



**PRESIDENT'S POLICY MEMORANDUM NO. 260**

**TO: All Faculty**  
**FROM: Charles W. Steger**  
**DATE: July 31, 2009**  
**SUBJECT: Professors of Practice**

**Approved by CFA: January 30, 2009**  
**Approved by Faculty Senate February 16, 2009**  
**Approved by University Council: March 2, 2009**  
**Approved by Board of Visitors: March 23, 2009**  
**Effective Date: Upon Approval**

The Board of Visitors approved a resolution to add the ranks of Assistant Professor of Practice, Associate Professor of Practice, and Professor of Practice to the Faculty Handbook.

Following is the text of that resolution.

**WHEREAS**, certain departments, typically those associated with professional programs, see considerable benefit from appointing outstanding members of their profession to full or part-time non-tenure track positions in support of their instructional, research, or outreach programs; and

**WHEREAS**, some professional or disciplinary accrediting bodies may encourage departmental use of experienced practitioners in teaching specific courses, overseeing certain student experiences, or carrying out other aspects of the department's mission; and

**WHEREAS**, individuals with significant and successful field experience bring with them exceptional understanding of the practice of their professions, thereby enriching the students' experiences and enhancing the quality of outreach and practitioner-based research; and

**WHEREAS**, the rank "Professor of Practice" is increasingly found in use at a number of universities to recognize these special contributions and the expertise brought by such individuals;

**WHEREAS**, approval of these ranks is not meant to suggest that academic departments must use them, or that a department is required to change its balance of tenure-track and non-tenure-track positions. Rather, these proposed ranks create a more flexible set of tools that have been requested by a variety of departments to meet instructional needs that have not been successfully addressed by a traditional tenure-track appointment while giving appropriate recognition for the accomplishments of the practitioners;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the ranks of Assistant Professor of Practice, Associate Professor of Practice, and Professor of Practice be added to the Faculty Handbook with the following overview and definitions.

**Proposed New Text for the Faculty Handbook, to be inserted in section 2.3.1 concerning non-tenure-track ranks for instructional faculty**

**Professor of Practice Ranks**

Academic departments retain the authority and responsibility to make decisions about whether to employ professors of practice to deliver aspects of their instructional program or to carry out other aspects of the departmental mission. Departmental policies and practices related to the use of non-tenure-track ranks must be approved by an appropriate standing committee in the department, such as a promotion and tenure or executive/personnel committee, the department head, and dean.

For disciplines where professional preparation of students is a major goal, the involvement of experienced practitioners in teaching the skills and values of the profession, overseeing internships and project experiences, and career advising, for example, can be a vital aspect of a successful program. Professional programs often have a deep commitment to ongoing continuing education of practitioners in the field, resulting in a greater commitment to delivery of outreach programs than may be typical of a tenure-track appointment outside of extension. Programs in the arts may wish to attract resident artists or performers for a period of time to contribute to the program. The professor of practice rank series may be appropriate in these and other roles that typically do not reflect the same range of responsibilities required for tenure-track faculty members.

The professor of practice series provides for short- or long-term, full- or part-time, non-tenure-track faculty appointments for individuals who bring specialized expertise to the instructional programs of the university, thereby complementing the qualifications and contributions of tenure-track faculty. [These rank titles may also be used for wage appointments in lieu of adjunct assistant, associate, or professor, if appropriate for the assignment and credentials of the individual.] Individuals appointed to these ranks are expected to be successful and effective professionals in a given field. They must be effective teachers of the profession or discipline and they are expected to be able to understand and evaluate the research that applies to their field and to teach it to students. While professor-of-practice faculty members may conduct research and present their findings in professional venues, there are no expectations for an extensive research program as is typical of tenure-track faculty appointments.

Professor-of-practice faculty members are expected to remain active in their professions in ways that contribute to their assignment--teaching, consulting or doing outreach, serving in technical and professional societies and associations, and similar activities. Where appropriate to their assignment, they may serve on graduate committees and interact with graduate students and interns, in accordance with policies of the Graduate School. They may also be expected to serve on departmental, college, or university committees as contributing members of their departments and the broader university community.

Individuals appointed to a professor of practice rank must have a graduate or professional degree in the discipline (or a related discipline), professional certification(s) if relevant, and/or significant professional experience. Any appointment without the relevant **terminal** degree in the field must be certified by the department as appropriately credentialed for the faculty member's particular instructional assignment in accordance with guidelines for regional accreditation and university policy and procedures. Documentation supporting alternative credentials certification is required. A record of significant professional achievement is expected for appointment at the associate or full level; initial appointments at such ranks must be approved by the appropriate departmental committee and head.

Appointment to one of these ranks may be from one to five years and are renewable without limit.

Promotion within these ranks may be pursued through procedures outlined in this section for all non-tenure-track instructional faculty. Tenure will not be awarded at any of these ranks and all service at one of these ranks will be excluded from the probationary period should the faculty member later be appointed to a tenure-track position.

**Assistant Professor of Practice**

Persons appointed at this rank will have a graduate or professional degree in the discipline (or a related discipline), professional certification(s) if relevant, and/or significant professional experience. Experience and a demonstrated competence in practice of the profession are expected. Credentials must be relevant to the field and type of assignment.

**Associate Professor of Practice**

Persons appointed at the associate professor of practice rank will have a graduate or professional degree in the discipline (or a related discipline), professional certification(s) if relevant, and/or significant professional experience. Credentials for appointment or promotion to this rank must document a record of significant professional experience and accomplishments relevant to the field and type of assignment.

**Professor of Practice**

Professor of practice is the capstone rank in the series. Appointment to this rank denotes distinguished professional achievement, and regional, national, or international prominence in the field. Credentials for appointment or promotion to this rank must document a record of significant professional experience and accomplishments relevant to the field and type of assignment. External validation of such accomplishments and leadership in the field is expected at the time of appointment or promotion.

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