

Draft of a Resolution to Establish a Teaching Professor Title

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This is a draft for public comment. It has not yet been submitted for Senate consideration.

A Teaching Professor (TP) track with three ranks (assistant, associate, full) is proposed. The TP track will create attractive career paths for individuals whose contributions to education both in their unit and in their fields is at a high level and supported by rigorous review. The TP track will create a cadre of non-tenured, professorial faculty whose pedagogic expertise extends and complements what is already brought to campus by faculty appointed on the lecturer (L), clinical professor (CP), professor-of-practice (PoP), and tenure tracks. Furthermore, the TP track will strengthen Cornell's ability to recruit and retain the very best educators.

Terminology and Acronyms

A substantial component of this proposal is concerned with “environmental impact”—how would a teaching professor track impact other titleholders whose responsibilities include teaching? Here are the “neighbor tracks” and the associated ranks:

the <i>TT</i>	the tenure track (assistant, associate, full)
the <i>L track</i>	the lecturer track (lecturer, senior lecturer)
the <i>CP track</i>	the clinical professor track (assistant, associate, full)
the <i>PoP track</i>	the professor-of-practice track (assistant, associate, full)

Faculty on tracks have *titles*, e.g., associate clinical professor. Titles have *descriptions* that are specified in [Section 3.1](#) of the Faculty Handbook. There is *TT teaching* and *RTE teaching*. Important contributions to the teaching environment are made by visiting faculty, graduate students, and postdocs as well as those having the title “teaching associate” and “instructor”. However, this cohort of teachers does not impact the design of the proposed TP track.

Individuals who are hired into an RTE teaching position for the first time are said to be *appointed*. Current faculty can be *renewed* at the same rank, *promoted* to a higher rank, or *transitioned* to a different track.

Although the L track has two ranks, it is sometimes useful to distinguish between two types of senior lecturers:

SL	refers to a senior lecturer who has not yet been renewed as a senior lecturer.
SL+	refers to a senior lecturer who has been renewed at least once as a senior lecturer.

Motivation

There are several interrelated reasons why it is important to create a TP track:

1. *Recruiting and Retention.* The two-rank L track, created over fifty years ago, does not inspire long-term commitment, creativity, and professional growth in the same way that a three-rank professorial track would. In some fields it is increasingly difficult to compete with peer institutions who do offer professorial titles for teaching positions. These factors can make it difficult to recruit and retain the best teachers.
2. *Equity.* The university already recognizes the importance of specialized instruction through its creation of the CP and PoP tracks. It should now expand that recognition and create comparable opportunities for qualified individuals on the L track. Data provided to us through the Office of the Dean of Faculty underscores the need. Approximately 35% of all credit-hours-taught across the university are delivered by approximately 500 RTE faculty of whom over 370 are on the L track. Yet, none of those L track faculty have access to a professorial appointment.
3. *Impact on Education.* The research professor (RP), CP, and PoP titles bring certain types of expertise to the campus that enhance the education of our students, including those enrolled in PhD and professional degree programs. Similarly, the creation of the TP track will improve education at Cornell, including (though not exclusively) at the undergraduate level.

The Enabling Legislation Approach

When it comes to managing faculty appointments and promotions, Cornell operates as a loose confederation of colleges. University-wide descriptions of all the available titles are specified in the Faculty Handbook, but the implementation details are left to the colleges. Even for tenure reviews, the colleges have considerable latitude within the guidelines specified by the Faculty Advisory Committee on Tenure Appointments ([FACTA](#)).

With a few minor exceptions, RTE appointments, promotions, renewals, and transitions are totally controlled by the colleges — there is no university-level component to an RTE review. Thus, the colleges manage their lecturer, extension associate, and research associate track reviews with just a modicum of guidance from the Faculty Handbook.

The same is true for the existing RTE professorial titles, although for these tracks the Faculty Senate added a level of university oversight. Before it can use an RTE professorial title, the sponsoring unit is required to submit a proposal to the Faculty Senate in which it justifies the use of the title, and how it intends to handle appointments, promotions, renewals, and transitions. The required format of the proposal is detailed in the *enabling legislation* together with the steps that must be taken before use of the title is authorized. Through the enabling legislation mechanism, the Faculty Senate is effectively telling the colleges that an ad hoc implementation of these long-term professorial appointments is unacceptable, and that the university requires a carefully documented implementation plan before authorizing use of the title.

Guiding Principles

As much as possible, the T4 adhered to the following principles in its formulation of the TP title description and the enabling legislation.

P1. Respect the Diversity of Teaching Needs Across the Campus

The enabling legislation (EL) needs to be flexible enough to accommodate the fact that teaching needs vary across the disciplines and evolve with time. One college may initially avoid making TP appointments at the assistant or associate level and simply switch all its SL+ faculty to the TP track. Another college may choose to initially focus on the hiring of assistant and associate TPs. Still another may decide that for the time being, they have no need to make TP appointments.

Larger colleges will have to accommodate variation in TP usage across departments.

P2. The L Track Remains

Some colleges or schools may implement a TP track soon, whereas others may not need a TP track or may delay implementing it. Therefore, the L track will be around for the foreseeable future. No change should be made to the L track title description at this time.

P3. Model the enabling legislation after what is already on the books for the CP and PoP Tracks.

High standards and rigorous review processes are essential components of an RTE professorial track. There must be evidence of dedication to the university and of impact beyond the immediate classroom or laboratory.

P4. Think through side effects.

Needlessly exclusionary title descriptions or divisive transition processes could create morale problems that undermine the teaching environment.

The Resolution

Whereas the current range of RTE teaching titles does not always meet the instructional needs of colleges and schools,

Whereas it is important for Cornell to staff its RTE teaching positions with the very best faculty given the large fraction of instruction that is handled by that group,

Whereas it is important that a teaching professor track be governed by carefully developed procedures for all appointments, renewals, and promotions,

Whereas it is equally important that there be carefully developed procedures for processing a request to transition an individual from the lecturer track to the teaching professor track,

Whereas all such procedures should be shared among the colleges to promote transparency and the dissemination of best practices,

Be it resolved that the title of teaching professor be added to the university's "approved list of titles" and that the attached title description be adopted,

Be it further resolved that a college or school that wishes to use the teaching professor title must comply with the attached enabling legislation and have its proposal approved by the Faculty Senate.