

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

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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.

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.

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.

- 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.

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.

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.

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

