

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE TASK FORCE ON INSTRUCTORS**

In response to a request from the Boulder Faculty Assembly, Provost Phil DiStefano established a task force on instructors. The following people were appointed to the task force:

1. Cathy Comstock
2. Michael Peirce
3. Robert Nauman
4. Robert McNown
5. David Frederick
6. Robert Regoli (Unforeseen health complications prevented Robert Regoli from continuing his service on this committee.)

Associate Vice Chancellor Jeff Cox was assigned to the task force as a resource.

On August 21, 2007, Provost DiStefano presented the following charge to the committee:

The Task Force on Instructors should begin their work this semester with recommendations to the Chancellor and Provost by January 15, 2008, at the latest.

The Task Force should focus their attention on the following areas:

1. Consideration of Career Tracks, including, among other possibilities, tenure for instructors,
2. Recognition in maintaining currency in the discipline,
3. Salary,
4. Status within academic units, and
5. Grievance processes.

The Task Force met on Wednesday mornings, from 9:00 until 10:30, most weeks of the fall semester. We interviewed lecturers and instructors for five of those days. In order to gather opinions from a wider range of lecturers and instructors than we were able to interview in person, we conducted a campus-wide survey. Many of the questions in the survey were based on points raised during these personal interviews. Others addressed specific issues that were raised in the initial instructions to the Task Force. The survey, responses to the summary, and a summary of the survey is attached as an appendix to these recommendations.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### *Instructors' Rights and Contracts*

- The Instructor Bill of Rights (officially known as the Boulder Campus Guidelines for the Appointment, Evaluation, and Promotion of Lecturer and Instructor Rank Faculty) should be endorsed by the Chancellor as campus policy.
- Any lecturer who has taught at 50% or more for at least three years should be considered by the unit for promotion to rostered Instructor.
- For instructors who have been renewed and are performing well, academic units should have the option of extending multi-year contracts for up to six years. The review of six-year contracts could take place in the fourth year.
- All employees at the University of Colorado Boulder are guaranteed academic freedom. Contract renewal should not be jeopardized by exercise of that freedom.
- In order to utilize the grievance procedures in place, instructors on multi-year contracts should receive notification of non-renewal at least one semester before the contract ends. A fast-track grievance procedure should be available to hear grievances while the instructor is under contract. Justifiable grounds for grievance of nonrenewal include: discrimination of protected class status, violation of academic freedom, procedural violations.

### *Contract Salaries and Titles*

- Raise the floor for all fulltime, multi-year instructor contracts to \$40,000. (Supported strongly by #1 and #2 in the Instructor Survey.)
- Honorarium per-course compensation should be incremented annually by the average salary increment for rostered faculty.
- Titles of existing non-tenure-track faculty ranks should be changed from Instructor to Associate Teaching Professor and from Senior Instructor to Teaching Professor. (Supported by #17 in the Instructor Survey.)

### *Career Development and Professional Needs*

- Instructors need to maintain currency in their area of teaching. To do so, resources similar to the College Accounts in Arts & Sciences and the Faculty Discretionary Accounts in Business should be extended to rostered instructors. In addition, some

release from teaching, as proposed in the Instructor Bill of Rights, should be available.

- Administrative units at all levels should consider applications from rostered instructors for any administrative positions, excluding those that involve personnel actions concerning tenure-track faculty. (Supported by #25 in the Instructor Survey.)
- Rostered instructors should be involved in departmental faculty governance, especially through representation on the merit raise committee and in curricular development.
- All individuals hired to teach at University of Colorado Boulder should have an office in which to meet their students in privacy and perform other professional duties. (Supported by #13 in the Instructor Survey.)
- Units should provide computer equipment of sufficient quality to meet the needs of lecturers and instructors who are not part of the regular university computer replacement program.

## APPENDIX

### SURVEY OF NON-TENURE-TRACK FACULTY

One basis for the recommendations presented in this report was an email survey of non-tenure-track faculty (NTTF) conducted during November 2007. The purpose of the survey was to gather opinions from a wider range of lecturers and instructors than we were able to interview in person. Many of the questions in the survey were based on points raised during these personal interviews. Others addressed specific issues that were raised in the initial instructions to the Task Force. The complete survey is included in this appendix.

The Task Force constructed the survey questions and submitted these to the Office of Institutional Research (OIR) for their review and subsequent distribution to University of Colorado Boulder Lecturers, Instructors, and Senior Instructors. The OIR also compiled the results and presented these to the Task Force with a breakdown of responses by college and by rank of respondent. The complete set of results is presented in several spreadsheets attached to this document.

The survey was sent out to 962 NTTF. Responses were received from 312 (32%), with a response rate from 51% of Senior Instructors, 44% of Instructors and 21% of Lecturers. Results that we found particularly significant included the following:

- NTTF showed a high degree of interest in opportunities for professional development and career advancement. The two items which received the highest number of “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” regarded the creation of a fourth rank of distinction beyond Senior Instructor (74%) and a highly selective category of tenure for instructors with an extraordinary record in teaching in combination with exceptional research or service (79%). Approval was much lower for the concept of tenure without these marks of professional distinction (37%).

The high number in favor of more awards for teaching quality and innovation was another index of strong interest in superior performance and corresponding recognition (73%). A majority would also favor a change to the title of Teaching Professor (64%).

- The interest in career development and advancement was also suggested by the high percentage of responses to the need for more support for professional development within their department (60%) and for career advancement (52% found the present opportunities insufficient).

There was also strong support for the possibility of including a dimension of research in instructor contracts for those who wanted it (71%), as well as in more opportunities to serve in administrative positions (59%).

- Results to questions about perception of respect and job security were especially interesting. While 66% of NTTF responded positively to the question of whether

their department treated them with respect, and half said that they did not feel constrained in the classroom because of their at-will status, over half (51%) said they did feel constrained in expressing opinions to tenure-track faculty and administrators.

Responses to two questions suggested a high level of insecurity. An extremely low percentage (9%) agreed that the university offers sufficient protection against arbitrary termination of contracts or non-reappointment for instructors and lecturers. Only 12% agreed that there were adequate grievance procedures for dealing with a conflict between them and their supervisor.

- As far as improvements in job parameters, there was exceptionally positive response (71%) to the idea of lengthening the span of multi-year instructor contracts to six years rather than the present three-to-four years.

A high percentage felt that the present level of pay is not a fair match for their qualifications (66%) or for the work performed (64%). As one kind of remediation, the chance to teach an overload class for a proportionate addition in compensation was generally popular (only 21% disagreed). At the same time, the idea of revising instructor appointments to a 4-4 load with the same proportionate addition in compensation met with one of the highest levels of disapproval in the survey (48% disagreed or strongly disagreed).

- The need for an office with which to speak with students with confidentiality was the one question which showed significant differences in response according to position. Eighty per cent of Senior Instructors agreed their office situation was acceptable, while only 34% of Lecturers did. Instructors fell in the middle, with 61% positive response and 36% negative response.