

## Statement on Special Appointments

According to the Collective Bargaining Agreement section 4.8.2, special appointments “shall be for one (1) of four (4) purposes: (a) to bring to the university personnel with unusual knowledge, artistry or exceptional merit, (b) to replace a full-time member on leave, (c) emergency appointment prior to a successful affirmative action search, or (d) appointment to a temporary grant- or contract-funded position.” On each of the four CSUS campuses, the administration is violating the spirit and the letter of provision (c) of section 4.8.2 by using special appointments to repeatedly and serially fill faculty lines without timely subsequent affirmative action searches for regular tenure-track faculty.

CSU-AAUP understands the administration’s stated strategy of filling lines with “temporary” full-time faculty in order to avoid laying off tenure-track faculty in the midst of this fiscal crisis. However, this budgetary shell game obfuscates a structural problem that has real and enduring negative consequences for students, for their educational outcomes, and ultimately for the State of Connecticut.

1. Special appointments create problems of consistency and quality in the classroom. This is not to say that professors holding special appointments are inferior instructors. However, special appointees have little incentive to insure that their courses meet long-term curricular goals of a department, and departments have little ability to shape an appointment that will end after a maximum of two years. Thus, as special appointment use rises, departments find it more difficult to insure that instruction is consistent with their curricular goals and values, and thus the coherence of instruction in programs and majors is diminished.
2. The increased reliance on special appointments has meant that some special appointees are now teaching core courses in programs or majors. This means that a department will be forced to rehire a new instructor for these core courses after two years. Because special appointments are made without the benefits of a national search, a department will be looking for a qualified individual to teach core courses from a limited pool of candidates. Greater reliance on special appointments increases the chances that a suitable individual will not be found, and this increases the chances that core courses may not be offered or may be taught by individuals who are not fully qualified to teach them. When core courses are not offered regularly, students’ progress toward the degree is impeded.
3. All instructors require some training to teach in the CSU system. One of the strengths of the CSUS is the care with which faculty tailor their teaching to meet the needs of CSU students. Reliance on special appointments means that departments must expend large amounts of time mentoring and training new faculty. This affects the amount of time faculty have to spend with students outside of the classroom which then directly affects the quality of the education that the student receives. Moreover, the time expended to train a new faculty member is in essence wasted after the faculty member in question leaves after one or two years.
4. Training is especially important for academic advisement. Departments that rely on special appointments will either rely on the special appointees to perform some academic advisement or will use only tenure track faculty to advise. In both cases, advisement quality is diminished. In

the former, advisement is performed by relatively inexperienced individuals since special appointments last a maximum of two years. In the latter, tenure track advisors have more advisees and therefore spend less time with and have more difficulty tracking the progress of individual students and students' progress towards the degree will be impeded. Moreover, the advisor-advisee relationship is a primary site of students' connections to the university and is thus directly related to retention. As tenure-track faculty take on more and more advisees, this relationship is diluted.

5. The cycle of interviewing and hiring to fill special appointment positions is costly and time-consuming without the advantages of spending that money and time to hire someone who will be a long-term asset to the educational mission of the university.

6. The current reliance on special appointments has been haphazard. Programs and departments were not systematically reviewed to insure that special appointments would not affect the core missions of the departments receiving them. Instead, positions made open through retirements, resignations, etc. were turned into special appointments with the expectation that students would somehow "make do" as they pursued their degrees. This is an irrational staffing policy and as such is not conducive to insuring the quality of education for CSU students.

7. Finally, the current practice regarding special appointments violates AAUP Red Book principles. The statement on *Contingent Appointments and the Academic Profession* reads: "Because faculty tenure is the only secure protection for academic freedom in teaching, research, and service, the declining percentage of tenured faculty means that academic freedom is increasingly at risk...[N]o more than 15 percent of the total instruction within an institution, and no more than 25 percent of the total instruction within any department, should be provided by faculty with non-tenure-track appointments."

This current overreliance on special appointments is a short-term solution that is leading to long-term challenges for our students. We urge that special appointments be used only for contractually stipulated reasons. Second, we urge that universities return to the approach to hiring that is best for our students: offering full-time tenure track positions.