

**Committee on Fixed-term Faculty  
Annual Report to the Faculty Council  
April 2013**

**Members**

Jean DeSaix	Biology (Arts & Sciences)	Master Lecturer (ft)
Janet Chambers	Dramatic Arts	Asst. Professor (tt)
Cal Lee	Info & Lib Sciences	Assoc. Professor (tt)
Kathryn Moracco	Public Health	Research Assoc. Prof (ft)
Margaret O'Shaughnessey (Chair)	English & Comparative Literature	Senior Lecturer (ft)
Adam Persky	Pharmacy	Clinical Assoc. Professor (ft)
Arrel Toews	Biochemistry & Biophysics (Med School)	Professor (ft)

Meetings: September 7, 2012; October 5, 2012; November 9, 2012; December 7, 2012; January 11, 2013; February 8, 2013; March 8 2013; April 12, 2013

**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 2012-13

At its first meeting in September, the Committee established a list of goals for the academic year. Appendix A provides a copy of this list, most of it continuing goals established by the 2011-12 committee. Primary concern was given to finding an alternative to the title “Master Lecturer” for the recently approved third-tier rank for fixed-term faculty in the College of Arts and Sciences. (See the 2011-12 Fixed-Term Faculty Committee Annual Report for *Background on third-tier rank title in the College of Arts and Sciences, Reaction to “Master Lecturer” title, Process for considering alternative titles, and Proposal and Response*). The decision to focus on the title issue was propelled by the knowledge that Provost Carney would be retiring at the end of the academic year. When Chancellor Thorp announced that he too would be leaving at the end June, the committee felt even more urgency to have an alternative in place before a new administration arrived. The Committee decided to conduct a university-wide survey to gather perspectives from all faculty ranks concerning title options.

During the academic year, articles in national publications made clear that many other universities in the nation are also working on status issues for fixed term faculty. See, for example, the following articles:

Flaherty, Colleen. “U of Missouri moves toward giving adjuncts voting rights in faculty governance.” *Inside Higher Ed*. 21 November 2012.

Schmidt, Peter. “U of Maryland Weighs Big Changes for Faculty Members Off the Tenure Track.” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. 5 March 2013.

Wilson, Robin. “The New Faculty Minority: Tenured professors fight to retain control as their numbers shrink.” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. 18 March 2013.

### ***Background on the Survey***

The 2012 Annual Report notes that two new titles were proposed—“Senior Lecturer with Distinction” and “Teaching Professor”—each title having both positive and negative features. The year ended with the statement that “the Provost will ask College Dean Gil to obtain the following information through department chairs:

- What is the response among faculty to the current title “Master Lecturer”?
- What other options would the faculty find appropriate for this rank? The Dean may choose to ‘float’ a couple of specific options for response.”

At the beginning of the 2012-13 academic year, Provost Carney met with department chairs and suggested “Teaching Professor” as a replacement for “Master Lecturer.” The Provost reported to committee members that the chairs “overwhelmingly if not unanimously rejected” the title.

A major reason for the objection was fear that the term could imply tenured faculty do research but not teaching. Even though teaching is the primary responsibility of fixed-term faculty in the College of Arts and Sciences, chairs were uncomfortable adopting the title “Teaching Professor.” The Provost reported that in rejecting the title “Teaching Professor,” the chairs said they were “expressing the views of their constituencies.” The Chairs instead proposed the title “Dean’s Lecturer.” Committee members, however, felt that “Dean’s Lecturer” had many of the same problems as “Master Lecturer.”

- Does “Dean’s Lecturer” signal a higher rank than “Senior Lecturer”?
- What kind of rank does the term convey to people and institutions beyond UNC?

- Does the absence of “Professor” in the title undermine the achievement which the title is meant to convey?

In addition to these problems with “Dean’s Lecturer,” committee members questioned whether faculty across the University were aware of the various titles for fixed-term faculty. For example, outside the College of Arts and Sciences, “Research Professor” and “Clinical Professor” are the terms used for fixed-term faculty. Within the College of Arts and Sciences, various titles are used, even in the same department —“Lecturer,” “Research Assistant Professor,” “Adjunct Assistant Professor” and “Adjunct Associate Professor.” Provost Carney stated that he saw two options:

- Move ahead with “Dean’s Lecturer”
- Do a massive study of the faculty to determine faculty view

Committee members were unsure what “the views of their constituencies” cited by the chairs meant. Were the chairs expressing the views of tenure-track and fixed-term faculty in their departments, or did they consider their “constituents” to be essentially tenure-track faculty? Committee members were also unsure whether faculty across the University were aware of the differences in titles for what were essentially the same ranks—for example, Clinical Professor and Lecturer for faculty whose primary focus is teaching. The Committee decided that a survey of the faculty would be the best route to take. The endeavor would require a degree of sensitivity since the committee did not want to appear to be overriding the views of department chairs. The ambiguity about “constituencies” suggested the possibility of a caste system which could erode morale of fixed-term faculty. Further complicating the endeavor is the anxiety among tenured faculty that fixed-term faculty threaten the security of tenure.

### ***Process for conducting the survey***

Through several meetings, the committee discussed possible approaches to the survey:

- Should the survey be sent only to faculty in the College of Arts and Science or to the entire University faculty?
- Should the survey be disseminated through department chairs or through the Office of Faculty Governance?
- When should the survey be conducted?

Ultimately, the committee decided that the more data collected from various components of the university on the title issue, the better the committee could understand how the various title options are viewed. To accomplish that end, the Committee worked through several meetings to devise a survey that would take no more than 5-10 minutes to complete. It would be sent to the entire voting faculty of the University and would gather both quantitative and qualitative data. The survey would be presented through Qualtrics, the same program used to conduct the faculty elections. Provost Carney and Dean Gil gave their approval for the survey as long as the responses from the College of Arts and Sciences could be distinguished from the responses of other schools in the University. See Appendix B for a copy of the survey.

### ***The survey***

The survey offered background information on the third promotion tier and reasons for the dissatisfaction with the “Master Lecturer” title. This section was followed by two introductory statements and five options for response (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree).

These questions were followed by five sequence options. In each sequence the ranks of lecturer and senior lecturer were retained. Only the third rank differed. Respondents had four response options (Very Unacceptable, Unacceptable, Acceptable, Very Acceptable.) They were also invited to describe what they found appealing or unappealing about particular sequences.

Five options were offered for the third-tier of the promotion sequence:

1. Master Lecturer
2. Teaching Professor
3. Fixed-Term Professor
4. Senior Lecturer with Distinction
5. Dean's Lecturer

Although the survey was ready in December, the committee decided that a January launch would solicit more responses than a December date. The January date chosen was delayed a bit to avoid "survey fatigue" since two other faculty surveys were circulating at the time: the Faculty Elections Interest Survey and a survey related to the UNC Strategic plan. The title survey was launched on February 4, 2013 and closed on February 28. Two reminders were sent to people who had not responded.

### ***Survey results***

The survey response was overwhelming. More than half of the faculty completed the survey: the committee received 1,861 responses to a survey sent to 3,683 faculty members. A significant number of respondents included discursive responses. Below are a few statistical highlights on the respondents:

#### Responses by Rank

Fixed-term faculty:	876
Tenured/tenure track faculty	971

#### Responses by School

Arts and Sciences	608	(62% of faculty)
School of Medicine	686	(44.3%)
School of Public Health	120	(51.3%)

### ***Survey questions and responses:***

**Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.**

- 1. It is important that fixed-term faculty titles clearly reflect progressive ranks in a promotion sequence.**

<b>Ratings</b>	<b>All Responses</b>	<b>College of Arts and Sciences</b>
Strongly Disagree	5.51%	5.7%
Disagree	3.42	4.52
Neither Agree nor Disagree	10.05	10.05
Agree	43.2	46.57
Strongly Agree	37.8	33.17

**2. It is important that a fixed-term faculty title has recognizable value in contexts beyond UNC-Chapel Hill (for example, on recommendation letters, representing the University at conferences, in publications)**

<b>Ratings</b>	<b>All Responses</b>	<b>College of Arts and Sciences</b>
Strongly Disagree	4.86	5.03
Disagree	1.49	1.85
Neither Agree nor Disagree	7.84	7.38
Agree	39.74	43.12
Strongly Agree	46.08	42.62

**For each of the following sequences of titles for fixed-term faculty, please indicate whether the titles are acceptable for their associated ranks.**

**3. Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Master Lecturer**

<b>Ratings</b>	<b>All Responses</b>	<b>College of Arts and Science</b>
Very Unacceptable	11.72%	11.4%
Unacceptable	40.78	39.73
Acceptable	41.65	40.07
Very Acceptable	5.86	8.73

**Option: Explain why.**

**Appealing aspects of title:**

- “Master” means master of a craft, not a person
- “Master” suggests expertise

**Unappealing aspects**

- I agree with the criticisms stated in the introduction
- The terms are confusing or ambiguous
- The terms are antiquated, gendered, patriarchal, or derogatory
- The sequence is illogical
- Since the sequence makes no sense, why not stick with two tiers
- All the titles under-represent or misrepresent the person’s actual credentials and/or duties
- The title has no recognizable value outside UNC
- The title “Lecturer” has a negative connotation

### Other Responses

- Make fixed term titles equal to tenure track
- Make the third tier position into a tenure track position
- This discussion about titles makes Arts a& Sciences look silly
- Discussions about titles are pointless discussion because there is little support or security for fixed-term faculty positions
- Fixed-term faculty should be the ones deciding what their titles are

### 4. Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Teaching Professor

Ratings	All Responses	College of Arts and Sciences
Very Unacceptable	12.45%	13.4%
Unacceptable	40.02	39
Acceptable	35.02	31.1
Very Acceptable	12.51	16.49

### Option: Explain why.

#### Appealing aspects of the title:

- It acknowledges expertise and faculty status
- It more clearly approximates the duties & responsibilities of the job than “Master Lecturer”
- A rank above senior lecturer should be a professor
- This title puts the top tier on a par with the rest of the faculty, thus acknowledging the value of their contributions
- This title is in line with other designations such as Clinical Professor
- The title “professor” suggests a level of accomplishment that “lecturer” lacks

#### Unappealing aspects:

- It disregards the service and research that fixed-term faculty do
- The title is too similar to a tenure track title; the titles should be different to clearly distinguish between fixed-term faculty and tenure-track faculty
- The title sequence lacks consistency and does not signal whether Senior Lecturer or Master Lecturer is highest
- The title implies that other professors do not teach
- Most lecturers do not have terminal degrees and so should not have a professorial title
- The title “professor” is reserved for research positions
- “Teaching Professor” sounds patronizing, condescending
- Everyone is a teaching professor

### Other

- All three tiers should be professors. Go with Assistant Teaching Professor, Associate Teaching Professor, Teaching Professor

- There are more serious concerns that need to be addressed regarding fixed-term faculty that titles. Issues such as salary, benefits, and professional support are more important
- More focus should be put on hiring tenure-track faculty

### 5. Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Fixed-Term Professor

Ratings	All Responses	College of Arts and Sciences
Very Unacceptable	16.28%	16.01%
Unacceptable	52.82	47.33
Acceptable	26.93	29.26
Very Acceptable	5.91	7.4

**Option: Explain why.**

#### Appealing aspects of title:

- Lecturers at highest rank are expected to do more than teach. This title is appropriate
- Inelegant, but less ambiguous than Master Lecturer or Teaching Professor
- This is the best option for reflecting progression ranks

#### Unappealing aspects:

- “Professor” is reserved for tenure track
- Students might take a fixed term professor less seriously than a tenured professor
- The title seems to advertise employment vulnerability
- The sequence lacks parallelism
- “Fixed-term Professor” sounds awkward, negative
- The title advertises that fixed-term faculty don’t have and can’t get tenure
- The progression is not analogous with tenure track
- The title connotes inferiority
- All three levels are fixed-term professors

#### Other

- There needs to be consistency in the nomenclature sequence. Assistant Fixed-Term Prof, Associate FT Professor, FT Professor would be better

### 6. Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Senior Lecturer with Distinction

Ratings	All Responses	College of Arts and Sciences
Very Unacceptable	7.21%	6.69%
Unacceptable	27.78	27.44
Acceptable	46.13	47.68
Very Acceptable	18.87	18.18

**Option: Explain why.**

#### Appealing aspects of title:

- The position and relative seniority are clear

- The ranks should be clear for anyone within or outside UNC
- The titles correlates with ability more than age
- The title reflects prestige
- There is a consistent, clear progression
- The title sounds like a merit rank instead of a longevity rank

**Unappealing aspects:**

- The title is cumbersome, clumsy, long
- The title implies some sort of endowed status
- The title sounds more like an award than a promotion
- The title gives no indication of criteria for measuring “distinction.” “Professor” is better
- The title seems more honorary than professional
- The title sounds like the same rank as Senior Lecturer, but with some sort of honor

**Other**

- Distinguished Senior Lecturer would be better

**7. Dean’s Lecturer**

<b>Ratings</b>	<b>All Responses</b>	<b>College of Arts and Sciences</b>
Very Unacceptable	11.74%	10.43%
Unacceptable	50.74	46.43
Acceptable	31.39	34.61
Very Acceptable	6.14	8.52

**Option: Explain why.**

**Appealing aspects of title:**

- Just as positive as senior lecturer with distinction, but shorter

**Unappealing aspects:**

- The hierarchy is unclear
- The title sounds like a chair position, thus not appropriate for fixed-term
- “Dean’s Lecturer” sounds like someone who is going to lecture the dean
- The title has no meaning outside of UNC
- Why not a provost’s lecturer? A chancellor’s lecturer?

**Other:**

- Use professor in the titles



## ***Conclusion***

The volume of responses to the survey seems evidence that faculty across the university are interested in issues regarding Fixed-Term faculty. Not only did hundreds of faculty complete the survey, providing overwhelming consensus that Fixed-Term faculty titles should clearly reflect progressive ranks in a promotion sequence and have a title with recognizable value beyond UNC-Chapel Hill, but most of them also took the time to write comments about each title sequence. The Committee was quite happy with this unanticipated level of response, but had little more than a month to read through all the responses and try to characterize them. Many important and valuable perspectives are offered in these comments which offer a richer texture for understanding views toward the titles than simple bar graphs do. For the most accurate assessment of faculty views, the written responses need to be classified, tagged, and counted while preserving information about the respondents' rank, gender, and educational unit. Committee members are trying out software programs which should be able to accomplish this end.

A look through the responses to the five options does reveal several points:

1. The "Senior Lecturer with Distinction" title garnered the most positive responses because it seemed a respectful title, but nearly all respondents who favored it also noted that the title was cumbersome. Many suggested "Distinguished Senior Lecturer," a title which the 2012 Annual Report explains is not an option.
2. One refrain consistently surfaced through responses to all five options: many people suggested that all three titles should parallel tenured ranks of "assistant," "associate," and "professor" because that nomenclature is already well-established in academia and in fixed-term ranks at UNC. "Teaching Professor" was more popular than "Fixed-Term Professor" for that sequence. There was, however, a counter-refrain saying that fixed-term faculty should not be awarded the title "professor."

A more scientific look at the qualitative data for these responses is needed to determine how strongly various sectors of the faculty view the options offered. The Committee hopes that a more complete examination of the data could be ready by the opening of the fall 2013 semester. We therefore recommend that the name change for the third tier of the Fixed-Term faculty promotion be postponed until the data collected in the survey can be accurately characterized.

## **Appendix A: Committee Goals for 2012-2013**

- Support reconsideration of “Master Lecturer” title for the new third-tier rank in Arts & Sciences. Other titles mentioned in the meeting were University Professor, Professor of the Practice, and Teaching Associate. Many are unhappy with the gender bias of the current proposed title; therefore, the committee should help to keep the conversation going about the best title option.
- Investigate and form recommendations on length of contract terms for people who have worked effectively in a position and achieved seniority (and who do not receive longer contracts automatically with a promotion). One-year contracts for fixed-term faculty have become the “norm” since the budget crisis began. The committee should seek further information from Provost.
- Investigate role of outside letters or “external letters” (implied “academic” recommenders) in HR promotion criteria for professional schools fixed-term faculty. Is an “academic” recommendation always available, and is it always the most effective recommendation for all positions, for example positions focused on engaged scholarship. Find out Provost’s perspective on this issue.
- Obtain report on “to-date” promotions to Senior Lecturer in Arts & Sciences. If possible, assess how departments are interpreting the criteria and if the continuity across departments is in a reasonable range.
- Consider question of how to encourage “best practices” for promotion of fixed-term faculty across the University. Is some consistency of criteria possible? Reasonable? How might this question relate to different position names used for fixed-term faculty across campus? (Committee members reiterated that titling in the School of Medicine is not a problem.)
- Track development of titling issues in new online programs in the University.
- Continue discussion of “Lecturer” title in Arts & Sciences. Committee members noted concerns about the perceived implications of the title in letters of recommendations for students and how other universities and other schools on our own campus perceive the rank as identified by that title. For example, “Lecturer” has very different connotations in the School of Medicine.

- Raise question again about fixed-term faculty eligibility for IAH’s Leadership Program. Currently the criteria stipulates tenured-track faculty only. If necessary, write an appeal to the Director to outline and substantiate concerns.
- Explore how SACS (Southern Association of Colleges and Universities) accreditation might relate to some of fixed-term faculty issues and titling.
- Investigate retirement options and criteria for fixed-term faculty. Are they eligible for emeritus status?

## **APPENDIX B**

### **FACULTY GOVERNANCE SURVEY ON TITLE OPTIONS FOR THE THIRD TIER OF FIXED TERM FACULTY PROMOTION IN THE COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES**

Survey conducted in February, 2013

The University recently approved a third promotion tier for fixed-term faculty with predominant teaching roles. This position has been given a tentative title of “Master Lecturer.” This term has received criticism for several reasons:

- It is a gendered term.
- The term “master” has undesirable connotations of domination over others.
- It creates confusion: which rank is higher— Senior Lecturer or Master Lecturer?
- It is a rank title which exists only at UNC.

A variety of titles for fixed-term faculty are used throughout the university. Examples are

- Adjunct: Adjunct Assistant Professor, Adjunct Associate Professor
- Clinical: Clinical Assistant Professor , Clinical Associate Professor, Clinical Professor
- Research: Assistant Research Professor, Associate Research Professor, Research Professor
- Professor of the Practice
- Writer/Artist-in-Residence

In an effort to be true to our policy of faculty governance, the Fixed Term Faculty Committee would like the general faculty to have input into and provide information to inform this important decision. Participation is voluntary. This survey is anonymous. No one, including the committee, will be able to associate your responses with your identity. Participation should take approximately 5-10 minutes.

We are defining Fixed-Term faculty in this survey as doctorate- level trained individuals who work full-or near full-time under contracts varying from 1-5 years who are not eligible for permanent tenure. These individuals have a variety of responsibilities, including teaching, mentoring students, conducting scholarly research, and providing service to the school, University or national organizations.

In the College of Arts and Sciences, the current tiers are Lecturer, Senior Lecturer and Master Lecturer, defined as follows:

- Lecturer is an appointment that may be made for a fixed term of one to five years for an individual who primarily engages in teaching activities.
- Senior Lecturer applies to a fixed-term faculty member who has been promoted from the rank of Lecturer after six or more years of service as a lecturer at UNC-CH or at a peer institution and providing evidence of excellent teaching and service.
- Master Lecturer is reserved for a lecturer who has a minimum of six consecutive years' full-time (i.e., 1 FTE) service as a Senior Lecturer or faculty equivalent from another institution, and has provided demonstrable evidence of distinguished teaching and distinguished service to the appointing department, beyond that which is expected of a Senior Lecturer.

This four-question survey seeks to assess the views of the general faculty on alternative title options for the "Master Lecturer" title.

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

**1. It is important that the fixed-term faculty titles clearly reflect progressive ranks in a promotion sequence.**

1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, 4 = strongly agree

**2. It is important that a fixed-term faculty title has recognizable value in contexts beyond the university (for example, on recommendation letters, representing the university at conferences and in publications).**

1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, 4 = strongly agree

**3. For each of the following sequence of titles for fixed-term faculty, please indicate whether the titles are acceptable for their associated ranks:**

**A. Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Master Lecturer**

1 = very acceptable, 2 = acceptable, 3 = unacceptable, 4 = very unacceptable

Optional: Explain why [free text response]

**B. Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Teaching Professor**

1 = very acceptable, 2 = acceptable, 3 = unacceptable, 4 = very unacceptable

Optional: Explain why [free text response]

**C. Fixed Term Assistant Professor, Fixed Term Associate Professor, Fixed Term Professor**

1 = very acceptable, 2 = acceptable, 3 = unacceptable, 4 = very unacceptable

Optional: Explain why [free text response]

**D. Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Senior Lecturer with Distinction**

1 = very acceptable, 2 = acceptable, 3 = unacceptable, 4 = very unacceptable

Optional: Explain why [free text response]

**E. Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Dean's Lecturer**

1 = very acceptable, 2 = acceptable, 3 = unacceptable, 4 = very unacceptable

Optional: Explain why [free text response]

**4. Please share any additional comments you have about the fixed-term faculty rank titles:**