




MEMORANDUM

To: Faculty and Academic Deans

From: Michael W. Quick 
Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

Date: September 15, 2017

Subject: Recognizing Teaching Faculty

USC's mission statement recognizes that our first priority is the education of our students. Every school and department should be working to improve the rigorous evaluation and review processes for assessing teaching quality. The Provost's Task Force on Excellence in Teaching, the Academic Senate, the Center for Excellence in Teaching, and UCAPT have been asked to make recommendations on ways to elevate teaching at USC and on improving ways to assess and reward excellence in teaching.

Full-time teaching faculty play a vital role in advancing the university's mission, and it is important to provide opportunities for recognizing excellence among these colleagues. I have sought to identify policies that provide more job security to these important faculty members, and a path to recognize and honor our very best teaching faculty. Such a demonstrated reciprocal commitment by the individual and the University provides stability to our students and academic programs, and allows us to attract and retain excellent teaching faculty.

The attached policies have been developed with the advice of the Academic Senate Executive Board, drawing on the work of the Senate RTPC Committee. They are also supported by the RTPC Promotion Committee. These policies are effective this academic year and apply to full-time RTPC faculty who continually teach for at least 75% of their full-time effort, whether they have a teaching, clinical, or practitioner title.

Please direct any questions about implementation of the attached policies to the office of the Vice Provost for Academic and Faculty Affairs.

Cc: President Nikias
Academic Senate President
President's Cabinet
Provost's Cabinet
Deans of Faculty Council

UNIVERSITY POLICIES FOR FULL-TIME TEACHING FACULTY APPOINTMENT AND PROMOTION

All RTPC Teaching Faculty

The performance of every teaching faculty member should receive careful review by an appropriate faculty committee every three to five years as to whether promotion is appropriate and whether reappointment is appropriate. If the review indicates promotion seems appropriate, the school will initiate the further evaluations required by its Provost-approved RTPC promotion process. Decisions on promotion will only be made after review and recommendation by an appropriate faculty body. The committees must include both tenured and RTPC faculty. If the dean does not concur with the advice of the faculty committee, the Provost will decide after receiving the advice of the University Committee on RTPC Promotions.

As with all faculty appointments and promotions, decisions on teaching faculty should reflect our commitment to merit, equal opportunity, diversity, and inclusiveness.

As a pathway to recognize our best teachers, all full-time teaching faculty will be considered candidates for continuing appointment, as detailed below.

Multi-year appointments

Longer-term contracts should be associated with successful promotion reviews. When a full-time teaching faculty member is promoted to the RTPC Associate Professor (or Senior Lecturer) level, the expected contract length will be three years. When an individual is promoted to the RTPC full Professor (or Master Lecturer) level, the expected contract length will be five years. (These terms are already the practice in large parts of the University.) If there is an exceptional case where a shorter contract length is needed because the teaching need is uncertain, the dean must request special permission from the Provost.

All deans should propose to the Provost appropriate raises to recognize each successful promotion.

For faculty on multi-year contracts, the periodic assessment of performance should occur before the end of each three or five-year term, preferably in the fall of the last year of the term. Decisions on reappointment will be made after review and recommendation by an appropriate faculty body.

A teaching faculty member on a multi-year appointment should be notified of non-reappointment by the beginning of the final semester of the appointment. If not, the faculty member will receive pay and extension of benefits to the extent notice falls short of one semester. The reasons, as well as the process, for any proposed non-reappointment of faculty on multi-year contracts will be reviewed by the Vice Provost for Academic and Faculty Affairs.

A multi-year contract may be terminated mid-contract for poor performance or adequate cause as defined in the Faculty Handbook, after consultation with a faculty committee. If so terminated, the faculty member will receive 90 days' notice or pay and extension of benefits to the extent notice falls short of 90 days.

A multi-year contract may also be terminated mid-contract for programmatic or economic reasons. If there is a proposal to terminate for programmatic or economic reasons, other opportunities to retain the faculty member, as determined by the dean, will be considered by the dean; if terminated for programmatic or

economic reasons the faculty member will receive one semester's notice or pay and extension of benefits to the extent notice falls short of one semester.

Mid-contract terminations for those holding multiyear appointments will include an appeal process. The first appeal level is to the dean. If the dean denies the appeal, the faculty member can appeal a mid-contract termination to the Vice Provost for Academic and Faculty Affairs.

Promotion of Teaching Faculty to Continuing Appointment

After a full-time teaching faculty member has been promoted to the full Professor (or Master Lecturer) level, and if the dean can demonstrate continuing programmatic need and financial support for the position, the individual can be considered for a continuing appointment. Continuing appointment will be based on exceptional performance and the expectation of continued excellence and growth in performance and expertise. Each new grant of continuing appointment must improve the average teaching quality at USC.

Continuing appointment can be granted by the President of the University, through the Provost, after a recommendation by the school's faculty and dean, and review of the file and recommendation by an appropriate panel of the University Committee on Appointments, Promotions and Tenure, which will include both tenured and RTPC teaching faculty.

Unlike consideration for tenure or continuing appointments for librarians, the review of teaching faculty proposed for continuing appointment will not be an up or out decision. Teaching faculty not approved for continuing appointment can continue in their current position, subject to applicable University and school policies.

Continuing Appointment Status

Continuing appointment is a high honor that may be awarded by the President of the University. Teaching faculty members achieving this status will have the modifier "with Distinction" added to their official title (e.g., "Professor (Teaching) of <Discipline>, with Distinction"), and may (outside official contracts and listings) instead employ the undifferentiated title (e.g., "Professor of <Discipline>"), if they wish.

Deans should propose to the Provost appropriate raises to recognize each grant of continuing appointment.

Continuing appointment contracts do not need to be reissued. They are not subject to reappointment or non-reappointment. A decision to end such a contract is expected to be highly unusual and would be regarded as a mid-contract termination. Any proposal to terminate a continuing appointment will be automatically reviewed by the dean. If the dean believes that mid-contract termination is necessary, there will be a second automatic review by the Provost. Only the President, acting through the Provost, can approve a termination of a continuing appointment.

A continuing appointment can be terminated for programmatic or economic reasons, poor performance, or adequate cause as defined in the Faculty Handbook. If there is a proposal to terminate a continuing appointment for programmatic or economic reasons, the dean will consider other opportunities to retain the faculty member, as determined by the dean. In addition, the Provost will review that determination and consider other opportunities to retain the faculty member outside the school, as determined by the Provost. If terminated for programmatic or economic reasons, the faculty member will receive one year's notice, or pay and extension of benefits to the extent the notice falls short of a year.

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Termination of a continuing appointment for poor performance or adequate cause requires that a faculty committee be consulted. If terminated for these reasons, the faculty member will receive reasonable notice or pay and benefits in lieu of notice, as determined by the President, acting through the Provost, taking into account the length and quality of service and the character of the grounds upon which the action was based.