Policy on Faculty Appointments for Full-time Exempt Staff

Overview: Vanderbilt University staff play a critical and foundational role in the academic mission of the university’s schools and colleges. In certain, limited occasions, staff may hold unique positions or serve special functions that warrant a part-time, non-tenure track faculty appointment.

Policy Guidance: Any decision to extend a part-time faculty appointment to a full-time staff member must take into account the workload of the staff member, the nature of the staff member’s work, the importance of ensuring staff and faculty are focused on fulfilling their primary commitments to the University, the desire to avoid conflicts of interest or commitment (real or apparent), and the responsibility to prevent bias or favoritism (real or apparent).

Reviews prior to such appointments should ensure there are no conflicts of interest, conflicts of commitment, and no favoritism or bias in making the appointment. The risk of favoritism, for example, is particularly high if the appointment is compensated. The potential conflicts could flow from the scope of work and responsibility, the individuals enrolled in the class if instruction is part of the appointment responsibilities, and the time commitment for each role.

In general, faculty positions for staff should be (1) rare, (2) integral to the staff position and fulfill a distinct purpose (as reflected in the staff contract), and (3) account for compensation for such faculty roles as part of the overall full-time, exempt effort (and be delineated in the full-time exempt staff contract).

A staff person must meet all of the criteria for a faculty appointment, which include the Faculty Teaching Qualifications Policy approved on November 11, 2015.

Policy:

1) Each dean has full discretion with respect to appointments made for staff employed within their respective school or college. Each dean is expected to be intentional and to monitor such practices in accordance with the overall policy guidance.

2) For any between-unit appointments wherein the staff person is employed by a different school or college or by an administrative unit (Provost Central or a Vice Chancellor area), review and approval by the Provost (or their designee) is required for the full-time staff person to be given a separate faculty appointment. The review should ensure the above criteria are satisfied. The staff member’s unit head (dean if from a different school or college, Provost or Vice Chancellor if from an administrative unit) must be consulted prior to and concur with the offer of the faculty appointment. If appropriate, and as indicated in the request for approval of appointment, units should compensate
each other for the time that a staff person devotes to the faculty role (e.g. teaching) rather than staff work.

[Note: Uncompensated, guest lectures by full-time, exempt staff are allowed and do not require faculty appointments.]

[Note: This policy does not supersede the policy on Teaching by Athletic Department Personnel that was originally approved on August 21, 2018.]