Faculty appointments may be made for periods not to exceed five (5) years in length. If, during the course of an existing appointment, the university chooses to extend the duration of an existing appointment, any extension may not exceed an additional five (5) years.
- 2.4. The university shall notify faculty members annually, in writing, of their salary. Any other changes or additions to the appointment also should be included.
- 2.5. 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.
- 2.6. No more than twenty percent (20%) of a department/program's faculty may hold an appointment as Fixed-Term Faculty. Exceptions may be made upon recommendation of the Provost/VPAA and approval of the President.
- 2.7. Appointment of Fixed-Term Faculty will not be made in a department/program if the appointment jeopardizes a department/program's accreditation.

3. Annual Evaluation of Fixed-Term Faculty, and Evaluation for Purposes of Promotion

Fixed-Term Faculty will be reviewed on an annual basis by their department head or supervisor, and respective dean. Such review will include requirements established in the initial letter of appointment and any additional requirements added during annual reviews. Fixed-Term faculty are eligible for merit raises, as determined by the annual review.

- 3.1. Annual Evaluation: Fixed-Term Faculty will prepare an annual activity report, in accordance with 12.99.99.W1/AA, Annual Review of Faculty Performance. The annual report will be limited in scope to the area of specific focus or expertise of the faculty member, as outlined in the letter of appointment, but will otherwise follow the same review process as other faculty.
- 3.2. Promotion: Candidates for promotion to the Associate or Senior ranks will follow the procedures and timelines provided in university rule 12.02.01 W1/AA Promotion and Tenure, with these exceptions:

- 3.2.1. Documentation need be provided only in the area of specific focus or expertise, as outlined in the appointment letter. Although evidence of activity in other areas may be provided, evaluation of the application will be limited to the area of specific focus or expertise.
- 3.2.2. Applicants for promotion in the Fixed-Term Faculty ranks will not be evaluated by the University Promotion and Tenure Committee. The applicant's portfolio will be evaluated by the department Promotion and Tenure Committee, the department head, the college Promotion and Tenure Committee, the dean, the Provost/VPAA, and the President.

4. Dismissal of Fixed-Term Faculty

- 4.1. Fixed-Term Faculty whose appointment have 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.
- 4.2. System academic institutions shall follow System Policy *12.01*, Section 6, when dismissing a Fixed-Term Faculty member for cause.
- 4.3. Fixed-Term Faculty may be placed on administrative leave pending investigation as described in System Policy *12.01*, Section 5.
- 4.4. Fixed-Term 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.

CONTACT FOR INTERPRETATION: Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs

APPROVAL: 
President/CEO

May 5, 2009
Date