



UNIVERSITY SENATE Faculty Affairs and Personnel Committee

Report and Recommendation on Contingent Faculty Proposal - Part I

1. THE CHARGE

S-0705: Contingent Faculty Proposal: Consider and make recommendations regarding the feasibility of implementing the “Teaching at Rutgers: A Proposal to Convert Part-time to Full-time Appointments and Instructional Full-time Non-tenure-track Appointments to Tenure-track Appointments” received from Professors Zoran Gajic, Karen Thompson, and Richard Moser. Include considerations on implementation timelines and related issues. Report to Senate Executive Committee by April 2008.

The proposal (Appendix I) can also be downloaded from:

http://senate.rutgers.edu/ContingentFacultyProposal_KThompson090507.pdf

2. SUMMARY

The Faculty Affairs and Personnel Committee (FAPC) was asked to review the desirability and feasibility of implementing the proposal to convert *Part-time to Full-time Appointments and Instructional Full-time Non-tenure-track Appointments to Tenure-track Appointments*, and to submit appropriate recommendations for the consideration and approval of the Senate. The FAPC has decided, by majority vote, to separate the two issues and report on them at different times. The FAPC has formulated a single recommendation on the part of the proposal that pertains to the conversion of some part-time (PT) to full-time (FT) appointments and submits the following for action by the University Senate:

- To recommend that the administration remind Deans and Department Heads that combining some PTL lines into full-time, non-tenure-track (NTT) positions is feasible and may be desirable (See page 7).

3. REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION

The FAPC met and discussed the charge in six sessions, namely on 09/28/07, 10/19/07, 11/09/07, 12/07/07, 1/25/08, and 3/28/08. The committee benefited from the fact that one of the co-authors of the proposal (Karen Thompson) represents PTLs on the Senate and is an active member of the FAPC. In addition, the committee heard from another co-author, AAUP staffer Rich Moser, and one of the (Fall 2007) co-chairs (Paul Panayotatos) had several informal discussions with the third co-author, Zoran Gajic. Furthermore, one of the co-chairs (Ann Gould) interviewed the chair of the New Brunswick English department which employs the most

PTLs in the University (50 as of last count, see Appendix II). She also interviewed the faculty of the Math department that administers the “Basic Skills” precalculus program. The NB Math Department employs 34 PTLs, as of last count, and was used as a model by the authors of the proposal. Finally the committee heard from EVPAA Phil Furmanski who graciously agreed to testify, provide data, and answer questions.

In addition to the proposal itself and the links contained in its Appendix C, the committee considered several additional documents and opinions as provided by members, as well as a relevant New Brunswick Faculty Council Report (Appendix III). The FAPC draft report submitted to the Senate Executive Committee was the result of interim deliberations and votes, and was circulated to the membership by e-mail prior to submission and was approved by the membership of the FAPC at its 2/22/08 meeting.

3.I. Background and Discussion

The statistics on Rutgers Faculty (all campuses) are as follows, as of the end of the last fiscal year. The data were provided by the administration and contained several cautionary statements¹. Note that the total number of approved positions (7,102) has remained more or less constant over the last 20 years.

	Faculty Lines	TA/GA Lines ²	Staff Lines	Total
Total	2,534	364	4,204	7,102
Vacant	165 ³	12	467	644
Filled	2,369 ⁴	352	3,737	6,458

There is a disconnect between the number of state lines and the amount of money for these lines. Authorization for lines is not the same as the number of lines that can be filled. The University is responsible for supplying the salaries for the filled positions from its own budget, thus the number that can be filled varies with the budget. On the other hand, the State provides benefits for those lines that are filled and are full-time. As far as we know, this is a unique arrangement among state universities and one that it behooves us to safeguard.

¹ Budgeting a vacant line as faculty is not determinative of the eventual use for that line. Recent changes in budget policies were designed to provide significant flexibility to units in the use of resources, and as a result, lines can be switched between faculty and staff. Changes in the budgeting of positions normally do not occur until hiring occurs. The faculty designation on a vacant line merely indicates that a line had most recently been budgeted as a faculty line.

² Each TA/GA line holds three graduate students.

³ These vacant faculty lines were budgeted as 159 faculty and 6 PTL positions.

⁴ Because of the flexibility of the budget rules, lines budgeted as faculty may be filled with TA/GAs.

Over the years there has been a gradual increase in contingent faculty, with a gradual decrease in tenure-track (TT) and tenured faculty. The fact that this is a national trend does not make it any less alarming. For New Brunswick, in particular, data provided by the Office of Institutional Research were incorporated in a New Brunswick Faculty Council report (Appendix III) which indicates that the number of Professors and Associate and Assistant Professors has dropped as a percentage of total faculty. As a consequence, we have lost 84 tenured and tenure track lines since 1988 in New Brunswick/Piscataway alone⁵.

The proposal under consideration notes these facts and, in addition, notes the following:

- Contingent appointments now outnumber tenure track appointments at Rutgers, and a majority of all new full-time hires are off the tenure track. The percentage of tenured faculty at Rutgers has steadily decreased 1% per year (from 67% to 59%) over the past nine years.
- Part-time lecturers, full-time non-tenure track instructors, and TAs teach more than half of all undergraduate classes.

The proposal suggests that a dual approach is needed to address the problem:

- to improve working conditions for contingent faculty, and
- to increase the ratio of full-time and/or tenured appointments to contingent appointments.

To partially meet this need, this proposal suggests the following strategies:

- a) to convert (some) part-time appointments to full-time, non-tenure track appointments, and
- b) to convert (some) contingent full-time appointments to tenure-track appointments.

The proposal claims in Section B, “Reducing Contingency Will Enhance Undergraduate Education at Rutgers,” that “*A more professional, stable and less contingent faculty would allow Rutgers to address problems with undergraduate education and improve the way that students, alumni, faculty and the public perceive Rutgers.*” The proposal goes on to identify a host of undesirable situations which stem from over-reliance of instruction on contingent faculty and also identifies both ethical and pedagogical shortcomings of the current policy. In particular they note that:

Page 4:

“Rutgers now withholds any serious commitment to a near majority of its faculty and in so doing invites doubt as to our commitment to education and research. The policy of reliance on a body of contingent faculty that are treated as second class citizens lowers morale and threatens quality by promoting disengagement and indifference. Instead, the relationships between instructors and Rutgers should reflect the idea that a sense of community and dedication are among the driving values of the academic community.

⁵ A note of caution is in order: we have no way of calculating how many were converted to TAs.

Professionalizing instruction promises to be an effective remedy because it enhances the student-teacher relationship by addressing the institutional and systemic obstacles to excellence created by overuse and abuse of contingent faculty.”

Page 5:

“While lack of professional salaries, benefits, office space, access to university resources, and other sub-standard working conditions presents obstacles to excellence, the most pernicious effects of contingency are to be found in the contingent relationship itself.”

Rationale presented for these pernicious effects include (excerpted from pages 5 and 6):

- Uncertainty acts as a powerful disincentive inhibiting the full commitment of time, energy and expertise to the educational mission.
- Excellence in the classroom has been strongly linked to systems of shared governance. Because contingency discourages involvement in governance, Rutgers forfeits an important source of knowledge and creativity.
- Contingency limits faculty involvement in non-class related activities, such as student life organizations or orientation for new students.
- Contingency results in divided loyalty and time because other jobs often become necessary.
- The resulting lack of familiarity with departmental culture and policy inhibits the advisory and mentoring capacity of contingent faculty.
- As the end of contracts approach, it is reasonable to assume that contingent faculty members will experience increased stress as more time and attention is diverted away from teaching and research to securing a future position.
- Growing contingency and part-time work means that a significant proportion of Rutgers’ faculty do not have health care insurance.
- The overuse of contingent appointments inhibits collegial interaction at the departmental level. Similarly, the physical and social dislocation created by contingency makes mentoring by senior colleagues the exception rather than the rule.

The FAPC members, in their deliberations, expressed agreement and sympathy to most of the points made by the proposers in this part⁶ of the proposal and agreed that reducing reliance on contingency and providing more security to as many as possible of the instructional staff of the University is the desirable course of action both ethically and pedagogically.

The proposal then⁷ suggests that there is, among universities, a cause-and-effect association between low contingency and large endowments. Members of the FAPC committee suggested that this relationship may simply mean that institutions with bigger endowments can afford to keep the numbers of contingent faculty lower and that reducing contingency in no way

⁶ Section B (page 3): Reducing Contingency and Professionalizing Instruction Will Enhance Undergraduate Education at Rutgers

⁷ Section C (page 6): Reducing Contingency May Also Help to Build Our Endowment and Slow the Loss of Potential Students through Out-migration and Attrition.

guarantees an increase to the endowment of Rutgers University. Nevertheless, there is no question that a better undergraduate experience generates more loyal alumni/ae. To the extent that contingent faculty are limited by the very nature of their appointment to offer their best in instruction, office hours, advising etc., then expecting an increase in the endowment may not be far-fetched. The same argument is made on retention: it is claimed that fewer students would drop out if they were instructed *by the same instructors* who would have a higher level of job security (full time and/or tenure).

The FAPC judged this to be possible but by no means guaranteed. It was suggested by committee members, as well as by the faculty in English and Math that were interviewed, that attracting *better instructors* would work better in achieving both goals. As a result, the committee sees the proposed transformation of a given set of PTL appointment into FT positions as an opportunity to use a powerful means for attracting instructors that would be not be interested in a PTL position. In suggesting this, the FAPC deviates from the proposal that limits these appointments to existing PTL staff and precludes a national search. The FAPC includes this part in their recommendation.

The proposal's next section⁸ outlines the two suggestions: converting some FT NTT positions to TT positions, which will be reported on by the FAPC at a later time, and merging some PTL position into FT NTT positions. The FAPC is, in principle, in favor of the latter proposal but notes that the wide range of needs and cultures among departments across the University would make this option more or less desirable and/or feasible. For example, many PTLs are industry professionals who supplement their income and/or experience by teaching specialized courses. Indeed, the contribution of many PTLs to the teaching programs at Rutgers is highly regarded because of the expertise they bring to the classroom. They would not be interested in full-time positions. Others, however, teach yearly and have been re-appointed for decades and it is reasonable that they should expect some level of job security. Thus, the FAPC wishes to leave the final decision on implementation to the level of individual departments and has formulated the Senate Recommendation accordingly.

The next section⁹ deals, mostly, with the benefits to the University by conversion of FT NTT positions to teaching TT positions, which is the part of the proposal to be reported on at a later date. Those items that deal with the benefits of converting PTL positions to FT NTT positions find the committee in general agreement. For example, it seems self-evident that conversion to FT NTT should improve Rutgers University's ranking according at least to the criterion of the *U. S. News and World Report* ranking based on "faculty who are full time."

The FAPC is skeptical¹⁰ about the soundness of the financial analysis of the proposal¹¹ but finds

⁸ Section D: The (Re) balancing Act

⁹ Section E: Benefits of Conversion to the University

¹⁰ The following were suggested: Under "Funding sources" item (a) has a major flaw: it calculates the benefit of release time to regular TTF from the full time teaching faculty as a windfall. The calculation would be correct if such a position was *in addition*, rather than *in place of*, the PTL appointments. As things stand current PTL appointments have already achieved this goal and the conversion would be, at best, revenue neutral.

Item (c) is also flawed. The claim is that increased use of full-time instructor appointments will increase enrollment and thus tuition revenue. If this is true, then it should be avoided at every cost. Increased enrollment is not a goal. At least the NB campus is saturated as is. Actually it has been a nightmare to both the administration and to shared governance bodies that

that the costs involved in converting several PTL positions into one FT NTT position are relatively low. The major difference between these two types of appointments is that part-time ones (PTLs) carry no benefits while FT ones do. The cost, however, of benefits is carried by the State, not by the University. The concern was that, in order to convert some PT to FT positions, the University would have to ask Trenton for new lines. This was deemed both unproductive and potentially dangerous. Given, however, that there exist more than enough vacant lines¹², with “wasted” associated benefits, such conversions can be achieved internally. In terms of the position of the administration, the FAPC was reassured that there is no concerted effort at Rutgers to move from a tenure-based to a NTT system. Indeed, the accomplishments and reputation of Rutgers University, as a research institution, rest with its tenure-track faculty.

Having established the desirability and feasibility of the conversion of PTL lines to FT NTT instructional staff, several points on implementation should be made. There should be no expectation that PTLs of long-standing are the first to be hired in these positions. Although some PTLs have been teaching for many years, they are not necessarily better educators than others. A national search may attract better candidates and should be entertained. If there is no national search, there should be a serious review before multi-year full time contracts are offered to existing PTLs. It was actually felt that, other than in departments that employ large numbers and have developed assessment mechanisms, there is little evaluation of contingent faculty. Even more, it is important to recognize that we don’t have the right system in place even with tenure-track lines. Relying on student evaluations is suboptimal, and most faculty (both TT and NTT) are not regularly reviewed by peers. If PTLs are to be candidates for full time positions, all PTLs in the particular department should be seriously and repeatedly evaluated, not just before a decision is made. Thus it is necessary for departments contemplating such conversions to develop a systematic way to evaluate teachers. Finally there needs to be developed a way in which annuals on long-term contracts and FT NTT faculty may be terminated.

It is also clear that better management of annual faculty and FT NTT faculty is now needed. The challenge to do well with a full load should be tempered with support and incentives. Possibilities include support for conferences, recognition of faculty contributions to the curriculum, and holding these faculty to the same standards as the rest of the department in terms of quality.

Regardless of all the above it seems that the biggest hurdle to conversions to FT NTT lines will be the perception of loss of flexibility based on budget and the teaching skills of contingent faculty. Some reassurance on the budget portion of the problem from the upper administration for support of these FT NTT appointments would go a long way.

Finally, as a consequence of the last contract negotiations between the University and the AAUP, the University has put together a taskforce to discuss issues related to NTT faculty (including

we might be *forced* to accept more students. A major *ad hoc* Senate Committee was convened to work out the arguments to the legislature against any enrollment increase.

On the issue of the cost of converting full-time to TTT appointments, saving \$2,500 by doing away with a national search would be counter productive.

¹¹ Section F: Costs

¹² Combining all current PTL lines into full-time, at a ratio of 8 to 1, results in less than 40 FT positions.

annuals, clinical, or other elements of NTT positions). Specifically, the taskforce will address the role NTT faculty have in the larger University structure; how to better identify, engage, and integrate them, and how to provide a clearer career path for these individuals. The FAPC now has one of the co-chairs (Ann Gould) sitting on that committee, and we hope to gain from their deliberations. By the same token, the FAPC hopes that this document and recommendation, as amended by the full Senate, will enhance the deliberations of the taskforce.

3.II. Recommendation

For these reasons, the FAPC offers the following recommendation for adoption by the University Senate:

Recommendation:

The Senate recommends that the EVPAA inform unit heads that there are academic benefits to merging some PTL lines into full time appointments, possibly with multi-year contracts; that candidates for these positions should be identified consistent with departmental needs and practices that may include a national search or, at the very least, be comprised of the unit's best PTLs based on the quality of their teaching as well as length of service; that a systematic way of evaluating teaching by contingent faculty should be in place before any full time offers are made; and that nurturing of these positions with incentives for motivation and innovation should also be a concern.

4. RESOLUTION

In Support of the University Senate's Faculty Affairs and Personnel Committee's Report and Recommendation:

Whereas, the University Senate Faculty Affairs and Personnel Committee has examined and reported on the section of the "Proposal to Convert Part-time to Full-time Appointments and Instructional Full-time Non-tenure-track Appointments to Tenure-track Appointments" that pertains to the conversion of some Part-time to Full-time Appointments; and

Whereas, the University Senate has reviewed the Committee's report and its Recommendation, finding said recommendation to be sound and in the best interests of Rutgers University;

Therefore, Be It Resolved, that the Rutgers University Senate endorses the "Report and Recommendation on Contingent Faculty Proposal - Part I" and urges the Administration to implement its recommendations.

Faculty Affairs and Personnel Committee 2007-08

Gould, Ann, SEBS (F), Co-Chair, Executive Committee Liaison

Leath, Paul, At-Large NB (F), Co-Chair (Spring 2008 semester)

Panayotatos, Paul, Engineering (F), Co-Chair (on sabbatical Spring 2008)

Barbarese, Joseph, GS-C (F)
Becker, Jonathan, Law-N (S)
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Coit, David, Engineering (F)
Covey, Lori, SAS-NB (F)
Creese, Ian, GS-N (F)
Deutsch, Stuart, Law-Newark Dean (A)
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