

A SHAKE-UP IN THE APPOINTMENTS OF FULL AND PART-TIME FACULTY

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Future appointments of faculty members will adopt a more flexible system than has been used so far. The new system will allow TKU to appoint teachers with specialty and research expertise more aggressively from all fields. Such a decision was drawn at a symposium for the re-structure of teaching and administration TKU held last month, whereby the Director of the Personnel Office, Lo Yunn-chyr first spelt out the concept of revising the ways the university has appointed faculty and their remuneration scale.

Flora Chang, the President, is convinced by the merits of such flexible appointment and salary system, as it will primarily inject a new breath of life into the intellectual vitality of all departments. In particular, she believes, a flexible hiring policy, which drew inspiration from similar systems deployed in progressive American universities and other full-time faculty appointment systems that will aid in transforming TKU into an international research-oriented university, enables Tamkang faculty to spread their wings in what they do best. In addition to this, there will be appointments of specialists to incubate students as ingenious entrepreneurs loved by all enterprises.

Lo further suggests that a flexible full-time faculty appointment system can divide faculty into two main categories—all round type and specialist type—paid by different salary scale and benefit package. The former type refers to faculties who are experienced teachers/scholars and hold administrative positions. They are entitled to receive extra allowances and are relieved from certain teaching obligations. Suggestions as to its implementation are welcome.

The latter type, the specialists, can also be divided into ‘research’ and ‘teaching’ faculties. Those that are good at research may teach one or

two courses but must have research results and publications to show for each year. Their works, additionally, will have to undergo the scrutiny of an evaluation board determining the merits of their contribution. Should it be unsatisfactory, there will be one year's probation time to modify the research. When the standard remains under par after that period, there will not be a renewal of contract nor change of contract to other types of appointment.

Teaching faculties, conversely, focus on teaching with a minimum teaching load of 3 to 4 courses and can offer new courses every few other years. Their performance will be regularly reviewed each time at the renewal of their contract. Such a scheme, for example, is ideal for lecturers that have not been promoted to a higher grade in the last eight years. They can consider doing the teaching 'full-time' so the university will drop the regulation of no payment for extra teaching for them. In exchange, they will neither be permitted to take on administrative job nor teaching at other institutions.

The university will also hire full time research fellows to conduct projects of various natures—long term, short term and certification projects. They should work under the supervision of full-time faculties to coordinate assorted resources and integrate diverse disciplines. Research fellows not restricted under these conditions will have to teach and do administrative work.

Finally, the university will encourage the 'teaching' type faculties to write e-learning and distance-learning materials for on-line courses in general or courses they will be teaching on TKU's e-platform. Their efforts will be compensated accordingly as well. Similar performance-related compensation systems will apply to all faculty in order to retain and attract outstanding teachers. Departments will also expand sources and amount of donation to cover the extra allowance paid to such teachers.

Furthermore, Lo points out the importance of employing more part-time faculty members outside the ivory tower to enhance the practical knowledge of the students. More elaborate proposal in this regard will be discussed separately in the near future. For the moment, the benefits of hiring them are indisputable as there are over 700 part-time teachers who tend to be in the younger population of the demography—a fact that is crucial in creating a vigorous campus. As for hiring well established, a Master-class scholar for part-time faculty, the university takes a case-by-case application from the departments concerned. Overseas eminent scholars should be invited to teach at TKU during their leaves as they can broaden the inquisitive mind the students here.