**General Faculty Council**

**Report to the Provost on Implementation of PROV-004: Employment of Academic General Faculty Members**

February 2018

The new General Faculty policy seeks to formally recognize the excellence and expertise of the University’s general faculty members and establish a clear foundation for recruiting, retention, promotion, and stability. As written, the policy addresses issues of promotion and stability, but it can be improved. The policy should support the development of long-term careers for general faculty at the University. Explicit recognition of that goal throughout the policy is essential to achieving its promise.

In anticipation of the one-year review slated for the new policy on Employment of Academic General Faculty Members (PROV-004), the General Faculty Council invited our constituents to share their experiences with the policy. The General Faculty Council discussed the common concerns heard across grounds and distilled those concerns into these proposed revisions. We urge the Provost’s Office to implement these changes as part of its one-year review of the policy, scheduled to begin in January 2018. We also urge the Provost’s Office to revisit the concerns and recommendations in our March 2017 report.

SCHOOL-SPECIFIC POLICIES

Many of our constituents are confused or in the dark about the processes their schools have undertaken to implement the Provost’s policy. A key component of supporting long-term careers for general faculty is involving those faculty in governance decisions. Transparency is also essential to the career stability the policy strives to achieve. We urge the Provost’s Office to fulfill its promise of publishing each school’s up-to-date policy on the Provost’s website. This will allow faculty to review the standards and procedures their schools have adopted. It will also prevent schools from drifting away from their procedures over time. Changes should only occur with approval from the Provost’s office. Transparency and consistency were major concerns that drove the establishment of the Task Force and the creation of this new policy.

TRACKING SYSTEM

The greatest source of confusion and frustration in the Provost’s policy remains the three tracks: teaching, research, and practice. These concerns were discussed at length in the GFC’s March 2017 Report. While some faculty fit fairly well into the tracks, others do not. Feedback from our constituency continues to indicate that schools are simply ignoring the criteria (e.g. 60-90% of time on teaching) to place individual faculty members into the tracks. This creates the impression that the Provost’s policy is not truly binding.

Instead of holding onto a policy that is already being ignored, we propose two possible solutions:

1. The tracks could be removed from the policy and replaced with a requirement that each faculty member have a detailed appointment letter that lays out the balance of teaching, research, and service expected in the position. Those appointment letters would be submitted to the Provost’s office as part of the hiring process. They could be reviewed and revised in conjunction with annual reviews or contract renewals to reflect changes in the faculty member’s work. Those who favor this proposal point out that the tracks create the sense that general faculty need to be boxed in and labeled, freezing their careers forever at the time of hire. A detailed appointment letter, which every general faculty member should have whether or not the policy includes tracks, could just as well serve the department’s and faculty employee’s shared need to set expectations for a faculty member hired to fulfill a particular role.
2. The tracks could be loosened to better capture the variations in general faculty roles. For example, the teaching track could be defined more simply as faculty who are primarily involved in teaching and curriculum. That definition would include certain program directors and institute directors who have a reduced teaching load paired with an administrative load, but who are nonetheless properly categorized as classroom-focused academic faculty. A fourth track—perhaps called the hybrid track—could also be added. That track would allow schools to specially define a general faculty position with the Provost’s approval if it did not fit well into the three main tracks. Presumably those hybrid positions would be rare. Those who favor this proposal point out that it prevents the new policy from being bent until broken, while it preserves the centralized foundation for promotion criteria that could improve transparency and consistency across grounds, as called for in the Task Force Report.

PROMOTION TO FULL PROFESSOR

Section 2.D (Promotion) – The section on promotion of general faculty with professorial rank makes no mention of promotion to full Professor. While criteria for that promotion are established in a different section (Section 2.F-Tracks), the section explicitly dedicated to promotion should not be silent on the availability of that promotion. This step on the ladder needs to be added, with a suggested time frame for promotion review. Without this explicit provision, the policy will fall short in its goal of laying out a clear path of advancement for general faculty careers.

We also urge the Provost’s office to conduct a review of faculty who may have been “stuck” for a long time at the associate professor level. For example, the Medical School has a large number of general faculty who have been at the associate level for many years. Significant efforts have been made to address this, but clear policy and support from the Provost’s office is needed. The Provost’s office should work with schools and departments to rectify existing problems with professorial rank. More generally, departments should be encouraged to provide mentoring and support to help faculty achieve the criteria for promotion to full professor.

RECOGNITION OF PAST WORK

Presently, there is no wording in the document that specifically addresses the fact that many general faculty were originally hired with contracts that looked more like tenure-track faculty (that is, they had research as a portion of their load, or research was simply expected). We seek to ensure that general faculty are given credit for the work they have done prior to the implementation of the new policy. This is particularly critical for general faculty seeking promotion. Some general faculty have been contributing for many years under a particular understanding of their position, and under this policy will be evaluated for promotion under terms that may be quite different. For some, expectations and contributions may have shifted significantly over time.

To prevent this unfair result, we recommend that the promotion criteria in the policy should include a “grandparenting clause.” One option would be to have evaluation for promotion based on the criteria in the policy and “on responsibilities articulated in the faculty member’s appointment letter and annual load distribution.” This provides the flexibility for P&T committees to judge the individual based on the expectations for the position across the full timeframe of employment.

USE OF ONE-YEAR CONTRACTS

The GFC applauds the move to require three-year contracts for general faculty members. This provision has the potential not only to acknowledge “the important academic service to the University community” that general faculty members provide, but it will also help enforce the spirit of the new policy, which recognizes that stable and long-term faculty best serve the university. But, the implementation of this section of the policy has had unforeseen consequences that may ultimately betray what it originally sought to accomplish.

As you can read in the narratives shared by general faculty, some programs have chosen not to implement the new policy, citing budgetary constraints as their rationale. **If changes are not made within the next few weeks, these departments will terminate faculty who have already had three one-year contracts simply to avoid the three-year contract.** Going forward, these departments appear poised to hire faculty with three successive one-year contracts, terminate them, and start over with new faculty hired with three successive one-year contracts. The stress and uncertainty caused by this situation is readily apparent in the attached narratives.

The practice of churning through one-year contracts would endanger teaching quality and department stability, and it would place an unnecessary burden on all faculty members. Departments with high numbers of faculty in one-year contracts will routinely have to let go of exceptional teachers that have already been trained, and that, in many cases, already hold key administrative positions or other essential service duties in their program. These departments will waste valuable time and resources to perform job searches every year to fill the positions of those faculty who are forced to leave. Long term, this practice will damage the school’s ability to attract teachers who are committed to their program.

We recommend that the Provost fully support the implementation of the new policy so that departments treat one-year contracts as temporary positions only. To ensure that the policy is properly implemented, we request:

* a conversation between the Provost and the appropriate administrators in the College of Arts & Sciences to (1) identify which departments currently have high numbers of GFMs in one year-contracts, (2) determine which positions are temporary (justifications may include substitutions of faculty members on leave and probationary periods for new faculty members) and which positions are part of long-term departmental needs, and (3) to commit to sufficiently fund the latter ones.
* the following changes (underlined) in the text of sections 2C and 3C of the policy, which have similar language:

“Academic General Faculty Members […] will be given an initial appointment of: (1) one three-year term or (2) up to three successive one-year appointments. For positions that have not been identified as temporary, after the successful completion of the initial three-year appointment term, or the three successive one-year appointments, the Academic General Faculty Member will, when renewed, be offered a three-year appointment.”

The university should not be spending resources to search for, hire, and train new teachers only to let them go and repeat the process.

NOTICE OF NON-RENEWAL—ONE-YEAR CONTRACTS

One-year contracts currently carry no requirement for notice of non-renewal. This is highly problematic and generates ill will. For example, one-year contracts are currently common in the language departments where many faculty need to renew their visas to remain legally in the country. As the attached narratives demonstrate, this is causing enormous stress and disruption in the lives of our faculty and their families.

We recommend that for a preliminary one-year contract, the department be required to inform the faculty member whether they will be renewed or not at least three-months prior to the termination of the contract. For a second one-year contract, the department should have good information about the faculty member’s performance and therefore should be required to give the faculty member six months’ notice of renewal or non-renewal. When the third one-year contract is executed, the department should indicate at the time of renewal whether the department intends to offer a three-year contract for the next renewal. This would encourage long-term planning and help prevent the scramble for exceptions to the one-year contract limit. All notices should be delivered in writing to avoid misunderstandings. Also, it is incumbent on the Administration to inform departments in a timely manner of support for existing positions in order for departments to be able to successfully fulfill the requirements towards notifying faculty of renewal or non-renewal.

LECTURER AND PROFESSOR RANKS

As individual schools adapt to the new policy, the use of the lecturer ranks has risen as a major issue. As the attached narratives demonstrate, assignment to professor or lecturer rank is playing out in ways that appear inconsistent or arbitrary in some departments and programs. For example, for musical performance faculty, the terminal degree (DMA) was not typical ten or more years ago. Instead, experience as a performer was prized. Now, the terminal degree is more common among junior faculty. Under the new policy, those junior faculty would be assigned to the professor ranks while more experienced senior faculty would be assigned to the lecturer ranks. And, two individuals with the exact same position (albeit specializing in different instruments) might have different titles.

The policy should establish a framework that causes those who have the same position to hold the same title, regardless of their degree. While we understand and respect the desire to seek faculty with outstanding qualifications—oftentimes a terminal degree—we believe a title should ultimately relate to the position held and work performed by the faculty member. A long-serving faculty member should typically carry the title professor, as the Provost’s policy currently suggests.

We therefore recommend several changes to the policy, described in detail below: a modification of the qualifications for professorial rank, an expansion of the use of commensurate experience, a grandparenting clause for those with long service to the university, and an explicit path to move from lecturer to professor ranks as responsibilities or qualifications change over a career.

We propose a modification of the language that defines qualifications for professorial rank. Section 2.B. “With the exception of faculty members on the practice track (see section II.F.3), Academic General Faculty Members who hold professorial rank normally must hold the terminal degree expected for faculty who teach in their discipline.” This change acknowledges that in some disciplines, a degree other than a Ph.D. may be considered a standard qualification for university faculty (e.g. a master’s degree in arts or music).

We also propose a modification of the language concerning commensurate experience, in Section 2.B. “In exceptional circumstances, or in departments where commensurate experience is a typical qualification for faculty, an individual with significant related experience without the qualifying terminal degree may be hired with professorial rank. In such cases, the hiring school must request approval in writing and provide a justification for the hire to the provost (see Procedure 3. Documenting Faculty Qualifications). Approval should be sought for the position, rather than an individual, where the department routinely expects to hire individuals for the position with a particular combination of education and commensurate experience.” The first change in this section would help clarify the use of the professor rank in departments where a terminal degree is not considered a standard qualification for faculty. The second change would allow a department to obtain approval for an ongoing exception where the department expects to routinely hire individuals with something other than a terminal degree. For example, the music department might seek approval for positions it expects to fill with those holding Master’s degrees who also have substantial professional performance experience.

We also propose adding to Section 2.B. a grandparenting clause: “Faculty who were hired prior to adoption of this policy should be placed in the professor track, regardless of qualifying degree, if their responsibilities, experience, excellence, and service to the university place them on par with others who hold the professor rank in their program, school, or department. Faculty with similar positions and responsibilities should not have different titles.”

Finally, we propose an explicit recognition that some faculty may start as lecturers, but should be moved to the professor ranks as their careers develop. For example, a lecturer hired to teach particular introductory classes might prove herself to be an exceptional teacher and a significant asset to the department. If that faculty member’s career evolves such that she regularly teaches upper-level courses and in other ways has the same responsibilities as those with the title Professor, the faculty member should be transitioned into the professor ranks. We recommend a new paragraph that encourages that change, which will help maintain equity of titles in departments. We suggest it might best be added as part of Section 3A, so that those with the Lecturer rank will easily find it when looking at the policy section that applies to their situation. It could read:

“A faculty member initially hired as a lecturer whose career evolves to include work typically performed by those of professorial rank (e.g. teaching upper-level classes, engaging in substantial service, and/or demonstrating significant professional reputation or commensurate experience), should be transferred to the professor ranks at the equivalent level. Schools should avoid having faculty with equivalent responsibilities holding different titles.”

TEACHING TRACK PROMOTION CRITERIA

Finally, within the teaching track, we urge two changes to the promotion criteria. The reason for each is explained below.

1. The requirement that scholarship “…must be evaluated for its contributions to the enhancement of the Academic Faculty Member’s teaching,” should be modified to include enhancement of the faculty member’s disciplinary expertise. This will clarify that scholarship need not be strictly pedagogical but will still provide what we sense department heads want--some assurance that faculty members will remain primarily focused on the expertise and teaching for which they were hired. The provision could read instead: “…must be evaluated for its contributions to the Academic Faculty Member’s expertise or to the enhancement of the Academic Faculty Member’s teaching.”)
2. The requirement that a faculty member must have a local, regional, or national reputation as a superior educator should be modified to allow departments to determine that a faculty member is a superior educator based on internal review. Particularly where a faculty member is not expected to publish, the need for a regional/national reputation would seem to run contrary to the classroom focus intended for the position. The provision could instead read: “…must demonstrate via internal review and/or regional reputation that they are superior educators.”

**General Faculty Narratives**

*These narratives were submitted by general faculty members to the General Faculty Council with permission to share them as part of our report. Many of the faculty asked to remain anonymous.*

**#1**

My main concern is the percentage structure that dictates the position.  Teaching GF should be 60-90% teaching and 10-40% service.  Since tenure track faculty are listed as 50/50 teaching and service it is extremely hard to enforce a substantial difference between these two roles.  What happens is I end up doing just as much service as my colleagues but with the addition of 2 more classes per year.  Since this can be justified to fit a 60/40 split it is hard to argue for less service and I end up with a far greater workload than anyone else.  A 3/3 teaching load is set, while a 10-40% service load is variable.  I see this as taking advantage of General Faculty who already shoulder heavier teaching loads than their colleagues.  If there is no way to enforce a balanced teaching/service load what's the point?  A split closer to 90% teaching 10% service would greatly help this issue.

**#2**

The "expedited promotion review" to Associate Professor was strange without connecting that "promotion" to a salary raise.  One of my colleagues in a similar position to my own was given a raise (a past year, not through the current NTTF policy) when he was promoted from Assistant to Associate.  If the Assistant Professor rank is "equal to" or a "transfer of equal title to" my former title of Lecturer (I've heard it called both things), why wouldn't the rank of Associate Professor be considered a promotion with a salary increase?

**#3**

Faculty who do both teaching and research never have the chance to take paid leave after years of service.  Sabbaticals should be offered to NTTF members.

**#4**

I was advised by my (now former) department chair about a decade ago that I should not pursue a doctorate because it would never help me in my position here at UVA.   He instead encouraged me to pursue experience in the field outside of my part-time position at the University, and I did just that.  With regards to the Provost's new NTTF policy, a number of my colleagues at UVA have years less experience professionally, both at the University and throughout our field on a national level, who are being placed in the professorial track because of their doctoral degree, while I am left as a Lecturer.  It would be nice if the Provost's office/individual schools would take into account considerable commensurate experience when evaluating employees for assignment into tracks under the new policy.

**#5**

In the Music Department, a number of people were given new titles (Lecturer to Senior Lecturer) without explanation/permission.  People were under the impression this change would be made only after seeking the employee's permission, and it is not clear as to why this happened.  Better communication/description from within the department/College would be greatly appreciated.  Also, promotions, such as to Senior Lecturer, should bring raises, and it is hurtful that the Provost/College didn't make these possible when creating the new ranking system.

**#6**

In the Music Department, two part-time employees, neither of whom has a doctorate or ECE, have been placed in the professorial track, while others who are doing identical work, but have earned ECE, have been left in the Lecturer track.  A third employee who also has no doctorate or ECE was offered the choice between the professorial and lecturer tracks.  Why have some faculty who have ECE but no doctorate been left as Lecturers, while others who have no ECE and no doctorate been placed, or at least offered to be placed, as Professors?

**#7**

I am one of those impacted by the three-year contract requirement after three consecutive one-year contracts. I initially understood that the policy meant that it would be easier to reappoint general faculty members:

"After the successful completion of the initial three-year appointment term, or the three successive one-year appointments, the Academic General Faculty Member will, if renewed, be offered a three-year appointment. Exceptions to these practices must be approved both in writing and in advance by the provost."

It now seems to me that it just makes it easier to fire us.

In Spanish, Italian & Portuguese, at least, we don't get renewed from a one-year contract to a three-year contract based on the recommendation of our chair. We have to compete in a national search for a three-year position--if such a position is available. The only mentions of "search" in the policy refer to tenure-track positions, so I don't understand where the mandate for a national search comes into play for us to keep our positions.

I don't know what the policy for rehiring general faculty was like before, but the implementation of the current policy definitely doesn't make me feel secure about my employment status.

Ricardo Huamán

**#8**

The main effect the Provost’s new policy has had on me is to create additional stress about my job security even though I succeeded in my 6-yr review. I was hired and recruited under the understanding that I would be employed under 3-year contracts and that renewal of the contracts was subject to my performance over the past 3-year contract period. If I understand the new policy correctly, under the new policy I may be warned of possible non-renewal if my performance is not satisfactory in a single year and that my failure to improve within one year could lead to a decision not to renew my contract. There are three reasons this is a more stressful situation. First, each year I face the possibility of being warned about possible non-renewal based on a single annual review. Second, it now seems that renewal decisions are based on a 2-year time period rather than a 3-year time period; the shorter time period is more subject to short-term fluctuations in my performance as a researcher (e.g., number of publications, grants funded). Third, decisions about contract renewal now seem tied to annual peer-reviews that were originally designed (and are still used) to allocate faculty raises of both tenure-track and general faculty. Previously, decisions about contract renewal were based on 3-year reviews, in which the reviewers weighed whether performance was satisfactory for contract renewal. As the stakes in contract renewal decisions are higher than decisions on allocating raises, I believe these decisions should be made through a different process.

**#9**

I have served the Department of Spanish, Italian and Portuguese at the University of Virginia for three years now, proactively and to the best of my ability, by recognition of my employers and supervisors, the Chair of the Department and the Program Director.

After having been subjected, for three continuous years, to a state of limbo when it came to knowing the procedures I needed to follow to request a renewal of my appointment – for us instructors on a 1-year contract – the new Provost policy affects me now in an unprecedented manner.

Being unsure about my own situation within the department makes me feel unprotected in my workplace. Not only it prevents me from making crucial decisions involving housing, visa applications in my home country and travel arrangements, but also this uncertainty makes me feel exposed to unnecessary anxiety and potentially to debt.

Indeed, holding a 1-year contract for the last three years – may it be due to university or school-level budget constraints – I have always felt in an underrated position at my workplace, seeing how my colleagues benefited from a much more attractive salary by doing the exact same job. Furthermore, as a J-1 visa holder, I cannot expect to be employed outside of the department – which I would, to try to bridge this salary gap. Yet, my employers, supervisors and my students have always made me feel very much appreciated at work, and this salary inequality has not, in any way, conditioned my outstanding performance.

All of us in our third one-year contract have recently been reminded that when our current appointment expires at the end of the year, we should have secured a position at another institution. It is very disappointing and discouraging that a reputed institution like University of Virginia cannot offer a renewal of our appointment beyond this year, when – and using one of my supervisors’ words – ‘they are willing to lose such incredible, extraordinary Faculty members’.

In the past, a 1-year extension has been granted for some Faculty members, but I want to express my disagreement with this policy, because such an extension does not make us a favor, but rather, it only perpetuates this unstable, unbearable and unfair situation, and, quite frankly, we personally have already borne a huge burden so far. I still hope for a better scenario where us, Lecturers, based on our performance, can expect to be promoted to a three-year contract and continue serving this University like we have so proudly done to date.

**#10**

2016-17 was my third year teaching as a lecturer on a one-year contract. In March 2017, after learning that the department would not receive any additional money for 3-year contracts, I was told that I would have to leave UVA unless the Provost granted me an exception to the new policy that states:

 “After the successful completion of the initial three-year appointment term, or the three successive one-year appointments, the Academic General Faculty Member ***will***, if renewed, be offered a three-year appointment.”

While not explicitly mentioned, this policy implies that if a three-year contract is unavailable for funding issues, the faculty member is forced to leave UVA because s/he cannot be rehired on a one-year contract again. I learned the wonderful news of the approval to extend my 1-year contract in April 2017. While I was grateful for the extension, the timing was not ideal. I had been frantic for weeks, scrambling to find positions at other institutions because I thought I had no other options until the last two weeks of the semester.

Our department is one of the largest in the university and the language classes that my colleagues and I teach are in constant demand. In our department, there are 25 General Faculty Members (GFMs) who collectively will teach 1,188 students in Spring 2018. This academic year, five of those GFMs will be affected by the above-mentioned paragraph of the policy. And, if the policy is not modified, next year it will affect 10 GFMs in our department.

Over the years I have received exceptional student course evaluations, I have held essential leadership positions and I have contributed beyond my duties as a lecturer to both the department and the university by presenting at conferences and supporting academic organizations. Within the department, my work is respected and valued equally to the work of my colleagues. However, it is discouraging to not receive equal compensation for the same work, as the three-year contract’s salary is significantly higher (39% salary increase from the one-year contract), in addition to lacking the stability that the longer contracts grant faculty members.

The department has expressed a desire to commit to me and other colleagues, but the needed support has not been granted to offer us contracts longer than one year. The department supervisors have fully supported us every step of the way; the sense of loyalty and collaboration within our department is exceptional and is one of the many reasons why I love working at the University of Virginia.

I understand that the policy was initially designed to protect General Faculty. However, in reality, it has accomplished the exact opposite. We, GFMs, are dedicated to UVA, and we would love to continue contributing to this community of learning.

**#11**

I continue to find it disturbing that the new policies will have the following (unintended) effects on teaching and learning in many programs and departments.

-- We are going to lose a number of truly exceptional teachers/lecturers who are on 1-yr contracts because we cannot offer them a 3-yr contract to continue on. Some of these lecturers hold key administrative positions or other essential service duties in our program.

-- Because our program uses innovative teaching methods and instructional technologies not utilized at other institutions, we spend a considerable amount of time training lecturers new to our department. The new policies mean that we end up losing lecturers we've just trained and have to constantly train new lecturers on a regular basis. This affects quality of instruction.

-- The department will waste valuable time and resources having to perform job searches every year to fill the positions of those lecturers who are forced to leave. Because our budget is generally not approved until late spring, these searches happen during summer and the quality of our pool of applicants that late in the year is not very good. So, we are losing superb teachers and replacing them with less qualified candidates.  Because of the nature of their contract limitations, we are bound to attract teachers who are less committed to our program.

-- Having a revolving door of lecturers constantly coming and going affects the quality of instruction, the quality of learning, program morale, and the educational mission of the College.

**#12**

I am writing this paragraph to let the provost and the administration know about the difficulty that the new policy about the hiring of lecturers has created personally to me. The uncertainty of the position forbids me to do any plans for the future, from simple things like buying a car to more important things, like starting a family. There is no point in doing a lot of things when I might not be able to stay here next here. But it creates also problems on the working part, and therefore, to my department. During the five years I spent here I started different projects, that now risk to be cancelled, if I am not confirmed. I started a very successful chapter of the Italian Honor Society (that created a collaborative atmosphere among the students of Italian that was present before), I started a monthly coffee chat with the students in order to make them practice their speaking skills, I got a grant and started a learning library, so that the students can borrow Italian books from me in order to practice their reading skill. I am currently organizing, for next semester, an initiative with a city in Italy called Poggio a Caiano, in order to pair the students from Charlottesville with people from Italy, so that they can meet on Skype and practice speaking Italian and English (this initiative will be promoted in Italy by the mayor and the city council). I piloted the e-Portfolio with Digication and I am currently part of the e-Portfolio grant team, led by Professor Emily Scida. There is no guarantee that the person who will come after me will be able to do all these things, and to keep them alive. Keeping instructors is beneficial for the students and the university, and an institution important like UVA shouldn't act like a common business company, worried more about money then about education.

Thank you for you attention,

Stella Mattioli

**#13**

My main concern is with the use of one-year contracts. I completely understand the fact that one-year contracts are offered to new General Faculty Members (GFMs) at UVa. However, after a one-year probationary period , all lecturers would feel more valued, eager to get involved with their departments, and less anxious if longer-term contracts were offered. According to the new policy, one-year contracts can be renewed up to three years. After that third year, a three-year contract should be offered if the GFM is renewed. Last year, two colleagues in my department were in this situation, but only one of them was offered a three-year contract while for the other an exception to the policy was granted, and my colleague stayed with a new one-year contract. Next year, three more colleagues will be in this same situation, and the following year it will be five GFMs. How long can those exceptions be granted? How long do we need to wait until our positions are seriously considered and compensated? Employees need to feel valued, and longer-term contracts should be reinforced in order to promote that.

Besides this, one-year contracts can be very stressful: not only the process of adapting to a new work place can cause anxiety, but also renewing those one-year contracts into another one-year contract can damage personally and professionally GFMs. One-year contract renewals are typically confirmed in mid-June, and they only transmit instability and uncertainty to GFMs who finish their previous contract at the beginning of May and find themselves "unemployed" after that time without a confirmation of renewal. Furthermore, many of those GFMs need to renew their apartments' leases around March (without the certainty of keeping their job) and many of them need to even leave the country for visa reasons and have to find a place to keep their personal belongings (once again, without the certainty of coming back).

Besides all of this inconveniences and uncertainties, having a one-year contract makes a difference on our professional development and on our opportunities to do service for our departments and or the university. In many cases, we are asked to commit with the university or the specific program, but the duration of our contracts does not allow for that: for example, in order to lead a study abroad program, we need to have a three-year contract; in order to participate in Ignite (Center for Teaching Excellence), we need to have a commitment of two years (when we do not know if we will be renewed); etc. This prevents us from benefiting from those wonderful professional opportunities, and to do significant service, both of which are certainly important opportunities for professional development that translate into elevating the quality of our teaching.

I understand that departments and the University want to ensure that their faculty members show great professionalism and develop a high quality teaching methodology. Therefore, three-year contracts should be offered in order to support and reinforce that hard work, and to allow those GFMs to participate in professional development programs so that they can continue doing their best for their students, their departments and the University.

Even though GFMs in one-year contracts have already demonstrated sustained excellence in their performance and a desire to keep growing professionally, if the policy does not change, they will be losing their positions, and that would  be a great loss for any department and for the university.

Once again, thank you very much for giving us the opportunity to share our concerns.

**#14**

Thank you for taking the time to collect our individual experiences.

During my first semester at UVa I did not have any benefits, so I purchased one of the private health insurance plans recommended by the university (International Medical Group, Inc.). I decided to buy an expensive plan with the hope of not having any issues. Much to my surprise, the only time I needed to use it no clinic in town accepted “international insurance plans” and they asked me to pay over $250 for a regular visit.

As my first appointment was a one-semester contract, it could not be renewed automatically. Therefore, I waited until 05/23/2017 and applied for a Lecturer position again. I had my interview on interview on 07/06/2017 and received my offer letter on 07/21/2017. Considering that summer is the peak season at the US embassy, it was difficult for me to make an appointment for my visa interview. I also had additional problems with my new visa type, which delayed the entire process even more. All this translated into a great deal of stress, a need for substitutes for the first week of classes, and an important investment of money, as I had to book a last-minute flight. I ended up booking my ticket on 08/24/2017, flying out 08/25/2017, moving in to my new apartment on 08/26/2017, and starting teaching on 08/28/2017. Additionally, as I did not know whether my employment at UVa would continue after May 2017, I did not renew my apartment lease in February 2017. Instead, I moved out in May, left all my belongings at a friend’s, moved back to my home country, and looked for another place to live in late July.

Lastly, I strongly believe that having a one-year contract negatively impacts GFM’s opportunities to access career development opportunities, such as Ignite, that require a firm commitment from the department for continued employment.

Thank you for helping us voice our concerns. I hope that some changes are made in due time to the benefit of both individual GFMs and Departments as a whole.

**#15**

I am writing to share my concerns about my current situation as a Lecturer on a one-year contract basis, as well as that of other colleagues in a similar situation, so that we can raise awareness about it.

Since I am working for the Department, every year new positions for Lecturers in a one-year contract basis have been opened. However, the process tends to start in late May or June, and there have been problems on several occasions with people who could not get the visa or background check done in time when the semester starts, and other colleagues need volunteer to work as substitutes. This also poses problems for those who need to buy last minute flight tickets from other countries, which is much more expensive than when done in advance.

As for the renovations, the process also takes place late on the semester (last year, I received the offer letter for the renovation in mid-June). This creates a lot of uncertainty, and it is not only the fact that ending the semester without knowing if one is coming back or not to the Department the following semester causes a lot of anxiety, but it also affects aspects such as housing. Most rents need to be renewed by March or April, and it forces us to risk renewing them or not without being sure we are coming back.

Last but least, something that really worries Lecturers on a one-year contract basis, is the precedent created last year with a colleague that had worked for three years on a one-year contract basis, and was not offered a three-year contract, but an extension of one more year to the previous one-year contract. Last year there were two people in this situation (they had been three years in one-year contract basis) and only one three-year contract position was opened because another colleague with that type of contract left the Department. However, the problem is going to be worse in the forthcoming future. This year, three Lecturers are going to find themselves in this situation, and next year, four more Lecturers will complete their three years on a one-year contract basis.

For all the above mentioned, the situation is not very encouraging in terms of professional development for us. But it also seems detrimental for the Department. With long-term positions, the Department will benefit from stability, commitment and professionalism from the Lecturers because having new Lecturers every year seems less efficient than ensuring that people who passed a selective process and show their professionalism on a daily basis for three years stay in the Department.

I would appreciate if you could share these concerns with whom you consider appropriate.

Sincerely,

A lecturer from the Department of Spanish, Italian, & Portuguese

**#16**

“[T]here is some confusion about the policies. For example, our school is under the impression that the Practice track is only intended for P/T, not F/T people. The other point that is confusing is whether the Practice track assumes a majority of time teaching. My understanding is that the Practice track does not assume a majority of time teaching, but assumes a majority of time in practice, action, research, etc. Our school assumes that as long as we do not spend the bulk of our time teaching, then we cannot be faculty. . . even though we are currently classified as T&R Faculty. . . . [Another of] the biggest issues for our school is to have a clear distinction between Administrative staff and Faculty. It might be helpful to have some clarification on that point. . . . In brief, nothing has happened at our school that we have any idea about, although [we] have asked what is happening a number of times. In fact we were told at first by the school that we were administrative general faculty, despite that clearly not being the case, and the school appears not to agree that the new policy applies to the school, at least as it is written.”

·

**#17**

 “(1) I work in an area/department that has traditionally been staffed by non-tenure track faculty. Informally, our Dean has said he would like to see our area/department be ‘the best in the world.’ Yet I’m not certain that will be possible without hiring a tenure-track quality candidate. How do I reconcile what sounds to me like a mixed message? (2) Is there a University procedure for requesting a tenure-track line for a previously non-tenure track position?”