

Answers to Frequent Questions about Probationary Faculty Positions

Date: Sept 29, 2017

On July 21, 2017, Dean Karl Martin announced the decision from the *nEXT Generation* sponsors that county-based educational positions, including current vacancies and newly created positions, will be academic staff positions in the new model. Since then, we have fielded many questions regarding the implementation of this decision. This document provides answers to several frequently asked questions. There are additional resources listed following the questions and answers below.

To help retain the high quality and talented staff within our organization, each county-based probationary faculty has been offered an academic staff position within the county that they are currently assigned, without launching a new recruitment process. On Thursday, September 14, the Office of Human Resources sent a letter describing the offer, a basic position description, and an acceptance form to each affected staff member. If an individual accepts the academic staff position, the form must be returned to an HR representative by Tuesday, October 10. The new academic staff positions will take effect on January 1, 2018. Accepting the academic staff position does not preclude staff from applying for other academic staff or statewide specialist positions as they are posted.

We understand that this is an important decision. To assist with this process, we developed the following FAQ's and resources. Please remember the deadline to return the signed acceptance form to HR is October 10, 2017.

FAQ's

Q: *Who should I contact if I have a question about the options that have been offered to probationary faculty?*

A: Dean Martin talked directly with impacted staff about these decisions on two separate Dean's WisLine conference calls (Sept 7 and Sept 14) with probationary faculty. These calls were recorded and are posted on the [Dean's blog](#).

- If you have additional questions about county support for your position, please contact your Area Extension Director. See [reference table](#) for contact information.
- If you have questions about your benefits or payroll, please contact the [benefits and payroll specialists in OHR](#).
- If you have questions about Academic Staff Policies and Procedures, see links in the Resources section below. You can also contact Andrea Cool, [Secretary of the Faculty and Staff](#).
- If you have questions about your programming alignment and support, contact your Program Director:
 - Dave Williams (david.williams@ces.uwex.edu)
 - Associate Program Director for Agriculture & Natural Resources
 - Ruth Schriefer (ruth.schriefer@ces.uwex.edu)
 - Interim Program Director for Family Living
 - John de Montmollin (john.demontmollin@ces.uwex.edu) and Julie Keown-Bomar (julie.keown-bomar@ces.uwex.edu)
 - Interim Co-Directors for 4-H Youth Development

- Will Andresen (will.andresen@ces.uwex.edu)
 - Interim Program Director for Community, Natural Resources & Economic Development
- If you have questions about the Extension Educator position descriptions or questions about the buildout of the new Institutes and Centers, please contact the Associate Dean:
 - JulieAnn Stawicki (julieann.stawicki@ces.uwex.edu)
 - Department of Youth, Family, & Community Development
 - Patrick Robinson (patrick.robinson@ces.uwex.edu)
 - Department of Agriculture & Natural Resources

Q: *What if my county decides to reduce or eliminate support for my position in the next year?*

A: If you accept the offer for the Academic Staff position, Cooperative Extension will fund this position at the same FTE as your current probationary appointment for the next year. However, the geographic assignment may differ depending on the level of county support. In these rare cases, Area Extension Directors will work with individuals on a case-by-case basis to determine the appropriate reassignment.

Q: *Will there be a probationary period for this new position?*

A: There is no probationary period for fixed-term renewable appointments.

Q: *I was offered a position description that aligns with the new Institute of Youth & Family but I feel that my programming falls within the new Institute of Health & Well-Being and would like to be assigned to that institute. When can that assignment happen?*

A: In the letters, probationary faculty were offered one of three general position descriptions discussed with their specific county/tribe: Youth & Family Educator, Communities Educator, and Agriculture Educator. These negotiations began before all five current Educator types were defined, and negotiations are still underway. The focus of the general academic staff position will allow people to continue their current programming while we transition to the new model. For example, if your programming was aligned with the Family Living Programs Healthy Living Team, you would continue to provide programming in these areas as a Youth and Family Extension Educator until the Institutes are in place. Within the next year, there will be a process to engage local educators, tenured faculty and Area Extension Directors to identify program focus based on local needs. This will then be used to finalize center affiliations and Institute assignments. The Departmental Associate Deans will work with Interim Program Directors to determine a final timeline and process for these possible reassignments.

Q: *What guidance will I receive to determine the specific programming that I will be providing in this academic staff position?*

A: Staff will receive input from Area Extension Directors on local programming needs and will work within their current program area leaders and teams on the design and delivery of that programming until the Institute and Center directors are in place to serve that role.

Q: *What is the timeline and process for academic staff promotions?*

A: Information on Cooperative Extension's academic staff promotion policy and process is online at: <https://intranet.ces.uwex.edu/sites/titlepromotion/SitePages/Home.aspx> [requires a UWEX login]. The information includes details on the materials that staff need to prepare for the

self-initiated review and promotion process as well as the salary increases associated with the title prefix promotion process.

Q: *How can we learn more about the job title and salary ranges?*

A: The Educator positions are titled as [Outreach Specialist](#) positions, with pay ranges between 3-6, depending on the prefix. Probationary faculty have been offered positions at their current FTE and salary.

The prefixes and pay ranges for this [title series](#) are:

	Min	Max	
DISTINGUISHED OUTREACH SPEC	55,406	83,108	pay range 6
SENIOR OUTREACH SPEC	48,333	72,499	pay range 5
OUTREACH SPECIALIST (NO PREFIX)	42,167	63,251	pay range 4
ASSOCIATE OUTREACH SPECIALIST	36,790	55,184	pay range 3

Q: *What notice period would I be entitled to in the future should a county decide to cut its funding for my position?*

A: Years at UW System will count toward years of service for notice periods. According to policy, probationary faculty who accept the academic staff position will be entitled to 6 months' notice, should such a situation arise.

Resources

- **Outreach Specialist title series information:**
<https://www.wisconsin.edu/ohrwd/download/upg/UPG01a1.pdf#page=67>
- **UW Extension Academic Staff Policies and Procedures** (Chapters 8-13 UWEX) found online at:
<http://uwex.edu/human-resources/policies/UW-Extension-Academic-Staff-Personnel-Policy.pdf>
- Information on the **Academic Staff Council** can be found online at:
<https://studentsuwc.sharepoint.com/sites/secretaryoffacultyandstaff/SitePages/Home.aspx>
- **Cooperative Extension's academic staff promotion policy:**
<https://intranet.ces.uwex.edu/sites/titlepromotion/SitePages/Home.aspx>