Final Report of the New Academic Ranks Task Force

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Introduction

The New Academic Ranks Task Force was charged in February 2012 by the Provost and the Presiding Officer of the Faculty Senate to provide recommendations on Portland State University’s implementation of the new academic ranks and titles for non-tenure track faculty (NTTF) that were adopted by OUS in January 2012. These ranks and titles are described in OAR 580–020–0005.

The Task Force was also charged to define and explicate the documentation required to justify promotion to each rank recommended for use. In addition, the process for handling ranks that would no longer be in use and the timeline for sunsetting those ranks.

Task Force Work

The Task Force met consistently during winter and spring quarters 2012. In addition to nearly a dozen highly engaged work sessions, individual members of the committee surveyed practices nationally by discipline and among comparator institutions. Committee members met in smaller working groups to explore and debate issues raised by the new ranks. Members also conferred formally and informally with colleagues within and across departments. Early on, an additional member, Christina Gildersleeve-Neumann, the chair of a department that would make use of the Clinical Professor/Professor of Practice title, was brought on board.

Once the Task Force had some drafts that we felt could be shared we:

- Consulted with department chairs (and some other faculty), focusing particularly in schools/colleges not represented on the Task Force, FPA, MCECS, and SBA, as well as chairs within other schools and colleges.

- The Task Force chair attended the AAUP Fixed-Term Faculty Caucus and spent about 45 minutes presenting, answering questions, and gathering comments from the faculty.

General principles guided and affirmed through this process included:

- That ranks primarily reflect job, given credentials, and experience. The duties laid out in individual faculty members’ letters of offer are the basis of evaluation.

- That the customary terms affiliate, adjunct, visiting, fellow, or emeriti remain available to units for the fulfillment of their goals and objectives.

- Faculty whose job titles do not include the auxiliary terms affiliate, adjunct, visiting, fellow, or emeriti should have a reasonable expectation of promotion based on job performance and seniority. We advise that in the hiring of these full-time, permanent faculty normal hiring procedures be followed and should not be waived unless there are exceptional circumstances.
• Hiring into all ranks above 0.5 FTE follow, at a minimum, requirements specified under the Collective Bargaining Agreement and Human Resource’s new Fast Track process.

• Currently employed non-tenure track faculty will have the option of being grandfathered into their ranks and existing departmental promotion processes and policies.

• A minority of the Task Force also requested that the following proviso adhere to service and governance responsibilities for non-tenure track faculty:

Non-tenure track faculty should not have service responsibilities that may involve conflict of interest (for example, these faculty should not be involved in curricular or budgetary decisions that have the potential to affect their job security).

**Recommended Titles**

The Task Force recommends that Portland State University use the following non-tenure track faculty (NTTF) titles: Clinical Professor/Professor of Practice, Instructor, Research Assistant, Research Associate, and Research Faculty.

The Task Force recommends that Portland State not use the Lecturer or Librarian titles.

The Task Force does not find the differentiation of fixed-term instructional positions into undergraduate and graduate instruction useful. It makes the process of determining appropriate title and rank more difficult for units as it adds complexity without a significant benefit. In soliciting feedback from department chairs it became clear that chairs would do what they felt they needed to do in order to cover the needed work, and that increased complexity would increase the chance of their ignoring the actual rank definitions. The Task Force does not find the argument that the ranks can be used to distinguish whether or not faculty members hold a terminal degree persuasive. In the new OAR lecturer appointments “must include significant mentoring and advising responsibilities and a significant measure of responsibility for graduate education.” It also states “the holding of a terminal degree in itself does not constitute an argument for appointment in the lecturer series.” A survey of comparator institutions did not find any institution that added a second instructional rank series. The majority of fixed-term faculty consulted preferred a single title.

The Library has no interest in using the Librarian title as there would be confusion with some of the librarians having the rank of Assistant Librarian and other librarians holding the rank of Instructor or Assistant Professor. The Task Force can think of no other unit that would use this title.

**Recommendation & Options for Currently Employed NTTF**

The Task Force recommends that currently employed fixed-term faculty be offered voluntary reclassification.

The reclassification process outlined below should be applied to currently employed fixed-term faculty members during their annual review, following the department’s review process and in accordance with departmental guidelines for review. The faculty member would then be able to choose between switching to the new rank or staying at their existing rank.

The one exception to this is regarding faculty at the senior instructor, senior research assistant, and senior research associate ranks. These ranks no longer exist in the new system so the Task Force recommends that these faculty members be mandatorily reclassified to senior instructor I or an appropriate clinical professor/professor of practice rank, senior research assistant I, or senior research associate I (respectively) instead of staying at the deleted rank. (They still may, of course, have an option of accepting reclassification or promotion into another title and rank, as determined by their department’s fixed-term faculty review process.) The reason to reclassify into a senior
[instructor/research assistant/research associate] I rank rather than a senior [instructor/research assistant/research associate] II rank is to leave room for future promotion.

The Task Force recommends, in general, that no currently employed non-tenure track faculty member should be reclassified into the highest rank in a title, thus leaving one rank available for future promotion.

Reclassification Process
The Task Force recommends that currently employed fixed-term faculty should be reviewed for reclassification at the time of the first annual review after these ranks go into effect. The committees and individuals involved in each department’s fixed-term faculty review process, in accordance with departmental guidelines for review, should be involved in the process as each faculty member’s materials move through review. Faculty in the second or later year of a multi-year contract would have their potential reclassification evaluated through the review process, even in the absence of an annual review. No faculty member shall receive a pay cut as a result of reclassification.

Promotion Streams for Currently Employed Non-Tenure Track Faculty
The Task Force recommends the following promotion streams for non-tenure track faculty currently employed at Portland State (current as of the adoption date of this process):

1. Non-tenure track faculty that participate in voluntary reclassification can be promoted to higher ranks within their title based on their job descriptions and the criteria laid out in the final section of this document for each rank and title.
2. Non-tenure track faculty that stay in their same rank (or are reclassified due to their existing rank having been discontinued) can be promoted in one of two ways:
   1. They can be promoted up the ranks in their title, based on the criteria for promotion detailed at the end of the document.
   2. They can follow currently existing departmental policies and procedures to attempt promotion to, and promotion within, the professorial ranks. Their ability to be promoted to, and within, the professorial ranks is grandfathered.

Use of Auxiliary Titles for Visiting Faculty
The Committee recommends that the auxiliary title visiting be added to the titles of faculty members hired on a temporary basis. The committee further wishes to clarify that:

1. Although in the OAR the professorial ranks are defined as tenure-track, the term visiting may be added to these ranks for faculty hired on a temporary or part-time basis at 0.5 FTE or higher.
2. The university should prioritize hiring permanent, full-time faculty wherever possible to promote student retention and healthy faculty governance.
3. Visiting faculty are brought in for their unique expertise and their employment is an opportunity for them to contribute to the University. These limited-duration appointments offered to visiting faculty shall not exceed a total of two years.
Title & Rank Write-Ups

Clinical Professor/Professor of Practice

Professor of Practice: A non-tenure track faculty appointment for individuals with primary duties in the areas of clinical or practice instruction or professionally related community education/service. Faculty hired in this category must have an advanced degree associated within their fields of specialization from an accredited program within their discipline or have comparable experience. Professor of practice members are licensed or certified professionals, or individuals in professional fields. Unique discipline-specific criteria may be defined by the unit for professor of practice and clinical practice ranks.

The major responsibility involves the education and support of students/learners in academic, clinical, and/or practice settings, supervising clinical experiences, and/or professionally related community engagement.

The title Clinical Professor may be used by some units instead of or in addition to Professor of Practice as appropriate for specific disciplines. The description, rank, and promotion criteria will be equivalent.

Ranks in this title in ascending order are assistant professor of practice, associate professor of practice, and professor of practice (or clinical assistant professor, clinical associate professor, or clinical professor).

Promotion in the category of Professor of Practice is based on criteria such as:

- Length of academic employment.
- Length of clinical/professional experience.
- Quality of instruction, as determined by classroom observation, assessment of student-learning outcomes, and review of student evaluations (statistically corrected for bias) and course materials such as assignments and syllabi.
- Expertise in the field, as determined by ongoing revision of course materials and participation in career-building opportunities such as: continuing education, workshops, conferences, or other professional activities. A publication record may also demonstrate expertise in the field, but publication is not required for employment or promotion.
- Experience with racially, ethnically, culturally, and gender diverse practice and/or students.
- Community engagement, if written into the individual’s job description.
- Scholarly or creative activity, if written into the individual’s job description.

Promotion to Associate Professor of Practice

Typically, candidates will meet the following requirements unless there is remarkable achievement:

- A minimum of six years post-certification professional experience,
- At least three years of clinical/professional practice teaching in an academic setting.

Promotion Recommendations are based on criteria such as

1. Evidence of effectiveness in clinical/professional instruction. This area includes materials indicating command of the academic and/or clinical subject matter, ability to motivate, mentor/advise, and assess students, and creative and effective use of teaching methods.
a. Candidates must submit student evaluations for all quarters in the past three years in which they have had supervisory and/or teaching responsibilities (or less than three if they have not been employed at Portland State University for that length of time).

b. Other examples of evidence may include, but are not limited to:
   - Developing, reviewing, or redesigning courses or other curricular components.
   - Development and publication of innovative instructional techniques.
   - Recognition of outstanding teaching through campus-wide, state, and national teaching awards.
   - Serving on master theses and/or special projects.
   - Faculty peer evaluation based on observation and/or co-teaching.
   - Documentation of impact of teaching activities on student learning and preparation for professional practice.

c. Other evidence of command of subject matter may include, but is not limited to:
   - Documented evidence of continuing education.
   - Evidence of classes audited or formally completed.
   - Tutorial tools developed by the clinical faculty member to assist student learning.
   - Training packets developed by the professor of practice for use in instruction.
   - Specialty certification or recognition.
   - Designing and delivering workshops, continuing education and professional development experiences.
   - Completion of an advanced degree in a related discipline.

2. Evidence of engagement of a professional nature to the institution, the community, and the state. Examples of engagement include:
   - Participation in school/college and university committees.
   - Contracts for provision of engagement outside of the school/college.
   - Membership and leadership roles in professional associations at local, state, national, or international levels.
   - Appointment to government committees, advisory panels, community panels, or other governing boards.
   - Mentoring a student group.
   - Leadership role in an academic program.
   - Effective liaison with field agencies if teaching in a clinical program.

3. Evidence of scholarly or creative activity. This category includes activities that have resulted in the generation of new ways of conceptualizing some aspect of the clinical/professional process. Generally these activities have yielded a body of knowledge that would be potentially valuable for presentation to peers in a forum such as local, regional or national conferences or other professional gatherings. Candidates should include records of such activities, for example:
   - New or modified clinical protocols and/or therapeutic techniques.
• Papers presented.
• Completed, but unpublished/presented research scholarly activity.
• Publications.
• Grant applications.
• Artistic shows or concerts.

Promotion to Full Professor of Practice

Typically candidates meet the following requirements unless there is remarkable achievement:

• At least 10 years of part- or full-time professional experience in the clinical/professional discipline post-certification.
• At least six years of clinical/professional teaching in an academic setting, with a minimum of two years at Portland State University.
• A high degree of academic maturity and responsibility.

Promotion Recommendations (in addition to the criteria for promotion to associate professor) is based on criteria such as:

1. Documented evidence of a consistent pattern of high quality professional productivity. This should be illustrative of professional productivity at regular intervals over a period of years.
2. Evidence of national and/or international recognition in the discipline. Such evidence may be indicated by, for example:
   • Appointments as a reviewer of peer-reviewed journals.
   • Invited papers and presentations given beyond the state and region.
   • Honors, grants, awards.
   • Committee service and leadership with national or international professional associations.

Instructor

Qualifications and Duties

A faculty appointment for individuals with unclassified instructional responsibilities which are devoted to academic instruction. Such appointments include advising and mentoring expectations congruent with creative and engaged instruction. This appointment requires an advanced degree in the field of specialization.

A minority of the Task Force believes that the Instructor title description should be replaced with the following: A faculty appointment for individuals with unclassified instructional appointments whose functions are devoted exclusively or primarily to undergraduate academic instruction focused on foundational courses in their disciplines. Such appointments include advising and mentoring expectations congruent with creative and engaged undergraduate instruction. This appointment requires an advanced degree in the field. Instructors with appropriate credentials and a record of scholarly achievement may occasionally teach some advanced courses such as graduate courses, as these are approved by the department chair and/or curriculum committee and an academic dean.


**Promotion Guidelines**

Promotion in this category is based on length of employment, quality of instruction, and expertise in the field. Other factors can be evaluated, based on the duties specified in each faculty member's letter of offer. In evaluating instructors, use criteria such as:

**Length of Employment**

Faculty in this category will generally be hired into the instructor rank. A faculty member will not be eligible for consideration for promotion to senior instructor I until the third year in rank as an instructor. Exceptions that result in consideration for promotion immediately upon eligibility should occur only in cases of extraordinary achievement. Length of time in rank is not a sufficient reason for promotion.

A faculty member will normally not be considered for promotion to senior instructor II until the fourth year in rank as a senior instructor I. Exceptions will be made only in extraordinary cases. Consideration for promotion immediately upon eligibility should occur only in cases of extraordinary achievement. Length of time in rank is not a sufficient reason for promotion.

**Quality of Instruction**

Quality of instruction is determined by measures such as classroom observation, assessment of student-learning outcomes, evidence of successful student mentoring and advising, review of student evaluations (statistically corrected for bias) and assessment of course materials such as assignments and syllabi.

**Expertise in the Field**

Expertise in the field is determined by such criteria as holding a related advanced degree or certification; ongoing revision of course materials; and participation in career-building opportunities such as continuing education, workshops, conferences, or other professional activities. A publication record may also demonstrate expertise in the field, but publication is not required for employment or promotion.

**Research Professor**

Professorial ranks will be available for individuals who are primarily engaged in research at a level normally appropriate for a professorial rank. Ranks for this appointment are research assistant professor, research associate professor and research full professor.

Appointees to the rank of research assistant professor ordinarily hold the highest earned degree in their fields of specialization. In most fields, the doctorate will be expected. A research assistant professor also will have an established record of initial success in securing and leading funded research and in other related scholarship that contributes to knowledge in the individual’s field of specialization.

A faculty member will not be eligible for consideration for promotion to research associate professor until the third year in rank as a research assistant professor. In the usual course of events, promotion to research associate professor is in the sixth year in rank as a research assistant professor. Exceptions which result in consideration for promotion immediately upon eligibility should occur only in cases of extraordinary achievement. Length of time in rank is not a sufficient reason for promotion. Promotion to the rank of research associate professor requires the individual to have made contributions to knowledge primarily through leadership for funded research and other related scholarship. High quality and significance are the essential criteria for evaluation. Although not required for this position, teaching or service responsibilities included in a letter of appointment will be recognized.
A faculty member will normally not be considered for promotion to research full professor until the fourth year in rank as a research associate professor. Exceptions will be made only in extraordinary cases. Consideration for promotion immediately upon eligibility should occur only in cases of extraordinary achievement. Length of time in rank is not a sufficient reason for promotion. Promotion to the rank of research full professor requires the individual to have made significant contributions to knowledge primarily through funded research and other related scholarship. High quality and significance are the essential criteria for evaluation. The candidate’s scholarly portfolio should document a record of distinguished accomplishments in funded research, as well as leadership for significant contributions to the individual’s field of specialization. Although not required for this position, teaching or service responsibilities included in a letter of appointment will be recognized.

Research Assistant

A NTTF (Non-Tenure Track Faculty) appointment for individuals who typically have earned a bachelor’s or master’s degree. Exceptions may include individuals with specific expertise required for the research project. Research assistants conduct research under the direction of a senior research assistant, research associate, research professor, or tenure-related faculty member. Ranks in this category in ascending order are research assistant, senior research assistant I, and senior research assistant II. Typically, individuals in the rank of research assistant will gather research or evaluation data using a pre-determined protocol, carryout routine procedures, gather materials for reports, perform routine data processing or lab work, data management, and routine, basic quantitative or qualitative data analysis. Faculty at the research assistant rank receives close supervision and may be asked to supervise students.

A faculty member will be considered for promotion to the rank of senior research assistant I with two years of experience at the research assistant rank or its equivalent. Promotion to the rank of senior research assistant I requires that the faculty member demonstrate the ability to perform focused research or evaluation tasks that may include assisting in the coordination of research activities, communication with community and interdisciplinary collaborators, qualitative or statistical analysis, maintenance of data bases, collection, processing and reporting of data, or the preparation of reports and presentations. A faculty member at the rank of senior research assistant I receives general supervision and may be assigned to supervise research assistants and students.

A faculty member will be considered for promotion to the rank of senior research assistant II with two years of experience at the senior research assistant I rank or its equivalent. Promotion to the rank of senior research assistant II requires that the faculty member demonstrate the ability to perform a variety of research or evaluation tasks and independently coordinate research activities, which may include coordination with community or interdisciplinary research partners, qualitative and statistical analysis, maintenance of data bases, coordinate collection, processing and reporting of data, and the preparation of reports and presentations. A faculty member at the rank of senior research assistant II receives general supervision and may be assigned to supervise employees ranked as research assistants, senior research assistant I, and students.

Research Associate

A NTTF (Non-Tenure Track Faculty) faculty member at the rank of research associate may have a doctoral degree or another appropriate combination of educational achievement and expertise. A faculty member at this rank will conduct research or evaluation independently or with minimal supervision. Ranks in this category in ascending order are research associate, senior research associate I, and senior research associate II.

A faculty member will be considered for promotion to the rank of research associate with four or more years of progressively responsible research experience. Promotion to the rank of research associate requires that the faculty member demonstrate the ability to participate in the design,
execution and control of quantitative or qualitative research or evaluation studies; manage the analysis of data; manage intervention delivery to fidelity in randomized clinical trials; support community or interdisciplinary research partnerships, manage the conduct of experimental tests and procedures; develop new research methodologies and data collection protocols. The faculty at this rank will work independently and/or with minimal supervision, and may be assigned to supervise and train research staff, support staff and students.

A faculty member at the rank of senior research associate I will typically have four or more years of progressively responsible research or evaluation experience. Promotion to the rank of senior research associate I requires that the faculty member demonstrate the ability to assist in writing grant proposals and scholarly or community publications; and take a lead role in developing qualitative and quantitative methodologies; in establishing and fostering community or interdisciplinary research partnerships, in designing and overseeing the delivery of intervention protocols to fidelity, and in developing data collection protocols and conducting experimental tests. The faculty at this rank will work independently and/or with minimal supervision and may be assigned to supervise research staff, support staff and graduate students.

A faculty member at the rank of senior research associate II will typically have six or more years of progressively responsible research evaluation experience. Promotion to the rank of senior research associate II requires that the faculty member demonstrate the ability to independently design, develop, execute one or more studies; take a major role in writing grant proposals, organizing community or interdisciplinary research partnerships and acquisition of support; author or co-author publications for scholarly or community audiences; and take a lead role in development of new qualitative or quantitative methodologies and data collection protocols. The faculty at this rank will work independently and typically supervise research staff, support staff and graduate students.

**Promotion Guidelines for Non-Professorial Research Ranks**

**Departmental Authority and Responsibility**

Each academic unit (department, school or college) will be required to develop and submit criteria and procedures for promotion within non professorial research ranks that are specific to the research activities of that unit. These guidelines will fulfill the minimum standards of the University guidelines, which have priority. These criteria will be reviewed and approved by the Dean and Provost.

**Procedures for Promotion Evaluation**

The request for promotion can be initiated by the supervisor/principal investigator or the individual himself/herself.

The faculty should be in-rank at PSU at least one year before requesting promotion to the next rank.

Changing rank signals a qualitative difference in what the individual will do on the job; specifically there will be an increase in both the initiative required and level of responsibility. When responsibilities extend beyond the current job description, this may be reason to consider promotion. The reviewer should also assess evidence that the individual is prepared to perform the activities at the next higher rank.

All promotions should be accompanied by an increase in salary as set in the collective bargaining agreement.

Request for promotions may be forwarded to the Provost typically twice yearly, although exception can be made if funding cycles make it necessary. This is consistent with the fluidity of research funding and the fact that research project staffing needs do not follow a nine-month academic
schedule. Academic units may choose to set their own time lines for request for promotion to be submitted to the Dean.

Each academic unit will articulate a mechanism for allowing the individual to appeal, should the request for promotion be denied.

**Responsibility of the Reviewer (Supervisor) and the Review Group**

At a minimum, the group that conducts the annual performance review according to Article 18 of the PSU-AAUP Collective Bargaining Agreement will also receive and review the request for promotion, although the academic unit may wish to constitute a different group.

Requests for promotion will go through the same decision making process as annual reviews. The annual review/promotion committee makes a recommendation to the department chair (research center or institute director, school director). This individual then makes a recommendation to the Dean.

**Responsibility of the Dean**

The Dean forwards all requests with his/her recommendations to the Provost for his/her review and final decision.

**Tenure-Track and Tenured Faculty**

The task force endorses the addition of distinguished professor to the ranks available to tenure-track and tenured faculty. The addition of this rank augments the existing post-tenure review process by allowing for the recognition and reward of high level scholarly accomplishment. Promotion to this rank should follow the process and timeline found in the “Policies and Procedures for the Evaluation of Faculty for Promotion, Tenure, and Merit Increases.”

**Distinguished Professor:** A faculty member will normally not be considered for promotion to Distinguished Professor until the fourth year in rank as a Professor. Exceptions will be made only in extraordinary cases. Consideration for the promotion immediately upon eligibility should occur only on the basis of particularly extraordinary achievement. Length of time in rank is not a sufficient reason for promotion.

Promotion to the rank of Distinguished Professor requires the individual to have made extraordinary contributions to knowledge as a result of the person’s scholarship, whether demonstrated through the scholarship of research, teaching, or community outreach. The candidate’s scholarly portfolio should document a record of very distinguished accomplishments using the criteria for quality and significance of scholarship (see II. D). Effectiveness in teaching, research, or community outreach must meet an acceptable standard when it is part of a faculty member’s responsibilities. Finally, promotion to the rank of distinguished professor requires the faculty member to have provided leadership or significant contributions to the governance and professionally-related services activities of the university.