

BACKGROUND:

In April of 2004, College Librarian Bryn Geffert made the recommendation to the President that “all future librarians at St. Olaf be hired on eleven-month, administrative appointments.”¹ In a memo to the faculty dated 5/26/2004, the President charged a task force consisting of Alan Norton (Treasurer), Paul Wojick (Chair, Review and Planning Committee), and Bryn Geffert, to draft a resolution “which deals with the appointment, status, and rank of the librarians, and which sets forth a process for the appointment of faculty not otherwise stated in the Faculty Manual and the Faculty Handbook.”² This draft resolution was presented on 9/1/2004 to RPC, where it was discussed and refined. The following motion is the result of that discussion.

MOTION:

The faculty of St. Olaf College recommends to the President the following statement of College policy:

In general, employees hired to serve in administrative units of the College should be hired with staff designations. However, such individuals may be hired on a faculty appointment (tenure-track, term, or terminal), provided both of the following conditions are met:

- 1a) the administrative unit director, the Dean of the College, and the President agree that it is in the best interests of the College to appoint a candidate with faculty rank; and
- 1b) the administrative unit director and the Dean of the College agree on terms of employment and a job description that is consistent with the mission of the unit.

In addition, in the case of a tenure-track appointment, the following two conditions must also be met before the appointment is made:

- 2a) a statement of significant professional activities, developed by the personnel of the administrative unit according to established procedures for academic departments, has been approved by the President; and
- 2b) the administrative unit director and the Dean have agreed on a job description that affords the candidate opportunities to conduct the work necessary to obtain tenure.

¹ Memo to Christopher Thomforde from Bryn Geffert, April 22, 2004 and amended May 14, 2004, “Recommendation on the Status of Librarians and the Governance of the Libraries.”
<<http://www.stolaf.edu/people/hansonr/rpc/lib?1>>.

² Email message from Christopher Thomforde to stolaf-faculty@stolaf.edu, dated May 26, 2004, subject “Library.”
<<http://www.stolaf.edu/people/hansonr/rpc/lib?24>>.

RATIONALE:

The goal of this motion is to make it clear that while the standard hiring of administrative personnel, including professional librarians, at St. Olaf College will be into staff positions, it is conceivable that, in certain circumstances, such personnel may be hired as faculty. Thus, the criteria listed in the motion (items 1a, 1b, 2a, and 2b) are essentially the same as those for any academic program that might be considering the hiring of new faculty: There needs to be agreement that the decision to have a faculty position within the unit is best for the College; there needs to be a clear job description that is both consistent with the mission of the unit and enables the new faculty member the opportunity to carry out the sorts of professional activities that are required for advancement in that position, provided such advancement is a term of appointment; and in the case of a tenure-track appointment, there needs to be in place clear expectations for tenure and promotion set forth in a formal statement of professional activity.

As the original issue relates specifically to the St. Olaf Library, RPC felt it important, at least in the form of a rationale, to specifically speak to that issue. The St. Olaf Library is an administrative unit of the College. Along with employees in other administrative units, such as the Academic Support Center, the Counseling Center, and Information and Instructional Technologies, professional librarians at St. Olaf often are called upon to provide close support of teaching and scholarship, providing students instruction in research, writing, or study skills.

The proposed policy establishes the possibility that in the future, under the right circumstances, it might be possible to hire a professional librarian into a faculty position (either tenure-track or not). We note that the Faculty Manual (4.XI.4)¹ allows for RPC to establish modified procedures for tenure and promotion of librarians specifically.

The proposed policy does not attempt to deal with all of the attendant issues relating to special procedures that might be involved in granting tenure and promotion within an administrative unit, nor does it speak directly to such issues as the possibilities of joint appointments between an administrative unit and an academic unit or special appointments.

Finally, the members of RPC wish to point out that mechanisms ~~in principle~~ exist in principle by which professional librarians as well as other administrative personnel hired as staff may assume partial or full faculty privileges, including faculty rank. For example, like employees of other administrative units, librarians on staff appointments may be invited by academic departments to teach courses in those departments and thus receive in return temporary faculty rank (FM 3.I.A).² In addition, RPC has the authority to recognize the contribution of administrative personnel such as professional librarians and award to them faculty franchise (FM 3.I.A)³ such that the individual may vote at faculty meetings.

¹ “Candidates for tenure or promotion from the Library shall follow modified procedures approved by the Review and Planning Committee.”

² “Administrative personnel may teach with the approval of the appropriate department and the Dean. They will receive term appointments for the period of the course being taught, the rank to be determined by the department and the Dean.”

³ “The faculty of St. Olaf College shall consist of all persons having academic rank and of the President and Vice-Presidents of the College. Other administrative personnel may be granted voting rights in faculty meetings upon recommendation by the Review and Planning Committee.”