

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
UNIVERSITY OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
UDC RESOLUTION NO. 2023 - 26**

SUBJECT: COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, URBAN SUSTAINABILITY, AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES, (CAUSES) CONVERSION OF LAND-GRANT STAFF TO NON-TENURE TRACK FACULTY/RESEARCH-EXTENSION APPOINTMENTS

WHEREAS, pursuant to D.C. Code §38-1202.06(3), the Board of Trustees is authorized to establish or approve policies and procedures governing admissions, curricula, programs, graduation, the awarding of degrees, and general policy making for the components of the University; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to 8B DCMR 311.1, the University shall take advantage of all provisions of legislation affecting its status and benefits as a land grant college; and

WHEREAS, the conversion of a limited number Land-grant staff Project Specialist positions with teaching assignments into non-tenure track faculty/research-extension appointments will fill the gaps in educational, instructional, and research needs for the College of Agriculture, Urban Sustainability, and Environmental Sciences, (CAUSES) and the University, and are aligned with best practices of 1862 and 1890 Land-grant universities;

WHEREAS, the attached proposal outlines a vision for converting a limited number of Land-grant staff positions (Project Specialist with teaching assignments) in CAUSES to non-tenure track faculty/research-extension appointments to leverage the expertise, build capacity, and increase engagement with external funding grant opportunities with USDA/NIFA and other grantors, and provide research mentorship and instructional support in the Urban Leadership and Entrepreneurship Ph.D. program; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of the University of the District of Columbia hereby authorizes the President to establish non-tenure track faculty/research extension appointments within the College of Agriculture, Urban Sustainability, and Environmental Sciences, pursuant to the proposal attached hereto as **Exhibit A**, effective August 16, 2024.

Submitted by the Academic & Student Affairs Committee:

May 31, 2023

Approved by the Board of Trustees:

June 8, 2023



Christopher D. Bell
Chairperson of the Board

Exhibit A

A Modest Proposal:

**Leveraging Expertise, Building Capacity, and Increasing
Engagement through Converting**

**Ph.D.-Prepared Land-Grant Staff to Non-Tenure Track
Faculty/Research-Extension Appointments**

A Modest Proposal:
**Leveraging Expertise, Building Capacity, and Increasing Engagement through Converting
Ph.D.-Prepared Land-Grant Staff to Non-Tenure Track Faculty/Research-Extension Appointments**

Background

Land-grant universities across the United States rely on their land-grant faculty to teach academic courses, mentor students, conduct research, and engage in community outreach and service following their land-grant mission. In the fall of 2012, the land-grant college of the University of the District of Columbia began to offer land-grant staff with appointments as Project Specialists the opportunity to assume the three-pronged responsibility of teaching, research, and community outreach/service. Later, UDC began to offer qualified land-grant staff a contract that includes teaching responsibility for one academic course per semester.

While this contract system has significantly enhanced the academic programs offered in CAUSES, the status of land-grant staff as non-faculty continues to limit their eligibility to serve as project investigators or lead investigators on available grants offered through the US Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA NIFA). Therefore, The University would benefit from regularizing Ph.D.-prepared land-grant staff by offering them status as ***non-tenure-track faculty/research-extension appointments***.

Rationale

The engagement of qualified land-grant staff in the University's academic programs has created significant capacity for the University and has provided much-needed renewal and quality for some of the academic programs in CAUSES. Given the current appointment system, land-grant staff members do not have faculty status even when their contract includes a teaching assignment in the University's academic programs. As a result, land-grant staff members are not eligible to serve as Principal Investigators (PI) on several competitive grants available through the National Institute of Food and Agriculture of the US Department of Agriculture. In addition, land-grant staff members are not eligible to serve as Dissertation Committee Chairs or subject-matter experts (SMEs) for UDC students pursuing a Ph.D. in Urban Leadership and Entrepreneurship (ULAE) program in CAUSES.

This is regrettable since a significant revenue source for 1862 Land-grant Universities are funds available through USDA NIFA. These competitive funds are only available to land-grant universities and are provided in addition to the annual appropriation allocated to land-grant universities. Most grants and multi-state grants stipulate that the Principal Investigator of the grant must have a faculty appointment in the University's land-grant college. CAUSES has a growing research capacity among its faculty; however, there is an urgent need to build capacity and leverage the internal expertise of the current CAUSES Ph.D.-prepared Project Specialists. The University would benefit significantly from converting land-grant staff positions to non-tenure track faculty/research extension appointments.

In 2014 CAUSES surveyed 53 land-grant universities to learn whether land-grant staff held faculty appointments in addition to their appointments as Agricultural Experiment Station (AES) or Cooperative Extension Services (CES) staff. Twenty-eight of the surveyed land-grant universities answered all the questions posed in the survey. The

results are summarized in the table below. If UDC offered non-tenure track faculty/research-extension appointments to Ph.D.-prepared land-grant staff at the Project Specialist rank (ten positions not including Directors or Assistant Directors), 70% of the University's land-grant staff would be categorized within faculty ranks. This would position UDC well above the percentages 54% reported by 1862 land-grant universities surveyed and 32% reported by 1890 land-grant universities (UDC is an 1862 land-grant university).

Faculty Status of Land-grant Staff - Survey Results			
Total Number of Land-grant Colleges surveyed: 53			
Total Number of Land-grant Colleges that completed all survey questions: 28			
Total Number of 1862 Colleges that completed all survey questions: 22			
Total Number of 1890 Colleges that completed all survey questions: 6			
	1862 Colleges		1890 Colleges
	% of total		% of total
Total Land-grant staff with faculty status	54%		32%
AES staff with faculty status	55%		38%
CES staff with faculty status	52%		19%

Proposal

Land-grant staff titled Project Specialists with a teaching responsibility currently hold a 12-month appointment. The proposed land-grant non-tenure track faculty/research-extension appointment would be a regular 10-month faculty appointment with a 2-month summer appointment. Consistent with standard faculty contracts at UDC, land-grant faculty would not have annual leave but would be granted sick leave during their appointment period. Land-grant faculty would have the option to add to their salary through funded research that generates revenue for the University, as is customary for tenure-eligible faculty.

The ability to generate additional salary through research grants and placing them on a 10-month contract would also address the below-average salary levels of land-grant staff and increase the University's potential for retaining strong and qualified land-grant staff. The specific appointment details of the proposed land-grant faculty contracts would typically be offered for three years with the possibility of renewal contingent on an annual evaluation covering teaching, research/scholarly activity, and service services (extension, committee service, community outreach, etc.).

The University's land-grant programs are organized into four Centers and two Institutes. They are well aligned with the goals of the National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA) of USDA: (1) Center for Urban Research, Engagement, and Scholarship [CURES], (2) Center for Urban Agriculture and Gardening Education [CUAGE] (3) Center for Nutrition, Diet, and Health with its Institute of Gerontology, and (4) Center for Urban Research, Innovation, and Infrastructure [CURI2] with its Water Resources Research Institute; (3) Center for Nutrition, Diet, and Health [CNDH] with its Institute of Gerontology. Each Center addresses the research (Agricultural Experiment Station – AES) and community outreach (Cooperative Extension Service – CES) objectives of the land-grant mission.

Beyond supporting the University's academic mission and land-grant goals, the four land-grant centers also offer a common focus on relevant research and community outreach that enhances student experiential learning, research, and retention, as well as faculty professional development and engagement.

The Centers serve as a resource for teaching and learning, internships, and applied research for all UDC colleges and schools. Creating non-tenure track faculty/research-extension appointments for Ph.D.-prepared land-grant specialists affirms their research capabilities, teaching abilities, and service appreciation.

Filling Critical Research-Intensive Gaps

At the request of the Chief Academic Officer (Dr. Lawrence T. Potter, Jr.), in collaboration with the then Acting Dean of CAUSES (Dr. Dwane Jones), the concept for the Center of Urban Research, Engagement, and Scholarship (CURES) was launched to create a hub that would serve as UDC's intellectual axis and key convening space of interdisciplinary activities, programs, and research opportunities. CURES' mission is to identify and provide collaborative, interdisciplinary, and groundbreaking solutions to urban challenges facing the District of Columbia and beyond, including inequities, climate change, resource degradation and limitations, and inadequate infrastructure and technology. Building from our networks with local community experts and stakeholders, CURES projects and initiatives share several core features rooted in our land-grant, research, and public service missions.

As such, there are Ph.D.-prepared land-grant staff with expertise who could "fill the gaps" by serving as Principal Investigators (PIs) or Co-PIs on competitive grant applications to advance the University's visibility and reputation in these various research efforts.

Moreover, in 2018, the University created two Ph.D. programs —(1) Urban Leadership and Entrepreneurship, a collaborative project with Fielding Graduate University, and (2) Engineering and Computer Science. On May 13, 2023, the University graduated its first five Ph.D. students—two in Urban Leadership and Entrepreneurship (CAUSES) and three in Engineering and Computer Sciences (SEAS). We have 35 students enrolled in the ULAE doctoral program and 10 students enrolled in the Engineering and Computer doctoral program. Moreover, while we are excited about all the recent accolades, we lack faculty expertise and mentors who are eligible to direct doctoral dissertations, serve on dissertation committees, and mentor/advise doctoral students.

As such, there are Ph.D.-prepared land-grant staff with expertise who could "fill the gaps" by serving as Dissertation Committee Chairs, dissertation committee members, and doctoral student advisors, which would reduce an over-reliance on external faculty expertise to staff and support our doctoral students in the ULAE doctoral program.

Recommendations:

1. Convert Ph.D.-prepared land-grant staff positions with teaching assignments (Projects Specialists) to non-tenure track faculty/research-extension appointments at rank and title: Assistant Research Professor-Extension (they are not eligible for tenure, non-collective bargaining)
2. Conversions will result in the following:
 - a. 7-8 positions converting from 12-month to 10-month positions—allowing flexibility for these positions to:
 - b. Teach two courses per academic year (academic and extension courses)
 - 1) Engage in research opportunities that will allow them to be PI or Co-PI on major grant proposals within the land-grant centers or projects affiliated with Firebird Farm,
 - 2) Increase external grant submissions,
 - 3) Increase scholarly writing submissions and publications,
 - 4) Engage in extension services, serve on doctoral committees, chair dissertations (where they have expertise), and/or mentor undergraduate and graduate research students

3. Establish position as three-year renewable fix-term contracts
4. Establish procedures for the review of non-tenure track research-extension faculty and a policy on Annual Performance Reviews for Fixed-Term Faculty. This review aims to determine whether to recommend an additional appointment or not to reappoint.
5. Establish qualifications and a promotion career ladder based on exemplary annual performance reviews and years of service
 - a. Assistant Research Professor-Extension
 - 1) Terminal degree appropriate to the field,
 - 2) Evidence of productive scholarship, including external funding support,
 - 3) Evidence of ability to fulfill relevant responsibilities in the research enterprise,
 - 4) Renewable up to two three-year terms (not more than six years)
 - b. Associate Research Professor-Extension
 - 1) Terminal degree appropriate to the field,
 - 2) Record of productive scholarship, including evidence of sustained external research funding and salary support,
 - 3) Fulfillment of important responsibilities in the research enterprise,
 - 4) Renewable up to two three-year terms (not more than six years)
 - c. Research Professor-Extension
 - 1) Terminal degree appropriate to the field,
 - 2) Record of research excellence as an independent investigator, including an established record of continued research funding
 - 3) Meritorious evidence of national or international recognition by peers,
 - 4) Renewable up to two five-year terms (not more than ten years)

Pay and Benefits

Non-tenure track faculty/research-extension appointments are covered by the same salary guidelines that apply to other non-union fixed-term faculty. The guidelines provide for pay adjustments (usually annual) based on merit. Research faculty are covered by the same benefit programs applicable to other non-union fixed-term faculty and academic staff (e.g., health, dental, prescription drug coverage, retirement plan, etc.) Eligibility for coverage under such programs is the same as for other non-union fixed-term faculty.

Effective Date of Conversion

August 16, 2024



FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

TO: The Board of Trustees

FROM: Managing Director of Finance *David A. Franklin*

DATE: June 8, 2023

SUBJECT: Converting CAUSES Land-grant Staff Project Specialist Positions (with teaching assignments) to Non-Tenure Track Faculty/Research-Extension Appointments

Conclusion

It is concluded that there is no fiscal impact associated with the proposal to convert CAUSES Land-grant Staff Project Specialist Positions (with teaching assignments) to Non-Tenure Track Faculty/Research-Extension Appointments.

Non-tenure track faculty/research-extension appointments are covered by the same salary guidelines that apply to other non-union fixed-term faculty. The guidelines provide for pay adjustments (usually annual) based on merit. Research faculty are covered by the same benefit programs applicable to other non-union fixed-term faculty and academic staff (e.g., health, dental, prescript on drug coverage, retirement plan, etc.) Eligibility for coverage under such programs is the same as for other non-union fixed-term faculty.

Background

The status of land-grant staff as non-faculty continues to limit their eligibility to serve as project investigators or lead investigators on available grants offered through the US Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA NIFA). Therefore, The University would benefit from regularizing Ph.D.-prepared land-grant staff by offering them status as non-tenure-track faculty/research-extension appointments.

The resolution outlines a vision for converting a limited number of Land-grant staff positions (Project Specialist with teaching assignments) in the College of Agriculture, Urban Sustainability, and Environmental Science (CAUSES) to leverage the expertise, build capacity, and increase engagement with external funding grant opportunities with USDA/NIFA and other grantors. In addition, it provides opportunities for research mentorship and instructional support in the Urban Leadership and Entrepreneurship Ph.D. program.

Financial Impact

This request has been approved based upon the information provided. There are no anticipated risks at this time.