

Implications of New Job Titles for Instructional Academic Staff

Submitted by the Ad Hoc Committee on Instructional Titles
January 29, 2016

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The increasing use of contingent faculty as undergraduate instructors is leading universities, including the UW–Madison, to reexamine the titles of their instructional staff. At the request of the Academic Staff Executive Committee, an Ad Hoc Committee on Instructional Titles considered the impacts of current titling practices on UW–Madison instructional academic staff and documented titling practices of classroom instructors at peer universities. The committee recommends that the title series of Teaching Professor (Assistant, Associate, no prefix) be made available to instructional academic staff who meet the necessary qualifications; and that the title series for Faculty Associate and Lecturer be retained but revised.

CONTEXT

In 1969, 80% of the U.S. faculty were full-time, tenured and tenure-track faculty. Now, more than 70% of U.S. faculty occupy non-tenure-track positions, and trends suggest that this percentage will continue to increase.¹ According to the American Association of University Professors and other professional groups, challenges associated with the increasing use of contingent faculty appointments currently include unacceptable conditions and compensation for contingent faculty members, poor learning outcomes for students, and the potential erosion of academic freedom. Moreover, what were once seen as concerns internal to the academy are now attracting the scrutiny of parents, legislators, and policymakers.²

Institutions are responding to these challenges in different ways, one of which is re-examining the job titles of contingent faculty. In some cases, institutions have responded to such a review by creating new titling systems that better reflect the qualifications of non-tenure-track faculty and their many contributions to undergraduate and graduate instruction.³

"Academic staff" is a classification unique to the University of Wisconsin System. At the University of Wisconsin–Madison, contingent faculty are known as **instructional academic staff (IAS)**. The current titling series for instructional academic staff serves as a record of the time and conditions in which they were devised and adopted (see Appendix A for an overview of current IAS titles). To date, these titling practices impact 2,339 instructional academic staff—a group that constitutes 27% of all UW–Madison instructional personnel (including faculty and graduate teaching assistants) and teaches 32% of total credit hours.⁴

Because the UW–Madison Academic Staff Executive Committee believed that current IAS may be disadvantaged by the current title system, it created in January 2015 the Ad Hoc Committee on

¹ Maxey, D., & Kezar, A. (2015). Revealing opportunities and obstacles for changing non-tenure-track faculty practices: An examination of stakeholders' awareness of institutional contradictions. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 86(4), 564-594. doi:10.1353/jhe.2015.0022

² Kezar A, Maxey D, Badke L. 2014. *The Imperative for Change: Fostering Understanding of the Necessity of Changing Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Policies and Practices*. Delphi Project on Changing Faculty and Student Success. (6 June 2014; www.uscrossier.org/pullias/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/IMPERATIVE-FOR-CHANGE_WEB-2014.pdf); McGrew, H., & Untener, J. (2010). A primer on improving contingent faculty conditions. *Academe*, 96(4), 43-45.

³ American Association of University Professors, Committee A on Academic Freedom and Tenure, *Contingent Appointments and the Academic Profession*, 2014. <http://www.aaup.org/file/Contingent%20Appointment.pdf>

⁴ *UW–Madison Data Digest, 2014-2015*; Academic Planning and Institutional Research report, *Comparison of Credits Follow the Instructor to Credits Follow the Department for Fall/Spring 2014-15*.

Instructional Titles; its charge was to document titling practices (not working titles) of classroom instructors at other peer universities, and make recommendations regarding UW–Madison instructional titles. The committee met six times between April 2015 and December 2015.

This report provides a brief overview of current titles for instructional staff at UW–Madison, discusses their implications, reviews titling practices of peer institutions, and offers a recommendation.

Prior Efforts to Review and Revise Instructional Academic Staff Titles

Recent efforts to review and revise UW–Madison instructional academic staff job titles date back to 1996, when UW System conducted a study of Teaching Academic Staff in the UW System. One recommendation that was accepted by the Board of Regents in June 1998 stated

UW System Administration should: 3. Consider revising Category B titles to reflect national titling trends so that UW System instructional and research titles might be better understood for grant applications, in the national job market, and for other academic purposes.

In February 2000, the Academic Staff Assembly passed a resolution to create two new academic staff title series: Instructional Professor (Assistant, Associate, no prefix, and Distinguished) and Research Professor (Assistant, Associate, no prefix, and Distinguished). On February 5, 2001, the University Committee moved that the Faculty Senate endorse only one honorific working title: Research Professor (Associate and no prefix). The second motion endorsing Instructional Professor (no prefixes) did not pass.

On May 12, 2014, a resolution regarding the Teaching Professor honorific title was put before the Academic Staff Assembly. The resolution said,

Whereas, the approval of the new title of “Teaching Professor” would be demoralizing and detrimental to long-term instructional academic staff on campus in the absence of a similar opportunity;

Therefore be it resolved, the UW–Madison Academic Staff Assembly is strongly opposed to the use of “Teaching Professor” so long as the honorific title “Teaching Professor” is unavailable to academic staff at UW–Madison.

NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF CURRENT IAS TITLING POLICY

The committee found that the current UW–Madison titling policy disadvantages IAS in the following ways:

1. Current titles of *Faculty Associate* and *Lecturer* do not reflect the qualifications and duties of IAS. As a result, these titles may negatively affect how IAS are perceived and valued by various groups.
 - a. **The public** may believe that IAS are not “real” faculty, wrongly assuming that IAS occupy temporary teaching positions that do not require subject matter expertise.
 - b. Current titles do not carry the same respect with **undergraduate students** as professorial titles, and perhaps may have a negative effect on students’ perception of being taught by experts in their fields. Students may have less confidence that their classroom experience will be led by high quality, credentialed professionals. Letters of recommendations written for students by IAS may put students at a competitive disadvantage compared with students whose letters are from faculty with professorial titles.
 - c. Current titles do not convey to **other academics** inside and outside the University the reality that many IAS hold terminal degrees and are conducting independent instruction with the same level of professionalism as tenure-track faculty. The current model (1)

lacks precision, clarity, and transparency when compared to those of peer institutions and (2) offers no evidence of alignment between professional competencies, credentials, and classroom practice. Current IAS titles at UW–Madison are out of step with other member universities of the Committee on Institutional Cooperation (the consortium of research universities of which UW–Madison is a member).⁵

2. The inability to use titles that include “professor” has hindered the ability of units to recruit and hire the most qualified individuals for these positions; an apparent disparity between UW titling practices and those at other institutions has reduced our ability to recruit and retain credentialed and dedicated teachers, who may be concerned that our titles will not attract the same professional respect as tenure-track titles. Further, it has proven difficult to retain new IAS hires, especially (but not exclusively) in the Lecturer title series.
3. Current titles that do not reflect qualification and duties leave some IAS feeling de-professionalized and marginalized as “second-class” academics.
4. Current titles are not used consistently on our campus. For example, some professional schools have made use of titles such as clinical professor and professor (CHS) to recognize the high professional achievements of colleagues whose main activities do not fit tenure criteria, but whose contributions are absolutely essential to the success of the school. However, these titles have not been applied in most schools and colleges, including those that do a great deal of undergraduate teaching. As a case in point, in some liberal arts departments, such as language departments, long-term lecturers function essentially as instructional professors.⁶ Inconsistent application of titles among instructional staff results in a confusing teaching environment; a fragmented body of instructional academic staff proves a weakened faculty ally and can undermine UW’s efforts to protect tenure.

POLICY OPTIONS

Given these current concerns, the Ad Hoc Committee on Instructional Titles examined two policy options: To bring UW–Madison’s IAS titles in line with those of peer institutions, or leave the current titling system in place.

Option 1: Adopting New Titles for Instructional Academic Staff

Members of the Ad Hoc Committee initially examined titling practices at 20 peer institutions (see Appendix B) and later focused on four institutions whose instructional faculty had a teaching professor title series (see Appendix C). It then considered the advantages and disadvantages of adopting a title series for IAS that includes the word “professor.”

Disadvantages of Adding a Teaching Professor Title Series

1. Title changes could cause some initial confusion.
2. Use of “teaching professor” might meet resistance from tenure-track faculty, who may believe that giving academic staff such a title encroaches on faculty prerogatives.
3. Use of “teaching” professor might meet resistance from those who feel this title change separates instructional academic staff from other academic staff.

⁵ A list of instructional staff titles at member institutions was assembled by the CIC in November 2014 and can be found here: <http://go.wisc.edu/6e22o5>

⁶ UW–Madison Faculty Document 1489, 6 March 2000, p. 1

4. It may take some time to establish a process to ensure titling decisions are made fairly (e.g., when an individual argues that their job duties warrant the “teaching professor” title but their unit does not agree).

Advantages of Adding a Teaching Professor Title Series

1. New titles could reflect the duties and qualifications of IAS more accurately.
2. New titles could make it easier to recruit and retain highly qualified instructors.
3. New titles could raise the stature of IAS in the eyes of students, other academics, and the public.
4. The title of “Teaching Professor” would provide an equitable counterpart to the “Research Professor” title currently available to academic staff researchers at UW–Madison.
5. UW–Madison is undertaking a titling-and-compensation study that will change some if not many employee titles; not only is this a propitious time to consider a new title series for IAS, but also the costs of adding a teaching professor title series would be included with the greater costs of carrying out the study’s recommendations.
6. Adopting instructional titles used by peer institutions could increase understanding of the qualifications and roles of UW–Madison IAS.

Option 2: Leaving the Current Titling System Unchanged

A second policy option the Ad Hoc Committee considered was leaving current instructional practices in place.

Disadvantages of Leaving Current Titling System in Place

1. Policy inaction would likely continue to negatively affect
 - a. Recruitment and retention of IAS;
 - b. Perception of IAS by public, students, other academics;
 - c. Morale of IAS.

Taken together, the impact of the current titling practices on recruitment and retention and their implications for practice have a strong impact on institutional ethos. If the quality and credentials of non-tenure track instructional staff are under question from any direction, the University of Wisconsin brand is undermined. The consequences of taking no action on the current titling series for instructional positions can damage the University’s reputation for providing instruction of the highest caliber.

Advantages of Leaving Current Titling System in Place

1. The committee sees no advantage to maintaining the status quo because the negative effects of the current titling policy would still exist.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

Based on the balance of evidence reviewed here, including a review of peer institutions’ titling practices, the Ad Hoc Committee on Instructional Titles recommends that the title series of **Teaching Professor** (Assistant, Associate, no prefix) be made available to IAS who meet the necessary qualifications. Below is a table showing suggested changes to current titles (Faculty Associate and Lecturer) and the addition of Teaching Professor.

Current Titles for UW–Madison Instructional Academic Staff	Proposed Titles for UW–Madison Instructional Academic Staff
<p data-bbox="217 296 721 323">Faculty Associate (Asst., Assoc., No Prefix, Dist.)</p> <p data-bbox="181 359 808 653">Provides instruction and training in an academic discipline or adult education, including formal/informal or laboratory instruction. Responsibilities include instruction associated with more than one formal lecture or laboratory course, or with supplemental modules to formal courses, training of Graduate Assistants, programming to adult and continuing education clients, and frequently includes extension and teaching associated with the instructional portion of faculty appointments. May involve development of disciplinary teaching techniques as an accompaniment to instructional responsibilities.</p>	<p data-bbox="841 296 1328 323">Faculty Associate (Asst., Assoc., No Prefix, Dist.)</p> <p data-bbox="816 359 1443 600">Responsibilities can include development of pedagogy, assessment of student learning, and other significant curricular duties such as providing programming to adult and continuing education clients as well as outreach programs. Each department must define the specific substantive criteria for level advancement, but fundamentally it denotes a higher level of contribution to the unit. They may however be applied where staff have analogous experience or long-term service to the unit.</p>
<p data-bbox="201 701 615 728">Lecturer (Assoc, No Prefix, Senior, Dist.)</p> <p data-bbox="181 758 808 978">Provides formal classroom or laboratory instruction in an academic discipline, either independently or under the general supervision of a faculty member. Effective delivery of instructional material, testing and grading are the primary duties of a Lecturer. However, the degree of involvement in course and curriculum development, course scheduling, advising and subject matter expertise differs significantly depending on the prefix.</p>	<p data-bbox="831 701 1245 728">Lecturer (Assoc, No Prefix, Senior, Dist.)</p> <p data-bbox="816 758 1443 1188">Provides formal classroom and/or laboratory instruction in an academic discipline, including formal, informal and/or laboratory instruction, at a level associated with the instructional portion of faculty appointments. May work either independently or under the general supervision of a faculty member. Responsibilities to include the effective delivery of instructional material, testing and grading, course and curriculum development, and the supervision of teaching assistants. May also involve development of disciplinary teaching techniques. Each department must define the specific substantive criteria for level advancement, but fundamentally it denotes a higher level of contribution to the unit. This title series is primarily for terminal appointments. They may however be strategic appointments (long term) to the unit. *We recommend examining the Lecturer (SA) title; it currently is confusing.</p>
	<p data-bbox="831 1241 1333 1268">Teaching Professor (Asst., Assoc., No Prefix, Dist.)</p> <p data-bbox="824 1297 1443 1894">Provides classroom instruction on a level commensurate with the instructional portion of faculty appointments. Position will also involve significant contributions to the unit or department's teaching mission, the effective supervision of teaching assistants and the development of curriculum and/or pedagogy. This may include advancements in teaching and learning in the discipline and innovative strategies that produce course improvement. At the highest title level, a teaching professor should be making pedagogical contributions to the department. This could include sharing creative and scholarly work at conferences and in publications and the publication of textbooks. A teaching professor should be involved in department, college or university service. There is no presumption that a senior lecturer position will automatically advance to the teaching professor track. Appointment to a teaching professor title should be accompanied by a multi-year contract or no shorter than any existing "rolling horizon" appointment. Teaching professors are required to hold a terminal degree or extensive instructional experience along with an expertise in the relevant discipline.</p>

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Mark Connolly (chair), Associate Research Scientist, Wisconsin Center for Education Research
Ricardo Court, Faculty Associate, Political Science
Thomas Eggert, Senior Lecturer, Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies
Nicholas Hill, Faculty Associate, Chemistry
Robin Kurtz, Distinguished Faculty Associate, Bacteriology
Kim Manner, Senior Lecturer, Mechanical Engineering
Christina Matta, Assistant Faculty Associate, College of Engineering
Carrie Sperling, Associate Dean for Experiential Learning and Education Innovation, School of Law
Christine Stephenson, Lecturer, College of Engineering
Joseph Towles, Associate Faculty Associate, Biomedical Engineering

APPENDIX A:

An Overview of Instructional Academic Staff Titles at UW–Madison

According to the [Summary of Unclassified Appointment Types](#), UW System has 14 groups of titles considered to be unclassified. First of these is [UW–Madison faculty](#), which consists of all persons with instructional, research and service responsibilities who hold the rank of professor, associate professor, assistant professor or instructor, with at least a one-half time appointment with UW-Madison or a full-time appointment held jointly between UW-Madison and UW-Extension.

Five of the 14 groups are considered to be [academic staff](#), which includes professional and administrative personnel (other than faculty, classified staff, limited staff, student appointees, or employees-in-training) with duties and appointments primarily associated with higher education institutions or their administration.

Academic staff appointments fall into three categories: *Category A* (professionals, program managers and administrative directors in an administrative, research, student, instructional or community-related area); *Category B* (individuals performing at a level typical of faculty by either providing instruction to students in an academic discipline, or conducting research); and *Category C* (administrators and program directors who also hold a concurrent faculty appointment and other specially defined positions).

[Instructional Academic Staff](#) provide for-credit instruction and training to students in an academic discipline. Instruction or training includes classroom and/or laboratory and/or clinical teaching duties. Instructional staff involved in the outreach mission provide non-credit instruction which may involve teaching, application and integration of knowledge from several disciplines. While there are instructional and research support titles in the Category A Professional title group, Category B includes those titles in which the duties and responsibilities are similar in responsibility level to the research or the instructional duties typical of faculty at UW-Madison.

Current titles for jobs falling in the Instructional Functional Area, Category B (found in [Title Definitions within Functional Areas](#)):

1. **Faculty Associate (Assistant, Associate, full rank, Distinguished)**. Provides instruction and training in an academic discipline or adult education, including formal, informal or laboratory instruction.
2. **Lecturer (Associate, no prefix, Senior, Distinguished)**. Provides formal classroom or laboratory instruction in an academic discipline, either independently or under the general supervision of a faculty member. **Lecturer (SA)** is the title for a graduate student who is given this appointment (rather than the usual teaching assistant title).

In addition to the **Faculty Associate** series and the **Lecturer** series, other Instructional Academic Staff titles in Category B include the following:

1. **Faculty Assistant (no prefix, Senior)**. Teaches the quiz, tutorial, discussion or lab section(s) of a course or assists in the development of materials or programs under the direction of an academic staff or faculty member. A Faculty Assistant may perform the same work as a Teaching Assistant but is not a UW-Madison student.
2. **Adjunct Instructor, Adjunct Professor (Assistant, Associate, full rank)**. Specifies persons from a non-instructional institution and persons whose professional career is primarily outside of University instruction. Must be performing primarily instructional activities.
3. **Visiting Lecturer (Associate, no prefix, Senior)**. Performs the duties of lecturer on a temporary basis and holds the title lecturer or its equivalent at another institution.
4. **Visiting Instructor, Visiting Professor (Assistant, Associate, full rank)**. This function is used for individuals who come from outside the UW System for temporary academic assignments.

5. **Instrumentation Innovator—Instruction (Assistant, Associate, full rank, Distinguished).** Provides specialized technical assistance to faculty, researchers, staff and students in areas such as design, development, maintenance, implementation, installation and use of scientific instruments and equipment.
6. **Clinical Adjunct Professor (Assistant, Associate, full rank).** This zero-dollar title is for use by the Health Sciences Schools for unpaid positions within the Schools.
7. **Clinical Instructor, Clinical Professor (Assistant, Associate, full rank, Distinguished).** Responsible for the supervision of the clinical training of students. This function is used to describe instructional academic staff positions in the health sciences and other academic disciplines with clinical practices.
8. **Instructor (CHS), Professor (CHS) (Assistant, Associate, full rank, Distinguished).** Specifies members of the instructional academic staff engaged in clinical activities in the Center for Health Sciences divisions.

**APPENDIX B:
Comparison Institutions**

Institution	CIC⁷	UW System Salary Peer	AAU⁸	Public	Private
American University					X
Carnegie Mellon University			X		X
Indiana University Bloomington	X	X	X	X	
Massachusetts Institution of Technology			X		X
Michigan State University	X		X	X	
Northwestern University	X		X		X
Ohio State University	X	X	X	X	
Pennsylvania State University	X		X	X	
Purdue University	X	X	X	X	
Rutgers- State U of New Jersey			X	X	
Stanford University			X		X
Texas A&M University			X	X	
University of California, Berkeley		X	X	X	
University of California, Los Angeles		X	X	X	
University of Chicago	X		X		X
University of Colorado Boulder			X	X	
University of Illinois-Urbana Champaign	X	X	X	X	
University of Iowa	X		X	X	
University of Maryland–College Park	X		X	X	
University of Michigan	X	X	X	X	
University of Minnesota–Twin Cities	X	X	X	X	
University of Notre Dame					X
University of Texas–Austin		X	X	X	
University of Washington		X	X	X	
University of Nebraska–Lincoln	X			X	
Yale University			X		X

⁷ Member of Consortium on Inter-institutional Cooperation

⁸ Member of Association of American Universities

APPENDIX C:

Titling Practices of Instructional Academic Staff at Select Peer Institutions

<i>Available Titles and Promotional Path</i>	<i>Key Characteristics of Appointment</i>
Northwestern University⁹	
Professor of Instruction (Assistant, Associate, full rank) ¹⁰	Holds a terminal degree (with exceptions); these are full-time, continuing appointments

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign¹¹	
Instructor (no prefix, Senior)	Does not hold terminal degree for the discipline
Lecturer (no prefix, Senior)	Holds terminal degree for the discipline
Teaching Professor (Assistant, Associate, full rank)	Holds terminal degree for the discipline; makes an instructional impact both within the department and beyond, either through scholarly publications, invited talks, or other related activities involving pedagogy.

University of Minnesota–Twin Cities¹²	
Teaching Instructor (no prefix); Teaching Professor (Assistant, Associate, full rank)	Classified as Term (Non Tenure-Track) Faculty; must have teaching, research and service responsibilities, but proportion of time dedicated to each area will vary from regular faculty according to needs of the unit and qualifications of the individual.
Teaching Specialist; Lecturer (no prefix, Senior)	Classified as Academic Staff ¹³ ; Teaching Specialist typically requires master’s degree; Lecturer requires terminal degree.

University of Nebraska–Lincoln¹⁴	
Instructor	Reserved for individuals recruited for a regular tenure-track assistant professor's job but who have yet to complete their terminal degrees before starting.
Professor of Practice (Assistant, Associate, full rank)	Non-tenure track appointments of 1-5 years requiring terminal degree; with potential for renewal.
Lecturer	Non-tenure track appointments of 2 years or less; considered part-time and temporary.

⁹ 2014 Teaching track policies, Weinberg College of Arts & Sciences, Northwestern U., <http://www.weinberg.northwestern.edu/faculty/documents/Teaching-Track%20Policies.pdf>

¹⁰ Prior to 2014, non-tenure track teaching faculty were referred to as Continuing Lecturer Faculty with titles of Lecturer (including the prefixes Senior and Distinguished Senior) and Professor of Instruction. There are plans for conversion to the new titles, but faculty who hold the old titles can keep their titles if they choose

¹¹ See *Employment Guidelines for Specialized Faculty Holding Non-tenure System Positions*, http://provost.illinois.edu/communication/25/provostcommno25_specializedfaculty.pdf

¹² *Chart Outlining Academic Appointments with Teaching Functions*, http://policy.umn.edu/sites/policy.umn.edu/files/appendix/teaching_appb.pdf

¹³ Academic Professionals who hold primary responsibility for teaching.

¹⁴ *Guidelines for Faculty Titles*, <http://svcaa.unl.edu/searches-appointments/faculty-titles>