

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN SENATE
COMMITTEE ON UNIVERSITY STATUTES AND SENATE PROCEDURES
(Final; Action)

SP.20.32 Proposed Revisions to the *Statutes*, Article X, Section 1 (Tenure of Academic Staff)(a)6 and 7 – to permit the use of five-year appointments for non-tenure track faculty

BACKGROUND

At its April 22, 2020 meeting, the University of Illinois at Chicago Senate approved a set of proposed revisions to the University *Statutes*, Article X, Section 1(a), 6-7 that would raise the current ceiling on multi-year appointments for non-tenure-track faculty from three years to five years. In the background to their proposal, they noted in part:

In recent years, many of the academic units at the different Universities have recognized that it is important to have faculty who have contracts that are longer than three years, to permit them to engage in longer-term projects and to be recognized for their long-term participation in University work. For example, there are research, service, and teaching initiatives that may require a commitment of faculty time that ensures the completion of the project. By having a five year contract, non-tenure track faculty would be able to engage in such projects with confidence.

Another issue associated with the limited contract term relates to the participation of these faculty within governance structures. Currently, such faculty are able to participate in the University Senate and its committees. Having a longer term of a contract, and knowing that subsequent extensions will be of similar length, allows these faculty to undertake such service commitments more readily.

Finally, the availability of contracts up to five years allows the University and the faculty to recognize that their contributions have developed into something that warrants recognition of the extended service of the faculty member.

The proposed change will rectify this situation by allowing appointments for up to five years.

The proposed change allowing multi-year appointments up to five years would not automatically change any current multi-year appointments. After consulting with Academic Human Resources, the Senate Committee on University Statutes and Senate Procedures cannot identify any significant complications that might be caused by approving this change. The Senate monitors the number of multi-year appointments via its Committee on General University Policy (GP), which reports regularly on such matters. GP has identified some possible

impacts and long-term considerations related to this proposed change, included as an appendix to this proposal. SP encourages Senators to consider those issues found in the appendix included here.

RECOMMENDATION

The Senate Committee on University Statutes and Senate Procedures recommends approval of the following revisions to the *Statutes*, Article X, Section 1(a)6 and 7.

Text to be added is underscored and text to be deleted is ~~struck through~~.

PROPOSED REVISIONS TO THE STATUTES, ARTICLE X, SECTION 1(a)6 and 7

1 ARTICLE X. ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND TENURE

2 Section 1. Tenure of Academic Staff

3 a.

4 (6) An appointment which includes in the title the term “adjunct,” “clinical,” “research,”
5 “teaching,” and “visiting” modifying the term “professor,” “associate professor” or “assistant
6 professor,” as authorized in the first paragraph of Article IX, Section 3c, or an appointment with
7 the rank of lecturer or senior lecturer, or instructor, clinical instructor, or senior instructor, shall
8 be for not longer than ~~three~~ five years.

9 (7) An appointment with the rank of teaching associate, research associate, clinical
10 associate, or which includes in the title the term “research” modifying the term “professor”,
11 “associate professor” or “assistant professor,” as authorized in the first paragraph of Article IX,
12 Section 3c, shall be for not longer than ~~three~~ five years. The duration of the appointment shall
13 be specified in the Notification of Appointment. Where no duration is specified, appointment
14 shall be for one year. Written notice of nonreappointment is required in the case of full-time
15 appointments at these ranks other than appointments that are for no more than one year,
16 nonsalaried, part-time, or conditional upon the receipt of nonappropriated funds (as specified
17 in the Notice of Appointment).The notice need not be accompanied by an offer of a terminal
18 contract if the notice is given not later than six months before the end of an annual
19 appointment or by March 1 in the case of an academic-year appointment. If notice of
20 nonreappointment in such cases is given later than six months before the end of an annual

21 appointment or after March 1 in the case of an academic-year appointment, it shall be
22 accompanied by an offer from the Board of Trustees of a terminal contract for one additional
23 year of service. In the case of multi-year contracts, notice, as described above, is required only
24 in the final year of the contract. If no notice is given before the end of an appointment that
25 exceeded one year, the renewal appointment shall have a duration of one year.

University Statutes and Senate Procedures

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TO: Shawn Gilmore, Chair
Senate Committee on University Statutes and Senate Procedures

FROM: Nicholas Burbules, Chair
Senate Committee on General University Policy

DATE: December 9, 2020

SUBJECT: GP.21.09, Proposed Revisions to the *Statutes*, Article X, Section 1(a)6-7 – Length of Multi-Year Contracts

The Senate Committee on General University Policy (GP) is supportive of the proposal. If units are asking for this authority (which is optional not mandatory), we see little downside.

Increasing our ceiling from three years seems to be a factor in recruiting some specialized faculty for key roles, and a competitive disadvantage with places that already do offer five-year multi-year contracts (MYC).

Some other schools go as high as 7-10 years, though we have some concerns about this (see below).

Units need to be aware that the longer a MYC, and the more MYCs, the less their budget flexibility (which is one of the reasons for hiring specialized faculty in the first place).

Units need to think about how longer MYCs will affect the status of specialized faculty as they become longer and longer term unit members. Impact on governance roles, for example.

Units need to think about how MYCs should be linked with promotion review for specialized faculty.

Units need to think about equity issues among specialized faculty – are only specialized faculty in “high demand” areas likely to qualify for longer term MYCs?

This may be a decision with unintended consequences, as the term for MYCs grows. Let’s say in a few years they creep up to 7, then to 10 years. Do we let the “competitive market” of what other schools are doing set our policies?

For example, what does this do, in the long term, to the balance of specialized faculty and tenure system faculty? Does a ten-year MYC become a kind of “tenure lite”? Does it erode tenure? Will units opt for longer-term specialized faculty instead of hiring tenure system faculty? Already there are national proposals to eliminate tenure and go to a universal, renewable ten-year contract. Will this policy eventually morph into a change in tenure?