

## Work on faculty terminology- re: Fixed-term faculty

### Summary:

In AY20-21 a workgroup was charged by the faculty senate to explore alternative terminology for fixed-term faculty. The term “fixed-term” implies a temporary position, and this implication is inconsistent with the actual role of many fixed-term faculty. Furthermore, this terminology can be stigmatizing, which hinders both recruitment and retention of excellent faculty.

The workgroup consisted of:

Danielle Devoss  
Jamie Alan  
Brian Teppan  
Sandra Logan  
Stephen Gasteyer

The group met and discussed possible alternative terminology, which included:

Non-tenure system faculty  
Non-tenure stream faculty  
Non-regular faculty  
Renewable appointment faculty  
Fixed-term faculty  
Career Track Faculty  
Other

The group was poised to send a survey to fixed-term faculty on campus.

“Our contributions to MSU are central to the mission of the university, and we write to solicit your input on how you are designated in institutional policies and documents. An ad hoc Faculty Senate subcommittee is working to address a request that the Senate reconsider the use of the term “regular” faculty by MSU. The groups currently designated as “regular faculty” at the University level are tenure-system faculty and librarians.

Many constituents have voiced that they find the term “non-regular faculty” discrediting and that it implies a value hierarchy that may be offensive to those who perform similar functions but do not fall under the “regular” faculty designation (we are suggesting “tenure-system faculty” and “librarians” as a replacement for “regular”). Common designations for those faculty not currently designated “regular” include “fixed-term,” “non-regular,” and “non-tenure-system.”

Because this “regular” faculty designation is used in the MSU Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities, the Bylaws for Academic Governance, the bylaws of 11 colleges, the bylaws of many units, and throughout the Faculty Handbook, changing these designations will have far-reaching effects.

We ask that, as faculty not included in that designation, you please indicate a preferred designation below. Please respond no later than 5pm eastern on xxxxxx.

If you have any questions about the subcommittee work or about the survey, please contact Danielle Nicole DeVoss, College of Arts & Letters Faculty Senator ([devossda@msu.edu](mailto:devossda@msu.edu)).

### Requested Action:

We request that the faculty senate empower a workgroup to continue the work done by the committee in AY20-21. We suggest that we revisit the possible terminology and survey the fixed-term faculty. We would like to have a final recommendation by the end of the academic year.