

Research Professor Titles

April 29, 2015

I. Preamble

In 2002, the Faculty Senate approved the creation of new, non-tenure-track Clinical Professor titles. In 2014, the Senate amended that legislation to authorize the use of the Professor of Practice title as an alternate nomenclature for this form of professorial title when more appropriate for a particular academic unit. Both actions were in response to the fact that Cornell, in sharp contrast to its peers, lacked any professorial titles for those holding academic appointments that were focused heavily or exclusively on a primary teaching function. The Senate concluded that the lack of such titles put the University at a competitive disadvantage in terms of recruiting and retaining such faculty members.

The Committee on Academic Freedom and Professional Status of Faculty has now turned to the final step in modernizing Cornell's professorial designations – the adoption of the Research Professor titles. With the exception of Cornell, virtually all top U.S. research universities now use the Research Professor titles for non-tenure track faculty engaged primarily or exclusively in research related activity. Cornell considered this possibility in 2002, at the same time it created the Clinical Professor title, but for a variety of reasons this initiative stalled. In its stead, the University adopted the Research Scientist and Principal Research Scientist titles in an attempt to describe this category of academic appointments. In addition, Cornell had previously recognized, but seldom used, a Senior Scientist title with a description confusingly similar to that of Principal Research Scientist.

Cornell's idiosyncratic approach has been unsuccessful. Deans and department chairs consistently report that some efforts to attract highly qualified people into such roles have failed due to the lack of a professorial title that is equivalent to what all of our peer institutions now offer. Funding agencies are understandably unfamiliar with the Research Scientist titles and are therefore potentially less favorable towards grant applications than they would be if such proposals came from academics holding a generally recognized professorial title. And very strong concerns about the lack of these nationally recognized professorial titles have repeatedly surfaced in the context of Cornell's greatest hiring challenge – dual career recruitment – where the dual career partner is reluctant to accept an idiosyncratic title that is distinctly inferior to what all other research universities now offer.

- Whereas the adoption of the Clinical Professor and Professor of Practice titles were major steps in modernizing Cornell's titles, and
- Whereas Cornell could further benefit from the final step of adopting the Research Professor titles now in use at essentially all major research universities,

BE IT RESOLVED THAT THIS ENABLING LEGISLATION BE ADOPTED.

II. Purpose of Enabling Legislation

The purpose of this legislation is to allow units, at their option, but in accordance with the process and requirements set forth below, to use the title of Research Professor in reference to a limited and defined group of long-term, non-tenure-track appointments. This title will be available for use at the Assistant, Associate and Full Professor rank, modifiable when appropriate by the term "visiting."

III. Limited Availability of Research Professor title

The title of Research Professor is available only for long term, non-tenure-track faculty who are distinguished and highly experienced individuals in a relevant field of research. To qualify for the title, such individuals are expected to have achieved significant stature in the scholarly discipline, to have demonstrated the quality of research accomplishment appropriate to initiating independent research programs, and to have demonstrated a trajectory that promises a continued high level of achievement. Their primary responsibilities include initiating new research activities; creating and managing research laboratories; seeking funding opportunities, submitting proposals, and fulfilling the terms of research grants and contracts; planning, conducting and reporting on original research; and representing their research groups externally. Persons appointed to these titles may serve routinely as principal investigators on grants and contracts.

The title of Research Professor may not be used for positions whose responsibilities substantially replicate those of tenure-track faculty. Accordingly, such individuals normally are not permitted to teach courses for credit. In the event that some teaching of courses for credit is requested by the appointing department, this teaching must be consistent with the terms of the individual's funding and must be approved by the dean. When such teaching is assigned, care must be taken not to shift teaching expense inappropriately to research grants or contracts. In no case should such an individual teach for an extended consecutive period.

IV. Additional Restrictions and Requirements

A. Terms of Appointment. Terms of positions bearing these titles shall normally be up to five years. Unless otherwise specified, they shall be renewable indefinitely. While there may be a transition period before research funding supports the position, appointments normally are expected to be supported largely by such funds; other funding sources are permitted. The offer and appointment letters should include notification that the appointment may be terminated early or modified if funding is withdrawn or reduced. Nonrenewal or early termination of appointment also may

occur on the basis of other significant resource constraints, unreliable funding prospects, seriously diminished interest in the research area or relevance to the appointing unit's research mission, or performance.

B. Appointment, Reappointment and Promotion Processes. Search procedures should generally follow those used by a department to fill other professorial positions. A dossier-based review must be conducted for initial appointment. Through an exception approved by the department chair and the dean, the dossier-based review may be conducted during the first year, with continued appointment contingent on successful review. This dossier shall typically include letters from confidential external referees, letters from participants in current or recent research programs, a report of the faculty vote, and an analytical recommendation by the department chair to the dean, who makes the ultimate decision about appointment. Promotions to the associate and full professor ranks, as well as reappointment at any rank at the end of a fixed term, should generally follow procedures used for other professorial-level appointments.

C. Voting/University Faculty Membership. Research Professors are not members of the University Faculty. They are nonvoting members of their college or school faculty unless given the right to vote by the particular faculty.

D. Relationship to Existing Titles. Because the Research Professor titles are intended to replace the current Research Scientist, Principal Research Scientist, and Senior Scientist titles, individuals holding such titles may convert, with the approval of the department and the dean, to the appropriate level of Research Professor. An individual currently holding a Research Scientist, Principal Research Scientist, and Senior Scientist titles who is not approved to move to the Research Professor title or does not wish to do so may remain in the current title subject to all applicable conditions. There shall be no new appointments to the Research Scientist, Principal Research Scientist, and Senior Scientist titles. Individuals holding other academic titles, including Research Associate and Senior Research Associate cannot convert to Research Professor titles, but may seek appointment to such titles through the normal appointment processes noted in IV.B. above.

E. Membership on Graduate Committees. Individuals holding Research Professor titles shall have the same opportunities for and restrictions on membership on graduate committees that currently pertain to the Research Scientist, Principal Research Scientist, and Senior Scientist titles. Such individuals are eligible to be nominated as a general or minor member of a graduate field's faculty according to the procedures of the Code of Legislation of the Graduate Faculty.

V. Proposal Process

A college or school that wishes to adopt the Research Professor title must take the following steps:

A. Sponsors must prepare a written proposal for use of the title in accordance with the requirements of sections VI below.

B. The proposal must be approved by at least two-thirds of those voting, in separately tabulated votes, of tenure-track and of non-tenure-track faculty respectively of the originating college or school. The non-tenure-track faculty shall consist of the group of individuals in the college or school holding Research Scientist, Principal Research Scientist, and Senior Scientist titles

C. A proposal so approved will come before the University Committee on Academic Policies and Procedures (CAPP) for review of its conformity to the requirements of section VI below. After submission to CAPP, such a proposal will be distributed to University faculty and distributed to or electronically posted for other interested parties for a period of 60 days before action by CAPP in order to invite public comment.

D. At the end of the comment period, CAPP shall review the proposal in order to determine whether it complies with the requirements of this enabling legislation. In conducting such a review, the committee is not to substitute its judgment for that of the originating college or school as to the need for or wisdom of the college's or school's adoption of the Research Professor title.

E. If CAPP determines that the proposal meets the requirements of this enabling legislation, it will report the proposal to the Senate, which will approve or deny the proposal by a majority vote based on the Senate's determination of whether the proposal complies with the requirements of this legislation. If CAPP determines that the proposal fails to meet the requirements of this legislation, it shall furnish a written explanation of this determination to the college or school submitting the proposal.

VI. Proposal Contents

The written proposal of a college or school that seeks to use the title of Research Professor must include the following provisions.

A. *Justification.* A proposal for adoption of the Research Professor title shall include a statement offering justification for adoption of the title within the originating college or school and explaining why existing titles for non-tenure-track faculty are insufficient for staffing and recruitment. The practices of peer schools and the impact of available titles on recruitment efforts may be of particular relevance in this regard.

B. *Description of Position.* The proposal shall describe as precisely as possible the functions and responsibilities of positions bearing the title and the anticipated distribution

of such positions within the college or school.

C. Terms of Appointment. The proposal shall include a summary of the terms on which candidates will be appointed and reappointed to such positions and promoted from one to another. These terms should include: the nature of the search by which applications will be elicited; the credentials required by holders of these positions; the levels (department, college, university) at which approval for individual appointments is necessary; the length of appointments; the possibilities open to appointees for movement between non-tenure-track and tenure-track paths; and procedures for renewal and promotion open to appointees.

D. Percentage Limitation. The proposal shall include a statement restricting the creation of positions in the proposed titles to a certain percentage of the tenure-track faculty of the originating college and of the tenure-track faculty in those departments or programs where those positions are located. The percentage of positions bearing the titles may not exceed 10% of the existing tenure-track faculty positions in the college or 10% of the tenure-track positions in those departments or programs where those positions are located, except as herein provided. A higher percentage may be afforded if, but only if, the relevant college, department, or program makes an overpowering showing that: (1) there is a need for the higher percentage; (2) the Research Professor positions in question would not replicate the functions of positions ordinarily held by tenured or tenure-track faculty; and (3) any additional Research Professor positions in a department or program would not detract in any way from the potential for adding tenured or tenure-track positions in that department or program.

E. Voting and Other Rights. The proposal shall define the rights and responsibilities of appointees in the proposed titles, including their voting status in their departments and colleges or schools, and their access to grievance and appeals processes available to tenure-track faculty.

F. Impact Statement. The proposal shall contain an appraisal of the impact of creating the new positions on existing tenure-track and non-tenure-track academic titles and their holders. This appraisal should indicate whether and in what ways current holders of non-tenure-track titles will be eligible for appointment to the new positions and whether their current positions will be protected against elimination by the new positions.

END OF LEGISLATION