

2007-2008 Group on Faculty Affairs  
AAMC Listserve Queries & Responses

**Query: Academic Reappointments of Voluntary Faculty Members**

*Question from Judy Ockene, University of Massachusetts (Judith.ockene@umassmed.edu):*

I am interested in how your institution monitors and facilitates the academic reappointments of voluntary (e.g. unpaid) faculty members. Do your voluntary faculty members receive written notification of their reappointment and is this done on an annual basis or some other timeframe? Alternatively, are they automatically reappointed without notification unless you hear otherwise from the department?

At UMass Medical School voluntary faculty members are reappointed for a one-year term. My office consults with each department and issues reappointment letters. Departments are responsible for notifying faculty members who are not being reappointed. I am concerned that this process may be too onerous for the departments.

Thank you for your help.

**Responses:**

*Kevin Grigsby, Penn State University (kgrigsby@psu.edu):*

At Penn State, we appoint volunteer faculty for a 3 year term via formal appointment letters. All appointments are reviewed every 3 years.

*Paula Trief, SUNY Upstate Medical University (treifp@upstate.edu):*

This is a timely question, as we (at SUNY Upstate Medical University) are currently developing policies and procedures for voluntary faculty. Until now, they were appointed and that was it, never re-appointed, voluntary faculty for life! We have drafted a proposal for the chairs and Dean to consider, so nothing has changed yet.

We are proposing that the first year be a provisional appt. then they could be appointed for up to 5 years, with clear statement about expectations of their role at Upstate. At the end of their appointment period, the chair will have to reappoint them. He/she can do that however he wants, i.e., either automatically, or after discussion with the faculty member about their role. We recognize that some individuals will definitely be reappointed, so didn't want to make the chairs have to jump through big hoop for them, but some won't if the chair really considers their lack of contribution to the institution, so a hoop is needed. We have an automatic notification capability through HR. So, the chair will be notified when it's time to reappoint, if he doesn't act, the appointment will lapse, and then it will be the chair that will have to explain it to the faculty member why they were not reappointed. It does put a burden on the chair, but hopefully not an onerous one.

*Linda McLaughlin, Stanford University (deasy@stanford.edu):*

At Stanford, the terms of our (voluntary) Adjunct Clinical Faculty individuals vary according to rank (from one year (for Adjunct Clinical Instructors) to "continuing term" (for Adjunct Clinical Professors)). Each year, the departments survey these physicians to ensure they've met the 100 hours/year contribution required for continued appointment; nothing's automatic. The department chair has the authority to appoint, reappoint, promote or terminate. The School reviews/approves our requests and issues letters accordingly with the exception of terminations (the departments notify individuals regarding terminations).

*Steve Block, Wake Forest University (stblock@wfumc.edu):*

A most timely question. We are undergoing a change at Wake Forest. As of next July, all volunteer faculty will be appointed for three-year periods. Each department chair will be expected

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to develop a set of expectations for the volunteer faculty and the reappointment will be predicated upon their performance. We realize that this may increase the amount of work that the chairs have to do in evaluating the volunteer faculty, but they feel that this provides them with some control over the situation and an ability to have the volunteer faculty fully engaged in the academic process. Reappointment letters will go to the volunteer faculty member from the Dean once the reappointment has been approved by the department chair. We don't yet have a track record, so I have no idea whether this will actually work.

*Sandra Watson, Morehouse School of Medicine (swatson@msm.edu):*

Our process at Morehouse is much as described at Wake Forest except we have two year appointment periods. Our office sends evaluation forms to chairs and they indicate the activity over the past term and whether or not they want to re-appoint. If yes, reappointment letters are sent from the dean; the department chair notifies the faculty member if their appointment is not being renewed. The process actually works relatively well.

*Marcie Weiss, Northwestern University (mbweiss@northwestern.edu):*

Terms for our voluntary faculty are similar to our regular faculty: based on rank. Faculty at the rank of Instructor, regardless of whether FT, PT, or voluntary, are eligible for one-year terms. We require Departments review these faculty annually and consent to their reappointment, but we don't send written notification. Voluntary faculty holding the rank of Assistant or Associate Professor are eligible for 3-year reappointment terms, and those at the rank of Professor receive a 5-year term, just like their FT and PT colleagues. All based on Departmental request. Written notification for all these reappointments comes from Faculty Affairs, rather than Departments.

*Victoria Mulhern, University of Pennsylvania (vmulhern@med.upenn.edu):*

At Penn, we review reappointments for volunteer faculty (clinical and adjunct) every 3 years. The review process involves approval by the home department, the SOM committee on appointments and promotions, and the Provost's Office. Minutes of the Provost's Staff Conference are distributed.

*Jan Shorey, University of Arkansas (ShoreyJeannetteM@uams.edu):*

We have begun to monitor our voluntary appointments more carefully over the past 3 years. I'll attach our "principles of voluntary appointments" document which specifies our processes. In those departments where voluntary faculty members play significant roles, chairs have found this helpful – both to explicitly appreciate the voluntary faculty who really are of service to the department and to "thank and not renew" the voluntary appointments of voluntary faculty who really don't contribute to the department.



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