


Memorandum

To: Faculty Senate
Seton Hall University

From: Karen E. Boroff, Ph.D. 
Interim Provost and Executive Vice President

Re: Faculty Guide Interpretation – Exception to 1/3 Lecturer Limit
2019-FS-22

Date: September 6, 2019

The Office of the Provost is in receipt of the Executive Committee of the Senate approval of an exception to the 1/3 Lecturer Limit, 2019-FS-22. This was sent to the Office of the Provost on August 14, 2019 for consideration.

I would like to place your recommendation that, “provided also the Department of Professional Psychology and Family Therapy (PPFT) be granted approval to search for three tenure-track members this year, the Executive Committee agrees to allowing the hire of one additional one-year term hire in the department, for 2018-2019 (2019-2020) only, beyond the prescribed limit” in context. The PPFT Department offers the M.A., M.S., Ed.S. and the Ph.D. degrees. The wording of the Senate’s interpretation gives the idea that the enrollments in these programs are “spiking” and therefore an additional faculty member is required in order to satisfy student demand. Unfortunately, this is not the case in some programs. Based on the small number of admission applications and acceptances received for this fall, the next entering cohort in the Marriage and Family Therapy Program is delayed until spring 2020, when there would possibly be 10 students to enroll. The Department of PPFT has lost some tenure track faculty this year, and thus the contract hire is not really an additional faculty member but a replacement faculty member for this year.

As to the limits defined in Article 3.6. of the *Faculty Guide*, I think one must be careful not to confound the faculty positions which are deliberately carved out. The positions of lecturer and faculty associate are renewable indefinitely depending on enrollments. For this reason, the “fewer than 3 or 1/3 the of the faculty” rule is there to protect the scholarly productivity level of a department. One can imagine that a graduate program where students are expected to thrive under mentors with strong scholarly achievements would be open to the idea of a visiting contract professor with an impressive vita. A lecturer or faculty associate may also have research bona fides, but that may not always be the case. Contract faculty, the 1530 hires mentioned in the

interpretation, are renewable for a maximum of five years. Somewhere in that period, we would expect a position to convert to a tenure track search providing the enrollments continue to justify a hire. In addition to spiking enrollments, these hires are often made when someone in a probationary position steps aside and a national search is required to fill the vacancy as is the case in PPFT. I do underscore that national and widely advertised searches are necessary and is an important human resources practice in order to develop a diverse faculty team.

By equating the position of lecturer with a visiting contract faculty member, and allowing a contract hire providing there are three tenure track hires as the Executive Committee has done is a disservice to the faculty. It reminds me of an old Popeye cartoon character, Wimpy. He would say, "I will gladly pay you Tuesday for a hamburger today." We are elevating contract hires to the point where one contract faculty member today must be replaced by three tenure track faculty the following year to justify some 1/3 rule which may not apply the following year. Hires are somewhat fluid because positions do not "belong" to specific departments. A resignation or retirement from one department does not guarantee a replacement of the same position (refer to my earlier resolution 2019-FS-12 response regarding potential need for realignment, where I made this point and it bears repeating). Whether or not there are replacements or incremental hires depends on many factors, including enrollments, curriculum needs, and the overarching needs of the college/school.

I refer my Senate colleagues to the Appointment Process in Article 3.6. It details the recommendations coming from department to the dean. There is no mention of a role for the Faculty Senate in this process because it is a college/school decision. Consider Article 12.3.c of the *Faculty Guide*, which states "Faculty Senate shall not replace, modify or assume any of the internal prerogatives of the South Orange campus units." The PPFT hires for next year will be considered on the bases that already exists, including complicated questions of enrollment and sustainability.