

A Study of the Teaching Professor Track at Some Peer Universities of Cornell

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Executive Summary

We study the Teaching Professor track that is available at some of Cornell's peer universities. We pursue some questions that inform how a Teaching Professor track could be instantiated at Cornell. Here are the questions, and a summary of the answers that will appear in later sections:

Q. What teaching-track professorial titles are in use?

A. "Teaching Professor" is the most common.

Q. Do Teaching Professor titles co-exist with Lecturer titles?

A. Almost always, yes.

Q. What distinguishes the Teaching Professor track from the Lecturer track when both exist?

A. The Teaching Professor track is a full-time academic career with expectations of impact beyond just the courses taught. The Lecturer track is part-time, short-term, and/or narrowly focused on courses.

Q. What are the criteria for promotion along the Teaching Professor track?

A. Excellence in teaching and service, with higher ranks having broader impact. That impact could be local or external. It could occur through leadership positions, or advances in teaching and pedagogy.

Q. Is there an analogue to tenure available in the Teaching Professor track?

A. Sometimes, yes, there is a formalization of a long-term employment relationship.

Q. Is sabbatical leave available in the Teaching Professor track?

A. Sometimes, yes, sabbatical leave is available.

Q. What are some examples of creating a Teaching Professor track?

A. We provide two recent proposals from our peer universities.

Which universities are represented in this study?

The following ten universities are represented: **Carnegie Mellon, Dartmouth, Johns Hopkins, Stanford, U. Chicago, U. Illinois, U. Washington, UC Berkeley, UT Austin, and UW–Madison.** We call this the *comparison set*. See the References section below for links to the policy documents we studied from each university.

We also considered ten other universities: Brown, Columbia, Georgia Tech, Harvard, MIT, Princeton, U. Maryland, U. Michigan, U. Pennsylvania, and Yale. These universities do not have a Teaching Professor track, so they are excluded from the rest of the study.

What teaching-track professorial titles are in use?

The most common teaching-track professorial titles in our comparison set are **Assistant Teaching Professor, Associate Teaching Professor, and Teaching Professor.** Alternatives to the base of “Teaching Professor” are “Instructional Professor”, “Professor of Instruction”, and “Professor (Teaching)”.

Do Teaching Professor titles co-exist with Lecturer titles?

Yes. Only one university in our comparison set eliminated Lecturer titles entirely. See Appendix A for the exact titles in use at each university.

	Has 2 Teaching Professor Ranks	Has 3 Teaching Professor Ranks
Has 0 Lecturer Ranks	—	Carnegie Mellon
Has 1 Lecturer Rank	—	UW Madison
Has 2 Lecturer Ranks	John Hopkins	Dartmouth (Engineering) U. Chicago ¹ U. Illinois U. Washington UC Berkeley
Has 3 Lecturer Ranks	—	Stanford UT Austin

¹ U. Chicago actually has two Teaching Professor tracks with three ranks in each track.

What distinguishes the Teaching Professor track from the Lecturer track when both exist?

The core distinction in our comparison set is a **full-time academic career** vs. just **teaching some courses**. There is no expectation of promotion from the Lecturer track to the Teaching Professor track.² See Appendix B for a summary of the track distinctions at each university.

Teaching Professor	Lecturer
Full-time	Commonly half-time or part-time
Long-term	Possibly short-term
Same service and citizenship expectations as tenure-track faculty	Primary obligation is just teaching one or more courses; uncommonly some related service such as advising might be expected
Trusted to teach independently	Might teach under supervision of tenure-track or teaching-track professors
At higher ranks, expected to have impact beyond department curriculum and perhaps externally	Impact expected only within department curriculum

What are the criteria for promotion along the teaching track?

Generalizing, the criteria for promotion in the **Teaching Professor** track across the comparison set are as follows. See Appendix C for a summary of the promotion criteria at each university.

- **To Associate Teaching Professor: Excellence in teaching and service, with an impact on departmental curriculum.** Such impact could occur through course development, pedagogical innovation, student advising, and/or receipt of grants/awards for teaching development.
- **To Full Teaching Professor: Even greater excellence in teaching and service, with an impact beyond the department that could be local or external.** Examples of such impact include leadership roles, and substantial contributions to teaching/pedagogy. Such contributions could occur through textbooks, national conferences, and/or scholarly work.³

Again generalizing, the criteria for promotion in the **Lecturer** track across the comparison set are as follows. See Appendix D for a summary of the promotion criteria at each university.

² Johns Hopkins is an exception: the two tracks are merged into one, and a Senior Lecturer can be promoted to Associate Teaching Professor.

³ No university in the comparison set requires scholarly work as part of the promotion criteria on the Teaching Professor track. That is a primary distinction between it and the tenure track.

- **To the second rank (e.g., Senior Lecturer):** Excellence in teaching, perhaps with some service expectations.
- **To the third rank, if any (e.g., Distinguished Senior Lecturer):** Even more excellence in teaching and service, with an expectation of demonstrated leadership.
- There is no expectation of promotion from the Lecturer track to the Teaching Professor track, when both tracks exist at a university.

Is there an analogue to tenure available in the Teaching Professor track?

No university in our comparison set grants tenure in the Teaching Professor track. But, four of the nine universities do establish some form of long-term job security. See Appendix E for more details.

- **Dartmouth (Engineering):** Associate and Full Teaching Professors are typically granted *rolling appointments*, which last continuously until the individual retires, or until the individual fails to improve after a performance improvement process is initiated.
- **Stanford:** A *continuing term appointment* can provide security of appointment to Associate and Full Teaching Professors without requiring further formal reappointment. Continuing term appointments may be terminated for just cause, failure to perform satisfactorily, or program/funding reasons.
- **UC Berkeley:** Associate and Full Teaching Professors have *security of employment*, which cannot be terminated except for good cause, and only after a hearing before the appropriate advisory committee of the Academic Senate — which is the same guarantee as *tenure*.⁴
- **UW–Madison:** Appointments in the Teaching Professor track can be *indefinite*: permanent status and unlimited term.

In addition, a lesser form of job security is provided at **U. Washington**: Teaching Professors of all ranks there are not subject to removal during their term of appointment (typically up to 5, 7, or 10 years, based on rank) except for cause or elimination of program. Washington is otherwise an at-will employment state, like New York.

Although we did not consider them in the rest of this study, at **U. Virginia** Teaching Professors at the Associate and Full ranks can be non-renewed only if an individual fails to improve after a performance improvement process is initiated, or for cause or programmatic change.

⁴ In fact “tenure” is sometimes stated instead of “security of employment” by [faculty](#) and the [press](#).

Is there an equivalent to sabbatical leave available in the Teaching Professor track?

Three universities in our comparison set do make sabbatical leave available to Teaching Professors: **Dartmouth (Engineering)**, **U. Chicago**, and **UC Berkeley**. In addition, at U. Chicago, every four years, Teaching Professors can apply for a one-course teaching reduction for the purpose of creating high-quality instructional material that could not be created without the course reduction.

What are some examples of creating a Teaching Professor track?

U. Washington [[proposal](#)] and UW–Madison [[proposal](#)] have recent proposals creating a Teaching Professor track while maintaining a Lecturer track. Those proposals offer rationales for why creating the Teaching Professor track is beneficial.

References

The information in this study comes from the following sources, all accessed August 20–24, 2023.

- **Carnegie Mellon** [[policy on teaching track appointments](#)]
- **Dartmouth Engineering** [[faculty handbook](#)]
- **Johns Hopkins** [[academic council policies](#)]
- **Stanford** [[academic staff handbook](#), [faculty handbook](#), [criteria booklet](#)]
- **University of California, Berkeley** [[lecturer appointments](#), [lecturer SOE appointments](#), [promotions](#), [teaching professor working title approval](#), [security of employment](#), [sabbatical](#)]
- **University of Chicago** [[collective bargaining agreement](#), [evaluation criteria](#), [Senior IP framework](#), [Senior IP progression](#), [handbook](#)]
- **University of Illinois** [[employment guidelines](#), [promotions](#)]
- **University of Texas** [[titles and transitions](#), [appointments](#), [promotions](#)]
- **University of Virginia** [[teaching track](#)]
- **University of Washington** [[establishment of new track](#), [faculty code](#)]
- **University of Wisconsin–Madison** [[establishment of new track](#), [appointments](#), [instructional titles](#), [lecturer title](#), [indefinite appointment](#)]

Appendix A: Teaching-Track Titles

- **Carnegie Mellon:** Assistant Teaching Professor, Associate Teaching Professor, Teaching Professor. [n.b. no Lecturer track]
- **Dartmouth (Engineering):** Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Assistant Instructional Professor, Associate Instructional Professor, Instructional Professor.

- **Johns Hopkins:** Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Associate Teaching Professor, Teaching Professor. [n.b. no Assistant Teaching Professor rank exists, and Junior Lecturer exists but is for graduate teaching assistants]
- **Stanford:** Lecturer, Advanced Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Assistant Professor (Teaching), Associate Professor (Teaching), Professor (Teaching). [n.b. parentheticals are part of title but “may be removed in everyday usage”]
- **University of California, Berkeley:** Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Assistant Teaching Professor (aka Lecturer with Potential for Security of Employment), Associate Teaching Professor (aka Lecturer with Security of Employment), Teaching Professor (aka Senior Lecturer with Security of Employment). [n.b. the Security of Employment (SOE) titles are used in the academic personnel manual [i.e., faculty handbook], but the “Teaching Professor” titles are approved working titles that may be used e.g. on the university website, in professional correspondence, on CVs, and in publications]
- **University of Chicago:** Lecturer 1, Lecturer 2, Assistant Instructional Professor, Associate Instructional Professor, Instructional Professor, Assistant Senior Instructional Professor, Associate Senior Instructional Professor, Senior Instructional Professor [n.b. Senior Lecturer is a legacy title still held by some but according to the CBA no longer appointed, and is used in the handbook in a generic sense for what now seems to be the Senior Instructional Professor ranks]
- **University of Illinois:** Instructor, Senior Instructor, Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Assistant Teaching Professor, Associate Teaching Professor, Teaching Professor.
- **University of Texas (Austin):** Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Distinguished Senior Lecturer, Assistant Professor of Instruction, Associate Professor of Instruction, Professor of Instruction.
- **University of Washington:** Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Assistant Teaching Professor, Associate Teaching Professor, Teaching Professor. [n.b. Principal Lecturer used to exist but was eliminated when Teaching Professor was created.]
- **University of Wisconsin–Madison:** Lecturer, Assistant Teaching Professor, Associate Teaching Professor, Teaching Professor.

Appendix B: Track Distinctions

- **Dartmouth (Engineering):**
 - **Instructional Professor** is a teaching-focused academic career. Similar expectations in teaching and service as tenure track. Should have the ability and interest to pursue scholarly and/or external work that demonstrates broader reach and impact.
 - **Lecturers** teach courses without any other implicit obligations to the university.
- **Johns Hopkins:**
 - Single track, in which **Teaching Professor** ranks are a continuation of **Lecturer** ranks: Lecturer -> Senior Lecturer -> Associate Teaching Professor -> Teaching Professor.
- **Stanford:**

- **Professor (Teaching)** is a faculty track in which teaching is emphasized and scholarship is not expected.
- **Lecturers** are academic staff who generally teach courses under supervision by faculty, and do not take on departmental administration or advisory roles.
- **University of California, Berkeley:**
 - **Teaching Professors** are full-time members of the faculty with associated rights and responsibilities. Their focus is on teaching, professional activity, and service.
 - **Lecturers** are contracted teaching duties, often for limited periods or part-time.
- **University of Chicago:**
 - **Instructional Professor** is a career trajectory for full-time academic appointees who are responsible primarily for contributing to the university's teaching mission.
 - **Senior Instructional Professor** is an Instructional Professor track that also has substantial responsibility for managing non-student employees.
 - **Lecturer** is a part-time teaching position.
- **University of Illinois:**
 - **Teaching Professor** is a track that requires instructional and curricular impact both within the department and beyond. It requires an extraordinary record of accomplishment. There is no presumption that Lecturers will be promoted to Teaching Professors.
 - **Lecturer** is a track that is primarily devoted to classroom instruction and departmental curriculum.
 - **Instructor** is the same as Lecturer, except that Instructors do not hold the terminal degree in their field.
- **University of Texas (Austin):**
 - **Professor of Instruction** is the track for full-time faculty.
 - **Lecturer** is the track for part time or short-term appointments.
- **University of Washington:**
 - **Teaching Professor** is the track for full-time faculty.
 - **Lecturer** is the track for part time or short-term appointments. The third rank in that track was eliminated when the Teaching Professor track was created.
- **University of Wisconsin–Madison:**
 - **Teaching Professor** is a full-time long-term career track.
 - **Lecturers** are responsible for a single course or series of courses.

Appendix C: Promotion Criteria for Teaching Professor Track

- **Carnegie Mellon:**
 - To Associate: Exceptional mastery in teaching with a substantial impact on the university's educational mission.
 - To Full: Extraordinary accomplishment in teaching and fundamental contributions to the university's educational mission.
- **Dartmouth (Engineering):**
 - To Associate: Excellence in teaching and service.

- To Full: Outstanding record in teaching and service, possibly including leadership activities. External recognition within academia and/or field.
- **Johns Hopkins:**
 - To Associate (from Senior Lecturer): Excellence in instruction, curriculum development, pedagogical innovation, program coordination, student advising, and/or service.
 - To Full: Beyond criteria for Associate, demonstrated external impact and/or leadership in teaching or pedagogy.
- **Stanford:**
 - To Associate/Full: Excellence in teaching, evaluated in general by higher standards with respect to teaching than tenure-line promotions.
- **University of California, Berkeley:**
 - To Associate: Excellence in teaching, activity in public/university service, and sustained professional/scholarly achievement. Such achievement may be in the discipline or in pedagogy, and should provide evidence of achievement, leadership, and/or impact on the campus or beyond.
 - To Full: Excellence in teaching, active public/university service, and professional/scholarly achievement that makes the individual a leader in the professional field and/or in education.
- **University of Chicago:**
 - To Associate: Fulfillment of teaching and other duties at a high level, dedication to staying current in the subject matter, professional development leading to regular careful refinement of the approach to teaching to benefit student learning. Senior track: also, potential for innovation and/or leadership.
 - To Full: Dedicated and sustained commitment to improvement in teaching practices and professional growth, leading to substantial innovation as a teacher in the area of instruction or recognition for teaching excellence at the University. Senior track: also, innovation and leadership.
- **University of Illinois:**
 - To Associate: Impact and maturity in teaching, classroom innovation, student interactions, and scholarly accomplishments in pedagogy. Demonstrated instructional contributions to the college, campus, and broader discipline.
 - To Full: Quality teaching and pedagogy, including advancements in teaching and learning that lead to innovative strategies and marked course improvement. Demonstrated broader contributions to pedagogy, which could be through published scholarly work, reputable textbooks, internal or external grants for curriculum or pedagogy development, and effective mentoring of other teachers.
- **University of Texas (Austin):**
 - To Associate: Excellence, impact and distinction in instruction and university service.
 - To Full: Same as Associate, but with higher standard, workload demands, and expectations; and with expectations about demonstrated leadership.
- **University of Washington:**

- To Associate: Extensive training, competence, and experience in instruction, as demonstrated through some or all of the following: curriculum or pedagogical innovation, receipt of grants or awards; contributions to interdisciplinary teaching, participation and leadership in professional associations, or significant outreach to professionals at other educational institutions.
- To Full: Record of excellence in instruction, which may be demonstrated by exemplary success in curricular design and implementation, student mentoring, and service and leadership to the department, college, university, and field.
- **University of Wisconsin–Madison:**
 - To Associate: Excellent teaching; experience in course creation; record of consuming, implementing and/or producing creative activity or scholarship in teaching and learning.
 - To Full: Sustained outstanding teaching. External recognition such as awards or scholarship in teaching and learning. Leadership in development of teaching strategies, course creation, and the overall curricular mission of the unit. Representation of the unit on college or campus committees in support of the university's instructional mission.

Appendix D: Promotion Criteria for Lecturer Track

- **Dartmouth (Engineering)**, to Senior Lecturer: Teaching excellence, terminal degree, continuing professional activity.
- **Johns Hopkins**, to Senior Lecturer: Teaching excellence.
- **Stanford:**
 - To Advanced: Excellence in teaching, advising, citizenship.
 - To Senior: Higher level of programmatic responsibility and teaching excellence than Advanced Lecturer, rather than seniority or longevity. Only a limited number of Senior Lecturer positions are normally available in any program.
- **University of California, Berkeley**, to Senior Lecturer: Services of exceptional value to the university, and salary at the Professor level [sic].
- **University of Chicago**, to Lecturer 2: Fulfillment of all instructional duties at a high level.
- **University of Illinois**, to Senior Lecturer: Significant contributions to the department's teaching mission, including contributions to curriculum.
- **University of Texas (Austin):** [same criteria as Teaching Professor track]
 - To Senior: Excellence, impact and distinction in instruction and university service.
 - To Distinguished Senior: Same as Senior, but with higher standard, workload demands, and expectations; and with expectations about demonstrated leadership.
- **University of Washington**, to Senior Lecturer: Extensive training, competence, and experience.
- **University of Wisconsin–Madison:** no promotion; only one rank.

Appendix E: Job Security

- **Dartmouth (Engineering):** Instructional faculty can be granted a rolling appointment. Instructional faculty on rolling appointments remain on faculty continuously until the individual elects retirement. An individual promoted to the rank of Instructional Associate Professor is typically appointed on a rolling basis. Rolling appointments can also occur following promotion from Associate to Full (if initial appointment was as Associate), or following an in-depth review (if initial appointment was as Associate and promotion is not yet being considered). A rolling appointment may be converted to a one-year terminal appointment if performance concerns are confirmed following the completion of an internal review process that mimics the reappointment process used for Instructional Assistant Professors and following a period during which the faculty member has an opportunity to rectify any identified performance issues.
- **Stanford:** A continuing term appointment provides security of appointment without requiring further formal reappointment. Continuing term appointments may be terminated for just cause or (with 14 month notice) when satisfactory performance ceases or for programmatic reasons (including funding considerations). Continuing appointment is available to {Associate, Full} Professor (Teaching) and certain Senior Lecturers.
- **University of California, Berkeley:** *Security of employment* is granted upon promotion from Assistant (aka Lecturer with Potential for Security of Employment) to Associate Teaching Professor (aka Lecturer with Security of Employment). Employment cannot be terminated except for good cause, and only after a hearing before the appropriate advisory committee of the Academic Senate — which is the same guarantee as tenure.
- **University of Virginia:** Once promoted to associate or full rank, the individual will continue to be reappointed for three or five-year terms and may be given notice of non-renewal only with the provost's advance written permission and only if one of the two conditions applies: (1) The faculty member's performance falls below the standards required by the school; the school provides the faculty member with written guidance that documents the deficiencies in performance and stipulates that future reappointments are contingent upon significant improvement in performance; and a timeline is established by which the faculty member needs to demonstrate significant improvements in performance. (2) The school no longer needs the disciplinary expertise for which the faculty member was hired.
- **University of Wisconsin–Madison:** Appointments in the Teaching Professor track can be *indefinite*: permanent status and unlimited term. The primary guideline for promotion to indefinite status is professional excellence in fulfilling employment responsibilities and a clear expectation the candidate will continue to be of significant value to the area and therefore warrants a long-term commitment by the university.