

POLICY ON FACULTY RANK

1. Definitions of Faculty Rank

a. Faculty rank shall include: (1) all tenure-track faculty usually employed full-time in teaching or the supervision of full-time teaching faculty; (2) others who have previously qualified under (1), (3) non-tenure-track teaching faculty; (4) non-tenure-track research faculty.

b. The classifications of faculty rank are: professor, associate professor, assistant professor and instructor. The classifications under non-tenure-track teaching faculty are: lecturer, adjunct (instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, or professor), and visiting (instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, or professor). The classification under non-tenure-track research faculty are: instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, or professor.

c. Reassignment to full-time teaching of administrators with faculty rank should be based on an analysis of the individual's previous contribution to the educational activity of the college as an administrator and teacher in relation to the current teaching needs of the college. Colleges with rotating chairs/directors should have written guidelines for this process.

d. The president may confer the equivalent of faculty rank on administrative personnel if and when this appears desirable.

e. The relative number of professors in the department, the division and the Institute as a whole (excluding department heads and administrative personnel) should usually be no greater than 30% of the faculty. The number of associate professors should usually be no greater than 25% of the faculty. However, these percentages are not mandatory.

f. The title of emeritus may be granted upon a regular or early retirement provided the faculty member has been a full-time member of the faculty for at least ten school years (not necessarily consecutive). Recommendation as to the award of the emeritus title is initiated by the dean and directed to the chief academic officer and to the president for final action. Retirement may be on a basis of age, health or voluntary. Transfer to faculty status at another institution does not qualify for emeritus rank.

2. The Nature and Opportunities of Faculty Service

The view that teaching is the foremost activity of the RIT faculty is deeply rooted in the traditions of the institution, and the primacy of teaching continues to be a hallmark of RIT. Consequently, the basic consideration, both in initial appointments and matters pertaining to salary adjustments, promotion and tenure, is the extent to which high standards of teaching can be achieved and maintained.

Effective teaching, among other things, consists of clearly and enthusiastically communicating special knowledge and expertise based on an understanding of curricular objectives and the learner's needs and abilities. Further, it entails selecting and using appropriate instructional methods and materials which lead to learning and providing fair and useful evaluations of the quality of the learner's work. Effective teaching requires a sensitivity to and rapport with the learner.

Evaluation of teaching cannot be totally objective, but such evaluation must include a conscientious effort to obtain and consider information bearing upon the work of the classroom and the activities which make effective classroom performance possible.

The Institute endorses the view that good teaching is undergirded and indeed made possible by selective attainments in the areas outlined below which are appropriate to individuals in the circumstances of their academic units:

a. Academic and Professional Qualifications

These achievements refer to past and present professional and career experiences, professional recognition in the form of licenses, honors, degree attainments, and sustained effort directed toward professional and career updates.

b. Professional Activities and Scholarship (see E4.0.5)

These include research and creative activity in a professional specialty, writing and publication in a specialized area, development of new courses and curricula, modification of existing courses or programs and investigation of alternative learning strategies.

c. Special Contributions to the Institute

These include relationships with students and colleagues outside the classroom such as might be found in college and Institute committee work, student advising and student activities.

d. Community Activities

These include activities linking the professional skills of members of the faculty to the world beyond the campus and other community service in the public interest.

No faculty member can be deeply engaged in all of the foregoing activities at any one time. Rather, specific forms of endeavor should be planned and agreed upon with the appropriate college authorities to the end that full opportunity is provided for individual development and enhancement of the teaching function.

3. Procedures with Respect to Faculty Promotions

a. A senior faculty member or the chair/director may initiate consideration for promotion of a faculty member. Usually, the chair/director should evaluate the rank status of each faculty member at least every two years.

b. A faculty member may request consideration for promotion, but at least a full calendar year must elapse between each such request.

c. When a faculty member is being considered for a promotion, the department head/director will inform all faculty members superior in rank to the individual under consideration. Each qualified faculty member will then report in writing to the department head/director, within two weeks, a recommendation for or against promotion. The department head/director will record the number in favor of, opposed to, and abstaining.

d. The department head/director forwards to the dean a recommendation for or against promotion. The faculty's vote will also be forwarded.

e. The dean forwards to the chief academic officer a recommendation for or against promotion. The faculty's vote will also be forwarded.

f. The chief academic officer forwards to the president a recommendation for or against promotion. The faculty's vote will also be forwarded.

g. All promotions are to be made officially by the president.

4. Non Tenure-Track Teaching Faculty

A non tenure-track teaching faculty member is an employee of the Institute engaged in teaching credit courses or special courses under the auspices of one of the colleges, whether full-time or less than full-time, and assigned the title of lecturer, adjunct, visiting or clinical professor. In certain very unusual circumstances approved by the chief academic officer, these titles may be preceded by "distinguished," for persons widely recognized for their knowledge and expertise. A non tenure-track teaching faculty member is assigned to teach for a specific period of time, and the Institute is not committed to provide employment beyond the time specified. There is no limit to the duration a person may serve in these categories on a part-time basis. Appointment to any of these categories does not qualify one for consideration for tenure or other privileges accorded to tenure-track faculty. (See E5.0).

a. Lecturer

This title is generally used in situations carefully tailored to institutional programmatic needs. It may be assigned to:

(1) those who meet the normal criteria of education and experience for employment as a faculty member or

(2) those who do not meet the criteria (e.g., lack of degree attainment or other deficiency) but whose talents and promise would give reasonable assurance of qualifying for consideration for appointment as a teacher.

Those appointed to the position of lecturer may be reappointed annually to non tenure-track employment. The lecturer position may be used in cases of unique circumstances (e.g. RIT programs being offered off-site from the RIT campus) but may not be used in lieu of making full-time tenure-track appointments where no such unique circumstances exist.

b. Adjunct (instructor, assistant professor, associate professor or professor)

This title may be assigned to those with significant experience in a field that qualifies them to teach specific course(s).

c. Visiting (instructor, assistant professor, associate professor or professor)

This title may be assigned to those who possess the usual requirements for employment in that faculty rank, but have been employed in a non tenure-track position. Once assigned a visiting rank, there is no provision for advancing that rank except if their primary teaching and/or research responsibilities are at another post-secondary institution and they achieve advancement at that institution. The total time anyone may serve full-time in a visiting position is usually no more than three years.

For positions approved as difficult to fill by the chief academic officer, this period may be extended to an absolute maximum of five years.

d. Clinical (instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, or professor)

This title is usually limited to practitioners who are assigned regular and continuing responsibilities in a clinical setting in institutions with a formal affiliate relationship with the Institute.

5. Non-tenure-track Research Faculty

The rank of Research Faculty may be assigned to individuals who secure the funding necessary to establish, support, and lead research programs that will enhance the education of RIT students. Persons having this classification will hold an appointment with an RIT Academic Department. Qualifications for the position include research expertise, research results, publication record, achievement of externally funded grants and contracts, demonstrated collaborative research, and ability to mentor students. Appointment to this category does not qualify one for consideration for tenure or other privileges accorded to Tenured and Tenure-track Faculty (see e5.0).

Assignment of Research Faculty rank will be determined through consideration of the individual's qualifications listed above and credentials such as degrees earned, current rank, and professional experience.

After appropriate consultation with and endorsement of the faculty of the relevant department or program, the Department Chair or Program Director will recommend an individual for appointment to Research Faculty. With approval from the Dean(s) and

Provost, the appointment is then made. Continuation of the appointment is subject to the institutional commitment to the appointee's research and the availability of external funding.

Research Faculty may serve as principal investigators for sponsored research projects and may serve as members of the core graduate program faculty. They may serve as principal advisors of both Ph.D. and masters thesis students and may serve on Ph.D. thesis advisory committees and final examinations (thesis defense) committees, but they may not serve as a Chairperson for the final examination committee for the Ph.D. degree. Research Faculty may supervise undergraduate research and thesis projects and also may participate in curricular discussions in a non-voting capacity.

The plans of work of a Research Faculty will be set with the Department Heads and Program Directors to whom they report, and will be evaluated on a yearly basis. Because a top priority of scholarship at RIT is to enhance the education of its students, an assessment of the value provided by the Research Faculty to the education of students at RIT will be included in the annual evaluation.

Research Faculty are not required to teach and typically have no service loads. Nevertheless, they occasionally may teach courses as determined by the Department Head or Program Director. When Research Faculty take on teaching or service roles, those roles will be specified in their contracts. Their plans of work, and their performance in those roles will be evaluated.

Tenure-track Faculty of RIT who choose to accept Research Faculty positions will be given a Leave of Absence from their existing faculty positions. Untenured Tenure-track Faculty may request a suspension to their tenure track clock during this Leave of Absence.

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