

University Senate

Proposed: January 28, 1994

Adopted: \_\_\_\_\_

RESOLUTION TO ESTABLISH UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES  
FOR APPOINTMENTS TO SPECIAL NONTENURED INSTRUCTIONAL RANKS

WHEREAS, a legitimate instructional need exists around the University for exceptions to the eight year up-or-out rule on non-tenured service, and

WHEREAS, heretofore exceptions have been granted occasionally on a school by school basis, but no attempt has been made to develop a comprehensive policy, and

WHEREAS, restrictions on, and monitoring of, these exceptions are indispensable to maintaining the quality of the University's scholarly and research effort,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the University Senate adopt the attached report as permanent University policy, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the attached report be incorporated as an appendix into the Faculty Handbook, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that suitable amendments to the University Statutes enacting this policy be recommended by the Senate to the Trustees at the earliest possible date.

Proponents:

Faculty Affairs Committee  
Executive Committee

## Report of the Faculty Affairs Committee

on

University Policies and Procedures  
For Appointment to Special Nontenured Instructional Ranks<sup>1</sup>

The Provost and the Faculty Affairs Committee of the Senate have recently received a number of proposals from departments and schools in the University to establish additional non-tenured instructional ranks that are exempt from the usual University tenure requirements. Among other things, full-time faculty holding such appointments would be permitted to remain at the University under contract for more than eight years without being granted tenure by the University. If approved, therefore, these proposals would substantially enlarge the scope of the existing exceptions to the University's present tenure requirements.

In its deliberations on the proposals before it, the Faculty Affairs Committee has become aware that there do not now exist general University policies and procedures for special appointments. Exceptions to the University tenure rules, embodied in subsection (g) of Section 71 of the University statutes, have been carved out in an ad hoc fashion as pressing needs have arisen. Section 71(g) of the University statutes permits limited exceptions to University tenure requirements for certain designated units of the University. If the Senate and the University were to adopt the special appointments proposals before us without alteration, a substantial expansion of the language of Section 71 would be required to accommodate the new special appointments that would be permitted.

### I. Policy Objectives

The Faculty Affairs Committee proposes that we establish a general University policy together with uniform procedures for special appointments. In its view, this policy and the procedures that implement it should, at minimum:

1. Make clear the substantive standards under which special appointments can be made;
2. Assure that special appointments are granted only to

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<sup>1</sup> Existing titles in this rank include: clinical professors, lecturers or associates in (language), and professors of practice of Journalism. Hereinafter, this rank is referred to collectively as "special appointments."

exceptional individuals whose experience and expertise make them particularly well-suited to the University tasks that they will be expected to perform;

3. Develop standards and procedures that govern special appointments;

4. Assure that, once employed, special appointees are evaluated on an on-going basis and are assigned only to tasks that are consistent with their particular skills and experience; and

5. Assure that special appointees are treated in accordance with the terms of their contracts.

## II. Key Premises

Prior to the development of standards and procedures for accomplishing these goals, we first need to define a University policy governing special appointments. In addressing this issue the Faculty Affairs Committee accepts the following three premises:

1. Columbia University is distinguished by the high quality of its faculty. To maintain this distinction, it is essential that a faculty of high intellectual ability and achievement be retained;

2. The tenure system in effect at Columbia and other outstanding universities, while not perfect, has been and continues to be the University's main safeguard for maintaining a high quality faculty;

3. Consequently, exceptions to existing tenure procedures and standards should be granted only under exceptional circumstances, where a case can be made that such exceptions are vital to the ability of schools and departments to achieve their intellectual and programmatic goals.

A primary motivation for schools' and departments' wishing to create an exception to the customary tenure-track faculty appointments is their need to staff particular courses or teaching functions that are not easily staffed by permanent or tenure-track faculty, but which are nevertheless critically important to their instructional programs. Many schools commonly satisfy these needs by employing either of two types of faculty: adjunct professors or full-time "contract" faculty. Adjunct faculty are employed on an annual contractual basis and are not permitted to teach a full-time course load. Other than budgetary considerations, there are no University limitations on the hiring of adjuncts, and such faculty can be retained indefinitely without receiving tenure. In contrast, full-time "contract" faculty can be employed for no longer than a total of 8 years without being awarded tenure.

### III. General Principles

Given the vital role that tenure standards and procedures play at Columbia and other major universities, and given the wide scope that units of the University already have to utilize both adjunct and "contract" faculty to meet temporary or unique instructional needs, the Faculty Affairs Committee believes that special appointments should be narrowly circumscribed.

The Committee proposes that the following general principles be adopted by the Senate and the University with respect to the special appointments.

1. Special appointments must be made only to fill very specific and important pragmatic instructional needs. Faculty appointed to such ranks must be distinguishable in function and qualification from the regular professorial faculty. In general, appointees will fulfill instructional needs that cannot be met by either full-time tenure-track faculty or by the use of adjunct or "contract" professors;

2. Individuals given special appointments must have substantial experience or expertise that uniquely qualify them to fill the needs for which they are employed;

3. Each unit must be confined to the use of a single title of this type (although different modifiers like "assistant" or "senior" should be permitted);

4. The granting of special appointments must be subject to clear and uniform standards and procedures assuring that individuals who hold these positions possess a high quality of mind and personal integrity;

5. The number of special appointments made by a school, department, or other unit of the University must not at any time exceed ten percent of the full-time tenured and tenure-track faculty of that school, department, or unit of the University. (The Faculty Affairs Committee believes that such a cap is necessary to preserve the scholarly character of the University.)

6. All units of the University employing special appointees must conduct periodic written reviews (at minimum, every five years) to ascertain how well its special appointments program has worked, and its effects on the general well-being of the units, including the intellectual quality and scholarly standing of the unit. Such review must be made available to the Provost's Office and to the Faculty Affairs Committee.

7. The current exceptions to University tenure requirements granted to certain schools and departments under subsection (g) of

Section 71 of the University statutes should be exempted from the new procedures adopted.

#### IV. General Procedures

With these principles in mind, the Faculty Affairs Committee proposes that the following procedures be established for special appointments:

1. Any unit considering special appointments must prepare a written proposal to both the Provost's Office and the Faculty Affairs Committee of the University Senate, and obtain the approval of both bodies;

2. When the unit subsequently chooses an individual to fill a special appointment, the unit must obtain approval for that individual from the Provost's Office;

a. To obtain approval in accordance with section IV.2, schools, departments, and other units of the University must submit a written request, together with supporting documents, to the Provost's Office for review and evaluation; and

b. For purposes of reviewing and acting on the requests submitted in accordance with section IV.2a, and in order to obtain a truly independent second assessment of the qualifications of individual nominees, the Provost should establish a University-wide faculty review committee procedure analogous to the tenure ad hoc procedure. The substantive criteria used in this procedure should be those set out in the proposal approved both by the Provost and the Faculty Affairs Committee in accordance with section IV.1 above.

Finally, as an aid in the preparation of proposals to be submitted to the Provost's Office and to the Faculty Affairs Committee in accordance with section IV.1 above, the Faculty Affairs Committee has provided suggested guidelines (see attached). The Committee's objective in providing these guidelines is to establish University-wide standards for special appointments.

Guidelines for the Submission of Proposals  
To the Faculty Affairs Committee To Establish  
Special Appointments

1. Prior to submission to the Provost and to the Faculty Affairs Committee, all proposals should be discussed and approved by both the tenured and full faculty of the petitioning unit of the University. Specifically, in separate meetings, the proposal should be approved by majority vote of the respective faculty bodies, by confidential ballot. The vote tallies shall be reported to the Faculty Affairs Committee and the Provost.
2. The proposal must include a description of the substantive standards used to make special appointments.
3. The proposal must include a description of the teaching responsibilities and other duties of special appointees.
4. The proposal must include a description of the procedures used to search for and evaluate potential candidates for special appointments, including assurance of conformity with affirmative action regulations, and the role of the tenured faculty in such procedures.
5. The proposal must include a description of the procedures to be used to review and evaluate the performance of special appointees on an annual basis, and the role of the tenured faculty in reviewing the contracts of special appointees.
6. The proposal must include a statement about the "target" number of special appointees that the petitioner intends to hire, and the proportion of the current full-time, tenured-track, faculty of the petitioner which that number would represent.
7. The proposal must include a description of the rights, privileges, and benefits accorded to special appointees if different from those of full-time, tenure-track faculty.