Guidelines for Hiring, Evaluation, Reappointment, and Merit for Lecturers

College of Liberal Arts

These guidelines supplement Towson University Policy 02-01.05, Policy on the Employment of Lecturers. Interested parties should consult that policy for a fuller statement on the employment of Lecturers at Towson.

I. Search Procedures and Hiring:

A. Qualifications:

1. Competitive candidates for Lecturer positions in the College of Liberal Arts will normally hold at least a Master’s degree in a discipline or field directly related to the subject areas in which they teach. Departments may establish a higher or additional expectation (ABD, PhD, license, or certificate) when appropriate to the position and to the hiring experience of the department. Under unusual circumstances, exceptional professional experience and accomplishment might provide a substitute for normal degree expectations. Departments must make a case for any exception to the Dean and receive approval before interviewing any candidate who does not meet the normal minimum requirements.

2. Competitive candidates should demonstrate reasonable breadth and currency in their understanding of the discipline in which they are being hired and adequate familiarity with the scholarly resources appropriate to their field. They should also convey a continuing interest in the evolving scholarship of the field compatible with the maintenance of ongoing currency.

3. Competitive candidates should provide evidence of successful teaching or demonstrate marked teaching abilities through class demonstration, and they should exhibit reasonable understanding of course construction, grading, professional conduct, and other responsibilities of a faculty member.

4. Competitive candidates should clearly understand and accept that the Lecturer position represents full-time employment, includes an element of departmental and institutional service, and may not be combined with teaching elsewhere without University permission.

B. Search Procedures:

When the time available before the beginning of a term permits, the following procedures shall apply in the hiring of lecturers in the College of Liberal Arts.
1. When the need to fill a Lecturer position becomes evident and time permits, the chair of a department in which there is a Lecturer position available will provide the Dean of the College with a written description of the position and request approval to begin a lecturer search.

2. Upon receiving approval from the Dean, the department will post ads in local media, on national disciplinary sites, or in other locations as circumstances warrant. Flyers carrying identical information may be sent to graduate programs or potential applicants. Departments will make a specific effort to ensure that announcements of the search are included in, or sent to, job lists or programs that are inclusive of groups less represented in the academy and, when possible, will seek to identify minority candidates and draw their attention to the search. Departments may choose to receive all applications online.

3. Applications must include a cover letter, CV, evidence on teaching (when possible), a sample of writing, a transcript confirming the candidate’s highest degree, and at least two letters of reference or names of references. (An unofficial transcript is acceptable at the time of application but the candidate must provide an official transcript before employment is confirmed.)

4. The chair of each department, in consultation with members of the department, will establish a process for reviewing candidate files and recommending candidates for interview. A candidate must have completed an interview with the department chair or the chair’s designees, and with other available colleagues, before being hired. When a selected candidate with clearly superior credentials is located at a distance from the campus, chairs may consult with the Dean over shared support for the costs of bringing the candidate to campus for an interview. Normally, remote candidates will be authorized one at a time to control the costs of remote visits.

5. The Chair will seek the approval of the Dean to offer the position to a particular candidate and provide the file and any comments for the Dean’s review at that time. The Chair will make the offer to the candidate.

C. Variations:

1. On occasion, positions may be vacated during the summer or close to the beginning of a term when there is insufficient time to conduct a fully advertised search. The Chair may then seek the Dean’s approval for an expedited hiring and, notwithstanding provisions 1-4 above, may act as necessary to identify and hire a capable Lecturer for the impending year or semester. When a position has been
filled through an expedited hire, the position should be advertised in the following year with the steps above carried out before a subsequent appointment to the position is made.

2. Departments that regularly employ adjuncts to teach courses that would also be taught by a Lecturer and who have compiled substantive evidence on the success of specific adjuncts in teaching their courses may recommend when a Lecturer position is available that a current adjunct faculty member may be hired to fill the position.

3. Lecturers hold one-year contracts in their first years of employment, and departments decide on an annual basis whether to re-employ each Lecturer. Within this context, departments may choose to establish norms for the duration of Lecturer employment and indicate to a Lecturer at the time of employment that the department will not appoint the same Lecturer, even when performance is more than satisfactory, for more than one or two or three years of sequential one-year contracts. Departments making these choices may consider both the benefits to students and curriculum, and the long-term interest of the persons hired as Lecturers, in making such choices.

II. Evaluation:

D. Lecturers Hired Under in an Expedited Search:

Lecturers hired under an expedited search as described in these guidelines will not be evaluated for potential reappointment. The position will be posted as a new search. The Lecturer hired under an exception may be a candidate in the new search and, if hired, will be eligible for reappointment in future years.

E. Regular Review, Year I:

In the first year of employment after a search, a Lecturer will be evaluated by the chair of the department who will give primary weight to the following considerations:

1. The quality of the Lecturer’s teaching
2. The Lecturer’s ability to provide at a high level the courses needed by the department and the university
3. The Lecturer’s willingness and capacity to understand and articulate the programs and objectives of the department
4. The Lecturer’s readiness to contribute to the work of the department and to accept the guidance of the chair and of departmental colleagues

The Chair of the department may confer with the chair of the department merit committee before making a decision on whether to offer an additional year of employment to the Lecturer. The department may choose to specify a different process for consultation through an
addendum on Lecturers added to its PTRM document and approved by the CLA PTRM Committee and the Dean. The process must be consistent with section III below.

F. Regular Review, Subsequent Years:

Lecturers will submit Annual Reviews with supporting evidence as provided for in the Towson University Policy on the Employment of Lecturers. A Lecturer who has held appointment for more than one year will have provided in previous Annual Reviews a percentage weighting for teaching, scholarship, and service and statements on expected activities in each area of responsibility. The Merit Committee of each department will review as part of its work each Fall the Annual Review portfolios of lecturers in the department. Unless otherwise articulated in an addendum on Lecturers in the department PTRM document (approved as above), the Merit Committee will apply in examining the lecturer portfolios the criteria for evaluating teaching specified in the department PTRM document for tenure line faculty; the expectation for scholarly activity and currency described in the Towson University Policy on the Employment of Lecturers; and criteria on service consistent with the expectations for all faculty, as modified by recognition of different degrees of eligibility for committee and shared governance positions. (See the Towson University Policy on the Employment of Lecturers, section D., 3, a and b.)

The Merit Committee should provide:

1. Comments to the chair reflecting the committee’s judgment on the performance of the Lecturer in all spheres of faculty expectation
2. Feedback to the lecturer containing suggestions for teaching strategies or other professional development
3. When appropriate, a recommendation for merit consideration contributing to the college-based process described below

The Chair of the department may add comments to the Lecturer in a separate letter. The Lecturer, upon receiving the evaluative comments from the department, may request a meeting with the Chair or the Chair’s designee to discuss the feedback received.

The evaluative comments of the Merit Committee should inform but do not determine the department decision on whether to offer reappointment to the lecturer for a subsequent year.

III. Reappointment:

G. Recommendation

A department recommendation to reappoint a Lecturer must come to the Dean from the Chair of the department and must have the support of the Chair. The Chair is charged with applying
the criteria in section E. above in considering all reappointments of Lecturers, as well as with examining carefully the comments of the department Merit Committee when available and the record of prior evaluations and annual reviews.

The Towson University Policy on the Employment of Lecturers provides that “After three consecutive years, a Lecturer may be eligible for a three-year contract with a recommendation from the department chairperson and college dean.” A Chair choosing to make such a recommendation will provide a substantive letter of explanation and support to the Dean that addresses each sphere of faculty responsibility. The Lecturer’s annual review portfolios from the three years preceding must accompany the recommendation. The Dean will submit his or her separate recommendation to the Provost. A Lecturer completing a three-year contract will be subject to the normal reappointment process and may be recommended for non-renewal, a one-year appointment, or a three-year appointment.

H. Timing of Reappointment Decision

The Chair will normally communicate to the Lecturer the decision on whether to recommend reappointment for the following year by February 28 of the current contract year. If a Lecturer has provided more than seven years of continuous full-time service, notice of non-renewal shall normally be given at least six months before the end of the current contract. Should new information, institutional circumstances, or changing needs lead to a decision and notification at a later time, that decision may be communicated at any date subject to the provisions and conditions of the Towson University Policy on the Employment of Lecturers (see G., 3).

IV. Merit:

I. Consideration of Lecturers for Merit Pay:

Lecturers are eligible for merit pay, when funds for this purpose are made available, as described in university policy.

To assure equitable consideration for merit pay across departments with one lecturer or many lecturers, department recommendations for Lecturer merit recognition will be submitted by the departments to the Office for the Dean for examination by a committee of the college assembled for this purpose. Department letters (which may be the same as the committee comments identified above) should specify the basis for the recommendation of merit recognition with particular reference to the categories of faculty responsibility and the evidence of the Lecturer’s Annual Review. The Annual Review must accompany the recommendation.
The CLA Lecturer Merit Committee will be named by the Dean and will normally include at least two members of the Leadership Council and at least two members of the College Council, chosen whenever possible to avoid faculty or chairs who have played a significant role in the prior evaluation of the lecturers recommended for merit. The CLA Lecturer Merit Committee will review recommendations from the departments in light of the materials from all departments and recommend to the Dean those Lecturers who should receive merit pay, normally limiting positive recommendations for merit to no more than 30% of the total number of Lecturers in the college (unless University guidelines for the awarding of merit have provided another framework). The Dean will forward these recommendations to the Provost with his or her own recommendation, consistent with other faculty merit procedures.