

Final Report and Recommendations by the Senate Ad-Hoc Committee on PT NTS Faculty
February 22, 2017

Both the Senate and the administration of the University of Pittsburgh have been working proactively for many years to examine and improve the situation for our full-time and part-time non-tenure stream faculty. As we reported in February in 2015, our current practices are in many ways excellent and could serve as a model for other colleges and universities. However, some issues surrounding NTS faculty continue to be of concern. This Senate ad-hoc Committee was set up to consider these issues.

Non-tenure stream faculty are an important part of our faculty; improvements in their working conditions elevate our whole university. Full time and part time faculty hired outside of the tenure stream (NTS) are growing at the University of Pittsburgh. They can be found in every school. Faculty, both full-time and part-time, working outside of the tenure stream have been and continue to be essential to the growth and successful operation of the University of Pittsburgh.

Non-tenure stream faculty can be found in every school; improvements in their working conditions elevate our whole university. They have been, and continue to be, essential to the growth and successful operation of the University of Pittsburgh. Their numbers are growing; the percentage of full-time NTS faculty, for example, has increased in all but two of Pitt's schools over the past decade. NTS faculty now represent more than half of the full-time faculty in 8 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.

NTS faculty perform essential tasks. These duties vary from teaching introductory level to highly specialized classes, conducting research as a PI or other support role, performing clinical duties, engaging in administration at all levels, 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. NTS faculty, including part time NTS faculty, often provide special expertise that enhances programs throughout the university.

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.

Making sure that our full-time and part-time NTS colleagues know that they are important parts of programs, departments, and schools is essential. A conscious effort on the part of full-time tenured and tenure-stream faculty and the administration to think about ways to include, to the greatest extent possible, both full- and part-time NTS faculty in programs, departments, and

schools, costs very little in terms of money. More importantly, doing so will result in elevated morale and greater commitment to contribute to the university community.

As the committee has discussed previously, the role of PT NTS faculty at the university varies widely depending on the unit, department, and job responsibilities involved. Given that variability, it is difficult to make universal recommendations. It should be possible, however, to make some general changes that will allow the university an opportunity to model best practices, safeguard finite resources, provide students and colleagues with high-quality instruction and research, and offer benefits and resources to allow PT NTS faculty to better help to accomplish the various missions of the university.

As a result of collaborations with this ad hoc committee on NTS faculty as well as the Senate Budget Policies Committee, the Office of the Provost has taken a series of steps in recent years to address concerns of the non-tenure stream faculty, including extending contract lengths, providing promotion pathways, granting emeritus/emerita recognition to non-tenure stream faculty, and adjusting salaries. The Office of the Provost is also working with the academic units to review faculty positions to ensure faculty number and distribution are aligned with the University's strategic plan. As part of this review, there is an ongoing effort to combine part-time positions into full-time non-tenure stream positions, and ensure the mix of tenured/tenure stream faculty and non-tenure stream faculty is appropriate.

The recommendations below come from the review of several different kinds of materials: collective bargaining agreements between different universities and their respective unionized faculties (like those at Point Park University, the state university system, and others), handbooks (like that of Penn State)¹ for part-time faculty, and groups (like the Conference on College Composition and Communication)² that have already carefully considered many of the same issues facing part-time NTS faculty at the university.

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.

TRANSPARENCY

This committee (and others) have noted the difficulty the committee faced at times in gathering data about compensation, the cost to the University of existing benefits (and the potential costs of benefits not currently provided), and the degree of universality of best practices involving hiring,

¹ Penn State University. University Handbook for Part-Time Faculty and General Resource Book for All Faculty, 6 January 2015. Accessed online 1 October 2016 at

http://www.psu.edu/dept/vprov/pdfs/pt_faculty_handbook.pdf Accessed 1 October 2016.

² Conference on College Composition and Communication. Statement on Working Conditions for Non-Tenure-Track Writing Faculty, April 2016. Accessed online 1 October 2016 at

<http://www.ncte.org/cccc/resources/positions/working-conditions-ntt>

review of existing faculty, and retention. Some information from the school level has been gathered, but the variety of existing practices suggests a more comprehensive review and some degree of standardization of practice would be beneficial.

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.³
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. 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.
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

³ <http://www.ncte.org/cgcc/resources/positions/working-conditions-ntt>. Possible supporting documents would include resume/CV, letters of recommendation, teaching or other portfolios as appropriate.

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.⁴

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.

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.⁵
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

⁴ This compensation could occur on a sliding scale. Suggested amounts might be 10% of the total amount for a month or more before the term, 20% of the course salary for less than a month before, and 30% of the course salary should it be cancelled within the first two weeks after the beginning of the term. Depending on the unit or school, summer courses may need to be exempted from this.

⁵ The agreement between CCAC and its faculty uses a “typical” labor union seniority system that governs preference of semester class requests and appointments. For the agreement between Point Park University and the USW, there is the possibility of attaining “preferential appointment status” after teaching regularly at Point Park. At Tufts U. the CBA provides a minimum salary scale based on department and length of service. For example, someone with 0-4 years of service at the school teaching a 3-unit class in English, History, or Philosophy receives \$7300, with 5-8 years-\$8030, and with more than 8 years-\$8760. By contrast, teaching a course in Biology, Economics, or Physics/Astronomy has a minimum salary scale of \$10,000 (0-4yrs), \$11,000 (5-8yrs), and \$12,000 (more than 8 years).

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).⁶

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

Compensation levels vary based on type of institution (two-year versus four-year institutions), quality of institution, location (which has implications for differentials in cost-of-living), and whether or not faculty at those institutions are represented by a union contract or other agreement.

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.

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.⁷
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.⁸ The

⁶ Collective Bargaining Agreements negotiated by SEIU at American University, George Washington U., Georgetown U., Boston U., Lesley U., Northeastern U., and Tufts U encourage annual contracts, and provide criteria, based on length of (satisfactorily evaluated) service, for 2- and 3-year appointments. The UAW CBAs with the New York universities also include this experience progression from semester, to annual, to 3-year appointments.

⁷ Some union contracts establish professional development funds for PT NTS faculty. The New School (whose faculty are represented by the UAW) provides \$150,000 annually for that purpose, and from which Individual faculty members may receive up to \$1000 payments. The SEIU and AAUP/AFT CBAs have also produced similar funds. Rutgers’ agreement with AAUP/AFT provides a Professional Development Fund of \$60,000 annually dedicated to part-time faculty.

⁸ As noted, salary data varies widely. At the low end, minimum compensation at CCAC is (for the 2016-17 academic year) \$800/credit (\$2400 for a 3-unit course). The minimum at Point Park varies according to rank and course level (undergraduate or graduate). It is \$2304-2766 for a 3-unit undergraduate class and \$2796-3006 for a 3-unit graduate class. At American U., the current minimum salary for a 3-unit course is \$3600 for those without,

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.

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Senate ad hoc Committee on Part-Time NTS Faculty Issues

Committee members: Irene Frieze, chair [Psychology, TS], Stephen Ferber [Office of Human Resources liaison], Laurie Kirsch [Office of the Provost]; Don Bialostosky [English, TS], Helen Cahalane [Social Work, NTS], Lorraine Denman [French & Italian, NTS], Beverly Gaddy [Greensburg, Political Science, TS], Bill Gentz [Univ Library System, NTS], Wes Rohrer [Public Health, NTS], Sue Skledar [Pharmacy, NTS], John Stoner [History, NTS], Jay Sukits [Business, NTS], Cindy Tananis [Education, NTS], Seth Weinberg [Dental Medicine, TS], Frank Wilson [Greensburg, Sociology, NTS].

and \$4150 for those with, a terminal degree in their field. At Georgetown U, on the other hand, the minimum is \$4700 with no distinction. Information on Tufts' minimum salaries can be seen in footnote 5 above. The Rutgers contract provides for a minimum salary of \$5052 for a 3-unit class. The old contract for the state university system in Pennsylvania established minimum compensation of \$5838 for a three-credit course.