

An Overview on the Appointments Process

The creation of positions and the identification of individuals to fill those positions are among the most important responsibilities of the collegium. The appointments process ought to be seen as supporting that view, not as an end in itself. In addition, the process is heavily affected by collective agreements with bargaining units. It is absolutely essential that the Dean(s)/Principal/University Librarian and others involved in the process be familiar with these requirements. For interpretation and application of the collective agreements, contact the Vice-Provost Academic.

Full time faculty appointments are classified as professorial-stream (commonly known as tenure-stream) or alternate-stream. In either stream, appointments can be tenured, probationary (tenure-track) or contractually limited. Librarian appointments fall into one of three classifications: continuing, probationary or contractually limited.

The appointments process operates in three phases, involving the position approval, the search, and the recommendation. The policies and process considerations for each phase are set out as follows:

Approval of Faculty/Librarian Positions

The Vice-President Academic & Provost, in conjunction with the President and the Vice-President Research and Innovation, must approve appointment positions in advance of the search. Resignations, retirements, or other forms of separation do not automatically result in a vacancy or replacement position. Rather, these departures allow Faculties and Units to reflect on their longer-term academic priorities and identify appointments that might serve to bolster specific areas of strength, meet new challenges, and adapt to changing needs and demands. The University remains committed to maintaining the size of its tenure-stream complement and will continue to make as many appointments as are fiscally possible. Decanal requests for appointments, not all of which can be granted, must be made on academic grounds and be consistent with unit, Faculty, and University planning documents. Requests for bridging appointments will be considered each year where retirements are expected in areas of critical importance or to fill other urgent academic needs; approval will be contingent on appropriate funding arrangements.

Appointment allocations are made only for the year specified and do not automatically get carried forward if the position is not filled. A new request for an unfilled position must be submitted for approval. In cases of genuine emergency, or in order to take advantage of a special opportunity, it may be necessary for a Dean to submit a request for a position outside of the normal annual cycle. While the Vice-President Academic & Provost will consider such cases, they are the exception rather than the rule. All relevant units should consult and cooperate with a view to meeting shared needs. When appointments come forward for approval, appropriate indication of such efforts must be provided.

The needs of appropriate Graduate Programs are also a major consideration for all faculty appointments. All new faculty hires are expected to contribute to an existing Graduate Program or one that is expected to come on stream soon. In a University as deprived as York is of tenure-stream positions, it is perhaps not surprising that for most Faculties it is the needs of the undergraduate programs which drive the requests for tenure-stream positions. Nevertheless, where an appointment can also satisfy research needs by, for example, supporting a developing nucleus of research activity, or an Organized Research Unit (ORU), that fact ought to be seen as additional support for the request for a tenure-stream position. Certainly no request for a tenure-stream position in the professorial stream ought to lack comment on the implications of the proposed appointment for the research program of the initiating unit. Some units will adopt a policy of building upon existing research strengths, while others will opt for developing new nuclei. Both strategies should be seen as viable, provided that the longer term implications of the strategy are made clear.

On the financing of proposed positions, the Vice-President Academic & Provost has been charged with the responsibility of monitoring Faculty budgets, and s/he requires assurance that the Faculty has the capacity to pay for the positions that it is proposing to fill. Beginning in 1993-94, Deans were asked to enter into formal memoranda of understanding indicating that proposed appointments could be funded from existing Faculty budgets, endowment income, or from new revenue streams approved by the Office of the Vice-President Academic & Provost. In this way, the financial basis on which all appointments are made is known by everyone. In the absence of such memoranda of understanding, appointment files were turned back.

The above requirements still apply. Further, in regards to strategic appointments, appointment requests should demonstrate how the appointment will contribute to directions set out in the University Academic Plan and White Paper. In addition, detailed rationales should be provided describing how each requested appointment (centrally-funded and faculty-funded) will advance university strategic priorities and objectives and/or advance Faculty strategic academic priorities. Note that when requests for appointment authorization(s) are submitted to the Vice-President Academic & Provost, the Deans should ascertain the start-up costs involved and how those costs will be funded. Anticipated start-up funding is part of the decanal submission and the amount of start-up costs that will be provided from the Office of the VPA&P in relation to strategic appointments will be determined on an annual basis and specified in calls relating to strategic appointments. Unless otherwise specified, additional funding for start-up costs will be the responsibility of the Faculty budget or of research funding secured by the faculty member. Deans should indicate what special arrangements and considerations, e.g., space, lab/studio (new or renovated), equipment, etc. may be required.

Finally, there is the general matter of accountability both within the University and externally. While it is true that Faculty and Unit Plans can give a sense of future direction, it is also true that it is the decisions of the responsible administrative officers that will give effect to that sense of direction. There is no more important statement of the direction of the Faculty or Unit than that which indicates the appointments that will be made in the near

future and the Vice-President Academic & Provost expects such statements to make explicit reference to Unit and Faculty Plans. The Vice-President Academic & Provost is regularly asked by bodies reporting to Senate, by the Board of Governors, and by external bodies for statements of this sort, and it is important that this Office be kept fully apprised of the proposals that Deans have for appointments.