TO: Executive Committee/Faculty Senate
FROM: Ad-Hoc committee on Lectureships and Part-time lectureships (Renee Everett, Jan Downing, Judy Lindquist)
DATE: 1/17/02
RE: Proposal for one-year, renewable Lecturer position at EKU

The committee was asked to consider the viability of creating a yearly renewable “lecturer” position at Eastern Kentucky University as a solution to the hiring of part-time or adjunct instructors.

The committee’s discussions, along with input from the deans and faculty, plus a perusal of comments about this issue from AAUP and COSFEL, led the committee to conclude that, although there are serious concerns about such a position, there is an appropriate use of such a rank.

Even AAUP acknowledges that “there are legitimate uses” of non-tenure track, full-time lecturers to “meet unexpected increases in enrollment or faculty vacancies, to provide service in a specialized field, or to develop a new academic program” (AAUP Non Tenure Track Guidelines, 2001). In fact, non tenure track, full time faculty now hold more than 20 percent of all faculty positions across the U.S. (AAUP).

A system, which combines the use of both tenure track and non-tenure faculty, seems appropriate. Different kinds of faculty are appropriate to different kinds of settings and classroom experiences. However, to protect those faculty in non tenure track positions, certain guidelines and policies must be established. When this is done and clearly communicated to all faculty, the “divide” that so often occurs between the two tracks can be diminished.

To make this system work successfully, those guidelines must be clearly set forth. The committee has looked at concerns from both AAUP and COSFL and feel those concerns can be mollified through clear articulation of guidelines to govern non-tenure track, full-time faculty. Most of those concerns revolve around the fact that part-time or non-tenure track faculty are short term and can’t participate in the long-term plans and goals of a department and/or university. However, the renewable, non-tenure track position (the “lecturer” or “teaching associate”) would be continuing. The individual could be rehired year after year and provide the continuity missing in part-timers and/adjuncts. Another concern is the “reduction in the sense of community of the university” (COSFL comment page). The statement is made that part-timers are not considered part of the university family (i.e., no benefits, short-term contracts). This would not be true of a renewable position that the committee will suggest here. Individuals holding the rank of “teaching
associate” would have benefits, would undergo evaluation, and would be eligible for return the next year.

Additionally, the individuals often hired into the position of “teaching associate” love teaching. They have a direct and personal relationship with the students. Their number one priority is teaching and they help the department retain that focus. Anecdotal evidence from several institutions (University of Cincinnati Pharmacy School, West Virginia University, University of Illinois at Champagne-Urbana, Berry University, University of Georgia, and Ball State University) support the viability of such “teaching associate” positions. Faculty in those positions are long-term. The committee talked to several faculty members who had been in such positions for over 15 years. They felt completely welcome in their respective departments and believed they were full and active participants in the university. Most underwent annual evaluations, received merit raises, and were active in departmental committees. Jobs posted on the West Virginia University web site were written to allow the candidates to choose either a tenure-track (which included research, etc.) or a non-tenure track renewable “teaching associate” track (with a heavier emphasis on teaching and less on research).

The committee’s polling of deans and faculty on campus also generally supported the creation of such a “teaching associate” rank (see attached summary of comments). It is particularly interesting to note Dean Hart’s comments. Dean Hart chaired a committee charged with this same issue back in 1993. That committee concluded at that time that such a position was not recommended. However, Dean Hart now notes that he would be “somewhat softer on the possibility now than he was several years ago – though [he] still has serious misgivings.” Dean Hart recommends that “if it were to be instated, there should be appropriate and secure restrictions on its use.” This committee agrees, wholeheartedly.

With this background in mind, the committee recommends the following “teaching associate” non-tenure track, renewable rank for EKU. The committee lays out recommended guidelines to support such a position, but acknowledges that such guidelines may require modifications before implementation.

1. EKU should introduce a non tenured, renewable (indefinitely) rank with the following conditions/guidelines:

   a) This rank will not be considered tenurable regardless of years re-hired into rank.
   b) non tenured renewable faculty should constitute no more than 15% of the total instruction within the institution and should be no more than 25% of the total instruction within any given department
   c) the faculty member hired into the non tenured, renewable (indefinitely) rank would be hired into a fixed 9 month term with limitless renewals
   d) credential requirements could be less than those for tenure track faculty (MA/MS required, plus any additional credentials as required by individual departments)
e) all appointments in the non tenured, renewable (indefinitely) rank should have a
description of the specific professional duties required in the position
f) the performance of faculty members on non tenured, renewable (indefinitely)
tracks should be regularly evaluated by the respective department with established
criteria appropriate to their positions

i) faculty in non tenured, renewable (indefinitely) rank who have been employed
consecutively for 3 or more terms should receive at least a full term’s notice of
nonreappointment

j) departments with faculty in non-tenured, renewable (indefinitely) rank must
provide the conditions necessary to perform the assigned duties in a professional
manner, including such things as appropriate office space, necessary supplies,
support services and equipment.

k) Faculty in non tenured, renewable (indefinitely) rank should be included in the
departmental and institutional structures of faculty governance

l) Faculty in non tenured, renewable (indefinitely) rank may be eligible for advising
m) Faculty in the non tenured, renewable (indefinitely) rank should be permitted to
count some portion of their years in the non tenured position toward tenure when
and if the faculty member applies for a full-time tenure track position

The committee feels the “treatment of non tenure track faculty is the barometer
whereby the general status of the profession may be measured. While the colleague
whose performance is undervalued or whose potential is blighted by
underemployment bears the brunt of the situation, the status of all faculty is
undermined by the degree of exploitation the profession allows of its members”
(AAUP, non tenure track guidelines, 2001).

There is justification for the creation of such a position, but it must be treated
carefully to ensure faculty placed in such positions are not de-valued or treated as
second class citizens.

Additionally, by ensuring such faculty do not exceed 15% of the entire institution, we
protect against the marginalization of faculty as whole and the de-valuing of tenure
among the rest of the faculty.

A summary of the Dean’s comments follows.
Summary of Deans’ Comments:

Dean Rogow (College of Business and Technology): (verbal discussion) Dean Rogow is in favor of such a position and attempted for 7 years to create such a position at Auburn University. He feels it is useful in cases of “skills” oriented classes such as accounting, broadcast skills, and others.

Dean Hart (College of Arts and Sciences): (email) Dean Hart was on a committee in 1993 that decided against such a “lecturer” position, but notes today that he “would be somewhat softer on the possibility [now] than he was several years ago – though [he] still has serious misgivings.” He is fearful that such positions are often used to “staff lower division course which the regular faculty often find unattractive and to do so at a reduced cost.” Dean Hart also recommends that “if it were to be instituted, there should be appropriate and secure restrictions on its use.”

Dean Cordner (College of Justice and Safety): (email) Dean Cordner is generally agreeable to the idea and notes that he checked with several folks in his area and that “we generally support the idea. Anything that would give us more flexibility in hiring would be a plus.” He also cautioned that “figuring out how to avoid making such folks second class citizens is important.” Gary Collins, chair of Loss Prevention and Fire Safety also added that he feels this “has potential to solve the problem of finding people in some of the technical areas. In some fields, even the best don’t pursue terminal degrees.”

Dean Gale (College of Health Sciences): (by phone) Dean Gale is also very much in favor of this kind of position, as it would be extremely helpful in the areas of clinical work. He said he has also tried for several years to get EKU to pursue this kind of position to no avail.

Dean Wasicsko (College of Education): Declined to respond.