

Priority Letter: Recommendations for the 2022-23 A&S NTE Faculty (Framework) Policy

Concern: In 2013, a substantial shift in policy was introduced affecting the roles, rights, and responsibilities of non-tenure eligible (NTE) Arts & Sciences (A&S) faculty. Announced as a *fait accompli*, the 2013 policy included innovative improvements (e.g., new titles, new merit process, consolidated positions, and the presumption of continuation for Senior Lecturers). However, A&S implemented this policy in relative isolation, inconsistently, and without NTE faculty input.

Opportunity: During the 2021-22 academic year, the A&S Dean's Office has been developing a new A&S NTE policy. In Spring 2022, the A&S Dean announced the draft A&S NTE faculty policy to the A&S Faculty Affairs Committee, A&S Chairs, and Program Directors, and NTE faculty. As of June 2022, the draft policy has not been circulated; no process for reviewing and eventually approving the policy has been articulated.

Recommendation. The Faculty Assembly reinforces the need for the process for reviewing and approving the proposed A&S NTE faculty policy be deliberative, transparent, and based in William and Mary's existing policies of shared governance. Unit bylaws, the *Faculty Handbook*, and other established documents outline procedures for changing university policies that govern faculty. William & Mary administrators and faculty must work through established shared governance mechanisms if substantial changes to faculty policy are warranted.

Implementation Details. The Faculty Assembly expects its constituents to have sufficient time to consider, revise, and support the proposed A&S NTE faculty policy. To support this requirement, the Faculty Assembly requests that by August 1, 2022 the A&S Dean share the draft policy with the A&S Faculty Affairs Committee, the Faculty Assembly's Faculty Affairs Committee, and the NTE Faculty Association. Faculty Assembly also recommends providing multiple opportunities in the form of townhalls, brown bags, coffee meetings, etc. for faculty to consider and refine the proposed A&S NTE faculty policy. Eventual approval of the policy must rely on existing shared governance mechanisms. Naturally, significant changes to faculty policies will be more effective after engaging in strong collaboration among stakeholders. Broad faculty understanding and engagement should be a goal in the refinement process. The deeper the consultation, the greater the likelihood of policy consistencies across schools.

Benefits. Providing multiple opportunities for broad engagement will: 1) improve everyone's understanding of the proposed policy's purpose, 2) increase constituent investment in its success, 3) ease and harmonize implementation within and between units, and 4) encourage effective shared governance. Because the proposed A&S NTE faculty policy directly affects a substantial sector of the current faculty, the mechanisms for its review and approval must remain transparent and inclusive.

Risks & Costs. The stakes are high for all faculty. Implementation without collaboration risks re-creating the problems of the 2013 policy: inadequate understanding and inconsistent implementation, thus leading to inefficient and costly problems in recruiting, retaining, and promoting NTE faculty. NTE faculty contribute in critical ways to Arts & Sciences and to William & Mary more broadly. We deserve a policy that has been vetted in accordance with William & Mary's commitment to shared governance.