

Awarding Emeritus/a Status: A Proposed Process and Title Modifier

Committee on the Transition to Emeritus

August 2017

Members

Barbara Baird	Associate Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
Brian Chabot	Professor Emeritus (Ecology and Evolutionary Biology)
Sandy Dhimitri	Director of Human Resources, College of Human Ecology
Ron Ehrenberg	Professor (Industrial and Labor Relations)
Kevin Hallock	Dean, School of Industrial and Labor Relations
Linda Croll Howell	Office of Human Resources
George Hudler	Professor Emeritus (Plant Science)
Yael Levitte	Associate Vice Provost for Faculty Development and Diversity
Linda Nozick	Professor and Director (Civil and Environmental Engineering)
Mary Opperman	Vice President for Human Resources
Judith Reppy	Professor Emerita (Science and Technology Studies)
Cynthia Robinson	CAPE Office
Charles Van Loan (Chair)	Professor Emeritus (Computer Science), Dean of Faculty
Charles Walcott	Professor Emeritus (Neurobiology and Behavior)
Elaine Wethington	Professor (Human Development)

Background

The Dean of Faculty's Ad Hoc Committee on the Transition to Emeritus was formed in September 2016 and charged to recommend an improved process by which a retired faculty member acquires emeritus status.

The Committee identified these problems with the current situation:

- 1) variable interpretations by the Colleges of the [emeritus/a legislation that is currently expressed in the Faculty Handbook](#).

- 2) inconsistencies between the Faculty Handbook and various emeritus-related memos produced over the years by the Provost's Office, the Dean of Faculty's Office, and Human Resources.
- 3) an overall lack of clarity about the process of becoming emeritus making it difficult for both the department chair and the candidate.
- 4) the lack of an appeal process.

[Minutes](#) of our six meetings and [supporting materials](#) are available on the committee [website](#). The proposed process (detailed below) was informed by numerous interactions with the [CAPE](#) Executive Council and by feedback from presentations to the Provost's Office, the academic deans, and the department chairs. (See [slides](#).) There is broad support among the deans and chairs for our recommendations.

During the course of our deliberations the Committee produced a pair of webpages designed to assist chairs and candidates as they navigate the rather complicated waters that surround retirement:

[Perquisites and Opportunities for Retired and Emeritus/a Faculty](#)

[The Retirement Checklist](#)

These documents are available through the Dean of Faculty website.

Current Legislation

Here is the core legislation regarding emeritus/a status as it appears in the Faculty Handbook:

Any member of the professorial staff who retires after ten years in the tenured rank of university professor, professor, or associate professor and who has rendered distinguished and meritorious service to the university, may be appointed professor emeritus by the provost after recommendation by the members of the particular department and the dean of the college or school faculty to which the retiring member belonged.

Note that a retired Associate Professor is eligible for Professor Emeritus title.

Request that "Emeritus/a" be a Title Modifier

An important component of the recommended new policy below is the creation of a new title: associate professor emeritus/a. The Committee believes that the awarding of emeritus/a status is a recognition – not a promotion. With this point of view, being a *professor emeritus* means that as a professor, your contributions to the university were distinguished and meritorious. Likewise, being an *associate professor emeritus/a* means that as an associate professor, your contributions to the university were distinguished and meritorious. The advantage of having this pair of emeritus/a titles is that it disentangles the two "feeder streams" and creates a more level playing field for associate professors.

There are two ways that the title "associate professor emeritus" be realized through legislation. One is to simply to add it to the long [list of existing titles](#). The other way is to make "emeritus" a [modifier](#) (like adjunct, acting, courtesy, and visiting) that can be applied (as of now) to professors and associate

professors. We prefer the second avenue because it is consistent with the idea that emeritus status is a recognition: you retired and rendered meritorious service as a professor or an associate professor, and now you are being recognized as a professor emeritus/a or as an associate professor emeritus/a.

Proposed Procedure for Becoming Emeritus/a

Here is the proposed procedure for becoming a professor emeritus/a or an associate professor emeritus/a:

Proposed Process for Becoming Emeritus/a	Comments
<p>Upon retirement, a university professor, full professor, or associate professor who has been a tenured member of the University Faculty for ten or more years may be considered for emeritus/a status.</p> <p>Awarding the title of university professor emeritus/a, professor emeritus/a, or associate professor emeritus/a shall be based upon the career contributions of the candidate through a combination of teaching, research, advising, administration, extension, and outreach. An overall record of meritorious service to the university is expected.</p> <p>The candidate supplies a curriculum vita to the department chair together with a cover letter that includes the date of retirement and a request to be considered for either emeritus or emerita status.</p> <p>If the request is from a full professor, then it is reviewed and voted upon by the full professors and the emeritus faculty in the candidate’s department. If the request is from an associate professor, then it is reviewed and voted upon by the tenured professors and the emeritus faculty in the candidate’s department. The result of the vote and the chair’s recommendation to either approve or deny emeritus/a status is communicated to the dean of the candidate’s college.</p> <p>The dean reviews the dossier and makes a recommendation to the provost. If the recommendation is positive and an endowed chair is held by the candidate, then the dean should indicate whether the college authorizes use of the endowed chair title, e.g., Jacob Gould Schurman Professor Emerita. This will not continue to encumber funds attached to the chair title.</p> <p>If either the dean or chair recommendation is negative, then the candidate is so informed by the provost and given the opportunity to respond in writing within ninety days. The final decision to approve emeritus/a status is made by the provost, perhaps in consultation with the dean of faculty and others.</p>	<p>No change from current policy.</p> <p>The point of identifying these five areas of contributions is to encourage a broad view of what we mean by “meritorious service to the university.” Faculty contribute in many different ways over the course of their careers. There is no formula for emeritus/a status any more than there is a formula for tenure.</p> <p>Basically current practice. As much as possible, the CV should relate the full history of the candidate’s contributions though teaching, research, administration, extension, advising, and outreach.</p> <p>Important to be clear on who votes and to have uniformity across campus.</p> <p>This appeal process will help ensure that emeritus review procedures are carefully followed. The appeal process is “light” because the review process for emeritus/a status is nowhere near as ponderous as in a tenure case.</p>

The [current policy](#) is vague in certain key directions when it comes to process:

The department chair provides the dean with a letter summarizing the retiree's career and the department's vote and recommendation. The chair's letter also should indicate whether the professor prefers the title to be emeritus or emerita. If the dean approves the recommendation, the dean so indicates when forwarding the departmental materials; the dean also should indicate whether the college authorizes use of an endowed chair title, if one has been held, in emeritus status, e.g., Jacob Gould Schurman Professor Emeritus— this will not continue to encumber funds attached to the chair title. The dean sends the materials to the provost via the Office of Academic Human Resources. A letter from the president notifies and congratulates the professor. In most instances, emeritus status is effective the day following official retirement from the university.

In particular, it does not indicate who votes and what happens if the department vote and/or the dean's decision is negative. The proposed process addresses these deficiencies.

Approval Process

Two Senate Committees will be asked to evaluate our recommendations:

[The Committee on Academic Programs and Policies](#)

[The Committee on Academic Freedom and the Professional Status of the Faculty](#)

After adequate revisions (if necessary), the Senate will be asked to approve two resolutions:

Resolution 1. Recommend that "emeritus/a" be added to the list of available title modifiers.

Whereas granting emeritus/a status is a recognition available to retiring professors and retiring associate professors, with tenure;

Be It Resolved that "emeritus/a" be defined as an allowable title modifier;

Be it further resolved that at this time "emeritus/a" can only be used to modify the titles of professor and associate professor.

Resolution 2. Recommend that the current process for becoming emeritus/a be replaced by the process detailed in this document.

Whereas the current process for awarding emeritus/a status is sufficiently vague so as to sometimes cause misunderstandings, oversights, and hard feelings at the time of retirement;

Whereas the current process for becoming emeritus varies significantly from college to college;

Be it resolved that the process detailed in this document be adopted and followed by all the colleges.

The two recommendations, if approved, will be forwarded to the provost.