

Policy 2.3: Faculty Ranks, Academic Titles, and Voting Rights

1. Policy Statement

It is the policy of the University to appoint faculty with academic titles that reflect their primary responsibilities at the forefront of the University's core academic efforts in the areas of research, teaching, and service. All persons receiving faculty appointments should have engaged in significant scholarly work or have notable professional expertise or achievement. These classifications of ranks and titles have significance in regard to benefits and rights that may not pertain to each category or classification.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to specify the faculty ranks and academic titles used at the University. Appointments with the standard professorial titles Professor, Associate Professor, and Assistant Professor are tenured or tenure-track. All other faculty appointments are non-tenure track. The standard professorial titles are significantly altered by the addition of modifiers such as Research, Clinical, Visiting, Affiliate, or Emeritus. A distinction is also made between full-time and part-time appointments. The original letter of appointment and each subsequent letter of appointment shall indicate the title, nature, duration, tenure status, and salary of the appointment (see University Policy 2.4, Faculty Recruitment and Appointments). **In addition to these contractual titles that correspond to faculty rank, faculty can also have a functional title. Unlike standard academic titles, which signify rank and tenure status, functional titles may provide a more descriptive label for the duties or specialized areas of expertise a faculty member performs. Such functional titles must be approved by the Dean and Provost in writing and specify the faculty member's roles and responsibilities within their unit or broader institution that reflects their specialized contributions or leadership positions.** The Provost makes all faculty appointments except as indicated below. The Provost has delegated the responsibility for letters of appointment to the Deans except for letters of appointment for endowed chairs and tenured faculty. Full-time faculty appointments are reviewed and approved by the President and confirmed by the Board of Trustees.

3. General Faculty and Voting Rights

As specified in the University Bylaws, the General Faculty consists of the President of the University, the Provost of the University, the Deans of the Schools, the tenured and tenure-track faculty (see below), and the non-tenure track faculty (see below). All full-time members of the General Faculty, as defined by University policy from time to time, excluding Adjunct Faculty and Scholars-in-Residence are entitled to vote on issues pertaining to the General Faculty.

Non-tenure track faculty do not have voting rights in regard to faculty recommendations concerning promoting or granting tenure for tenure-track and tenured faculty. They also do not have voting rights in regard to faculty hiring of tenured or tenure-track faculty unless authorized by the Dean. Other voting rights in schools, departments, and Faculty Senate elections are determined by the bylaws of those bodies.

4. President, Provost, and Deans

- a. President – Elected by the Board of Trustees for a term fixed by the Board after due consultation on selection of the President with a University committee including, but not limited to, representatives of the following groups: the General Faculty through the Faculty Senate, the Student Body through the Student Senate, the Council of Deans, the Vice Presidents, and the SMU Alumni Association through its Executive Committee. The Board of Trustees shall have sole authority to employ or terminate a President, an action that must be taken at a regular or special meeting.
- b. Provost – Appointed to a stated term determined by the President.
- c. Deans – Appointed to a stated term determined by the Provost.

Terms of appointment for all other faculty are discussed in University Policy 2.4, Faculty Recruitment and Appointments.

5. Professors, Associate Professors, and Assistant Professors

Professor, Associate Professor, and Assistant Professor are the standard professorial titles for tenured or tenure-track faculty. A more detailed description of these titles can be found in University Policy 2.11, Guidelines for the Award of Rank and Tenure.

6. Instructors

A faculty member who has not completed the required terminal degree by July 1 and has signed a contract stipulating appointment to the rank of Assistant Professor upon certification of completion of the degree is appointed as an Instructor for a one-year term. Upon providing the University with a transcript indicating the awarding of the terminal degree, the faculty member is appointed to the tenure-track rank of Assistant Professor.

Full-time service in the ranks of Instructor and Assistant Professor is counted in the probationary period leading to mandatory action by the University either promoting the individuals to tenure rank or notifying them that they will not be promoted.

7. Endowed Chairs and other Named Academic Positions

The term “endowed chair” or “endowed professorship” derives from a position being supported by the income from an endowment. Approval to hold an endowed chair or other academic named position supported by an endowment does not change the standard professorial title to which the person is appointed. Some examples of named positions include (Named) Distinguished Chair or Professor, (Named) Endowed Chair or Professor, (Named) Chair or Professor, and (Named) Professorship. These designations are accorded to senior scholar/teachers of outstanding qualifications who have national and international reputations and records that set them apart from the majority of their colleagues.

The endowed position of (Named) Trustee Professor is held by exceptionally gifted young scholars whose accomplishments indicate great potential. The faculty member will normally not have received tenure at the time of appointment and will hold the position for a period of years as he/she transitions from junior to senior status. The use of these positions for junior faculty may depend on the school.

Other endowed positions such as (Named) Visiting Professor or (Named) Research Professor are non-tenure track faculty positions. The availability of endowed funds for visiting faculty enables the schools to bring in scholars who can interact with faculty and students and thereby enrich the University’s academic environment. The term of this position is one-year or less with the possibility of renewal for a second year. The availability of endowed funds for research faculty provides salary, equipment, or research expenses for a fixed term.

8. University Professors

University Professors hold one of the few university-wide endowed positions that are not connected to a school or department.

9. University Distinguished Professors

The title "University Distinguished Professor" is accorded to no more than ten faculty employed at the University at the time of designation, who have proven themselves to be outstanding teachers/scholars with exceptional academic records according to rigorous nationally accepted standards. This designation recognizes that not all faculty in the University with exceptional academic records can be honored with endowed chairs.

10. Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, and Senior Lecturer II

The academic titles of Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, and Senior Lecturer II are reserved for persons who are engaged full-time in instructional activities requiring a high level of academic knowledge or specialized knowledge and skill. The main criterion for appointment is promise as a teacher or demonstrated ability in teaching. The positions of Lecturer, Senior Lecturer and Senior Lecturer II are held by full-time faculty members who are on fixed-term appointments and not on the tenure-track.

The normal responsibilities of a Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Senior Lecturer II consist of teaching and the scholarly and administrative requirements associated with teaching, such as counseling students, and incidental consultative or administrative responsibilities (e.g., committee work). These positions typically do

not carry the scholarly and administrative requirements associated with tenured and tenure-track faculty positions.

A Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, or Senior Lecturer II may have up to one-half of his/her contract bought out by external research funding if (1) the Principal Investigator on a grant requests the time and (2) the relevant school or college Dean and the Department or Division Chair approves of the arrangement. It is understood that teaching duties take precedence over other activities regardless of demands of the research component of any individual efforts. Individuals with a Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, or Senior Lecturer II title may not be the Principal Investigator on external grants. Senior Lecturer and Senior Lecturer II statuses are reserved for persons who have demonstrated exceptional mastery of teaching in their discipline.

11. Research Professor, Research Associate Professor, and Research Assistant Professor

These non-tenure track ranks for research faculty are reserved for persons whose (1) compensation is normally funded entirely by external funding sources and (2) who may not engage in classroom teaching or other duties unless specified in the contract from the external funding source or with written approval from the Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs. Research faculty with the above titles may serve as principal investigator or co-investigator on one or more grants or contracts administered by the University and oversee a significant area of research or scholarship underwritten by an external funding source. Research faculty may serve on department committees as determined by the tenured and tenure-track faculty of the department and also on graduate supervisory committees, but may not serve as the sole chair of the graduate supervisory committee.

12. Clinical Professor, Clinical Associate Professor, Clinical Assistant Professor

These non-tenure track ranks are reserved for persons who are qualified by training, experience, or education to engage in practical instruction of professional students. The responsibilities of this position may include (1) teaching courses and seminars, (2) supervising student internships or directing independent studies, and (3) other duties that the Dean determines are consistent with this rank. Faculty with these titles may supervise undergraduate and graduate students with departmental permission and may serve on appropriate department and graduate supervisory committees as determined by the tenure-track and tenured faculty, but may not serve as the sole chair of the supervisory committee.

13. Professor of Practice, Associate Professor of Practice, Assistant Professor of Practice

These non-tenure track ranks are reserved for persons who are qualified by their past experience outside of academia, and whose current level of expertise and demonstrated or potential ability will significantly enhance the instruction of students and will advance the goals of the academic unit or program. The responsibilities of this position may include (1) teaching courses or seminars, (2) directing the independent studies of undergraduate and graduate students and (3) other duties that the Dean determines are consistent with this rank. Faculty with these titles may supervise undergraduate and graduate students with departmental permission and may serve on appropriate department and graduate supervisory committees as determined by the tenure-track and tenured faculty, but may not serve as the sole chair of the supervisory committee.

14. Scholars-in-Residence (Executive-in-Residence, Artist-in-Residence, Composer-in-Residence, Writer-in-Residence, and Researcher-in-Residence)

These non-tenure track ranks are reserved for persons who are qualified by their past experience outside of academia, and whose current level of expertise and demonstrated or potential ability will significantly enhance the instruction of students and will advance the goals of the academic unit or program. The responsibilities of this position may include (1) teaching courses or seminars, (2) directing the independent studies of undergraduate and graduate students, and (3) other duties that the Dean determines are consistent with this rank. Faculty with these titles may supervise undergraduate and graduate students with departmental permission and may serve on appropriate department and graduate supervisory committees as determined by the tenure-track and tenured faculty, but may not serve as the sole chair of the supervisory committee.

15. Visiting, Adjunct, Affiliate, and Emeriti Faculty

The prefix “Visiting” preceding many of the above academic titles is used for full-time, non-tenure track faculty in short-term positions when only a limited search or no search is possible. There is no expectation that the faculty member will be appointed beyond the initial term.

The prefix “Adjunct” preceding an academic title is used for part-time, non-tenure track appointments. Adjunct faculty are usually paid for a particular assignment such as teaching a course. Normally these employees are not entitled to any fringe benefits except access to services essential to teaching their courses.

The prefix “Affiliate” preceding an academic title is used for an individual from another institution whose scholarly or professional activities enrich and complement SMU programs and interests. It is an honorary appointment only. More details on the use of affiliate faculty appointments and courtesy appointments within SMU can be found in University Policy 2.6, Affiliate Faculty Appointments.

The suffix “Emeritus” or “Emerita” following Professor or Associate Professor is an honorary title given to designated faculty upon retirement. More details on the use of this title can be found in University Policy 2.16, Faculty Retirement.

16. Visiting Scholar

The non-tenure track faculty rank of Visiting Scholar is reserved for a distinguished faculty member or academic professional from another institution who a Dean appoints to the faculty of the college or school for a term of a few weeks or months, but not more than one year, for the purposes of collaboration with SMU faculty within the college or school. Visiting Scholars are usually compensated with salary and benefits that are funded by the scholar’s home institution. This title should not be used for graduate students visiting from another educational institution to pursue research with SMU faculty related to their degree program. These graduate students are usually non-compensated and given the title of Visiting Graduate Researcher.

17. Questions

Questions regarding this policy are to be directed to the Office of the Provost.