POLICY MEMORANDUM NO. 246

TO: All Faculty
FROM: Charles W. Steger
DATE: October 12, 2007
SUBJECT: Part-Time Appointments for Tenure-Track and Tenured Faculty

Approved by Faculty Senate: March 13, 2007
Approved by CFA: March 23, 2007
Approved by University Council: May 7, 2007
Approved by Board of Visitors: June 4, 2007
Effective Date: Fall 2007

The Board of Visitors approved a resolution developed by the AdvanceVT Policy Work Group in conjunction with the Commission on Faculty Affairs to provide policies supporting flexibility for faculty careers.

Following is the text of that resolution.

WHEREAS, the doctoral workforce is changing dramatically in terms of its demographic profile, with fewer choosing to pursue a faculty career because of the real and perceived difficulties in achieving a satisfying balance between personal and professional obligations, particularly early in their careers; and

WHEREAS, Virginia Tech, through its NSF Advance grant, has been a leader among research universities in adopting policies such as stop-the-clock, family leave, modified duties, dual career services, and now part-time tenure track opportunities, creating a suite of policy tools to help faculty members address issues of work-life balance at key points in their career; and

WHEREAS, such policies directly support Virginia Tech’s interest in recruiting and retaining the best talent available for faculty positions; and
WHEREAS, the proposed policy allows tenure-track faculty members to pursue their careers on a part-time basis with departmental approval for a fixed period of one semester to two years (a renewable "term" part-time appointment) for reasons of family care or personal health, and for tenured faculty members to request either a term or permanent part-time appointment for a broader set of reasons;

THEREFORE, be it resolved that the policy on part-time appointments for tenured and tenure-track faculty be approved.

Brief Overview of Policy on Part-Time Appointments for Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty

Rationale: To enhance the ability to recruit and retain excellent faculty through policies supporting flexibility for faculty careers.

Acceptable Justifications for Part-Time Appointments:

- To balance work and family needs for the arrival or care of a child, the care of a family member, or for personal circumstances related to the health of the faculty member. Both tenure-track and tenured faculty members may request part-time appointments for these reasons.

- To balance work at Virginia Tech with professional practice, for example, a professor who wishes to serve as a consultant in addition to an appointment at Virginia Tech; a professor who wishes to engage in entrepreneurial activity outside of university responsibilities; a professor who may run for office for a limited term and wish to reduce the workload at Virginia Tech for that period.

Other reasonable justifications may be considered if approved by the department head, dean, and provost. Only tenured faculty may request part-time appointments for these reasons.

- To accommodate a dual career hire by allowing an initial term part-time tenure-track or tenured position.

Term or Permanent Part-time Appointments: Part-time appointments may be either term or permanent.

- Term appointments are for increments of one semester to two years and may be renewed. The faculty member is expected to return to full-time service.
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- Permanent part-time appointments are on-going and do not provide the faculty member with entitlement to return to full-time service. Probationary faculty members are not eligible for permanent part-time appointments.

General Guidelines for Implementation:
- Faculty member must request; however, part-time appointments are not an entitlement, and requests may be turned down when the faculty member and the department cannot agree to a workable plan. Workload issues and date of return to full-time must be specified in a written, approved agreement.
- Departments are expected to continue to advertise for full-time tenure-track or tenured positions and must have funding for a full-time hire. Faculty member may request part-time appointment at or after point of hire if desired. Pre-tenure faculty members may request a term part-time appointment only, which can be renewed.
- Departments use salary savings to replace the work of the faculty member on a term part-time appointment. Department head and dean negotiate costs/salary for permanent part-time appointments.
- General equivalency to full-time appointments expected for those in probationary period, up to a maximum of TEN years of part-time service. Two years of 50% employment, for example, would be one year of full-time equivalent service.
- May be used in conjunction with other policies (stop-the-clock or modified duties), as long as ten-year cap on total service for probationary period is not exceeded.

Faculty Handbook segments, with changes incorporated

2.6 Terms of Appointments

2.6.1 Regular Appointments
   2.6.1.1 Calendar-year Appointments
   2.6.1.2 Research-extended Appointments
   2.6.1.3 Part-Time Tenure-Track and Tenured Appointments

2.6.2 Restricted Appointments
2.6.3 Summer Appointments

2.6.1.3 Part-time Tenure-Track and Tenured Appointments (new section)

While tenure-track and tenured appointments are normally full time, Virginia Tech recognizes the importance of allowing flexibility in the percent employment so that faculty members can better manage the balance between their professional work and family or personal obligations over a defined period of time, or perhaps permanently. This policy is
intended to encourage departments to accommodate reasonable requests for part-time appointments, however part-time appointments are not an entitlement, and requests may be turned down when the faculty member and the department cannot agree to a workable plan.

Departments will continue to advertise for full-time tenure-track or tenured positions and must have funding for a full-time hire. Advertisements will include information about university policies for flexible appointments. If desired, the faculty member may request and negotiate a part-time appointment at or after the point of hire if acceptable to the department.

An initial term part-time appointment, either tenured or tenure-track, may be approved to accommodate a dual career hire if funding is not immediately available to support a full-time position, or if the faculty member seeks a part-time appointment consistent with the intent of this policy. The expectation is that the subsequent reappointment, if recommended, would be for a full-time position, unless the faculty member requested a renewal of the term part-time appointment in accordance with these guidelines. Part-time appointments created for a dual career hire are approved through the usual approval processes for dual career hires.

Requests for conversion from full-time to part-time appointments may only be initiated by the faculty member. The reasons for the request for a change in the percentage of appointment should be clearly stated. The department chair should make a careful assessment of the needs of the department, and work with the faculty member requesting the part-time appointment to facilitate the request whenever possible. The period for which this part-time appointment is granted shall be clearly stated (renewable terms from one semester up to two years, or permanent).

The written agreement should include a careful and thorough statement of work expectations for the part-time appointment. Generally, faculty members would continue to contribute to all areas of responsibility, but with reduced expectations for accomplishment proportional to the fractional appointment. Service responsibilities for faculty members on part-time appointments are generally seen as proportional to their appointments. Faculty members on part-time appointments are not excused from regular departmental, college, or university service because of the part-time appointments.

The written agreement for either an initial appointment or a conversion of a full-time appointment to part-time status, and any subsequent renewal, must be approved by the faculty member, department head, dean, and provost.
Part-time appointments will be either *term* or *permanent*. *Term* part-time appointments may be made in increments from one semester up to two years. During the duration of a part-time term appointment, terms of the appointment will only be changed via the agreement of all parties. A term agreement must specify the date on which the faculty member is expected to return to full-time status. Renewal of a term appointment should be negotiated no less than three months before the end of the current term so that the department can plan accordingly. For term part-time appointments, departments would be able to use the salary savings to replace the work of the faculty member on part-time appointment.

For *permanent* part-time appointments with no end date, a return to a full-time appointment is not guaranteed. If tenured, the faculty member remains entitled to the tenured appointment on the part-time basis only. However, an increase in the percent appointment up to full-time may be renegotiated between the faculty member and department head if mutually agreeable and funds are available. The department and the college would determine the best way to cover the costs of the academic work in the case of conversion to a permanent part-time appointment.

Faculty members on part-time appointments, whether term or permanent, retain all the rights and responsibilities attendant to their appointment as a tenure-track or tenured faculty member.

Tenure-track faculty members may make a request for a part-time appointment only for reasons of balancing work and family for the arrival or care of a child, the care of a family member, or for personal circumstances related to the health of the faculty member. In addition, they may request a *term* part-time appointment only, allowing the issue to be revisited on a defined cycle. While such term appointments can be renewed throughout the probationary period, a permanent part-time appointment will not be granted until tenure is awarded.

Tenured faculty members may request either term or permanent part-time appointments for reasons stated above, or to balance work at Virginia Tech with professional practice or significant community or public service, for example, a professor who wishes to serve as a consultant in addition to an appointment at Virginia Tech; a professor who wishes to engage in entrepreneurial activity outside of university responsibilities; or a professor who may run for office for a limited term and wish to reduce the workload at Virginia Tech for that period. Other reasonable justifications may be considered if approved by the department head, dean, and provost.
Part-time appointments can be made for any fraction from 50% to 100% of a full appointment; faculty members will receive proportional salary. If employed at least 80%, the faculty member will continue to receive full health care benefits. Appointments of 50% or more remain eligible for retirement and proportional sick leave, and annual leave if on a calendar year appointment. Under current state benefit programs, there is no employer contribution to health care for those with appointments less than 80%. Faculty members considering such appointments are strongly encouraged to meet with representatives in the Benefits Office so that they will clearly understand the consequences of the change. Office and laboratory space may be adjusted for longer-term or permanent part-time appointments.

2.8.2 Probationary Period (new material related to part-time appointments in bold)

The term "probationary period" is applied to the succession of term appointments, which an individual undertakes on a full- or part-time regular faculty appointment, and during which continued evaluation for reappointment and for an eventual tenured appointment takes place.

The beginning of the probationary period for faculty members on term appointments is taken as July 1 or August 10 of the calendar year in which their initial full-time appointment begins, depending on whether they are on a calendar-year or academic-year appointment, regardless of the month in which their services are initiated. (The probationary period for new faculty appointed for spring term shall begin the following fall even though the spring contract period officially begins December 25.)

The initial appointment for assistant professors, and for associate professors and professors employed without tenure, is ordinarily for a period of not less than two years. Multiple-year reappointment may be subsequently recommended.

The maximum total period for full-time probationary appointments is six years, unless an approved extension has been granted. Decision about tenure, if not made earlier, is made in the sixth year of the probationary appointment. If the tenure decision made in the sixth year is negative, a one-year terminal appointment will be offered.

Pre-tenure faculty members may request a term part-time appointment as described in section 2.6.1.3 for reasons of balancing work and family or personal health issues. In such cases, the probationary period will be extended proportionately. For example, two years of service at 50% will count as one year of full-time service. The term appointment may be
renewed. (A permanent part-time appointment may be requested and granted following award of tenure.)

In determining the mandatory tenure review year for those with partial appointments, general equivalency to full-time appointments is expected, so that approximately five years of full-time equivalent service is expected prior to the mandatory tenure review year if no tenure clock extensions have been granted; six years if one year of extension has been granted, and seven years if two extensions have been granted. (In summing partial years of service, a total resulting in a fraction equal to or less than .5 would be rounded down, and a fraction greater than .5 would be rounded up.) (See examples in Appendix A.) However, review for tenure must occur no later than the tenth year of service, resulting in somewhat less full-time equivalent service (4.5 years) for a faculty member with a 50% appointment throughout all nine probationary years prior to review. If denied tenure following a mandatory review, a one-year terminal appointment will be offered.

Faculty members on part-time appointments may request a tenure clock extension in accordance with section 2.8.2.1. (Extensions are granted in one-year increments, not prorated by the part-time appointment percentage.) However, the extension will not be approved if it results in a mandatory review date beyond the tenth year.

Up to three years of appropriate service at other accredited four-year colleges and universities may be credited toward the probationary period, as specified below.

A faculty member on probationary appointment who wishes to request a leave of absence shall consult with his or her department head or chair about the effect of the leave on the probationary period, taking into account the professional development that the leave promises. The request for leave should address this matter and the provost's approval of the leave request will specify whether the leave will be included in the probationary period.

Under normal circumstances, departmental promotion and tenure committees review pre-tenure faculty members twice during the probationary period, usually their second and fourth, or third and fifth, years of service. The timing of the reviews should depend upon the nature of the faculty member's discipline and should be clearly indicated in written departmental policies. The terms of offer identifies the initial appointment period. Pre-tenure reviews may be delayed if there is an approved extension as described below. Changes or variations in the standard review cycle should be documented in writing.
The initial review for a part-time faculty member should be no later than the third year of service (regardless of percent of employment) to give early feedback on their progress. At least two reviews should be conducted for part-time faculty members during their probationary period; more are recommended. The anticipated schedule for such reviews for reappointment and for the mandatory review for tenure should be documented in writing as part of the agreement for the part-time appointment. Changes should be agreed upon by the faculty member and department.

These reviews are substantive and thorough. At a minimum, departmental promotion and tenure committees should review the faculty member’s relevant annual activity reports, peer evaluations of teaching, and all authored materials. It is strongly suggested that promotion and tenure committees and pre-tenure faculty use the promotion and tenure dossier format (see section 2.8.4) in organizing and presenting information for review.

The pre-tenure reviews should analyze the faculty member’s progress toward promotion and tenure and should offer guidance regarding future activities and plans. All reviews must be in writing, with the faculty member acknowledging receipt by signing and returning a copy for his or her departmental file. Additional face-to-face dialogue between the promotion and tenure committee and the faculty member is strongly encouraged. Individual faculty members are also encouraged to seek guidance and mentoring from senior colleagues and the department head. Pre-tenure faculty members bear responsibility for understanding departmental expectations for promotion and tenure and for meeting those expectations.

2.8.4 Evaluation Procedures for Promotion and Tenure (Excerpt only; new material in bold)

The award of tenure is based on the achievement of distinction in an area of learning and the prediction of eminence throughout the individual's professional career. The documentation and evaluation should recognize some significant impact of the candidate's contributions beyond the borders of the university. If the primary strength is in instruction, there should be recognition that the candidate's pedagogical contributions have influence beyond the immediate classroom; if in research, that there is significant impression on colleagues nationally; if in outreach that the influence of the contributions reaches beyond the immediate clientele.
The criteria by which faculty with part-time appointments are evaluated for tenure shall not differ from the criteria by which full-time faculty are evaluated. Promotion and tenure committees are advised to consider years of full-time equivalent service when reaching decisions excluding any approved probationary period extensions granted under the stop-the-clock policy.

2.9.1 Annual Evaluation and Salary Adjustments (New material only)

Faculty with part-time appointments will be reviewed on the normal annual review cycle. For purposes of annual review, the fraction of the appointment must be taken into account when considering the appropriate level of achievement in that year.