

Proposal to staff key BCLA Core Classes with Tenure Line and Teaching Professors¹

(Approved by the Provost, crafted across the 24-25 Academic Year)

Rationale

The Core Curriculum provides a distinctive, mission-driven educational experience for all LMU students: it is the heart of an LMU education. In contrast to a general education model, LMU's Jesuit and Marymount informed core curriculum invites students into a scaffolded unfolding of courses that incrementally build on skills, experiences, and critical reflection, engagement, and action. LMU's current staffing model in some departments relies too heavily on part-time faculty to teach in the core. While many of these part-time faculty are dedicated and respected teachers, having full-time faculty teach more core courses provides curricular and pedagogical stability and—as documented by Institutional Research and Decision Support—positively impacts student retention rates (by allowing for more personalized connections, research opportunities, and related activities). Converting² part-time positions to full-time positions signals an intentional commitment to academic excellence and requires strategic reallocation of budgetary resources. Staffing proposals for Philosophy, Theological Studies, Classics and Archeology, and Economics have been approved. This proposal focuses on Theological Studies.

¹ The use of “Teaching-Professors” reflects ongoing conversations with the Provost Office and the Senate and remains an open question. However, we use that category when referencing future semesters as a replacement for Instructor and the categories Instructor or Term when referencing 2024-25 full-time NTTF.

² Converting positions does not mean converting individual faculty; all newly created positions would require competitive search processes to select the best candidates for the positions.

Staffing Proposal for the Theological Studies Department

The Theological Studies department provides critical contributions to the core. Almost every LMU undergraduate takes a THST lower division core class (Theological Inquiry), and the vast majority also take an upper level THST for their Faith and Reason requirement. The department also offers courses that fulfill other core areas. The department offered 132 courses in the fall 2024 and spring 2025 semesters. The department currently has 18 tenure lines and 2 term faculty. This leaves the department employing contingent faculty to cover more than 50 core courses per year. Table 1 shows the staffing of courses for the most recent academic year.

Table 1 – Current Staffing of Theological Studies Department (reflective of 2024-25 courses)

<i>Total Sections</i>	<i>Sections Taught by tenure-line faculty</i>	<i>Sections Taught by Term faculty</i>	<i>Sections Taught by VAP, Post-doc, Lecturer faculty</i>
132	55 (18 tenure-line faculty)	23 (2 term faculty, plus courses from non-THST term faculty)	52 (2 VAPs, 1 post doc) (~36 PT sections)

Table 2 shows an ideal staffing plan for the Theological Studies department. The plan brings the number of tenure-line THST faculty to 21 and the number of full-time term faculty to 10. This staffing model nearly eliminates reliance on part-time faculty. A new cohort of Teaching Professors (in a range of disciplinary and field foci) will work together toward common goals as elaborated by the Department.

Table 2 – Proposed Ideal Staffing Plan of Theological Studies Department

<i>Total Sections</i>	<i>Sections Taught by Tenure-Line faculty</i>	<i>Sections Taught by Term faculty</i>	<i>Sections Taught by Lecturer faculty</i>
125 ³	65 (21 tenure-line faculty – includes adding one new Christianity in Late Antiquity position, Caroline Sauvage, replacing Daniel Smith-Christopher and Chris Chapple, and filling the Jain position)	60 (10 term faculty – adding eight positions)	0-5 (this number will fluctuate depending upon TT availability and term overload availability, but it would remain low)

Implementation Plan for Proposed Staffing Plan in Theological Studies

The plan includes the hire of one new tenure line, already approved (Christianity in Late Antiquity) and ten term faculty. In addition to conducting the hiring, the department will develop a plan to support the new cohort of Teaching Professors. Within this cohort model, Teaching Professors will create syllabi and

³ As part of this proposal, core classes will be returned to 30-student course caps.

develop pedagogical strategies in alignment with college and department goals to deliver a deeply engaging liberal arts education for all LMU students. In this new cohort staffing model, current term faculty will have their current contracts honored, but they will need to apply for a Teaching Professor position.

The following is a draft timeline.

Year 1 – 2025-2026 Academic Year

- Hire two or three Professors of Teaching (call placed winter with hiring completed in spring).

Year 2 – 2026-2027 Academic Year

- Hire three or four Professors of Teaching (call placed in fall with hiring completed in spring)
- Search for approved tenure-line hire in Christianity in Late Antiquity

Year 3 – 2027-2028 Academic Year

- Hire remaining Professors of Teaching (call placed in fall with hiring completed in spring)
- Search for tenure line in Hebrew Bible/Old Testament, replacement for Daniel Smith-Christopher, subject to Provost's approval.

Here are general guidelines for these hires:

- Searches must be national, focused on finding excellent liberal arts undergraduate teachers who will be focused on the core curriculum.
- Searches will not be as elaborate as in TT hires, but will typically require a campus visit.
- Dean's Office approval required for finalists before invitations can be issued for a campus visit.
- New hires will be part of a new teaching-in-the-core cohort.
- Initial contracts will be 2-year and probationary, upon successful review in fall of second year, candidates will move to 3-year renewable contracts.
- Salary will be fixed at starting rate for instructors for 3-3 load. \$75k is the approximate starting salary, non-negotiable.
- Teaching faculty will be eligible to teach overloads that would bring a 4-3 year to a roughly \$85,000 annual salary and a 4-4 year to a roughly \$95,000 annual salary.