

**Task Force on Professorial Titles
Report to the University Faculty
January 25, 2002**

Background

The Task Force on Professorial Titles was appointed by the Dean of Faculty in October 2000 and met frequently through the academic year 00-01. Its formation was stimulated by enquiries from several college deans about the possibility of non-tenure-track professorial titles at Cornell, and ensuing discussions between the deans and a small *ad hoc* committee appointed by the Dean of Faculty. The deans' suggestions included professorial titles without indefinite tenure, but with a defined single function such as teaching, clinical practice, or scholarship and research. The additional question of a title that would recognize the professional identity of retiring professors who wish to remain active was also raised.

Membership

Lynne Abel, Associate Dean, College of Arts & Sciences
Alan Bell, Chair, Department of Animal Science
Abigail Cohn, Chair, Department of Linguistics
W. Donald Cooke, Professor Emeritus, Department of Chemistry & Chemical Biology
Stuart Davis, Senior Lecturer, Department of English
William Fry, Professor, Department of Plant Pathology (Task Force chair)
Robert Gilbert, Associate Dean, College of Veterinary Medicine
Jere Haas, Director, Division of Nutritional Sciences
Michael Kotlikoff, Chair, Department of Biomedical Sciences
Stephen Mutkoski, Professor, School of Hotel Administration
Danuta Shanzer, Professor and DGS, Department of Classics
John Siliciano, Vice Dean, Law School
Robert Smith, Associate Dean, School of Industrial & Labor Relations
Charles Walcott, Associate Dean, University Faculty
Charles Williamson, Professor, Department of Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering

Charge

Because any proposed additions to the current professorial titles and roles will surely be of deep interest to the entire faculty and likely to have long-term implications for the university, the Task Force should:

1. consult with the deans, faculty, and the Faculty Committee on Academic Freedom and Professional Status of the Faculty;
2. review the current professorial titles and their history in the context of tenure;
3. formulate recommendations and engage the community in dialogue, e.g. a University Faculty Forum during the spring 2001 semester; and
4. bring recommendations to the Faculty Senate for debate at its March 2001 meeting so that any changes endorsed by the Senate might be considered by the Board of Trustees in May 2001.

Activities

During the period November 2000 – May 2001 the Task Force met every 2-4 weeks. Existing professorial and other academic titles were reviewed and examples of current flexibility were noted. Implications of adding new professorial titles for existing academic, non-tenure-track titles were discussed. It was decided that further consideration of this important issue should be deferred until specific proposals for new professorial titles were developed. The full Task Force then chose to focus on the titles “Clinical Professor” and “Research Professor”, each of which recently had been suggested by several colleges.

A subcommittee, chaired by Professor W. D. Cooke, worked separately on the title “Senior Professor” during the Spring of 2001. Its central concern was the documented graying of our faculty. It aimed to formulate a title that would allow senior faculty with considerable service to retain their professional identity, teach part-time without giving up tenure, and thereby free up university resources to hire younger faculty. Professor Cooke regularly reported to the full committee on the progress of his subcommittee. The subcommittee presented its findings to the Senate on April 11, 2001. Professor Danuta Shanzer took over as Chair of the subcommittee at the end of the Spring Term. Despite considerable effort and some progress, the subcommittee was discharged by the Dean of Faculty in October 2001. The Benefits Office seemed resistant to exploring changes necessary to implement the proposed title successfully and the central administration seemed uncommitted to the idea. However, a recent revival of interest shown by the Office of Planning and Budget suggests that the subcommittee may need to be reactivated.

A general proposal for a framework to offer the option of new professorial titles available on a college-by-college basis was developed, with the leadership of Professor Cohn. More specific proposals for the establishment of the titles of Clinical Professor and Research Professor were developed, with the leadership of Professors Gilbert and Kotlikoff, respectively. Deadlines for faculty discussion in the Senate and elsewhere during spring 2001 were missed because of the Task Force’s decision to proceed deliberately, and to not bring a proposal to the whole faculty before it had been thoroughly considered and endorsed by at least one college. Because of the prior interest and expressed need for the Clinical Professor and Research Professor titles by the administration and some faculty in the College of Veterinary Medicine (CVM), Task Force activities were suspended during summer and early fall 2001 until CVM faculty had reviewed and voted on proposals for these titles.

After lengthy discussion during fall 2001, CVM faculty decided to defer consideration of the Research Professor title until after they had reviewed and voted on the Clinical Professor proposal. In early December 2001, they voted in favor of the latter. This led to reactivation of the Task Force and the decision to proceed with bringing the proposed enabling legislation and the specific Clinical Professor proposal before the whole faculty.

The Task Force has proceeded deliberately and painstakingly with development of the Enabling Legislation document, understanding that it will require very careful consideration by the entire faculty. There is a strong consensus among Task Force members that this legislation is important for certain colleges to advance their

competitiveness and to offer improved opportunities for career advancement of their non-tenure-track faculty.

Plan of Action

1. Post the following materials on the Faculty On-line Forum website (<http://www.cornell.edu/UniversityFaculty/index.html>):
 - Task Force Report to the University Faculty
 - Enabling Legislation for Creation of New Professorial Titles Available on a College-by-College basis
 - Appendix B: Proposal for the establishment of the title of Clinical Professor, by the College of Veterinary Medicine
 - Discussion piece, October 21, 2001: Non-tenure Track Professorships in the College of Veterinary Medicine
2. Consult with the Faculty Committee for Academic Freedom and Professional Status of the Faculty
3. Present to Faculty Senate on February 13, 2002
4. Schedule faculty forum if there is interest
5. Table formal motion to Faculty Senate on March 13, 2002