



Research Article (Preface)

Should Professors Emeriti Continue Their Academic Activities?

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Abstract

Whether Professors Emeriti will continue work after retirement depends primarily on their personality. An Emeritus Professor usually carries with him (her) accumulated knowledge, know-how, maturity, great scientific and life experience and good judgement. It would therefore be a pity to lose this accumulated capital of knowledge, skills and attitudes. There is a pre-condition for the continuation of academic activities: To be not only willing but also able to carry out this task. In our EAPE Position Statement (2024) we are noting this and we are requesting the opportunity to carry out teaching, research, mentoring, examining and governance activities. A recent Law in Greece is very encouraging towards this direction. In conclusion, my opinion is that those of us who are willing and able to continue carrying out academic functions should be given the opportunity to do so.

Key Words: Emeriti Professors, Personality, Academic Activities, Continuation

Introduction

People differ between them and so do Emeriti Professors.

So, deciding on whether they should continue working on what they have been doing before retirement is a decision that depends primarily on them.

Categories of Emeriti

There are various categories of Emeriti. I will mention just three, the ones I consider more representative.

1. Emeriti want to continue working at the University and find it very painful to disengage themselves from a professional setting in which they have justified their existence during all their professional lives. They depend on their professional identity and setting and have minimal interest in other activities. This represents a dependence that has the potential to be beneficial but (if difficulty in disengagement is hyperbolic) can become harmful to them and to the department in which they want to continue working.
2. Others want to have just a peripheral relationship with the Uni-

versity and are happy with activities linked to talents, abilities and dexterities or repressed needs that have been postponed due to their demanding academic responsibilities. They can now satisfy these needs along with their partial involvement in academic matters.

3. There is also a third category of Emeriti who don't want any connection with the University and prefer to look after their grandchildren and enjoy life.

So, the decision to continue academic work is a highly individualized one.

Those who say yes to this possibility make an offer to themselves but the offer is greater to the academic facility in which they want to work. An Emeritus Professor usually carries with him or her accumulated knowledge, know-how, maturity, great scientific and life experience and judgement that is free from academic antagonisms and such trivialities. It would be a pity to lose this accumulated CAPITAL of knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Having said that, I should add yet another pre-condition that is relevant to what we are discussing. Whether one is in a mental and physical condition that will allow continuation of one's work in an acceptable way. This is something that needs to be decided upon not only by us but also by an external agent, most probably

by the University authorities. The Dean of the University and the Director of the Department in which an Emeritus Professor wants to work must accept the responsibility and the possible negative consequences of the presence of an Emeritus Professor in an academic setting or in a sensitive department, like a psychiatric ward or a surgical department.

In conclusion, an Emeritus Professor who wants to continue being academically active must be not only willing but also able to continue carrying out academic tasks.

In our EAPE Position Statement, produced in 2024 we underline these two pre-conditions along with our arguments for the continuation of our academic activities.

The EAPE Position Statement on Continuation of Academic Activities

This Position Statement was produced in 2024 and in this we express the position that University authorities should provide us with access to University Information Technology (IT) and the opportunity to carry out teaching, research, mentoring, examining and governance activities [1].

The Situation in Greece

There is a recent Law in Greece that is very positive with reference to the continuation of academic activities by Emeriti Professors (article 170 of law4957/2022 as modified by article 85

of Law5094/2024). This law allows Emeriti professors (subject to approval by the University Senate) to carry out undergraduate and postgraduate teaching, research, PhD supervision and governance activities, some of the research activities with payment.

With reference to my own opinion as to whether Emeriti professors should be provided with the right to carry out teaching and research my opinion is of course positive. It would be desirable to have an office, a university e-mail and parking facilities but this is not a condition sine qua non. It would be welcome but not necessarily so, as it is subject to availability.

In conclusion, those Emeriti and past University Professors in Europe who are able and willing, should be encouraged to continue offering their services to the University from which they came or (perhaps preferably) to other Universities. This offer would be beneficial to them and (more importantly) to the recipients of their services.

References

1. Position Statement of EAPE"on continuation of Academic Activities by Emeriti Professors", given in Athens, 24 April, 2024.