

Fixed-Term Faculty Task Force

Response to Task Force Recommendations

To the OSU community:

The Fixed-Term Faculty Task Force, charged by the Faculty Senate President, submitted their report and recommendations in October 2004. President Ray and I would like to express appreciation for their work. Their report and recommendations are available [online](#).

The attached document outlines specific actions we plan to take in response to the recommendations from the Task Force. I sought input from the Provost's Council, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, and others regarding these actions. Implementation will begin this academic year, and will continue into 2005-06.

Many of the issues raised by the Task Force are related to processes and accountability with regard to performance evaluations, development opportunities, and recognition or reward systems. These are important aspects of our university, and we will continue to work with the Faculty Senate and other individuals and groups to increase effectiveness and relevance in all of these areas.

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Fixed-term Faculty Task Force Response to Task Force Recommendations March 27, 2005

Recommendation 1

Administration should assess the value of high quality undergraduate instruction, research, extension, clinical services and administration to the university, and **implement policies, recognition, and rewards** consistent with that value.

Response to recommendation 1: The University will review its recognition and reward systems to ensure that it is consistent with its mission and goals. The Provost will work with the Faculty Recognition and Awards Committee to complete a review by end of 2005 calendar year.

Recommendation 2

Because FTF perform such a range of service to the university, under such varying circumstances, we suggest that ***predictability and consistency, rather than uniformity*** across the varied types of fixed-term faculty in the areas of salary increases, professional development and promotion would promote a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment among FTF.

Recommendation 3

Units should develop a **consistent system for measuring and rewarding exemplary performance**, and a **system for disseminating that information** to FTF. It is the Task

Force's sense once again that predictability and consistency within units are more important than uniformity across types of FTF.

Response to recommendations 2 and 3: The University will ensure that clear guidelines are provided in the next salary adjustment cycle to include FTF in the faculty pool, and will follow-up with audits to ensure that university guidelines are being followed at the unit level. The offices of Academic Affairs and Human Resources will work together to implement the relevant processes. A post-audit follow-up process, driven by the Provost Office, will ensure accountability of unit heads.

Recommendation 4

FTF are essential to university operations. Their importance must be acknowledged from the highest levels of administration. Administration should **hold department heads accountable** for leadership and quality communication with FTF in order to improve respect and recognition issues, and to promote cultural change at OSU.

Response to recommendation 4: The University will initiate audits after completion of each performance review cycle to ensure that FTF have been reviewed, per university's faculty review guidelines. A post-audit follow-up process, driven by the Provost Office, will ensure accountability of unit heads.

Administrative reviews of Deans and Department Heads/Chairs will include an assessment of their policies and practices regarding FTF. The offices of Academic Affairs and Human resources will develop guidelines for periodic 360-degree review of administrators at all levels in the organization. The Vice Provost for Academic Affairs will distribute these guidelines by December 2005 for use in the 2005-2006 review cycle.

The unit-level diversity plans currently under development will address climate issues within the unit.

Recommendation 5

We recommend the establishment of **opportunities for professional development and travel** for all FTF, consistent with the opportunities implemented for professional faculty.

Response to recommendation 5: Professional faculty development fund was established for "professional faculty." The scope of the fund will be expanded to cover instructor-level appointment. However, it is expected that development and travel for fixed-term research faculty will be provided through research grants or through existing OSU/HR professional development programs. Academic Affairs will establish guidelines for department chairs/heads to include in their review of faculty evaluation of development opportunities for fixed-term faculty supported on research grants. The Vice Provost for Academic Affairs will distribute these guidelines to departments by December 2005 for use in the 2005-2006 review cycle.

Recommendation 6

Fixed-term faculty should be able to **transfer leave balances** to other fixed-term faculty. This will promote a sense of camaraderie and shared effort.

Response to recommendation 6: At present, Board Rules do not allow OSU to transfer leave balances for any non-classified employees (OAR 580-021-0030). Any change in the OAR requires an OUS and State Board level process. Inquiries regarding interest of other OUS

institutions in this regard will be made via the Inter-institutional Faculty Senate and the OUS' Provosts' Council.

Recommendation 7

Current FTTF members recommend establishing a **mailing list and mentoring groups** for all FTF, to address the differences in orientation at hiring. Mentoring groups could also help address issues of alienation felt by fixed-term faculty at OSU.

Response to recommendation 7: Campus-wide mailing lists already exist for different faculty groups. The FTF are encouraged to work with Human Resources on developing mailing lists/mentoring groups in specific areas of interest.

Recommendation 8

Annual appointments do not reward exemplary performance. **Bridging funds** would provide some security during a specific time frame for grant-supported FTF until subsequent grant funds are disbursed, and could come from indirect costs or returned overhead.

Response to recommendation 8: The University has in place policies regarding notice of non-reappointment to professional faculty. These policies will be extended to cover instructor-level appointments.

For fixed-term research appointments, academic units make every effort to provide bridging funds, if appropriate. While it is difficult to guarantee bridge funds in all cases, to help individuals and units improve their planning process, Human Resources will include in appointment letters to fixed-term research faculty the duration of the grant funding their position. The Research Office has also started conversations on the concept of "salary safety net" for soft money positions for principal investigators using Indirect Cost Return (ICR). However, that concept requires a campus-wide discussion, including an assessment of the implications of such a policy on the research enterprise and the university as a whole.

Recommendation 9

A **two-year rolling contract** would more appropriately reward exemplary performance of instructors and professional faculty, especially those with records of long-term service to OSU.

Response to recommendation 9: University leadership is currently discussing multi-year contracts, and will respond before the end of the academic year.