

## Senate Deliberations on Teaching-Related Titles

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Over the past 50 years the Faculty Senate, and its predecessor, the Faculty Council of Representatives, has taken up various issues that relate to titles and teaching. We summarize those portions of the deliberations that offer a (possibly relevant) historical perspective on the Teaching Professor proposal.

### The 1973 Lecturer Track Deliberations

Debates in the Faculty Council of Representatives at their meetings of 9/19/1973 and 10/10/1973 established the lecturer track in its current form. This excerpt from the meeting transcripts describes the essence of the legislation and the surrounding context:

... the proposal does not replace the present lecturer position but assumes its continuance, adding the position of senior lecturer and setting forth conditions regarding both titles which parallel those currently affecting the positions of research associate and senior research associate. The proposal attempts to meet the need for specialized teaching skills throughout the University and to represent the interests of persons with specialized talents.

It sets forth the two lectureship positions taking into account that there are presently 58 senior research associates at the University and 226 research associates, as well as the fact that 58 percent of current lecturers are deemed qualified in terms of their teaching and other experience to be senior lecturers. It does not establish a new career ladder, but attempts to formalize one which, with research associate positions, already exists in addition to the professorial one. Ten of the 11 divisions currently use lecturers, major users being Arts and Sciences, Agriculture and Life Sciences, Human Ecology, and Hotel Administration. There are currently 137 lecturers (77 full time equivalents) including 56 full time lecturers, 73 female lecturers and 64 male lecturers with average length of appointment of 3.3 years.

The possibility of abuses of the system should diminish when criteria and full communication is established among departments, lecturers, and professors. The proposal gives departments the option of using or not using lectureships as they see fit.

Although there are no "percent limitation" stipulations associated with the lecturer track, the legislation included this text on limitations of use:

- The Senior Lecturer and Lecturer titles shall not be used
- a. to fill faculty positions, the teaching and research nature of which appropriately calls for professorial appointments;
  - b. as a substitute for tenure appointments or appointments that would normally lead to tenure; and
  - c. as a means of the appointing unit circumventing the commitments and obligations associated with the tenure appointments.

Quotes from the deliberations that reflect support for the proposal include

- “The proposal responds to the increasing need for specialized teaching positions in various parts of the University. It is designed to protect the interests of individuals to avoid their being exploited.”
- “Without such an arrangement the University cannot meet its obligation to make use of available talents in the community.”

On the other hand, concerns were voiced that there is a rich connection between research and teaching and that this can only be communicated to students by professors:

- “It implies that research is not an extension of teaching”.
- “It would create a parallel Faculty [the lecturers] to the regular faculty [the professors], made up of persons lacking required teaching qualifications.”

### **The 2002 Clinical Professor Track Deliberations**

The creation of the Clinical Professor (CP) track required more than a year of committee work followed by faculty discussion at these meetings of the Senate: [Feb 13, 2002](#), [March 13, 2002](#), [April 10, 2002](#), and [May 8, 2002](#). The synopsis that follows is based on what was said at these meetings and various reports that fed into the debate. The end result was the passage of this [Enabling Legislation for Clinical Professor](#) (Senate Resolution 30). This summary of the Pros and Cons was offered before the vote:

Arguments for:

1. Highly accomplished non-tenure track appointees would have significantly improved and regularized terms of appointment, and greater opportunities for professional recognition and advancement.
2. Better employment conditions and status would improve recruitment and retention of clinical professionals of the highest quality.
3. The number of tenure track positions at Cornell will not increase appreciably in the foreseeable future, but demands for clinical service and teaching of the highest quality continue to increase.
4. The cap on fraction of total faculty within a department that can be non-tenure track, together with close monitoring of administrative practices for faculty hiring, is intended to allay fears of substitution of non-tenure track for tenure track professors.

Arguments against:

1. The tenure system will be weakened because administrators cannot be trusted to adhere to proposed guidelines for maintaining appropriate balance between the number of tenure track and non-tenure track appointments.
2. All clinical professorial positions should be tenure track and the value of functions other than research should be formally enhanced.
3. The distinction between responsibilities and expectations of non-tenure track versus tenure track professors is unclear and would be unfair to non-tenure track appointees.
4. Adoption of the proposal would lead to exacerbation of existing gender inequities by increasing the opportunity to appoint women to non-tenure track positions.

Interesting quotes from the deliberations include the following:

- “Is this set of long-term, non-tenure track appointments adequate?”
- “I understand my school is quite interested or at least the Dean has told me that they are very interested in the titles. At the same time I’m hearing concerns from faculty. There are concerns about the diminution of intellectual capital. There are concerns about what is the professionalism requirement of that position. Some people are worried that it makes the word professor not mean very much anymore. I just wanted to throw that out. What has been the thinking in terms of professionalism requirements of someone who is going to be called a professor?”
- “Do we want a sizable amount of the teaching and or research in controversial areas done by individuals who do not have the protection of academic freedom?”
- “Instead of growing those positions as non-tenure track positions in the clinical practice, why not have them get the promotion process that looks like tenure?”
- “I think that university-wide issue is that the legislation doesn’t solve any problems, and it creates new ones. Particularly, it doesn’t do anything to change the condition of lecturers and senior lecturers. Second of all, it creates a new, alternate faculty, which was brought out. So the central question is—what other differences, such as presence or absence of scholarship, would justify classification into a non-tenure rather than a tenure track position? If they are not distinctly different positions, then why does one have the opportunity to achieve tenure and the other does not? If they are truly so different that tenure would not be reasonable for these positions, then why would they merit the title of professor?”
- “There are two things that really matter in academic life—the ability to do research and to study in the areas that you want to study, and the other is the ability to speak in public and to say those things. The flip side of it is demanding standards for appointing and promoting people. These to me are the heart of the system, and I feel very strongly that nobody should bear the title of professor or assistant professor or whatever who doesn’t have those privileges and pass those tests. Beyond that I have a very simple test. I think that if somebody quacks like a professor, they should be called a professor. I actually agree very much with the person who said that really strict standards for appointment and promotion are the heart of this matter. I think that’s where we should draw our line.”

Adoption of the college proposals proceeded with no serious challenges as a review of the Senate transcripts reveals:

LAW	<a href="#">Proposal</a>	<a href="#">Resolution 46</a>	<a href="#">May 2005 Deliberations</a>
JGSM	<a href="#">Proposal</a>	<a href="#">Resolution 89</a>	<a href="#">Sept 2011 Deliberations</a>
CVM	<a href="#">Proposal</a>	<a href="#">Resolution 91</a>	<a href="#">Dec 2011 Deliberations</a>
SHA	<a href="#">Proposal</a>	<a href="#">Resolution 100</a>	<a href="#">Oct 2013 Deliberations</a>
CHE	<a href="#">Proposal</a>	<a href="#">Resolution 104</a>	<a href="#">Feb 2015 Deliberations</a>

### Professor of Practice Track Deliberations

The [Enabling Legislation for Professor-of-the-Practice](#) (Res 102) was discussed at the [April 9, 2014 Senate](#). The PoP track basically operates the same as the Clinical track; both make it possible to bring a certain type of teaching talent to the hiring unit. The PoP deliberations were quite brief because the enabling legislation is a carbon copy of the CP enabling legislation. The idea was basically to create an

identical track with a name that is more suitable for certain units. Nevertheless, the same concerns were voiced during the deliberations, e.g.,

1. The creation of the PoP track encourages increased reliance on non-tenure track instructors to teach our students.
2. It continues the dilution of the meaning of “professor” and of Cornell’s model of professors as researcher-teachers.
3. it is risky to have teachers who do not have the same academic freedom protections that the tenured faculty have.

Adoption of the college PoP proposals proceeded with no serious challenges, typically the votes were by consent.

JGSM	<a href="#">Proposal</a>	<a href="#">Resolution 103</a>	<a href="#">Feb 2015 Deliberations</a>
CHE	<a href="#">Proposal</a>	<a href="#">Resolution 104</a>	<a href="#">Feb 2015 Deliberations</a>
ENG	<a href="#">Proposal</a>	<a href="#">Resolution 106</a>	<a href="#">April 2015 Deliberations</a>
LAW	<a href="#">Proposal</a>	<a href="#">Resolution 108</a>	<a href="#">May 2015 Deliberations</a>
CALS	<a href="#">Proposal</a>	<a href="#">Resolution 111</a>	<a href="#">Sept 2015 Deliberations</a>
AAP	<a href="#">Proposal</a>	<a href="#">Resolution 114</a>	<a href="#">Feb 2015 Deliberations</a>
CAS	<a href="#">Proposal</a>	<a href="#">Resolution 116</a>	<a href="#">Feb 2016 Deliberations</a>
ILR	<a href="#">Proposal</a>	<a href="#">Resolution 176</a>	<a href="#">Oct 2021 Deliberations</a>
CIS	<a href="#">Proposal</a>	<a href="#">Resolution 187</a>	<a href="#">May 2023 Deliberations</a>

### **Additional Resolutions/Discussions**

[Resolution 44](#) (3/9/2005) Recommend that Senior Lecturers, Senior Research Associates, and Senior Extension Associates be given opportunities of professional development through leaves.

This was not enacted.

[Resolution 45](#) (3/9/2005) Recommend that retiring Senior Lecturers, Senior Research Associates, and Senior Extension Associates with a sufficient record of contribution be given emeritus status.

This was not enacted, but Resolution 141 was.

[Resolution 131](#) (4/2/2019) Increased representation for Research, Teaching, and Extension (RTE) Faculty.

Debates at several Senate meetings ([Nov 2018](#), [Dec 2018](#), [Feb 2019](#), [Mar 2019](#), [Apr 2019](#)) led to RTE representation in the Senate and an expansion of University Voting Rights.

[Resolution 141](#) (12/11/2019) Emeritus status for Retiring RTE Faculty

With certain conditions, these faculty will be eligible for emeritus status upon retirement: Senior Lecturer, Senior Research Associate., Senior Extension Associate, Professor of the Practice and

Associate Professor of the Practice, Research Professor and Associate Research Professor, Clinical Professor and Associate Clinical Professor, Senior Scientist, Senior Scholar, Research Scientist, Principal Research Scientist, Librarian and Associate Librarian, Archivist and Associate Archivist.

[Resolution 150](#) (5/13/2020) Law School proposal for clinical professor tenure

The AFPSF [review](#) of the [proposal](#) voiced some concerns, notably this:

What Makes an RTE Title “Tenure-Worthy”? The AFPSF feels that this question needs to be satisfactorily addressed before the proposal can be endorsed. The fundamental reason that we have tenure is to protect academic freedom. A reasonable case can be made that clinical law faculty who work on controversial cases should be afforded that protection. However, there are slippery slope concerns associated with this justification. There are, for example, Senior Lecturers and Professors-of-the-Practice who teach controversial topics in other disciplines who could argue for the same protection. We are concerned that other Colleges will follow suit and propose tenure options for RTE titles that they deem central to their strategic plan. This may be the wave of the future; something made possible by “decentralized Cornell”.

But before proceeding down this path we need university-level principles for the colleges to follow. The Senate dealt with a similar situation in the early 2000s when the idea of “Clinical Professor” first came up. Enabling legislation was devised that established criteria that had to be met before a college was authorized to use the title. This establishes a measure of consistency; it is not advisable to have ten different versions of clinical professor across campus. Perhaps for the same reason we need enabling legislation that establishes criteria that must be satisfied before a college can be authorized to have a tenure option for one of their existing RTE titles.

The resolution passed the Senate with a substantial majority but was rejected by the Provost.

[Resolution 153](#) (11/18/2020) RTE percentage caps adjusted in the CVM.

To facilitate the recruitment of faculty to meet their increased clinical teaching needs, the CVM needed to raise the percent limitation associated with their original CP proposal.

[Resolution 155](#) (11/18/2020) RTE percent limitation approval process.

Anticipating that other units may wish to alter their percent limitations, a process was established that helps ensure that such modifications are carefully vetted.

[Resolution 189](#) (5/19/2023) Structural Equity and Inclusion for Research, Teaching and Extension faculty

A call for heightened university oversight to bring about greater clarity in promotion and renewal processes and to address morale issues that exist within the RTE faculty.

