

FACULTY MEETING
March 6, 2015

MOTION

The Office of the Dean of the Faculty and Vice President for Academic Affairs moves to approve the following recommendations with regard to non-tenure-track faculty, and accordingly, changes to the Faculty Handbook (see attached).

- 1) Reserve the designation of Visiting Assistant/Associate Professor (VAP) to a maximum three-year, non-renewable contract. VAPs may petition the Associate Dean of the Faculty with responsibility for personnel and diversity to retain their Visiting Assistant Professor title.
- 2) Establish and define the rank of Teaching Professor to designate Visiting Professors whose contract is renewed for a minimum of an additional two-years.
- 3) Formalize the reappointment criteria and length of service of VAPs resulting in the change of rank to that of Teaching Professor.
- 4) Reserve the term of Lecturer for individuals who are not in possession of a terminal degree regardless of length of appointment or teaching load.
- 5) Create the rank of Senior Teaching Professor for eligible Teaching Professors who possess a terminal degree, the requisite credentials, and have taught at the institution in continued service for a minimum of six years.
- 6) Create the rank of Senior Lecturer for eligible Lecturers who possess the requisite credentials and have taught full-time at the institution in continued service for a minimum of six years.
- 7) Formalize the reappointment process and criteria of Teaching Professors and full-time Lecturers to include high quality teaching and department/program/ institutional need; and, where appropriate, effective service to the department, the College, and the profession; and, where appropriate, evidence of professional growth that maintains currency and enhances effectiveness in the classroom, studio, or laboratory.
- 8) Establish the process and criteria for promotion of Teaching Professors and full-time Lecturers to include to include high quality teaching and department/program/ institutional need; and, where appropriate, effective service to the department, the College, and the profession; and, where appropriate, evidence of professional growth that maintains currency and enhances effectiveness in the classroom, studio, or laboratory.
- 9) Regulate the employment termination of individuals in Teaching Professor and full-time Lecturer ranks.
- 10) Grandfather long-term serving VAPs and full-time Lecturers into the new policy.
- 11) Eliminate the rank of Trustee Visiting Scholar.

Rationale:

Skidmore's faculty is comprised of tenured, tenure-track, and non-tenure track faculty in full- and part-time appointments. Contingent appointments include Librarians, Artists- and Writers-in-Residence, Teaching Associates, Visiting Professors and full- and part-time Lecturers. Although the Faculty Handbook (FHB) defines each rank as well as the reappointment and advancement procedures for tenured and tenure-track faculty, Artists-in-Residence, Writers-in-Residence, and Teaching Associates, it is circumspect about the reappointment and termination of Lecturers and Visiting faculty. Furthermore, the FHB does not contemplate advancement of full-time faculty in these two ranks. The omission is significant given that VAPs and full-time Lecturers, with seven years or more of continuing service at the College, comprise approximately 40% of the faculty in full-time contingent appointments and, much like those in the regular ranks, are central to the fulfillment of our educational mission. VAPs and full-time Lecturers teach classes, studios, and labs; they also direct independent studies and theses and supervise internships; additionally, they advise and mentor students, participate in student/faculty collaborative research, and contribute to College and departmental governance.

In the past five years (data up to June 1, 2013), we have employed one hundred and ninety Visiting Assistant or Associate Professors (only a fraction at the higher rank) and eighty-nine full-time Lecturers. Included in this number are nineteen VAPs and eleven Lecturers who have received successive contract renewals, amounting to ten or more years of service. It is a fact that we would be unable to deliver the curriculum without the assistance of our colleagues in the visiting professor and lecturer ranks, particularly several of the all-College requirements -- EN 105, Foreign language, QR, Art -- and the major in a number of departments and programs.

By contrast, Skidmore has not made rank distinctions in the allocation of benefits: VAPs and full-time Lecturers have equal medical, retirement, and parental leave benefits as regular faculty. They are eligible for faculty development grants, as well as departmental funds and support for travel to read and represent. Furthermore, Skidmore includes VAPs and full-time Lecturers in faculty development programs such as the New Faculty Learning Community, Writing Groups, summer student/faculty collaborative research, one-credit teaching initiatives, etc. In several departments and interdisciplinary programs, long-standing VAPs and full-time Lecturers teach introductory, intermediate, and advanced courses, and at least one long-standing full-time Lecturer has served as department chair and directed an interdisciplinary program.

Skidmore does not, however, unlike a number of other private, small liberal arts colleges as well as universities, have procedures to recognize the professional achievements of VAPs and full-time Lecturers. In fact, the institution is an outlier among comparable institutions in not allowing for advancement within the Visiting and full-time Lecturer ranks. Moreover, Skidmore's FHB does not include guidelines pertaining to evaluation, reappointment, and employment termination procedures for VAPs and full-time Lecturers. These processes may be regulated by departmental internal procedures, and may vary from department to department, program to program. The only constant is the approval for hiring and termination of faculty in these ranks by the Associate Dean of the Faculty for Personnel, Development and Diversity. Of the forty-six faculty handbooks we consulted, including nine from our aspirant institutions, seventeen addressed, in varying detail, the nature of the contractual agreement, hiring and promotion procedures, and the rights and responsibilities of their non-tenure-track faculty. The other twenty-nine limit the contract length of full-time Lecturer and Visiting appointments, do not allow for contract renewal, or only hire non-tenure-track faculty on a part-time basis.

Generally, the nomenclature for non-tenure-track positions vary widely: several institutions, for example, apply the term Lecturer to various types of non-tenure-track appointments, while the Visiting rank is reserved for special, time-limited, appointments. A number of institutions use Lecturer to designate the equivalent of our Visiting Professor rank, while preferring Instructor to designate faculty who have not

completed their terminal degree. Other institutions have adopted the Adjunct designation, in its various iterations, Adjunct Assistant, Adjunct Associate, Adjunct Professor, for faculty with terminal degrees in non-tenure-track lines. Many institutions formally recognize professional achievement: Instructors who complete their degrees become Lecturers or Adjunct Assistant Professors, and both may progress to Senior Lecturer or Adjunct Associate or Adjunct Professor status. These possibilities are in stark contrast with our handling of the two full-time contingent ranks in question: the Visiting status at Skidmore, reserved for those who hold a terminal degree, offers no possibility for advancement, and it is a misnomer for faculty who have served at the institution on multiple continuous contracts, and thus, may have not been strictly “visiting”.

Formalizing the status of these two non-tenure-track ranks in no way weakens Skidmore’s commitment to strengthening and increasing the number of tenure-track lines. In fact, while the number of VAPs and Lecturers has remained steady for the past ten years, we have added sixteen new tenure-track lines (American Studies, Asian Studies, Chemistry, Classics, Economics, Health and Exercise Sciences, English, International Affairs, Environmental Studies, Intergroup Dialogues/Sociology, Music, Neurosciences, Physics, and Physics/Geosciences). Moreover, the FHB regulates promotion and termination procedures of other contingent ranks, i.e. Artists- and Writers-in- Residence and Teaching Associates. Also, codifying the status and recognizing the professional accomplishments of our colleagues in full-time Lecturer and Visiting positions, will recognize their commitment to the educational mission of the institution, and thus, contribute to its strength and vitality. Although we realize that VAPs and full-time Lecturers are not the only two faculty ranks in need of consideration (Artists-in-Residence and Writers-in-Residence are a case in point as, much like the Visiting appointments, their titles, as it has been brought to our attention, mistakenly suggest temporariness as well), these two categories of full-time contingent appointments are in the most glaring need of attention.

**Proposed Changes to the FHB for Contingent Appointments: Visiting Assistant Professors,
Teaching Professors, and Full- time Lecturers**

Part One, Section VI, Appointments to the Faculty, Section E

1. Under **E. Non-Tenure-Track Appointments, number 1**, added paragraph at the end:

Full-time Teaching Professors may be hired for an additional one, two, or three years beyond an initial three-year contract, in a department or program. On or before February 15th of the first year, the appropriate department or program may request the Associate Dean for Personnel to terminate the Teaching Professor's multiple year contract. If the Associate Dean for Faculty Development, Personnel and Diversity grants the request, s/he shall notify the appointee of such termination in writing on or before March 1st of the first year of the appointee's contract. Whenever possible, full-time Teaching Professors and full-time Lecturers on multiple year contracts will be advised of their contract renewal a year in advance of the expiration of their existing contract. Contract and length of renewal will depend on the Teaching Professor and Lecturer's performance in the classroom, institutional need and department/program curricular and enrollment needs.

2. Under **E. Non-tenure-Track Appointments, number 2**, delete "e" "Trustee Visiting Scholar".

Replace with the following:

e. Visiting Assistant Professor: a Visiting Assistant Professor (VAP) is usually a full-time member of the faculty in a department or program who is on a non-renewable contract of up to three years. No promotions are available at this rank. Departments that wish to extend a VAP's contract beyond the initial three-year term will do so at the Teaching Professor rank. **Those eligible for the Teaching Professor title and rank may choose to petition the Associate Dean of the Faculty with responsibility for personnel and diversity to retain their Visiting Assistant Professor title.**

f. Teaching Professor: a Teaching Professor is a full- time member of the faculty in a department or program who has taught at Skidmore for at least three years without interruption. Teaching Professors possess a terminal degree and the credentials required for appointment at the professorial rank. Promotion to Senior Teaching Professor is recommended to the Associate Dean of the Faculty for Personnel, Development, and Diversity by the department or program in accordance with internal departmental or program procedures and the criteria set forth in Part I, VIII, C, 4. Although Teaching Professors may stand for promotion, they are not eligible for tenure.

Replace "f. Lecturer" with the following and renumber remaining items accordingly:

g. Lecturer: a Lecturer is a full- or part-time member of the faculty in a department or program. Lecturers may be practicing professionals qualified by the possession of special skills or experience though they do not have the academic credentials required for appointment at the professorial rank. Promotion to Senior Lecturer is recommended to the Associate Dean of the Faculty for Personnel, Development, and Diversity by the department or program in accordance with internal departmental or program procedures and the criteria set forth in Part I, VI, C, 5. Although full-time Lecturers may stand for promotion, they are not eligible to the Teaching Professor rank or to tenure.

Part One, VIII. Evaluation of Faculty for Continued Service and Advancement in Rank

In **Section C. Non-Tenure Track Faculty**, add the following paragraphs:

4. Teaching Professors:

The criteria for reappointment and for promotion include high quality teaching and department/program/institutional need; and, where appropriate, effective service to the department, the College, and the profession; and, where appropriate, evidence of professional growth that maintains currency and enhances effectiveness in the classroom, studio, or laboratory.

5. Lecturers:

The criteria for reappointment and for promotion of full-time Lecturers include high quality teaching and department/program/institutional need; and, where appropriate, effective service to the department, the College, and the profession; and, where appropriate, evidence of professional growth that maintains currency and enhances effectiveness in the classroom, studio, or laboratory.

In **Section D. Reappointment**, add the following paragraphs:

5. Reappointment of Teaching Professors and Full-Time Lecturers

a. At the end of the appointee's first year in the case of a two-year contract and at the end of the second year in the case of three-year contracts, the department or program shall determine whether or not it regards the appointee as a candidate for reappointment according to the criteria set forth in Part I, VIII, C, 4 and 5 of the FHB and department or program procedures and shall inform the Associate Dean of the Faculty for Personnel, Development, and Diversity of its decision before May 31st of that year.

b. Should the department decide not to renew the contract, by June 15th of the appointee's first year in the case of two-year contracts, and of the second year in the case of three-year contracts, the Dean of the Faculty/Vice President for Academic Affairs shall remind appointees not regarded as candidates for reappointment that their service will terminate at the end of the term under contract.

c. If the appointee believes that the decision against reappointment was made in violation of academic freedom and rights or was procedurally inadequate, CAFR, upon petition of the appointee, will review the allegations and report their finding regarding the allegations to the Dean of the Faculty/Vice President for Academic Affairs.

d. If the appointee believes that the decision against reappointment was based on inadequate consideration of the standards for continued service, the Associate Dean of the Faculty for Personnel, Development, and Diversity may review the evaluation.

e. In either (i) or (ii), the result of a finding in favor of the appointee will be to return to the department for reconsideration.

f. If the department and the Associate Dean of the Faculty for Personnel, Development and Diversity differ, the Dean of the Faculty/Vice President for Academic Affairs will convene an ad hoc group, consisting of the Chairs of the other departments with Teaching faculty and full-time Lecturers, who will provide an additional perspective. The Dean of the Faculty/Vice President for Academic Affairs makes the final decision.

g. If the Dean of the Faculty/Vice President for Academic Affairs' decision is negative, the Dean of the Faculty/Vice President for Academic Affairs by March 1st shall remind those appointees in the final year of their contracts that their contracts terminate at the end of that academic year.

h. After the second two- or three-year contract, Teaching Professors and full-time Lecturers who are reappointed will receive an additional contract the length of which will depend on departmental and institutional need. The extension can be for one, two or three years. Additional reviews will happen every second or third year depending on the length of the new contract.

6. Other Non-Tenure Track Appointments

In **Section F. Promotion, number 2**, Procedures for Promotion, add the following paragraphs:

e. Teaching Professors

Promotion to Senior Teaching Professor is granted by the Board of Trustees upon recommendation of the Dean of the Faculty/Vice President for Academic Affairs after consultation with the department or program. The Department Chair/Program Director shall describe the consultation procedures within the department when recommending a promotion. Promotion is based on merit and not guaranteed by years of service.

f. Lecturers

Promotion to Senior Lecturer is granted by the Board of Trustees upon recommendation of the Dean of the Faculty/Vice President for Academic Affairs after consultation with the department or program. Only full-time Lecturers are eligible for promotion. The Department Chair/Program Director shall designate the consultation procedures within the department when recommending a promotion. Promotion is based on merit and not guaranteed by years of service.