

Teaching Professor Titles Proposal – College of Engineering

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A. Justification

The College of Engineering proposes the use of the title ‘Teaching Professor’ at all ranks (assistant, associate, and full) to recruit, retain and support the development of outstanding teaching faculty. The associate professor and professor ranks of this title may be modified with “emeritus/a.” This proposal is enabled by the April 2024 adoption of the Teaching Professor Titles by the Faculty Senate.

There are several motivations for adopting the teaching professor titles. Using “professor” in the title helps to recognize the importance and quality of instruction and leadership provided by engineering faculty currently in lecturer or senior lecturer positions. In some areas of study, it is difficult to compete with peer institutions who do offer professorial titles for teaching positions. These factors can make it difficult to recruit and retain the best teachers. The two-rank lecturer track offers limited room for advancement. The three-rank teaching professor track will increase opportunities to recognize professional advancement of those faculty and the associated benefits that accrue to the educational environment, including activities such as curriculum development, pedagogical innovation, degree program leadership, and external visibility.

B. Description of Position

The teaching professor titles are available only for benefits-eligible (50% FTE or greater), long term, non-tenure-track faculty members whose efforts are devoted primarily to the teaching mission of the university and who demonstrate a high level of skill and independence in teaching. Sustained excellence is expected of teaching professors at all levels. Assistant, associate, and full teaching professors are expected to achieve a high level of professional expertise within their areas of teaching responsibility to substantially contribute to their program’s educational mission. Teaching professors at higher ranks should demonstrate impact inside and outside the university through activities such as pedagogical achievement, curriculum development, and leadership roles. Consistent with their rank and local needs, teaching professors are also expected to contribute teaching-related service, especially in areas that concern advising, mentoring, curriculum, and the management of degree programs.

The teaching professor titles may not be used to replicate the combined teaching and research responsibilities of the tenure-track faculty. Accordingly, teaching professor appointments should not require conducting research, publishing its results, or advising graduate research students. Teaching professors may choose to participate in such activities, especially when related to pedagogy, and should stay current with research in their area to best incorporate it into their teaching. Nevertheless, research activity must not be required for appointment, reappointment, or promotion along the teaching professor track.

The nominal course load expectation for teaching professors is two courses per semester. Due to the variable nature of teaching professors’ duties, the actual teaching load may vary from the nominal.

Faculty holding teaching professor positions may apply for advertised tenure-track positions but may not move from these positions to an unadvertised tenure-track position.

1. Criteria and expectations for appointment at the rank of Assistant Teaching Professor

Assistant teaching professors are expected to demonstrate potential to develop into excellent classroom teachers. They may also contribute to the development of existing or new courses, and/or serve as faculty advisors, including advising student projects and academic and honorary societies.

2. Criteria and expectations for appointment at or promotion to the rank of Associate Teaching Professor

To be appointed or promoted to the rank of associate teaching professor, candidates are expected to have six or more years of full-time experience teaching in higher education (at Cornell or elsewhere) and to demonstrate, or have potential for, making contributions to their department's educational mission beyond those typically required of an assistant teaching professor. These might include creating novel and effective learning activities, contributing to curricular development and assessment at the course or departmental level, design and implementation of a new course, or other service or leadership in areas of importance to their department. Service activities related to the learning, well-being, professional development, and personal development of students are indicators of a willingness to understand the broad student experience and of tangible progress toward the capacity to contribute to department-level activities such as accreditation, advising or other aspects, and to student engagement such as mentoring, clubs, project teams, or other programs.

An associate teaching professor should demonstrate broad knowledge of the field as a whole and be able to draw on that knowledge to make connections between introductory and advanced level courses. Candidates should show evidence of continued development of their pedagogy and/or of keeping current in their area of instruction. Any campus-wide or external recognition for their educational contributions would weigh very favorably in appointment or promotion to the position.

3. Criteria and expectations for appointment at or promotion to the rank of (full) Teaching Professor

To be appointed or promoted to the rank of teaching professor, candidates are expected to have eleven or more years of full-time experience teaching in higher education. They are expected to make significant contributions to the broad educational mission of their department, advance teaching and learning in their discipline, use innovative strategies in teaching and have impact beyond their department.

Examples of such contributions may include: the development of materials such as a textbook, or a website making available important teaching materials in their field of instruction, development of educational software of value to courses taught at Cornell or elsewhere, dissemination of achievements via papers or presentations on education, curriculum development, mentoring other faculty's teaching efforts, development and delivery of distance learning courses, collaboration on teaching beyond the department, significant engagement activity related to engineering, technology or education, significant involvement in curricular innovation and leadership at the departmental or college level, leadership in national professional organizations appropriate to their field, or teaching awards beyond the college.

Full teaching professors are expected to contribute to department, college, or university service at a level beyond that of associate teaching professors. Participation in University governance, roles in ad-

hoc and standing committees of the College or the University, and engaging the public are each additional examples of the level of service expected of teaching professors.

C. Appointment, Promotion and Reappointment

1. Degree Requirements

A Ph.D. in a subject relevant to their field of instruction is required for all ranks of Teaching Professors.

2. Search Requirements

Searches for open teaching professor positions require a national, formal search or granting of a waiver of a search approved by the Dean and the Deputy Provost in cases where the University waiver of search criteria applies. Short term positions (one-year or less) do not require a formal search under University policy.

3. Procedures for New Appointments

New appointments must be voted on by the faculty of the department¹. Votes for hiring and advancements in rank are separated. The appropriate rank is determined by the criteria in Section B.

Appointments at the level of assistant teaching professor are for up to three years and are renewable. Appointments for associate and full teaching professors are for up to five years and are renewable.

All tenure track and non-tenure track teaching faculty on renewable appointments can vote on all hiring decisions for teaching professors. See Section E.1 for the broader policy on voting rights.

All tenure track and non-tenure track teaching faculty on renewable appointments can vote on the decision to appoint a candidate at the rank of assistant teaching professor.

All tenured associate and full professors as well as senior lecturers, associate and full teaching professors and professors of practice on renewable appointments can vote on the decision to appoint a candidate at the rank of associate teaching professor.

All tenured full professors and full teaching professors on renewable appointments can vote on the decision to appoint a candidate at the rank of full teaching professor.

Final decisions on all initial appointments are made by the Dean of the College of Engineering.

4. Procedures for Promotion to Associate or full Teaching Professor

Promotion from assistant to associate and from associate to full teaching professor will require a dossier-based review.

Dossier Materials

The candidate is expected to assist in the evaluation by supplying a curriculum vitae, a summary of their teaching practice and future goals, and their service, both internal and external (if any). The candidate

¹ For this document department is synonymous with school, program, or center in engineering. Chair is synonymous with Director or Associate Dean.

should also provide a short list of potential peer reviewers, including reviewers (internal or external to Cornell) who may be able to shed special light on the candidate's educational contributions. In strict confidentiality, the department will contact a subset of these reviewers together with individuals not on the candidate's list. A minimum of two letters from peers, at least one of which should be arm's-length (external to the department, not suggested by the candidate, and with no significant ties to the candidate), are required. All peer reviewers will be provided with the candidate's dossier. The department will also collect letters from students and advisees.

The dossier for promotion from assistant to associate teaching professor, or associate to full teaching professor should provide evidence of the candidate's contributions and qualifications addressing the criteria for appointment and promotion for each rank. Recognizing that not all items below are applicable for all candidates, a typical dossier will contain the following components:

CV (required)

A statement summarizing contributions made by the candidate to the educational and, if appropriate, outreach and engagement mission of the department; (required)

Letters of evaluation by tenure track and/or RTE teaching faculty (can be internal or external to Cornell) with first-hand knowledge of the candidate's teaching obtained through teaching observations, or review of course materials, or collaborations; (required)

Selected examples of teaching materials and instructional aids that document the candidate's teaching and development of courses;

Laboratory notes or manuals, and any teaching software or textbooks (with evidence of adoption of such materials outside of Cornell);

Course evaluations and summaries of course evaluations;

A summary of participation at national or international conferences on education and/or in their discipline and/or service to their educational or disciplinary community;

A summary of academic advising of individual students at all levels, and advising student projects, academic or honorary organizations;

Letters from students, including a sample of the solicitation letter and a list of individuals solicited;

Additional materials following any special guidelines and criteria developed by the department.

Note that with the exception of the two required components, the above are *guidelines* and thus some items may not be appropriate for all faculty given the broad range of duties of RTE teaching faculty and the differences between departments and college programs.

Process for voting on promotions

Promotions to associate teaching professor or to (full) teaching professor are voted on by the departmental faculty. Voting rights at each rank are as stated in the process for initial appointments. The department chair is not bound by the vote, though the chairperson must report it to the dean. The chair represents the department in making and explaining to the dean the department's recommendation for or against the promotion. The dossier and letter will then be transmitted to the Dean's office for further review.

When the departmental vote is positive, the Dean will review the case and either decide based on the dossier provided, or at the Dean's discretion, appoint an *ad hoc* committee to review the dossier and make a recommendation on the promotion. The makeup of the committee shall include three faculty members of which at least one must be tenure track and one an RTE teaching faculty at or above the rank under consideration. These faculty must be from outside the candidate's department and have suitable background for judging the case. At least one of the committee members should be from outside the College.

The Dean has final approval authority for all promotions. Faculty who are not promoted may be reappointed at their current rank.

5. Procedures for reappointment

Appointments at the level of assistant teaching professor are for up to three years and are renewable. Appointments for associate and full teaching professors are for up to five years and are renewable. The length of an appointment must be stipulated at the time of appointment. Decisions on renewal are at the discretion of the appointing unit and are dependent on departmental needs and availability of funding. Decisions not to renew and minimum notice requirements must adhere to policy [3.4 in the Faculty Handbook](#).

The department chair is not bound by department votes on reappointments, though the chairperson must report votes to the Dean.

Assistant Teaching Professors

Decisions to reappoint assistant teaching professors should be voted on by the department faculty based on a review of the candidate's teaching and other service relative to the criteria stated above for assistant teaching professors. The chair may wish to appoint a review committee. Documentation is at the discretion of the department but might typically include an up-to-date CV, teaching and service statement, student evaluations of teaching and peer review of teaching by one or more faculty members from the candidate's department. Voting rights are as stated in the procedures for initial appointment at this rank.

Associate and (full) Teaching Professors

All associate and full teaching professors will be reviewed for reappointment every five years, with dossier-based reviews every other period. With the exception of promotions, the dossier-based reviews need not occur more frequently than every 10 years. A negative reappointment review will result in nonrenewal of their current appointment. Therefore, appointments should be timed to run in sync with review cycles.

For the non-dossier-based reviews, the decision to reappoint teaching professors at the ranks of associate and full may be made by the department chair based on a continuing review of course evaluations, annual reports, curricular needs, and resources. Dossier-based reviews require a full dossier and departmental vote, following the procedures for promotion stated in Section C.4.

Non-renewal of an associate or full teaching professor's appointment may not be decided on academic performance grounds by the chair without the opportunity for a full dossier-based review.

The Dean has final approval authority for all reappointments.

6. Professional development

Since teaching professors are expected to achieve and to apply a high level of professional expertise in teaching and service, it is expected that departments will provide mentoring, and opportunities for professional development such as conference travel, participation in teaching workshops internal or external to Cornell, or other opportunities.

The policy for professional development leaves is outlined in [University Policy 6.2.1, Leaves for Professors and Academic Staff \(cornell.edu\)](#).

D. Limitations

RTE teaching faculty are defined as all long term, benefits-eligible faculty on renewable appointments who have appointments at any rank in the lecturer, teaching professor or professor of practice tracks. The number of RTE teaching faculty, R, in the college, to T, the number of tenure-track faculty in the college is limited to 30% of the total teaching faculty, i.e.

$$R \leq (30 / 100) (R + T).$$

This is meant to be an average across the college; some departments, schools or programs may have a greater fraction of RTE teaching faculty. The limitation on the percentage of RTE teaching faculty is meant to prevent erosion of the number of tenure-track faculty in the College of Engineering.

E. Voting and Other Rights

1. Voting Rights

Teaching professors on benefits-eligible renewable appointments will have university voting rights (UVR) as defined in the Cornell Faculty Handbook.

Voting rights on appointments, promotions and reappointments are discussed above in Section C. Voting rights are extended only to benefits-eligible faculty on renewable appointments. The general rule is that teaching professors at any rank may vote on hiring of teaching professors at any rank but for rank and for promotion only of teaching professors up to their rank. Consistent with the faculty senate resolution 106 authorizing adoption of the professor of practice title in engineering, teaching professors do not vote on decisions to hire professors of practice. Teaching professors do not vote on tenure track promotions, or rank.

Voting by teaching professors on tenure track hires is left to the discretion of departments. If allowed, departments must have written policies explicitly stating these voting rights.

Teaching professors at all ranks can vote on curricular matters at the departmental and college level. Voting rights for professors of practice, lecturers and sr. lecturers are stated below in Section. F.

2. *Grievance Procedures*

Teaching professors at all ranks have rights to seek through formal grievance procedures, redress of decisions made, or actions taken which they consider unfair or an impediment to the execution of their responsibilities. The relevant procedures are described in [Academic Grievances | Cornell Engineering](#).

All final decisions with regard to RTE appointments belong to the Dean of the College. There is no appeal to the Provost.

F. Impact on Other RTE Titles

The lecturer track will remain and be used for faculty hired to meet short term teaching needs or who do not meet the degree requirements for teaching professors. Faculty remaining in lecturer positions will have voting rights of assistant teaching professors; those in sr. lecturer positions will have voting rights of associate teaching professors.

In the initial phase upon activation of the teaching professor titles, faculty currently in lecturer track positions will, in most cases, be eligible to transition to the teaching professor titles. Current benefits-eligible lecturers and senior lecturers on renewable appointments who meet the required degree and experience criteria degree requirements and hold benefits-eligible, renewable appointments are encouraged to transition to the teaching professor titles.

1. Transition to Assistant Teaching Professor Title

Lecturers or senior lecturers meeting the Section B.1 criteria and expectations for appointment at the rank of assistant teaching professor may request to transition to the assistant teaching professor title. The request should be made by the faculty member to their chair and should include an up-to-date CV and cover letter from the faculty member outlining their qualifications for the new title relative to the criteria stated in Section B.1. If approved by the chair, the chair will provide a letter endorsing the new title and will forward the CV, candidate's letter and chair's letter to the Dean who will make the final decision. Appointment lengths and dates will be carried over from the faculty member's previous lecturer or senior lecturer appointment.

2. Transition to Associate Teaching Professor Title

Senior lecturers meeting the Section B.2 criteria and expectations for appointment at the rank of associate teaching professor may request to transition to the associate teaching professor title. The request should be made by the faculty member to their chair. Requests should include an up-to-date CV and cover letter from the faculty member outlining their qualifications for the new title relative to the criteria stated in section B. If approved by the chair, the chair will provide a letter endorsing the new title and will forward the CV, candidate's letter, and chair's letter to the Dean who will make the final decision.

The criterion that associate teaching professor candidates are expected to have six or more years full-time experience teaching in higher education is reduced to five years for transitions from current sr. lecturers to associate teaching professor titles and for assistant teaching professors who were initially appointed as sr. lecturers but who did not qualify to transition to associate teaching professor at the time the college adopted the teaching professor track. This aligns with the reappointment timing for sr.

lecturers. Appointment lengths and dates will be carried over from the faculty member's previous senior lecturer appointment.

3. Transition to (full) Teaching Professor Title

Senior lecturers meeting the Section B.3 criteria and expectations for appointment at the rank of (full) teaching professor may request to transition to the teaching professor title. Such transitions will be treated as a promotion. Eligible faculty members should first consult with their chair and consider their qualifications against the high expectations for appointment at this rank as outlined in Section B.3. If following this initial consultation, the candidate and chair agree with transitioning to the teaching professor title, the candidate and department will follow the dossier-based promotion procedures outlined in Section C.4. If the candidate has within the past five years had a dossier-based review for re-appointment or promotion, that dossier can be updated to address how the candidate meets the criteria in Section B.3 for appointment at the rank of (full) teaching professor. Upon successful review and appointment to the teaching professor title, the faculty member's appointment length and dates will be reset for up to five years.

4. Impact on Professor of Practice Titles

Faculty holding professor of practice titles² and whose roles are primarily teaching, may wish to transition to associate or full teaching professor titles at a rank commensurate with the faculty member's qualifications and experience. Transitions from professor of practice to teaching professor titles will require documentation and review following the procedures outlined above for faculty on the lecturer track appropriate to the target rank.

Procedures and criteria for appointments and reappointments of professors of practice remain unchanged. Current voting rights for professors of practice match those of senior lecturers. They have the additional right to vote on appointments to professor of practice. When the teaching professor titles are activated, professors of practice will have the same voting rights as associate teaching professors and will maintain the additional right to vote on appointments to professor of practice.

The limitations noted in Section D are inclusive of the professors of practice. Thus the [April 2015 Faculty Senate](#) resolution adopting the Professor of Practice title in engineering stipulating that "the number of professor of practice faculty will not exceed 25% of the number of tenure track faculty in the college" is superseded.

G. Definition of RTE Teaching Faculty

For purposes of this document and the vote on the College of Engineering's teaching professor proposal, RTE teaching faculty are defined as all benefits-eligible faculty with lecturer, senior lecturer, or professor of practice titles.

² There are no ranks for Professors of Practice in Engineering

If the teaching professor title is adopted, then faculty with teaching professor titles at any rank will also be considered RTE teaching faculty.