

# Faculty Affairs Committee - November 16, 2023

Meeting began at 1:30 pm and ended at 2:30 pm

## Attendees

- Jessica Lester
- John Carini
- Cassandra Coble
- Shu Cole
- John Gibson
- Shabnam Kavousian
- Minjeong Kim
- Gerry Lanosga
- Colleen Ryan (ex officio)
- Katherine Ryan
- Lana Spendl (ex officio)
- Cale Whitworth

## Agenda

1. Updates on the P&T Procedure proposed policy
2. Gender-neutral emeritus faculty language: Develop/review resolution
3. Discuss a request to revisit the ranks and titles of NTT faculty, specifically revisiting the title of assistant teaching prof; associate teaching prof, etc. Make recommendation to BFC Executive Committee regarding this request.
4. Begin discussions of revisions of grievance policy.

## Discussion

### 1. Update on P&T Procedure

- The academic associate deans are meeting tomorrow (11/17/23), and this is one of the topics they will discuss.
- We will have an update at the next meeting; no action today.

### 2. Gender-neutral language for emeritus faculty titles

Our charge is to make a recommendation on emeritus faculty labels that offer a possibility of gender-neutral language, like what some universities (e.g., UW Madison) have established — perhaps by including “emerit” as a gender non-specific option.

To advance the issue, we have two possibilities:

- a resolution, as a statement of sentiment, that the BFC would vote on; or
- a recommendation to BFC committees requesting changes to policies. This would be a more systematic alternative.

Some on the BFC believe this is a matter for the UFC, because it affects faculty titles across the university system. The UFC would require buy-in from other campuses, then prepare a policy.

A concern raised: if the UFC takes up this issue, will sharing our opinion with the BFC executive committee count for anything?

**Action:** The Director of Faculty Council Offices has emailed UFC co-chairs to invite them to offer their perspectives on whether the UFC should take up this issue.

### 3. Ranks and Titles for Non-Tenure-Track Faculty

NTT faculty have a range of research, clinical, and teaching ranks, the latter including Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, and the newer Teaching Professor<sup>1</sup>. There is a proposal to change Lecturer to Assistant Teaching Professor and Senior Lecturer to Associate Teaching Professor, making them consistent with Teaching Professor.

There is a desire in the VPFAA office to harmonize titles for research scientists et al. along these lines, for example by creating a Research Professor title. This committee will have to comment on these titles eventually.

#### Advantages

- These newer titles are becoming more common across the country.
- Some people will not come to IU for a lecturer rank, because it is not seen as providing a viable path for advancing their careers.
- It could be easier to get a grant as a research scientist if your title is Research Professor, without having to explain your title in the grant proposal.
- Harmonizing titles would bring some order to a bewildering collection of unclear titles across all the NTT ranks.
- A recommendation letter carries more weight if the author has the word “professor” in their title.
- The NTT caucus is in favor of this change.

#### Concerns and comments:

- Promotion from Lecturer to Senior Lecturer has become harder. Perhaps this change would make it even harder. (Promotion to Teaching Professor requires six external letters.)
- Some lecturers may not want this change, as they may be wary of elevated standards for contract renewals, as well as promotion.
- The notion of “tested experience” allows people to become a lecturer with only a bachelor’s degree, but then they can encounter trouble with promotion to higher ranks.
- Is there a risk of dilution of tenure, and with it protection of academic freedom, if the distinction between the names of TT and NTT ranks become more subtle (i.e., both containing the word “professor”)?
- But clinical ranks already have a parallel title structure. Has this resulted in dilution of tenure?

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://vpfaa.indiana.edu/faculty-resources/tenure-promotion/non-tenure-track/index.html> for a summary of these ranks and guidelines for promotion reviews.

- The VPFAA proposal suggests that these new titles could be additional title options. But that would seem to increase, rather than decrease, the confusion surrounding titles.
- Including “teaching” or “research” in the titles implies that these faculty do one or the other, which seems limiting or is not always the case.
- Are Visiting Assistant Professors involved in this? They have only two-year contracts, so no.
- Professor of Practice is another NTT rank, designed to attract experts with international reputations. Where does this title sit within the proposed scheme?
- The process of seeking promotion from lecturer to senior lecturer is “up or out.” Presumably it would be the same with the new titles.

**Tabled**, pending another visit to this committee by Judah Cohen and receipt of some data on titles across Big Ten universities.

#### 4. Revisions of Grievance Policy

Due to lack of time today, please review the tracked changes in the document sent to us by Moira Marsh (Chair, Board of Review)<sup>2</sup>, and bring ideas to the next meeting. The main concern is that the position of board coordinator is problematic. Should the chair of the BOR perform this role, improving coordination and reducing confidentiality problems?

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/fw64eyl0uptxcwex54qva/bl-aca-d22-grievance-review-faculty-annotated-85.docx?rlkey=e0kef4iror3kq9q6uejn99d93&dl=0>