

Proposal from CVM to Modify RTE Cap Restraints

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Approved by college faculty March 5, 2020

Preamble:

The College of Veterinary Medicine's philosophy on faculty titles emphasizes the complementary values that each title contributes in meeting the missions of teaching, research, practice, and service. Tenure track faculty historically have focused on discovery research and teaching, which remain major responsibilities of universities. However, we recognize the ever-growing clinical specialties in veterinary medicine, increasingly diverse components of public health practice, and myriad of ways in which we fulfill our outreach and service missions to New York State and global constituencies. As part of a vibrant and world-class academic institution, our college runs multiple hospitals and health services. Our faculty do not just perform their work in these settings, they also provide essential training of future veterinarians, scientists and public health professionals. To provide the highest quality training as well as perform impact-oriented research and engaged activities, there is growing recognition of the importance of experience in practice. For all these reasons, and to meet programmatic duties that continue to evolve and expand, it is important that the college has flexibility to utilize a variety of professorial and other titles. Appropriate use of titles will both recognize and facilitate the work of the highly-trained and experienced faculty who perform these complex practice and teaching duties. Based on recommendations in the report from the CVM Titles Committee, who completed an in-depth analysis of use of titles both within the college and in comparison with peer institutions including Weill Cornell Medicine and leading veterinary schools, we propose the following:

Background:

Enabling legislation associated with the [clinical professor](#) and [professor-of-the-practice titles](#) requires a commitment of the sponsoring unit to limit the total number of such titleholders to 25% of the total number of faculty who hold tenured and tenure-track positions:

"The percentage of positions bearing the titles may not exceed 25% of the existing tenure-track faculty positions in the college or 25% 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 Clinical Professor positions in question would not replicate the functions of positions ordinarily held by tenured or tenure-track faculty; and (3) any additional Clinical 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."

CVM has respected this constraint within each of its five departments. For reasons given below the college wishes to replace this constraint with

"The total number of RTE titleholders who are voting members of faculty but are not term-limited* (see below for list of all titles to which this pertains) in the college will not exceed greater than 45% of the total number of faculty in the college. The balance of faculty will be tenure track, and will represent 55% of total faculty numbers at a minimum."

Reasons:

1. It will enhance our ability to recruit top faculty.

Our department chairs report that the existing cap makes it difficult to recruit and retain highly qualified faculty, who do not seek a tenure track position but have the expertise, training and duties consistent with a professorial title, and desire such a title to facilitate and recognize their critical contributions to the college's missions. Outside of Cornell, many veterinary schools have broadly adopted clinical professorship or similar titles, as have many medical schools including Weill Cornell Medical College. In some of the clinical specialties (ophthalmologists, cardiologists, radiologists, surgeons, dermatologists, neurologists, internists and more) individuals can make much higher salaries in private specialty practice, resulting in a stiff competition for candidates between the veterinary colleges, and searches that yield 0-2 applicants. Non-tenure track professorial titles are recognized as having greater opportunity for promotion (e.g. assistant, associate, and full professors), and are more clearly defined as faculty positions, than Lecturer, Sr. Lecturer, Sr. Extension Associate, or Sr. Research Associate.

2. It will enable alignment of current RTE faculty with titles that match their job description.

Because of the current cap, many individuals have been hired to perform the duties of clinical professors or professors of practice, under the titles of lecturer/sr. lecturer, which are not subject to any cap. This situation, in which less appropriate titles are not subject to a cap, but more appropriate titles are tightly restricted, has therefore created a pool of college faculty who are denied the opportunity to hold titles more appropriate for their training and activities. This results in departments at CVM where individuals performing the same academic functions have different titles. As a result, the cap has created inequality amongst the faculty.

3. It will improve the external reputation of our RTE Faculty

While the individuals in RTE titles are highly regarded at the CVM as faculty members and have substantive responsibilities and similar credentials to TT faculty, lack of recognition of these titles at most other colleges at Cornell and outside institutions is an enormous disadvantage to their careers and to the external reputation of our college. Our mis-titled faculty are at a disadvantage in pursuit of scholarly activities, whether in terms of external recognition, establishing collaborations, receiving invitations to speak at international meetings, or pursuing extramural funding. Often, individuals outside the CVM perceive holders of the lecturer title as primarily being junior instructors. Senior extension and senior research associate titles are also not commonly considered to be faculty positions outside of the CVM.

4. It will enhance CVM's ability to participate in certain campus-wide initiatives.

In addition to the college's veterinary practice activities, the cap also hinders the success of two new initiatives—the Business and Entrepreneurship Initiative (more below), and the cross-campus effort to create a program offering professional public health training (MPH degree). The accrediting body for the latter, the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH), mandates that practitioners be heavily involved in teaching. Lack of appropriate titles for our faculty, some of whom have decades of experience with funding records of multiple tens of millions of dollars, negatively impacts their abilities to make collaborations, pursue extramural funding, and represent Cornell with non-academic partners. This combination of barriers is particularly harmful to the advancement of their scholarly activities since holders of these titles often directly interact with and support important constituencies in government, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector.

5. It will give us the flexibility to meet the specific needs of our five departments.

We feel strongly that we need a mix of titles to meet our College's strategic goals, maintain excellence, and hire and retain the most exceptional, diverse, and inclusive faculty possible. In doing so, it is imperative that we not decrease the number or proportion of tenure track faculty in the college, and strive to ensure appropriate distribution across departments, services, and units. Currently, positions at

the CVM are approximately evenly split between tenure track (55%) and RTE track titles (45%), when all non-term-limited RTE titles currently considered to be voting faculty are taken in aggregate*. We propose that we demonstrate our commitment to discovery and teaching by retaining this proportion. That is, the aggregate of faculty holding **all** non-term-limited RTE titles* should fall within this proportion of 45% of the total faculty numbers of the CVM.

Departments currently have differing ratios of tenure track to RTE faculty, with those departments involved in providing clinical services and training, diagnostic services and training, extension and outreach, and public health practice and training, having slightly higher percentages of RTE faculty. In contrast, departments focusing on basic science have slightly lower proportions of RTE faculty. Two guiding motivations behind this proposal are that we do not wish for the proposed change to result in tenure track positions becoming even more concentrated in some units and increasingly rare in others, and that we make every effort to maintain the recruitment of tenure track veterinary clinical scientists. Therefore, we propose further that each department maintain at a minimum, the percentage of tenure track faculty that currently exists at the time of this motion:

Note that although the current ratio represents a snapshot in time, the College has evolved to this point because a mix of titles best enables us to perform our diverse missions. Percentages will always vary slightly given the dynamic nature of positions becoming open or filled. Small departures from the target ratio are expected but should not contribute to trends lasting longer than one-to-two years.

Within each of our departments, RTE titles will be apportioned as needed and appropriate. To meet specific programmatic needs, a department chair, considering input from their faculty, might request a change in their department's proportion of RTE and TT titles. Such a change would require the approval of the dean, informed by consultation with the department chairs and directors. In this way, for example, new programs, new clinical services, and new concentration areas in public health, could develop and grow without running into artificially and unnecessarily limiting barriers that prevent us from performing our missions at the highest level. Creation of new positions or specific hiring will continue to require the approval of the dean, including consideration of title. The ratio of RTE to TT titles will be tabulated and reviewed annually with a report to the College faculty.

* For clarity, this new legislation would target the aggregate of RTE faculty holding titles of Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Senior Extension Associate, Senior Research Associate, Assistant/Associate/Full Research Professor, Assistant/Associate/Full Clinical Professor, and Assistant/Associate/Full Professor of Practice.