

Reimagining non-tenure stream faculty and academic staff evaluation/ career pathways at MSU

Strategic Plan Theme: Staff and Faculty Success

Funding Level: Below \$1 million

Facility Needs: No new facilities will be needed

Submitting Unit: College of Arts & Letters

Collaborating colleges/departments/units involved with this proposal.

College of Arts & Letters, Dept. of Writing Rhetoric, and American Cultures, Romance and Classical Studies, Theatre, English, Art, Art History, and Design, Religious Studies, Linguistics, Languages, and Cultures

What is the proposal's big theme or idea?

Making Non-tenure stream promotion processes transparent, equitable, and inclusive

What is the proposal's goal?

Some ideas for areas that need to be addressed include the following particularly for positions not covered in the AS handbook:

- 1) Conduct a review of non-tenure stream faculty and academic staff roles at the university guided by the values outlined in the MSU University Strategic Plan and DEI Strategic Plan as well as creating a sense of belonging and financial stability at MSU for such faculty and academic staff. The review should include voices of all stakeholders and new policies should be formulated including representatives from all stakeholder groups.
- 2) Consider whether some of the position types might be merged to reduce systemic confusion and uncertainty concerning equity among the appointment types.
- 3) If a certain position type is not to be merged, ensure that there is a handbook available for that position type like the academic specialist handbook is for academic specialists. Although fixed-term faculty fall under the purview of the faculty handbook, there is very little in the handbook that is devoted to their particular position type, while they are also held accountable to the many policies in this handbook.
- 4) Create models for equitable annual review practices and clear promotion pathways and procedures for the various appointment types if they do not already exist. Ensure that the promotion pathways include university level procedure and transparent raise structures that are on par with those of the tenure-stream and academic specialist systems. Identify policy and procedure gaps.
- 5) Identify ways that faculty and academic staff on long-term, one-year renewable contracts can be shifted to more stable appointment types, including longer-term contracts.
- 6) Create mentoring and peer review structures in units to support non-tenure stream faculty and academic staff that support career pathways and foster a sense of belonging. Refer to the reports of the MLA Committee on Contingent Labor in the Profession - <https://www.mla.org/About-Us/Governance/Committees/Committee-Listings/Professional-Issues/Committee-on-Contingent-Labor-in-the-Profession>
- 7) Conduct a salary equity review of each appointment type across the university to ensure a living wage among non-tenure stream faculty and academic staff. Include data gathered from peer institutions in analysis.
- 8) Work with the Office of Faculty and Academic Staff Development to create a roll-out strategy to bring into conversation faculty, academic staff, and administrators on new policies and procedures at the

university level so that they are transparent and easily accessible. Units would also need to formulate and implement bylaws changes, criteria formulation, mentoring and peer review practices.

- 9) The College of Arts & Letters has had great success in using the Charting a Pathway to Intellectual Leadership (CPIL) model with non-tenure stream faculty and academic staff as is easily adaptable to a variety of categories of academic work.

Define the significance, or impact of your big idea.

Acknowledge and include non-tenure stream faculty and academic staff contributions as equal partners and essential to the work of the university. Give them a sense of belonging instead of “contingent” or “fixed-term faculty” when they are here now for years or a whole career of sometimes 1-year appointments with no promotion possibilities. The non-tenure stream positions at MSU are organized into several systems, including fixed-term faculty, academic specialists (fixed-term and continuing system), research associates (post-docs), fixed-term clinical positions, librarians, and several others. Each of these areas has developed given specific contextual and historical needs of particular units or groups of units. Over time multiple non-tenure stream employment categories and titles, however, have created confusion on the part of employees in the various categories and the administrators who oversee them. A general lack of transparency regarding position definition, conditions of employment, annual review, promotion practices, and in some cases raise sources does not promote the recruitment or the retention of a strong, diverse, and equitable non-tenure stream workforce. In 2016, non-tenure stream positions made up 73% percent of all instructional positions (AAUP 2018) at all US institutions combined. According to the MSU faculty/staff dashboard, in 2021-22, 1974.6 fixed-term faculty and academic staff work at MSU compared to 1675 tenure stream faculty. MSU needs to create a more transparent, equitable and inclusive policies and practices in the area of non-tenure stream faculty and academic staff positions and career pathways. This is particularly the case for fixed-term faculty who number 846. Much work has already been done on the academic specialist handbook. Some ideas for areas that need to be addressed include the following particularly for positions not covered in the AS handbook are presented in the field above.

For AAUP 2018 - See <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2018/10/12/about-three-quarters-all-faculty-positions-are-tenure-track-according-new-aaup>

Who will be impacted?

All Non-tenure stream faculty and academic staff at MSU and I assume on MSU’s other campuses. This will greatly benefit all tenure stream faculty and staff as well by creating a more inclusive workplace. We all benefit when all are included. Our workplace and our ideas are both more resilient and of a higher quality.

What does sustainability for your proposal look like?

That the changes are incorporated in university policies such as university bylaws, policies, procedures as well as college and unit bylaws, policies, and procedures so that they are transparent and consistent across time. That funds are budgeted at the university level for standard promotion raises for non-tenure stream faculty similar to those available to continuing academic specialists.