POLICY ON NON-INSTRUCTIONAL CATEGORY OF “ACADEMIC SPECIALIST”
(Approved by Academic Council on January 23, 2009)
(Revised by Academic Council on April 29, 2011)
(Revised and Approved by Academic Council on November 21, 2014)

Academic Specialist

Academic Specialist shall be defined as individuals whose primary responsibilities are academic in nature, but who do not ordinarily teach courses for academic credit. These individuals engage in activities significant to the functioning of the department, school, centers, and institutes.

Academic Specialists are hired on an as-needed basis and in congruence with the mission of each Department. Need and congruence are determined by the Department Chair, in consultation with the faculty. The primary criterion for selection is a documented record of excellence in the particular non-academic capacity for which the individual is making application. A full-time Academic Specialist may be hired after a comprehensive national search, if deemed appropriate by the department chair and faculty. Academic Specialists are expected to remain current in their areas of professional responsibility. Efforts to remain current may be demonstrated in a variety of ways consistent with their ongoing responsibilities and with the endorsement by the Department Chair.

Initial Probationary Appointment

Academic Specialists may be appointed by the Chair of a Department in which employment is held, or through a mechanism developed and approved through the governance committee or procedure of the academic unit in which the individual is to be employed. The probationary period for an Academic Specialist appointment will be for a seven year period as follows: initial appointment is for three years with annual reappointment through
year six for consideration of a long-term contract beginning in year seven. Annual reappointments and long-term contract are subject to satisfactory job performance and available funding.

Non-Reappointment During the Probationary Period

Non-reappointment during the probationary period may occur in two ways: 1) unsatisfactory performance based upon essential duties of position description or 2) change in the needs of the department.

Official Notice of Non-Reappointment

For faculty serving full-time, notice of non-reappointment shall be given in writing in accordance with the following standards:

1. Not later than February 1 of the first academic year of service, if the appointment expires at the end of that year; or, if a one-year appointment terminates during an academic year, at least three months in advance of its termination.

2. Not later than November 15 of the second academic year of service, if the appointment expires at the end of that year; or, if an initial two-year appointment terminates during an academic year, at least six months in advance of its termination.

3. At least twelve months before the expiration of an appointment after two or more years in the institution.

Contract Terms

The performance review will be completed on an annual basis by the Chair of the Department in which the Academic Specialist is employed in order to determine eligibility for retention and change in contract terms. The Academic Specialist is responsible for submitting documentation of performance during each of the probationary years. The Department Chair is responsible for providing a written summary of each annual review with copy given to the faculty member and a copy placed in the school’s personnel file. At the beginning of the sixth year.
year, the Academic Specialist must submit documentation for consideration of a long-term contract. In conducting the annual reviews, the Department Chair reviews the essential duties of the position description, or duties as assigned. Provided the review is positive or the department needs have not changed, a three-year rolling contract, renewable annually, will be awarded and becomes effective beginning in year seven. The Academic Specialist may request early consideration of the long-term contract beginning in their fourth year of the probationary period.

Following a positive annual review at the end of the first year of the rolling contract, and provided the needs of the Department do not change, an additional year will be added to the end of the three-year contract. Thereafter, an additional year will be added to the end of the contract for each year of successful review, providing the needs of the department do not change.

Individuals judged by the performance review to have an unsatisfactory or below average year will be denied the annual year extension, and therefore, will only have two years remaining on their contracts. Following another year of successful performance, that person could, at the discretion of the Department Chair, be moved back to a three-year rolling contract.