

Task Force on Instructors

Formed jointly by
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Background

Some five decades ago, CU-Boulder's faculty workforce was predominantly tenured or tenure-track, and undergraduate courses were predominantly taught by them. Indeed, many tenured or tenure-track faculty focused wholly or in large measure on classroom teaching. Instructor-rank faculty were far fewer in number, and the positions were seen in temporary terms, or as way stations to tenure-track appointments.

Times have changed. Not only have the College of Arts and Sciences and the campus become far more reliant on Instructors and Senior Instructors, faculty in these positions now often make career-long contributions to the College and campus that have deep and ongoing relevance to their missions. Rostered Instructors and Senior Instructors on multi-year contracts now join tenure-stream faculty as the "core faculty" of the College of Arts and Sciences, and of the campus as a whole. Their responsibilities and professional activities surely differ, as they should. But both groups contribute in vital ways to our undergraduate mission, and to the success of our students.

An examination is long overdue of (1) the role of A&S Instructors and Senior Instructors, (2) the policies and workloads that affect their teaching and service, and (3) the climate in which they work:

- For decades, the ranks of instructors have grown without sufficient or intentional planning, and without a rational understanding of their role in the educational landscape of our College and campus.
- Current strategic planning and visioning initiatives in the College and on campus make the recommendations of the proposed Task Force on Instructors timely and highly relevant.

Charge to the Task Force

The Task Force shall examine the status and function of Instructors and Senior Instructors in the context of the mission of the College of Arts and Sciences. Although considerations of other non-tenure-track faculty (e.g. lecturers) may be included as deemed relevant, the focus of the Task Force's work will be on Instructors and Senior Instructors (job classifications 1105 and 1104, respectively). Its work will likewise focus on the College of Arts and Sciences, although its findings may also have broad relevance to the campus.

We charge the Task Force to investigate and develop recommendations on a set of interrelated issues that include but are not limited to the following:

- Appropriate distinctions among non-tenure-stream faculty positions and roles
- Teaching responsibilities, workloads, and course assignments
- Service, including instructionally-related service activities

- Professional development, access to funding opportunities, and pedagogical research accounts
- Policies regarding inclusive recruitment, hiring, contracts, reappointment, and promotion through ranks
- Access for long-serving and highly qualified lecturers to instructor-rank positions
- Career management and access to appropriate administrative positions
- Issues and policies regarding salary, benefits (e.g. family leave), merit, and salary compression
- Implementation of campus policy (e.g. Teaching Professor, alternating expedited and full review for senior instructors)
- Effective and consistent communication of A&S instructor policy
- Working conditions (e.g. access to office space, computers, office supplies, classroom/lab equipment)
- The presence and role of instructors in unit and College By-laws
- Role and voting rights in unit and College-level faculty governance
- Climate and collegiality at both the unit and College levels
- Ongoing assessment and accountability regarding instructor issues

Task Force Composition

The Task Force shall be composed of Teaching Professors, Senior Instructors and tenured Associate and Full Professors, drawn from a range of A&S units and departments. (Members of the Boulder Faculty Assembly Standing Committee on Instructor-Rank Faculty Affairs who are rostered in A&S can offer, in part, an initial pool of possible Task Force members.)

The Interim Dean and the ASC chair shall consult on the Task Force composition, designate a Task Force Chair (or Co-Chairs), and extend invitations to participate in its activities. Given the challenges of scheduling meetings with faculty who have high teaching loads, the optimal committee size may be eight members, but certainly no more than ten.

Projected Time Line and Deliverable

The Task Force shall be constituted before the end of the Spring 2018 semester, to permit some modest organizational and research work to commence.

The Task Force shall be in ongoing communication with the Interim Dean and ASC chair, and formally report on its progress in December 2018.

The Task Force shall complete its duties and offer a thorough report, with findings and recommendations, to both the Interim Dean and the ASC Chair by the end of February 2019. This timeline will facilitate comment, deliberation, and formal action, as appropriate, in March and April, 2019.

The report shall be shared with relevant bodies/persons who have an ongoing interest and stake in instructor issues, for example the Boulder Faculty Assembly, the Office of Faculty Affairs, the Council of Deans, and the Provost.