

MEMORANDUM

ATTENTION Dilson Rassier, Provost and Vice-President Academic, SFU
Kumari Beck, President, SFUFA **DATE** 15 November 2024

FROM Joint Committee on Teaching Faculty Titles and Ranks **PAGES** 5

RE: Teaching Faculty Titles and Ranks – Joint Committee Recommendation
(and Statement of Outstanding Issues)

As part of the 2022-2025 SFU/SFUFA Collective Agreement, a joint committee was formed per the Memorandum of Agreement re: Teaching Faculty Titles and Ranks. The committee’s purpose was to explore in greater detail a proposal that SFUFA brought forward in bargaining to amend the ranks and titles of teaching faculty to align with research faculty ranks and titles and to consider the implications of such a change and what specific language changes would be required to the Collective Agreement.

The Committee did consider specific language in order to determine what would need to be addressed should the Parties decide to pursue this matter further in bargaining. We did not, however, manage to resolve all issues related to how common principles ought to be implemented, and so what we provide below captures the areas of agreement in principle and outlines where further discussion would be required. We trust that the Parties will be able to decide to what extent they wish to pursue this matter further through the collective bargaining process.

Recommendations

After significant discussion, the committee devised the following principles and considerations.

1. While there is general agreement that changing the ranks and titles of teaching faculty to align with research faculty ranks and titles could be beneficial to both teaching faculty and the University, the introduction of professorial ranks for teaching faculty should be accompanied by the introduction of tenure, including a robust “up-or-out” process as exists for research faculty.
2. The existing teaching assessment language and processes are insufficient to support a tenure decision. The Parties will need to adopt new processes that allow for a more thorough review of teaching, which could include methods of evaluation like classroom observation, enhanced documentation of efforts to improve teaching practice, better use of student input and evaluations, and external review (as examples). Procedures for teaching assessment should be applied to all faculty (not just teaching faculty), which would communicate that teaching is highly valued by the University community and is a critical part of the role of all faculty members. Any change to teaching evaluation will also require a re-evaluation of how to organize and structure the reviews conducted by TPCs for both tenure and promotion and

salary review. The review process will also need to consider who is best placed to conduct classroom observations and formative assessments of pre-tenure members.

3. To the extent that changes are made to teaching assessment for the purposes of tenure, promotion, and salary review, it is also recognized that there is an important role for formative assessment (particularly for junior faculty members) that focuses on growth and development of teaching skills as opposed to assessment for the purposes of performance review and evaluation. Documenting how such formative assessments have informed and improved the subsequent teaching practice of a faculty member should be a consideration in tenure, promotion and salary review processes.
4. The workload of teaching faculty in the new ranks should be considered. The committee specifically explored the feasibility of developing an annualized workload that replaces the current system of 1-in-8s, 1-in-9s, and 1-in-16s, which is both confusing and administratively onerous. What is more, current workload practices, which have some lecturers teaching 8, 8 and 6 courses in the three years before having one semester free of teaching, are too onerous to allow those lecturers to prepare for a robust tenure and promotion application. The committee analysed the maximum number of courses currently taught over the careers of teaching faculty, and explored how to transform the same number of courses taught into a workload pattern with a consistent yearly expectation of the number of courses to be taught and a regular semester free of teaching. A move to this model may be in the interests of both the University and the Association, but the Committee was unable to settle on a specific recommendation that would meet the needs of both Parties. Further discussion in this area could be productive, but would need to be conducted at the bargaining table. We provide as an appendix the calculations done by both Parties in relation to this question.
5. With a shift in ranks and titles, the parties should also consider whether the two existing categories of work for teaching faculty (teaching and service) appropriately capture the work to be done or whether additional categories such as “scholarly currency” and/or “educational leadership” ought to be required and evaluated for purposes of tenure, promotion and salary review.
6. There should be a process for existing teaching faculty to transition to teaching ranks with new titles. Maintaining two separate pathways for teaching faculty may be administratively onerous; however, there is recognition that some existing faculty may not want to transition to a new system (which, as discussed above, would include an up-or-out tenure process).
7. Relatively minor changes to the Collective Agreement could synchronize the timelines to consideration for tenure and promotion for teaching faculty with those currently used for research faculty, improving cross-rank equity and easing the administrative burden of managing two sets of timelines.
8. Despite a change in title and alterations to make the ranks and titles of teaching faculty more similar to those of research faculty, there will remain some differences between them as a result of their different roles.

With the above general considerations, the Committee turned to consideration of specific mechanisms to operationalize a move; the following builds on the principles above and indicates where general agreement on possible steps forward was achieved.

Titles and Tenure:

- The transition to professorial titles for Teaching Faculty is in the interests of both Parties, and both Parties agree such a transition also requires the development of a tenure review process.

Teaching Assessments:

- The existing teaching assessment language and processes could be improved to provide clear expectations of teaching excellence for all faculty.
- **Student Evaluations/Student Experience Surveys:** Faculty members could be better encouraged to discuss in their teaching dossier specific student feedback and to demonstrate how they have responded to it.
- **Peer Assessment:** Faculty members should undergo assessments of teaching competence. Assessors should be selected from among appropriately qualified Research and Teaching Faculty members from within and outside the Department; normally, no more than one assessor should be a member of the TPC.
- **External review:** Reviewers external to the University should provide feedback on the faculty member's teaching dossier, including syllabi, assignments, course development, etc.

Scholarly Currency:

- The parties should include an additional category of assessment, "scholarly currency", to be evaluated for purposes of tenure, promotion and salary review. Evidence of scholarly currency will vary by discipline, but refers to continued engagement with disciplinary and/ or pedagogical currency or scholarship, and may be demonstrated in a variety of ways, including but not limited to: discipline-based scholarship; scholarship of learning and teaching; participation at, or contributions to, academic conferences including sessions on pedagogical research and technique; teaching-related activity and supervision outside of normal classroom functions; professional work that allows the faculty member to maintain a mastery of the subject area.

Workload:

- The 1-in-9s/8s/16s could be replaced by a system that provides an annual teaching load that is equal across the different ranks. This change would eliminate a system that is both confusing and administratively onerous. A nominal teaching load for teaching faculty, including consideration of course equivalencies, was not agreed in this process but there is general agreement that converting the 1-in-9s/8s/16s into an annualized number would simplify course and workload planning for both the University and teaching faculty.
- There are significant disciplinary differences both between and within Faculties with regards to class sizes, pedagogy and related teaching practices, all of which have an impact on the ways workload is counted and assigned. This reality is currently reflected in different normal teaching loads across (and at times within) Faculties.
- Real teaching loads should not increase or decrease as a result of this transition alone; how that is to be assured is an area the Committee was unable to resolve.
- An annualized system might make it possible for Teaching Faculty to have more regular semesters free of teaching, though this would have to be scheduled by the Chair in consultation

with the Member at least one year (and ideally longer) in advance in order to ensure Departmental teaching obligations are met. In this area, too, the Committee did not achieve a final consensus on implementation, as further discussion with Deans and with Association members would be necessary to determine if and how to move to this model.

- An annual teaching workload for teaching could make it possible to remove the link between Teaching and Research Faculty workloads that is currently embedded in the Collective Agreement. That, however, is another area that remains unsettled, as the various workload and workload configuration considerations need to be considered as a whole.

Timeline synchronization:

- Relatively minor changes to the Collective Agreement could synchronize the timelines to consideration for tenure and promotion for teaching faculty with those currently used for research faculty, improving cross-rank equity and easing the administrative burden of managing two sets of timelines. While not included in this report, work has been done to draft possible language for consideration should the Parties choose to explore this transition further.

Transition:

It is undesirable to maintain two different streams of continuing/tenure-track teaching faculty, instead, we recommend the transition in title of existing continuing faculty to the new ranks under the conditions below.

- Continuing Faculty
 - Existing continuing Lecturers to become Assistant Professors of Teaching with continuing appointments. They should not be subject to a deadline to apply for promotion, but should they choose to seek promotion to Associate Professor of Teaching, they would be required to undergo a tenure review at the same time, and if unsuccessful in such an application would retain their continuing (but untenured) appointment.
 - Existing continuing Senior Lecturers to become Associate Professors of Teaching with continuing appointments. They should not be subject to a deadline to apply for either tenure or tenure and promotion, and if unsuccessful in such an application would retain their continuing (but untenured) appointment.
 - Existing continuing University Lecturers to become Professors of Teaching with tenure.
 - Existing Lecturers who are in probationary appointments must either be assessed for continuing appointments (as Assistant Professors of Teaching) on the schedule that currently exists and under the standards in place at time of hire; or they must be assessed for promotion and tenure under the new criteria and process. In both cases, provisions as to what happens with an unsuccessful application are already in place.
 - New teaching faculty will generally be appointed at the rank of Assistant Professor of Teaching and will be required to undergo “up or out” review for Tenure and Promotion simultaneously on the same time schedule as currently applies to Research Faculty.
- Term Teaching Faculty
 - Term faculty should normally be appointed at the Assistant Professor of Teaching rank.
 - If a term lecturer is successful in an application for a tenure-track Teaching Faculty position, they should be eligible to apply for early consideration for tenure and promotion if they meet the conditions in the “Acceleration for Consideration” mirroring that of 30.19 of those for tenure-track research faculty.

The above outlines the areas of general agreement and those areas that remain unsettled after our discussions. We believe a good deal of progress has been achieved, and that this report deserves to be considered seriously by the Parties. It is also clear, however, that aspects of a transition – and particularly those related to a new model for Teaching Faculty workload – cannot be resolved in this forum, and would need to be considered in the collective bargaining process.

Joint Committee membership, listed alphabetically:

- Angela Brooks-Wilson – Dean, Faculty of Science
- David Broun – Associate Professor, Department of Physics
- Peter Hall – Associate Vice-President Academic
- Brian Green – Executive Director, SFUFA
- Carman Neustaedter – Dean, Faculty of Communication, Art and Technology
- Michael Sjoerdsma – University Lecturer, School of Engineering Science

Leah Chao, Adam James, and Jennifer Scott also attended committee meetings to provide support.



Name: Peter Hall

For Simon Fraser University

Name: David Broun

For Simon Fraser University Faculty Association

Attachments:

Appendix A – SFUFA calculations on the actual courses taught

Appendix B - SFU teaching capacity calculations