

April 25, 2014

Dear Colleagues,

I would like to address the information you may have received concerning changes in the titles of new faculty members who will hold continuing non-tenure-track appointments. Comporting with the requirements set forth in the Faculty Handbook, new CNTT faculty hires will use modified titles. I have made this decision after careful consideration and I want to emphasize that the new practice applies only to the recruitment and hiring of new CNTT faculty. No person currently employed at UD will have her or his title changed involuntarily.

It is very important that we collectively recognize the valuable work that all of our faculty members do, even though the nature of that work varies. In so doing we must ensure that we are creating job progression opportunities, promoting career advancement, and developing clear standards for promotion appropriate for the diversity of positions in our faculty portfolio. To that end, it is most important to me that we work together next year to review and revise departmental promotion policies so that continuing non-tenure track faculty can be appropriately promoted and rewarded for the contributions they make to our educational mission.

Standard practices within higher education distinguish between tenure track and non-tenure track positions. In contrast with CNTT responsibilities, tenured and tenure-track appointments carry well-understood standard expectations for recognized scholarly achievement as well as high quality teaching, and service. Virtually every other university in the United States distinguishes between “unmodified” titles for tenured and tenure-track faculty and “modified” titles for those not eligible for tenure.

The Faculty Handbook at the University of Delaware is consistent with this practice and, in fact, specifically recognizes that titles for non-tenure track faculty should be different from the titles we use for tenured and tenure-eligible faculty. The Handbook states that CNTT faculty should be “hired as instructional, clinical, public service or research faculty” (Section 4.1.6; <http://facultyhandbook.udel.edu/handbook/416-non-tenure-track-faculty>). I believe that clarifying and enhancing the roles and titles of our CNTT faculty, identifying and respecting their contributions to our mission, will be in the UD community’s best interest.

The routine use of modified titles throughout higher education, including in the most distinguished institutions, is evidence that modified titles for CNTT faculty will not affect recruitment or retention. Nor will the use of modified titles impede access to research grants, because external funders rarely if ever make tenure or tenure eligibility a criterion for funding. Rather, research awards are granted based on rigorous peer review and quality of the so-judged proposals.

I appreciate the advice that I have received from leaders of the Senate, the CNTT Caucus, the Deans, the Chairs, and other concerned members of the UD community. After careful consideration of the variety of perspectives on this issue, this decision is being made consistent with the responsibility entrusted to me under the University’s Bylaws. I am proud that the University of Delaware has been a leader in protecting the status and rights of non-tenure track faculty.

Sincerely



Domenico Grasso
Provost