## Faculty Assembly Minutes
### 2700 Posvar Hall
### March 14, 2017

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<th>Topic/Discussion</th>
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<td><strong>Call to Order</strong></td>
<td>The meeting was called to order by President Frank Wilson.</td>
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<td><strong>Approval of the Minutes</strong></td>
<td>Minutes were approved as written.</td>
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<td><strong>Introduction of Items of New Business</strong></td>
<td>New items will be addressed at April FA meeting or upcoming standing Senate Committee meetings.</td>
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<td><strong>Report of Senate President, Frank Wilson</strong></td>
<td>No further discussion.</td>
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<td><strong>Reports by and Announcements of the Special and Standing Committees of the Senate</strong></td>
<td>Discussion noted below.</td>
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### Ad Hoc Committee on Part-Time Non-Tenure Stream (NTS) Faculty

**Professor Irene Frieze, Chair**

The final report and recommendations were distributed last week to Faculty Assembly members for review ahead of today’s meeting. Professor Frieze reviewed the report and recommendations with FA members and encouraged discussion.

Professor Frieze noted that as the NTS full-time Adhoc group reported in February in 2015, and our current practices are in many ways excellent and could serve as a model for other colleges and universities. Some issues surrounding part-time NTS faculty continue to be of concern. This Senate Adhoc Committee was set up to consider these issues. Part-time issues turn out to be more complicated than the full-time NTS issues. The Adhoc Committee has focused on part-time issues, working closely with the Provost’s Office and they have been supportive. They have had Human Resources input from Steve Ferber as well, which has been helpful.

NTS faculty are an important part of our faculty; improvements in their working conditions elevate our whole university. NTS faculty now represent more than half of
the full-time faculty in eight of the university’s 16 schools, and comprise about 60% of the overall full-time faculty total. We have 4571 full-time faculty [TS and NTS], so the part-time faculty are about 31% of all faculty at Pitt. Of the 2094 part-time faculty, about half are currently categorized by their units as eligible for benefits. The Committee noted that verifying the count of part-time faculty is challenging due to many different titles/classifications.

Professor Frieze continued that NTS faculty perform essential tasks and functions, including teaching introductory and specialized classes, conducting research, performing clinical duties, engaging in administration, and providing service at the departmental, school and national levels. Many NTS members are active in the Senate, serving as Senate Officers, members of Faculty Assembly, or chairs or members of Senate Committees. Much of the decision-making related to NTS faculty occurs in the individual schools or units of the university. This leads to wide variation in practices when it comes to hiring, evaluation, compensation, and benefits. Job titles vary across units as well as treatment within the unit, especially as related to part-time NTS faculty. The experiences of individual units cannot necessarily be generalized across all NTS faculty.

In broad terms, the committee members feel that it would be to the benefit of the University and its part-time NTS faculty to consider some changes to existing practice in three key areas: transparency, seniority, and compensation. Professor Frieze highlighted the items below from the previously distributed Report and Recommendations. The full report is on the Senate Website (link below). Her additional comments to the distributed recommendations are in italics.

**TRANSPARENCY**

**For ALL PT NTS faculty**

1. Hiring practices should be standardized. The hiring process should be “formal, transparent, and systematic” and should involve submission of a resume or CV and relevant supporting materials.

2. The University should increase transparency for PT NTS faculty so they are aware of all of the benefits to which they are entitled and the rights they have (if any) in terms of departmental, unit, or university governance. Those policies and benefits should be indicated in the contract letter/offer letter or available on the University websites. The PT faculty are not always aware of the benefits that are possible and available. The PT NTS faculty should be offered the opportunity to attend appropriate department meetings and other events, with the understanding that doing so is voluntary on their part.

3. New PT NTS faculty should be fully oriented. The Provost’s Office is working on a new faculty handbook that describes orientation in more detail.

4. The university should ensure that PT NTS faculty have timely access to IDs and the other resources required to fulfill their actual and anticipated contractual obligations. In cases of “recurring” faculty, those resources (whether email, IDs, access to Courseweb, library privileges, etc.) could be continued to bridge gaps during times when those employees may have no explicit contractual obligations.

5. Department chairs, project supervisors or PIs, or other supervisory administrators should ideally meet (if feasible) with every PT NTS faculty member at least once a year to review that faculty member’s performance and communicate to the best of their ability the opportunities for, or likelihood of, renewal or consideration for
longer-term contracts. Those supervisors should (if feasible) provide written feedback; the forms of that feedback could vary based on departmental or unit needs.

For PT NTS faculty whose primary responsibilities are teaching:
1. As with FT NTS faculty, units should ensure that all PT NTS colleagues have access to office administrative support, supplies, and office space (at least shared offices for purposes of holding office hours in a predictable and semi-private location) during periods of active appointment.
2. Appointments of PT NTS faculty should occur as early as possible to allow the greatest possible period of time for the faculty member to prepare.
3. If courses are cancelled for under-enrollment, such decisions should be made at least one month prior to the beginning of the course. If courses are cancelled (or instructors removed) for this or other reasons, the university should consider some form of compensation to the instructor. This is especially important if the course is cancelled less than a month before the start of a term or even into the term itself. Professor Frieze noted that this may be the most controversial part of the recommendations.
4. PT NTS faculty should be encouraged to request that one or more colleagues (whether PT/FT or NTS/TS) observe their teaching and provide written feedback at least once for each course taught by that instructor. Such reports (in addition to OMETS) could be used when evaluating PT NTS faculty for renewal (thereby leading to "recurring" status) or for FT faculty positions. A formal feedback mechanism should occur.

PERFORMANCE AND SENIORITY
Part-time, NTS faculty will typically be hired as temporary employees. After being on the payroll for at least 2 semesters, and being formally evaluated within their unit, the PT-NTS faculty member can request to be considered as a regular or recurring PT-NTS faculty member. This designation should be approved within the unit, and by the appropriate higher administration. Once attaining this status, other benefits relating to their performance and seniority or length of service as PT-NTS faculty are recommended:

For all PT NTS faculty:
1. Each academic unit (schools and regional campuses) should devise and implement a transparent and predictable system by which compensation is adjusted according to performance levels and seniority and which is consistent with University policies and practices on compensation. This could be a regular percentage increase determined similarly to those for TS faculty. For teaching faculty, this would adjust the per-course or per-credit-hour compensation. For research faculty, this would augment hourly compensation.
2. If possible, recurring faculty should be given some preference when choosing class topics or course meeting times.
3. When the demand for the services of a PT faculty member is generally predictable (i.e. demand for certain classes for instructors is steady, when departments use PT NTS faculty consistently for certain kinds of teaching like labs, or ongoing grant monies exist to support those engaged in research), the unit should consider extending current contractual commitments as long as reasonable (a minimum of one year or two semesters for teaching faculty or for as long as grants will allow for those conducting research).
COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

While some PT NTS faculty at the university fit the current Pitt definition of “adjunct”—someone who is primarily employed (and compensated) elsewhere—it is also the case that the ongoing crisis in academic employment has led to an increasingly-marginalized group of under-employed academics. The university could, and should, provide support to mitigate the worst impacts of those market forces. It can do so by increasing pay, providing health benefits, and ensuring that PT NTS faculty have access to and are encouraged to utilize existing university resources for professional development. The Adhoc Committee discussed removing the adjunct title for PT faculty.

For all PT NTS faculty:
1. Consider expanding access to health care university wide (currently the case for all “regular” employees—PT or FT). With new political uncertainty over the future of the Affordable Care Act, doing so sends a strong message that some of the university’s most vulnerable employees deserve affordable access to high-quality health care.
2. Both full-time and PT NTS faculty should have access to opportunities to improve their research, administrative, or pedagogical skills.
3. Because the data on PT NTS compensation is fragmentary at best, it is difficult to make a universal recommendation as to minimum levels of compensation. For instructional faculty, the administration should move toward making the minimum compensation for a three-credit course at least $4000 (subject to increases based on seniority recommended above). This should apply to the Oakland campus and all of the regional campuses. The Provost or the Deans should regularly (at least every three to five years) review compensation levels and benefits and adjust them accordingly.
4. The university should investigate the cost and feasibility of providing other benefits (disability, maternity leave, etc.) to PT NTS faculty.

Discussion:
Loughlin: What constitutes part-time?
Frieze: The faculty member could be teaching any number of courses, from one to many, and be considered part-time.
Sukits: It does not have to do completely with number of courses taught.
De Vallejo: What is the rationale for having PT faculty? Is it due to full-time faculty being overloaded or is it needing their expertise?
Frieze: I can comment on Arts and Sciences (A&S). There are often not enough tenure line positions to teach our courses. There are limits on tenure lines. We cannot hire enough people to teach courses. We have been forced to hire FT and PT NTS positions.
Bonneau: Budgets for PT faculty are given to the Deans for their units. Was this discussed that if we put in place a raise based on seniority, with the finite dollars to the Deans, will this push out experienced instructors to hire less-expensive PT faculty members? Experienced people may be pushed out since a Dean could get two PT faculty for the expense of one FT faculty member.
Frieze: This is also true for tenure stream faculty.
Bonneau: At least there is a standard for tenure. For PT faculty, there is no standard and it is at the discretion of the Chair of the unit.
Frieze: This varies by unit.
Stoner: We did talk about this at the NTS Adhoc Committee. Many said we do not have monies for this. There needs to be an institutional commitment to honor seniority. Most universities have an out to deny tenure depending on the needs of the university.
We are counting on the administration to do the right thing for the university. There is a level of trust there.
Frieze: We are asking if people have formal performance reviews.
Sukits: This was a rewarding experience to serve on this committee. It was eye-opening. Questions today being brought up were raised in our discussions. No schools are the same. In my School of Business, we hire business professionals who do a better job at teaching today’s business concepts. This may not be the case for every unit.
de Vallejo: I like the university policy, but are we shooting ourselves in the foot? Each unit has a different way of doing this.
Sukits: It is by need.
de Vallejo: Each unit has different ways of rationalizing why they need these people. There are different needs. Based on those needs, are there data collated that show how Deans follow a scheme for hiring these people? In order to force a university policy, there needs to be a standard way.
Frieze: Are you saying that the unit people will not make good decisions? Do you not trust them? There are other solutions than hiring the cheapest person you can get.
Loughlin: In the Business School, that is a good example, hiring them due to experience. In the other schools, it is a resource issue. The larger question is that the majority of the university is NTS now – was that a conscious decision?
Kirsch: The Provost addressed this mix of tenure/tenure-stream/NTS faculty at her last update with FA, and the ongoing effort to combine PT faculty positions into FT positions. An ongoing review of the mix of faculty is occurring.
Loughlin: I agree with what the Adhoc Committee did. It just seems difficult to do this due to differences across schools. Hiring due to experiences is good; hiring them to be cheaper is not.
Frieze: Discussing hiring reasons was not the intent nor scope of the committee.
Rohrer: The Department of Health policy and Management hires adjuncts for one term, as they are the best people to teach our students. For example, we do not consistently evaluate our adjuncts. The principles underlying this document should be taken seriously. I think the main principles of transparency, performance, and seniority transcend the operation detail.
Tananis: I am a member of the NTS Adhoc Committee. The larger issue that has been looming for years, that NTS committee had to recognize, and set aside since a larger issue, is that what is the role of tenure and NT across the board? This is not something unique to PITT. On average, 60-70% of new positions are NTS, and this is even higher in professional schools. This is something that the University and the Academy as a whole has to deal with. What we are trying to do with this Committee is not ignore the issue, but recognize there are a lot of PT and FT NTS affected by policies that are not reviewed and are inherently unfair. We tried to surface these issues and make reasonable responses and recommendations to this. None of us have the answers to the big issue; we are trying to recognize that there are people living in these roles that we are trying to deal with that. I encourage the university to embrace this on all levels as part of a larger conversation.
Kanthak: I wanted to mention the issue of trust that came up. It is important. I share the issue of compensation. I trust my Chair in my department, but in my department, we do not have enough Chairs to get our majors graduated. If there is a finite amount of money, a Chair may choose someone that is cheaper. I have to echo what others said. It is not one-size-fits-all. There is no good way to do this. There is not a good way to treat PT NTS faculty that is good and humane that meets the needs of our students. Meeting needs of students will come first.
Frieze: I wonder how people would make these arguments thinking of TS faculty.
**Kanthak:** We can do whatever we want to NTS faculty and no one cares. We can treat our NTS faculty however we want. It is difficult for them to get attention.

**Frieze:** We as the Adhoc Committee are trying to deal with this exact issue.

**Bircher:** One thing that goes to this is to develop a more thorough set of policies for NTS PT faculty. There are no such due process policies, which is intrinsically unfair.

**Spring:** I commend the Committee for the directness and the simplicity of this. It is up to the Provost and Deans to implement policy and practice. The Committee’s statement of where and how things should move is very important. Nick’s point relates to the point of “expectation for continued employment.” Throughout this, details are provided on how decisions are made. This careful approach to establishing something that will take years to implement, and that will lead to better policies, is commendable. I commend the attention to broad concepts. A second point is that we have adjunct faculty used in my school. They are gainfully employed outside of the university. Same in the law school and business school. This is different than putting together a living where you are not employed full-time elsewhere. I completely support the committee’s general concept of questioning the term “adjunct.” Throwing it out completely is a problem. There is a group of people who are not seeking a career in teaching and are employed full-time elsewhere, that would be appropriate for adjunct. This is a minor comment compared to my first comment. The three elements of the recommendation are exquisite.

**Frieze:** In our recommendations, we note that the administration should move toward doing these recommendations.

**de Vallejo:** This is for part-time. The NTS complicates this. This is for all part-time people.

**Wilson:** I was on the NTS Adhoc Committee. Our attitude throughout has been to figure out ways that would end the most naked exploitation of PT faculty. There are plenty of examples of the importance of part-time faculty. In a lot of units, they enable the FT faculty to get course releases and help with teaching. The Committee wanted to make the case that there is value as long as we don’t let this get out of control. The PT faculty in many universities are teaching the majority of the classes with no benefits and this is not good for students. One of our outcomes is that during this process, where the Provost was focusing on these NTS issues, there have been substantial changes. The most exploited faculty are at the regional campuses. The administration elevated the standard of treatment for them, and this has been tangible progress. We should be able to have the discussions that everyone wants, and this will improve Pitt. We should not be exploiting this.

**Frieze:** Examples are in the 2nd full paragraph on page of what improvements the Administration has already made. Are we ready to vote? Do we endorse the principles in the report that are advice to Administration of how they better the situation for PT NTS faculty?

**Bratman:** Is this true that there is a formal classification of adjunct and there are people that are PT adjunct fully employed elsewhere?

**Frieze:** Yes, this is defined in the bylaws and there are adjuncts in many units. They are included in this policy. They deserve office space and computer access. Perhaps they would be excluded from the salary issues. The exact terminology in payroll does not allow us to know the # of exact adjuncts.

**Bratman:** If we don’t know the full number of them, we may be affecting compensation of the university negatively.

**Frieze:** The Committee did discuss this.

**Jones:** Health benefits – would you want to provide this to a true adjunct? This could be costly to the University.
Frieze: Why not?

Stoner: One of our colleagues said at his school (Dental School), many PT faculty would not return if the healthcare benefits were not continued.

Jones: We should not focus on the corner cases to build this policy. This seems like overkill. The fight for compensation and benefits is large.

Tananis: The PT faculty member can step aside and not take the benefits.

Sukits: This is an offering, not a mandate. We have entrepreneurs that teach part-time that want benefits. This is reasonable. Some do not want the benefits.

Frieze: These are important to the unit.

Jones: Since this is already happening, why are we pushing it?

Frieze: Because some PT faculty are not informed that they are eligible. It is not consistent across schools and departments. If all are informed, then the PT faculty can make their decision.

Stoner: Not all PT NTS are classified as adjuncts. Each school is different. They could be regular or temporary which will trigger benefits.

Spring: I regret raising the argument of the issue. Sometimes adjuncts provide essential skills and should be compensated. They may have a better benefit package from their full-time work and choose not to use university benefits. They having an office in the unit is reasonable and important. Having their courses evaluated like other courses is reasonable. Including them under the policy as PT NTS faculty with compensation, humane treatment, resources, are good things. A part-time faculty member who is employed 30% capacity v. 130% capacity is very different. I don’t think we should completely do away with the definition of adjunct. The College of A&S is different than graduate or professional programs.

Wilson: Let’s take a vote on accepting this report: the majority were in favor, 0 opposed; 3 abstentions. The recommendations passed as written.

**Ad Hoc Committee on Evaluation and Assessment of Faculty Teaching**

*Professor Alex Jones, Co-Chair*

The final report and recommendations were distributed last week to FA members for review ahead of today’s meeting. Professor Jones stated that he is not reading the material but highlighted the content.

Professor Jones reported that the Adhoc Committee was first formed as a working group out of Educational Policies Committee, and is now directly reporting to FA as an Adhoc Committee of the Senate. The resolution presented today was unanimously passed by Educational Policies Committee earlier this month. Regarding the use of student surveys for assessment of teaching and for faculty promotion, the background section of this Resolution provides content for why this is being discussed. This is a national issue. Limitations of student surveys are evident. At Pitt, we have an OMET, and the role of the Office of Measurement and Evaluation of Teaching (OMET) is a mechanism for student surveys to be administrated during courses.

The resolution asks that we move beyond this, student surveys (including those administered by OMET, and others) as the primary or sole method for evaluation of teaching in many units. The resolution discusses the Pitt units/departments that can be consulted for discussing better methods to assess teaching, such as the University Center for Teaching and Learning, the Learning Research and Development Center, and the Engineering Education Research Center. The recommendation also notes that a process be taken by Administration to seek alternative methods for better assessment.
and evaluation of faculty teaching for purposes of annual evaluation, review, promotion, and tenure.

The background of the report highlighted that student satisfaction is an important metric that should continue to be monitored, and new questions should be considered as positive developments. There is a growing body of educational assessment literature that highlights problems with using student surveys, regardless of construction and how they are administered, as assessment of teaching effectiveness and student learning. This literature highlights bias in these student teacher assessments due to non-instructional related factors such as gender, race, classroom location, and family name that impact student survey scores. Additionally, the literature also reports there is often a negative correlation between student surveys in prerequisite courses and academic performance in follow-on courses. The Committee on Evaluation and Assessment of Faculty Teaching felt that students are typically not qualified to comprehensively assess teaching effectiveness. This makes the results of a single polling question on “overall teaching effectiveness” problematic for true evaluation and assessment of teaching effectiveness and student learning.

The language of the Resolution is below:

Resolution

Whereas, either by policy or general practice of the unit, student surveys, including those administered by OMET, serve as the primary or only source of evaluation or assessment of teaching for faculty for the purposes of annual review, salary, and/or promotion and tenure.

Resolved, the Faculty Assembly recommends that the Provost develop a policy to move away from using student surveys (including OMET surveys) as a method for evaluating teaching effectiveness and student learning for the purposes of annual review, raises, promotion, and tenure. Under the advisement of existing or newly formed groups with expertise in education assessment such as the University Center for Teaching and Learning (UCTL), Learning Research & Development Center (LRDC) and Engineering Education Research Center (EERC), campus presidents, deans, and directors of centers are encouraged to seek alternative methods for better assessment and evaluation of faculty teaching for purposes of annual review, promotion and tenure. Moreover, while student satisfaction of teaching is a reasonable and important criterion to measure through student surveys, should these surveys continue to be used as a part of faculty evaluation processes, such processes should explicitly include recognition of inherent biases that often deflect scores of these surveys including, but not limited to, race, gender, course level (e.g., freshman to senior, graduate, etc.), and intended audience (service course, required major core course, optional elective course). Reasonable and transparent benchmarking of student survey scores at the unit level that considers these biases should also be a priority. Additionally, a unit should not mandate use of OMET surveys if the faculty member chooses to employ defensibly appropriate (e.g., for which peer reviewed literature supports the validity and/or in consultation with the UCTL) alternative quantitative method(s) for assessment of teaching effectiveness.

Discussion:

de Vallejo: Did the Committee discuss the best ways to assess teaching?
**Jones:** The Committee felt that the experts (noted in the resolution) would be consulted for this and would be the best groups to help. It was outside the scope of our committee to do this.

**Wilson:** This was discussed at the Educational Policy Committee, with OMET and UCTL. This is a collaborative effort, and the motion is trying to stimulate the process in a better way and to create more collaboration. There has been good interaction as a result of this recommendation.

**Spring:** Do we know how widespread this issue is?

**Jones:** I remember you asked his last time. We did survey the units represented on our Committee to see how OMETs are used. In A&S, Engineering, Social Work, Dental Medicine and Nursing, OMETS play a role in assessment of faculty teaching effectiveness for annual review, promotion and tenure.

**Spring:** The document says this is the sole source. In those units, is this the minimal requirement for assessment of teaching?

**Bonneau:** OMET scores are included and are the primary quantitative indication.

**Frieze:** In A&S, sometimes you get a peer review included also.

**Spring:** I am trying to distinguish if student satisfaction for a course is the same documentation as syllabi, etc., in promotion documents. There are more data usually included in promotion documents.

**Jones:** A faculty member on our Committee reported that a promotion dossier got to the Provost’s Office without OMET scores, and the Provost’s Office required the OMET scores to be included.

**Spring:** I am questioning OMET as the primary or only source.

**Jones:** Are you asking if this is the case in other units?

**Wilson:** Many of us are aware this is a part of the deal is for this resolution to move away from this as the only source of teaching effectiveness evaluation.

**Loughlin:** The Committee wants what you see regularly. The data we collected showed this is not the case in many units. Student evaluations of teaching are not reflective of student learning. The OMETs measure student satisfaction. We are asking that experts help to develop more appropriate measures.

**Jones:** The School of Information Sciences would not apply to the “whereas,” since it uses many other sources of data, but many schools where this is the sole source, do apply to this resolution.

**Frieze:** This is often used for PT NTS faculty evaluation. These are the only data used for them.

**Wilson:** Let us vote on this. All in favor? Majority. Opposed? 0. Abstain- 1. The Resolution was passed as written.

**Unfinished Business and/or New Business**

N/A

**Announcements**

Faculty Assembly members are invited to attend the pre-Plenary event immediately following the Assembly meeting today at 4pm in 2700 Posvar Hall, entitled “What Bibliometrics Tells Us About the Research Enterprise,” by Dr. Berenika Webster and Ms. Andrea Ketchum, from the University Library System.

**Adjournment**

The meeting was called to end by President Wilson.

Adjournment at 4:05pm.

Documents from the meeting are available at the University Senate website:
http://www.univsenate.pitt.edu/faculty-assembly

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Skledar, RPh, MPH, FASHP  
*Senate Secretary*  
Professor, School of Pharmacy, Department of Pharmacy and Therapeutics

Members attending:


Members not attending:

Adams, Clark, Danford, Deitrick, Frank, Gleason, Gold, Harries, Helbig, Irrgang, Kaufman, Kaynar, Kelly, Landrigan, Leers, Lyon, McLaughlin, Morel, Muenzer, Mulcahy, Munro, Nardon3e, Schmidhofer, Scott, Swanson, Thorpe, Velankar, Vieira, Weikle-Mills

*Excused attendance:

Beck, Czerwinski, Flynn, Gaddy, Guterman, Hartman, Henker, Jacob, Kovacs, Labrinidis, Landsittel, Rigotti, Taboas

Others attending/guests:

Barlow, Bickford, Fike, Frieze, Gentz, Kirsch, Pischke

*Notified Senate Office*