

UFC-Sponsored Resolution to Give University Voting Rights to RTE Faculty¹

Background

At Cornell there are approximately 1600 tenured/tenure track (TT) faculty, 460 research faculty, 380 teaching faculty, and 230 extension faculty. The pool of academic titleholders also includes the emeriti (600+), visitors and adjuncts (900+), and postdocs (500+). The University Faculty (= TT + emeriti) currently have representation through the Faculty Senate; everyone else is aligned with the Employee Assembly, a body that rarely considers academic matters. The resolution supports a plan whereby all academic titleholders are brought under the umbrella of the Faculty Senate with a group of about 1000 “RTE” Faculty being given university voting rights.

“RTE” stands for research-teaching-extension. Having “university voting rights” means that you can serve in the Faculty Senate and participate in university-level elections.

Shared governance is essential to the design of effective promotion ladders. The long-term health of the tenure system and the surrounding academic tracks are related. Oversight is the responsibility of the Faculty Senate.

Definition of the RTE Faculty

RTE faculty with university voting rights are those whose title is research professor (all ranks), clinical professor (all ranks), professor-of-the-practice (all ranks), lecturer (all ranks), research associate (all ranks), extension associate (all ranks), senior scientist, senior scholar, research scientist, principal research scientist, librarian (all ranks), or archivist (all ranks). RTE faculty without university voting rights are those whose title is visiting scientist, visiting critic, visiting scholar, visiting fellow, instructor, or teaching associate and those whose title is modified by “visiting”, “acting”, or “courtesy”. (Adjuncts remain as non-voting members of the University Faculty as stated in the University Bylaws.)

How the Senate Would Change

1. An RTE Faculty member with university voting rights could serve as a department or at-large senator.
2. There would be approximately twenty RTE-only seats apportioned among the colleges.
3. There would be an RTE senate seat for the library and a nonvoting ex officio senate seat for postdocs.
4. All RTE faculty would be invited to senate meetings but only RTE senators could propose legislation.

How Elections Would Change

RTE Faculty with university voting rights would be able to vote in elections that determine the Faculty Trustees, the Dean of Faculty, the Associate Dean of Faculty, and membership on the UFC and the N&E committees. Candidates for these positions would still have to be members of the University Faculty.

Enactment

Because the resolution involves changes to the bylaws of the Faculty Senate, it must also be approved by the University Faculty by referendum. Following these approvals, the matter of RTE representation on the standing committees of the Faculty Senate must be addressed. Especially important is the creation of a committee-level venue where RTE Faculty concerns² would be handled. Possibilities include the creation of a new “RTE Issues” standing committee or a broadening of the existing Academic Freedom and Professional Status of the Faculty Committee.

All changes prompted by the resolution would be reviewed after three years, i.e., during AY 2022-23.

¹ The resolution is based on recommendations from the Ad Hoc Committee on Academic Titleholder Representation. Members: [Adeolu Ademoyo](#), [Stephane Bentolila](#), [Elizabeth Bunting](#), [Brenda Dietrich](#), [Aliqae Geraci](#), [Roger Gilbert](#), [Kimberly Kopko](#), [Bruce Lauber](#), [Estelle McKee](#), [Bruce Monger](#), [Pilar Thompson](#), [Charles Van Loan](#) (Chair), [Makda Weatherspoon](#).

² RTE-related issues include recruitment, retention, promotion standards, switching tracks, adequacy of the current lineup of titles and ranks, variations across the colleges, and academic freedom.