

# Faculty Senate

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## Faculty Status Committee

### Annual Report 2000-01

This past year, the Faculty Status Committee revised its standing rules and reviewed issues related to Faculty Research Assistants. In addition, the Committee was asked to appoint representatives to a Faculty Senate Ad Hoc Committee examining extension faculty apportionment in the Senate and a Joint Faculty Senate/Academic Affairs issue group examining matters relating to professional faculty.

Standing Rules Revision. The Standing Rules were revised for clarity of language and to assure that the committee membership continues to represent all faculty at OSU. The Faculty Senate approved the following revision at its April meeting:

The Faculty Status Committee examines existing policies and makes recommendations to the Faculty Senate for new policies regarding academic freedom, tenure, appointment, promotion, termination, and procedures for review and appeals, and the committee maintains contact with other faculty affairs committees. Generally, the full Committee meets quarterly; subcommittees may meet more frequently depending on the nature of issues under consideration. The Committee is composed of nine Faculty members representing the broad spectrum of faculty appointments as identified in the Faculty Senate Bylaws.

Faculty Research Assistants. At the beginning of the year, a member of the Committee asked the Chair to bring concerns raised about faculty research assistants to the attention of Henry Sayre, Faculty Senate President. The concerns included participation in writing grants, job security, promotions, and soft money. Sayre recommended that a subgroup of the Faculty Status Committee investigate this further. The subgroup included Joe Toth (chair), John Block, and Teresa Sawyer. The subgroup surveyed research assistants at OSU and benchmarked with peer institutions. Though some good points were raised, the response rate was too low to draw any conclusions or make any recommendations. A copy of the full report follows.

Committee Appointments. Oscar Riera-Lizarazu agreed to serve on the Faculty Senate Ad Hoc Committee examining extension faculty apportionment, and John Block agreed to serve on the Joint Faculty Senate/Academic Affairs issue group examining matters relating to professional faculty. Neither committee formed this year.

Other. The Chair of the Committee met twice with the Faculty Consultative Group regarding the reorganization of campus units.

Membership -- 2000-2001 Loretta Rielly '01 [Chair] Valley Library  
 William Earl '01 Speech Communication  
 Teresa Sawyer '01 Botany & Plant Pathology  
 John Block '02 Pharmacy  
 Oscar Riera-Lizarazu '02 Crop & Soil Science  
 Joe Toth '02 Valley Library  
 Beth Barker '03 Business Affairs  
 Ron Doel '03 History  
 Kate Hunter-Zaworski '03 Civil, Construction and Env.Eng.  
 Executive Committee Liaison - Dan Arp  
 Submitted by Loretta Rielly, June 26, 2001

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Faculty Status Sub-Committee on Faculty Research Assistants

Sub-Committee Report

Submitted by: J. Block, T. Sawyer, and J. Toth

14 June 2001

Issue:

The Faculty Status Committee appointed a sub-committee to investigate issues relating to Faculty Research Assistants. It instructed the sub-committee to deal only with FRAs, and not with the professional faculty at large. According to the Faculty Handbook, Faculty Research Assistants and Senior Faculty Research Assistants are ranks "used for key support faculty members engaged in research. The positions require bachelor's degrees but not the doctoral degree or other terminal degree appropriate to the field in which the research is being conducted." The sub-committee identified job security, vacation and sick leave, and rank as possible topics to address, but decided that its inquiry be guided by responses to an Invitation to Comment sent to all FRAs.

Methods:

The sub-committee contacted FRAs by e-mail, informing them of the sub-committee's duty to investigate FRA status, and inviting them to identify issues of concern to them (see Appendix One). The sub-committee also identified and canvassed its "sister" institutions, asking counterpart faculty senators to share results from similar investigations they may have conducted. In addition, it located and examined definitions of FRA or equivalent positions posted by these institutions on their respective homepages (see Appendix Two). Finally, the sub-committee consulted OSU Human Resources staff to inquire on how FRA position openings and applications are processed, as well as to pose questions on points of interest to the sub-committee (see Appendix Three).

Findings:

The response to the subcommittee's query was poor, with nine responses received from invitations sent to over four hundred FRAs. Respondents note that duration of employment can be tenuous because the position is predicated on financial support from granting agencies, but accept this condition as one of the terms of employment. Those that mention vacation and sick leave are satisfied with the time allotted.

Many of the respondents are dissatisfied with the promotion process, in which lack of standardized promotion criteria and a single level of advancement are seen as barriers to just desserts. A general theme on the difficulty of fulfilling promotion requirements appears in numerous responses (see Appendix Four). Diverse responsibilities, varied skills, and limited opportunities to present or publish papers impede progress toward promotion. The requirement of 4 years of university service in a particular department before promotion eligibility overtly discounts similar service in other departments within the university, yet the lack of job security and dependence on soft money require FRAs to move to other research programs for continued employment within the university. Relocation or reduced FTE negates accumulated service obtained in different departments, which creates an additional obstacle for promotion of FRAs who choose to maintain careers at OSU. In short, devotion to the general and varied research agenda of the university is not fully recognized in the FRA promotion process. The sub-committee also notes that not all FRAs are directly involved with research, a fact the promotion guidelines do not recognize.

Conclusion:

Response to the sub-committee's Invitation to Comment was too low (approximately 3%) to allow the sub-committee to draw any conclusions from its inquiry. Simply put, greater participation from the FRAs is needed to facilitate further investigation of employment issues related to the position of research assistants at OSU. Nonetheless, the subcommittee members wish to call attention to the issues raised regarding promotion and years of service described in the "Findings" section of this report.

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Appendix One:

Faculty Status Committee Inquiry on Faculty Research Assistants

The Faculty Status Committee, composed of nine faculty members representing all segments of the university, examines existing policies and makes recommendations to the Faculty Senate for new policies regarding academic freedom, tenure, appointment, promotion, termination, and procedures for review and appeals. The Committee has been petitioned to review the status of faculty research assistants in light of its aforementioned charge. Accordingly, the Committee asks faculty research assistants to share with the Committee concerns, opinions, and insights about any aspect of their positions. The Committee has identified job security, vacation and sick leave, and rank as topics warranting examination, and thus welcomes specific comments on them. This inquiry, however, is a general one, so all comments are pertinent and appreciated.

The Committee encourages individuals to respond in ways comfortable to them. If you choose to append comments to this attachment, you may send it by e-mail to Teresa Sawyer at Teresa.Sawyer@orst.edu. You may also send paper communications, signed or unsigned, to Teresa at the following address: Teresa Sawyer, Botany & Plant Pathology, 3048 Cordley Hall, Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon, 97331.

If you have questions about this inquiry, please contact the following Committee members, who prepared this document:

John Block Teresa Sawyer Joe Toth  
College of Pharmacy Botany & Plant Pathology Valley Library  
John.Block@orst.edu Teresa.Sawyer@orst.edu Joe.Toth@orst.edu  
7-5779 7-2332 7-7270

Name (optional):

Description of Duties (optional):

Comments:

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Appendix Two:

#### Research Career Tracks at Peer Institutions

#### Institutions and Job Titles Classification

Texas A&M University Non-Faculty Professional  
Research Assistant  
Research Associate  
Assistant Research Scientist (PhD only)  
Associate Research Scientist (PhD only)  
Senior Research Scientist

Research Assistant Professor  
Research Associate Professor  
Research Professor

Kansas State University Faculty  
Research Assistant (BS/MS)  
Research Associate (PhD)  
Senior Scientist (PhD)

Research Assistant Professor  
Research Associate Professor  
Research Professor

Iowa State University Professional & Scientific  
Research Associate I (BS/MS) Staff  
Research Associate II (BS/MS)  
Assistant Scientist I (MS)  
Assistant Scientist II  
Assistant Scientist III (PhD)  
Associate Scientist (PhD+2)  
Scientist I  
Scientist II

### Scientist III

University of Colorado-Boulder Temporary Faculty  
Professional Research Assistants (BS)  
Senior Professional Research Assistants (MS)  
Research Associates (PhD)  
Senior Research Associates (PhD)

Research Instructor (MS)  
Assistant Research Professor  
Associate Research Professor  
Research Professor

University of Colorado-Boulder (CIRES) Faculty on Renewable  
Administrative Associate I (BS) Term Appointments  
Administrative Associate II (BS+3/MS)  
Administrative Associate III (BS+/MS+/PhD)  
Senior Administrative Associate  
Associate Scientist I (BS)  
Associate Scientist II (BS+3/MS)  
Associate Scientist III (BS+/MS+/PhD)  
Senior Associate Scientist (at least MS)  
Research Scientist I (PhD)  
Research Scientist II (PhD+3) (equivalent to Assistant Professor)  
Research Scientist III (PhD+7) (equivalent to Associate Professor)  
Senior Research Scientist (equivalent to Full Professor)

University of California-Davis Science/Laboratory Research  
Staff Research Associate I  
Staff Research Associate II  
Staff Research Associate III  
Professional Research  
Assistant Research (title) I-VI (PhD) (equivalent to Assistant Professor)  
Associate Research (title) I-V (PhD) (equivalent to Associate Professor)  
Research (title) I-VII (PhD) (equivalent to Full Professor)

University of Wyoming Academic Professional  
Research Assistant (BS)  
Research Associate I (BS+6mo)  
Research Associate II (MS+1)  
Research Associate III (MS+3/PhD preferred)  
Research Associate IV (PhD+1)  
Research Scientist (PhD+2)  
Senior Research Scientist

Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University Special Research Faculty  
Research Associate (at least BS)  
Senior Research Associate (at least MS)  
Postdoctoral Associate  
Research Scientist/Scholar (PhD) (equivalent to Asst or Associate Professor)  
Senior Research Scientist/Scholar (equivalent to Full Professor)

Research Assistant Professor  
Research Associate Professor  
Research Professor

Oregon State University Professional Faculty  
Faculty Research Assistant (BS)  
Senior Faculty Research Assistant  
Research Associate (PhD)

Research Assistant Professor  
Research Associate Professor  
Senior Research Professor

Ohio State University Unclassified Research  
Research Assistant 1 (BS) Positions (not  
Research Assistant 2 Administrative or  
Research Associate 1 (MS) Professional)  
Research Associate 2 (MS)  
Research Scientist (PhD only)  
Senior Research Scientist (PhD only)

University of Illinois-Urbana Faculty  
Research Assistant  
Research Associate

Research Assistant Professor  
Research Associate Professor  
Research Professor

University of Missouri-Columbia Research and Technical  
Research Specialist (BS) Support  
Senior Research Specialist (MS)  
Research Scientist (MS+2/3; PhD)  
Senior Research Scientist (PhD+2/3)

Research Assistant Professor  
Research Associate Professor

North Carolina State University Professional Staff  
Research Assistant (MS)  
Research Associate (Post-doc)

Research Assistant Professor  
Research Associate Professor  
Research Professor

Purdue University Laboratory/Research  
Research Assistant (BS/MS/PhD)  
Research Associate (BS/MS/PhD)  
Senior Research Associate  
Assistant Research Scientist (BS/PhD)  
Associate Research Scientist (MS+5/PhD preferred)  
Research Scientist

Research Assistant Professor  
Research Associate Professor

University of Nebraska-Lincoln  
Research Assistant Professional Staff (Other  
Research Associate Academic Staff)

Research Assistant Professor Professional Staff  
Research Associate Professor (Academic-Administrative  
Research Professor Staff)

Washington State University  
Assistant Scientist Scientific Faculty (Tenure-  
Associate Scientist Accruing)

Scientist

Assistant Research Professor Research Faculty (Non-Associate Research Professor tenure Accruing)  
Research Professor

University of Georgia  
Assistant Research Scientist (PhD) Faculty (Professional)  
Senior Research Scientist (PhD)

Michigan State University Academic Specialist  
Academic Specialist (BS/MS/PhD)  
Senior Academic Specialist (PhD)  
Research Associate (PhD) Fixed Term Faculty

Oklahoma State University  
Research Specialist Staff  
Senior Research Specialist

Assistant Researcher (PhD) Faculty  
Research Scientist

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Appendix Three:

The sub-committee sent the following questions to Human Resources. Two individuals, David Shaw, Associate Director, and Kathy Meddaugh, Employee Records and Information Manager, responded. Their answers are in bolded italics after each question.

1. How does Human Resources review a job description to decide if it is appropriate for a FRA (assistant or associate). Is the source of funding important (hard versus soft money)?

*David Shaw: Positions are reviewed when a department submits a request to conduct recruitment. Funding source is not a consideration.*

2. How did the two levels of RAs (FRA and Senior FRA) come about?

*David Shaw: Don't know.*

*Kathy Meddaugh: At the research level, Faculty Research Assistants are entry level and only require a Bachelor's degree (usually) - depending on the position. Senior Faculty Research Assistant positions are reserved for Promotion and Tenure ONLY. Refer to the Promotion and Tenure Guidelines on the Academic Affairs website for more information about promotion. <http://osu.orst.edu/dept/faculty/academic/dossier/p&tindx.htm>*

3. How did the rules or requirements for promotion from FRA to SFRA come about? Were they developed in the Faculty Senate P&T Committee? If so, what kind of input did that committee receive from FRAs, since they were not allowed to serve on that committee at the time? Why are FRAs not allowed to serve on the P&T committee at present?

*David Shaw: Don't know.*

*Kathy Meddaugh: Promotion and Tenure questions should be directed to Academic Affairs. <http://osu.orst.edu/dept/faculty/academic/dossier/p&tindx.htm>*

4. Where can we obtain a list of all faculty titles at OSU?

David Shaw: I believe these can be found in the Faculty Handbook

Kathy Meddaugh: Titles or ranks? Check the Academic Appointment Guidelines for ranks.  
<http://osu.orst.edu/admin/hr/policies.html>

Titles are "working" titles and there are hundreds of them - Dean, Department Chair, Etc. Usage of titles is mentioned in the above document.

5. Are the administrative rules that define FRA positions (both assistant and associate) limited to OSU, or do they apply system-wide? Could we have a copy of these rules (a URL will do)?

David Shaw: OAR 580, Division 20, applies to all OUS institutions. I believe (but I am not positive) that you can find the OAR on the OUS web page ([www.ous.edu](http://www.ous.edu)).

Kathy Meddaugh: OUS does not recognize Faculty Research Assistant - only Research Assistant. 10+ years ago, there was a push to change the rank to Faculty Research Assistant (at OSU only) to help differentiate between faculty and graduate assistants. A number of central administrative people (George Keller and myself included) attended the meetings with OUS and heard the rationale for changing the rank.

OUS approved our request. However, OSU is the only institution that uses Faculty Research Assistants - everyone else uses Research Assistant.

OSU requires a PhD for their Research Associate ranks. In most cases, Research Associates are Post Docs that are only here for a year or two. Should they continue longer than three years, justification must be submitted to allow for continuation of the appointment with the Post Doc qualifier removed.

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Appendix Four:

The Faculty Handbook chapter, "Promotion and Tenure Guidelines," lists the following requirements:

"Promotion from Faculty Research Assistant to Senior Faculty Research Assistant may be considered after four years of service. To be promoted, a candidate must:

- have a graduate degree appropriate to the field in which the research activities are performed, or comparable educational or professional experience;
- demonstrate a high level of competence, achievement, and potential in research, or serve effectively in a position requiring high individual responsibility or special professional expertise;
- demonstrate a high degree of initiative in research and leadership among research colleagues in the department, as documented in authorship, management responsibilities, and creative approaches to research."