

Faculty Council
Committee on Fixed-Term Faculty
Annual Report
2010

Members: Susan Bickford, Lucia Binotti, Jean DeSaix (chair), Kurt Gilliland, Susan Irons, Steve Melamut, Joy Renner, Arrel Toews

Meetings: October 9, 2009; November 6, 2009; December 11, 2009; January 29, 2010; February 19, 2010; March 15, 2010; April 23, 2010.

Committee charge: Resolution 2005-9. On Establishing the Council Committee on Fixed-Term Faculty

The Faculty Council resolves

Section 1. Pursuant to Section 2-8(b)(1) of the Faculty Code of University Government, the Council Committee on Fixed-Term Faculty is created. The Committee has six members, appointed by the Chair of the Faculty from among sitting members of the Faculty Council at the September meeting of the Council each year. Four of the members are fixed-term faculty members, and two are tenure-track faculty members. The Chair of the Faculty designates the chair of the committee. Members are eligible for reappointment.

Sec. 2. The committee addresses working conditions and the status of full-time and part-time fixed-term faculty members. In this regard it monitors implementation of policies and recommendations concerning fixed-term faculty; reviews school, college, and departmental policies governing such faculty members; and formulates and proposes new policies and procedures for consideration by the Faculty Council. The committee reports to the Council as appropriate to its agenda, but at least annually.

Sec. 3. This resolution is effective upon adoption.

Summary of Activities of the Committee 2009-2010

The committee began the year with little continuity of membership from the previous year, thereby prompting an examination of the history and current structure of the committee. Modifications could be made to allow more continuity and more certainty of existence. Currently the committee is appointed by the Chair of the Faculty from among members of the Faculty Council and, in 2006-07, the committee, having no chair designated, was not active at all. Conversations continue about the possibility of becoming a freestanding faculty committee chartered within the *Faculty Code of University Government* and appointed by the Chancellor.

A review of the many unaddressed concerns from previous years (see the 2008-2009 Annual report) prompted committee members to express a desire to be the conscience of the campus in pressing for implementation of past recommendations, serving in a role of advocacy and accountability. Thus, several times during the year, campus policies that excluded fixed-term faculty from various rights or privileges were brought to the attention of administrators, often with positive results. (Eligibility for small grants from the University Research Council is one example.)

Advocacy continues with regard to policies and practices about contract renewals. We remain concerned about the continuing practice of giving most fixed-term faculty one-year renewal contracts regardless of their rank or length of service. While we understand the seriousness of the present budget constraints, this policy presents the kind of situation where a clear "career path" for fixed-term faculty would ensure that those with greater seniority or in higher fixed-term ranks might expect to be treated differently.

At the request of Faculty Chair McKay Coble, the committee gathered information about policies across campus concerning appointment, reappointment and renewals of fixed-term faculty. Many units lacked policies or were reluctant to share their operational practices. A number were in the process of examining and regularizing their policies. Titles became an issue of consideration for many units revising their policies with most using prefixes such as Clinical or Research in front of the traditional titles Assistant Professor, Associate Professor and Professor. A spreadsheet of titles used in various schools and departments is available on our committee's section of the Faculty Council website.

Much time was spent discussing evolving policies in the College of Arts and Sciences, where a special committee had been constituted in 2008 to make recommendations to the Dean for consistent policies regarding fixed-term faculty in the College. The special committee's report, which represented considerable effort to develop a clear and equitable policy, was issued in late 2009. Faculty Chair Coble, who sat on the College committee, requested feedback on the recommendations from the Faculty Council Fixed-Term Faculty Committee. Here, the Council committee's campus-wide perspective and up-to-date knowledge of policies across the university provided helpful context and generated considerable discussion regarding the proposed set of titles for fixed-term faculty in the College which is based on tiers of lecturer rather than professor.

In the coming year the committee hopes to take a closer look at its structure and mission to ensure that it is serving fixed-term faculty campus-wide in all schools and departments. A proposal for changing the way the committee is constituted may be forthcoming.

The committee has been assisted in its work by the continuing efforts of Anne Mitchell Whisnant, Director of Research, Communications, and Programs in the Office of Faculty Governance and Joe Ferrell, Secretary of the Faculty.