

### NTT Contracts: A Proposal

The Chancellor's Campus Standing Committee on Non-Tenure Track Faculty would like to propose the following:

To provide greater stability and recognition for ranked NTT faculty, as well as provide better guidance for appropriate contract length and renewals across diverse campus units, we ask the Provost's Office to consider a campus-level policy on contract length for NTT faculty that offers increasing contract lengths based on the formula below.

Note that we suggest this as a *baseline* policy; it would require units to meet *minimum* standards for contract lengths based on length of time at the university and/or rank. That is, it would *not* preclude granting *longer* contracts as warranted by current unit practices, program needs, faculty performance, and/or recruitment and retention enticements.

#### Proposed schedule for NTT contract lengths

- A probationary period of *no more than* three one-year contracts;
- *No less* than two-year rolling contracts for all ranked NTT faculty at the assistant and associate levels who have worked at the university for three or more years;
- *No less* than three-year rolling contracts for all ranked NTT faculty promoted to full professor, as well as for those ranked NTT faculty who qualify as "the highest qualified, highest performing" (see CRR language below).
  - *For faculty supported primarily by year-to-year external grant funding, the requirement for three-year rolling contracts can be modified subject to review by the unit dean and/or the Provost.*

#### **Rationale**

##### A. The CRRs and ranked NTT contract length

The UM Collected Rules and Regulations provide the following framework for ranked NTT contract length:

#### **310.035 H. Contract Length**

NTT faculty appointments shall begin at a specified date and terminate at a specified date. Such appointments are usually for a period of one academic year but may be for a longer or shorter period, except no single term appointment shall be for a period longer than three years. Such three-year appointments should be reserved for the highest qualified, highest performing NTT faculty members.

While the CRR sets an expectation for a minimum contract length (one academic year) and allows for up to three-year contracts for ranked NTTs, it does not provide further guidance for variable contract length beyond the caveat that three-year contracts be reserved for "the highest qualified, highest performing NTT faculty members."

However, the ranked NTT system and the promotion process within it is predicated on an evaluation of NTT job performance over time, with full professorial rank as the clearest expression of merit for inclusion among the "highest qualified, highest performing NTT faculty members". Thus it would make sense to tie an increasing contract length to promotion within the professorial ranks.

But there is also the issue of years of service. As ranked NTT faculty are *not* required to go up for promotion, it is problematic to tie contract length solely to promotion and rank. Further, the MU NTT Committee has collected data that suggests that some units do not actively support the promotion of ranked NTT faculty. Many ranked NTT faculty have served at MU for extended periods; according to a 2016 NTT salary study by MU Institutional Research (which considered data through the November 2015 faculty census), the average service length of ranked NTT campus faculty is 10.9 years (11.8 years, when School of Medicine ranked NTT faculty are excluded). Such longevity suggests these faculty are important continuing members of their programs and departments; it also highlights their own institutional commitment and investment.

*B. Ranked NTT faculty stability and recognition*

According to the most recent faculty survey (November 2016), there are 877 ranked NTT faculty, which means that they account for 44% of the 2,010 total ranked faculty—a significant percentage of overall MU faculty.

Given these numbers, it is clear that the stability of NTT faculty directly impacts the stability of our programs and departments, where ranked NTTs often play critical roles across our teaching, research, extension, and clinical missions. In the Schools of Journalism, Health Professions, and Medicine, NTTs constitute the majority of total ranked faculty; in Nursing, half; and in Business and the College of Veterinary Medicine, 40%. It is also worth noting that NTT-Research faculty often exist on soft money *and* generate funding for their programs and divisions. Finally, ranked NTT contribute in significant numbers to service at all levels of the institution.

Yet despite this, the contract lengths of ranked NTTs across campus remain highly irregular, with variability even *within* colleges and divisions. A more consistent campus-wide policy for contract length would both provide a greater sense of stability for those faculty and the divisions who depend upon them; it would also go some way towards a more consistent recognition of the contributions made by ranked NTT faculty, especially in a challenging fiscal environment.

*C. Ranked NTT faculty and “contract non-renewal”: the need for rolling contracts*

The move to rolling contracts for faculty beyond the probationary period would give NTT faculty the same additional transition year of employment that is now provided to tenure-track faculty who are dismissed before obtaining tenure.

For unlike T/TT faculty—or—staff, currently ranked NTT faculty lack provisions for transition and/or compensation in the event their contracts are not renewed, regardless of the cause. TT faculty who are dismissed after their third-year review or after an unsuccessful tenure case typically receive an extra year, presumably in acknowledgement of the schedule for the academic job market. Many NTT faculty who learn of their dismissal in the spring semester will have missed the majority of the hiring season for their academic fields. Yet NTT faculty typically receive notice of their non-renewal in late February (or later, if on 12-month contracts; campus policy only requires notification of dismissal three months before the end of the current contract), which strongly disadvantages their potential transition to other jobs for the following academic year. And unlike staff who are laid off, NTTs who lose their jobs for reasons of budgetary consideration have minimal access (if any) to transitional assistance, either in the form of pay or other services.

*--Approved unanimously by the MU Non-Tenure Track Committee on 10 April 2017*