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CCCC Statement on Working Conditions for Non-Tenure-Track Writing Faculty

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Executive Summary

As the non-tenure-track (NTT) cohort of writing faculty grows, departments and programs need to provide equitable working conditions for all faculty, including reasonable workloads and protections against unnecessary changes; access to shared governance and curricular decisions; transparent and fair hiring, evaluation, and renewal processes; access to technology and other resources necessary for job performance; access to professional development and scholarly resources; and fair compensation. To provide such conditions, departments need consistent and transparent policies developed as much as possible in collaboration with NTT faculty.

Introduction

The term *non-tenure-track* (NTT) refers to all faculty who are not protected by tenure. Faculty off the tenure track face conditions that tenure-track and tenured (TT/T) faculty do not—even NTT faculty in the most secure positions.

From 2005 to 2012, the number of contingent faculty members increased from 48.2 percent to 52.9 percent at doctoral-granting universities, held steady at about 61 percent at masters-granting universities, grew from 55 to 57 percent at baccalaureate colleges, and stayed constant at almost 80 percent in two-year colleges.¹ One 2010 study, for example, found that roughly 75 percent of faculty were working off the tenure track, most part-time.² While data vary based on differing reporting mechanisms, contingent faculty employment clearly continues to rise in US colleges and universities. Additionally, it is challenging to obtain comprehensive and accurate information about contingent faculty demographics and working conditions following the discontinuation of the National Postsecondary Faculty Survey, an instrument that attempted to gather this information.

These figures are especially significant for faculty teaching college writing courses. These courses include those labeled “basic” or “remedial” writing and general education courses such as first-year writing. The Coalition on the Academic Workforce (CAW), which brings together faculty and disciplinary associations around issues related to academic labor practices, found in a 2012 survey of contingent teachers that 16.4 percent of all contingent faculty in the United States were from English language and literature departments; most of these faculty were teaching writing courses. A 2007 Association of Departments of English of the MLA study also found that almost 70 percent of composition courses housed within English departments are taught by contingent faculty.

As institutions encounter tightening budgets, calls for flexibility, and greater demand for instructional activities supporting students, many are relying on NTT faculty, especially in writing courses. With increasing pressure from state legislatures and campus or system governing bodies to maximize “efficiency” through such measures as increasing class sizes and demanding higher teaching loads, such situations are becoming more common and the need for specific disciplinary recommendations more urgent.

Summary of Recommendations

Given increasing institutional reliance on NTT faculty in writing courses and departments, recommendations here emerge from two core principles:

(1) Departments, programs, and faculty must work to ensure equity³ for NTT writing faculty by attending to issues associated with employment: compensation; job security; benefits; access to resources; access to shared governance; and opportunities for professional advancement⁴; and

(2) Decisions about hiring, workload, and working conditions should be made based on policies applied consistently to all faculty and take into consideration parameters of existing agreements, such as union contracts. Where no parameters currently exist, departments should develop and apply consistent and transparent standards based on factors such as seniority and quality of performance. NTT faculty should have as much input into those standards as possible.

These principles can be applied to a number of practices and situations affecting NTT faculty and their efforts: workload; hiring; evaluation and renewal; basic workplace resources; support for professional development and scholarly activity; and compensation. Each of the following sections outlines specifics related to these principles and their application.

Workload: Teaching and Service

- NTT faculty workloads should be limited to a maximum twenty students per section of first-year and/or advanced composition courses and a maximum fifteen students per section of basic (or “remedial”) writing courses. Generally, NTT faculty should not teach more than three sections of such courses per term⁵. If TT/T faculty teaching loads exceed three sections of first-year, advanced, or basic writing courses per term or exceed the class size recommendations, NTT faculty teaching loads should be consistent with those of TT/T faculty. NTT faculty should not teach larger sections of the same course as TT/T faculty.
- Departments should not use recommendations regarding numbers of students or sections to prevent the creation of full-time NTT positions, nor to deny health care benefits to NTT faculty.
- NTT faculty should have access to teaching assignments in their areas of expertise and at various levels of the curriculum. NTT faculty should not be assigned exclusively to courses enrolled by students at any one level.⁶
- NTT faculty should be protected against last-minute schedule changes/reductions.⁷ When such changes are absolutely necessary, departments should follow clear and transparent policies for determining how those changes or reductions are made.
- Departments should provide full-time schedules for NTT faculty who want them before offering overloads to TT/T faculty.
- NTT faculty should be included in and receive credit for department/program/campus governance. Such participation should be compensated.⁸ When NTT faculty are included in service, they should have voting rights on matters connected to that work.
- NTT faculty should be included in curriculum decisions for courses that affect their teaching and receive credit for their involvement.
- NTT faculty should be able to vote on all policy matters unless specifically excluded by department code, faculty manual, or collective bargaining agreement.

Hiring, Evaluation, and Renewal Practices

- NTT faculty should be hired through formal, transparent, and systematic processes, e.g., submission of an application letter, CV, names of recommenders, and teaching materials followed by a formal interview process and reference check.⁹
- NTT faculty should undergo rigorous, systematic evaluations on par with evaluations of TT/T faculty in terms of frequency and rigor. Most frequently,

these include: teaching observations; student evaluations; teaching portfolio; and evaluations of scholarship and service where appropriate.¹⁰

- If NTT faculty are involved in evaluations of superiors, they should receive appropriate provisions/protections.
- NTT faculty should be hired into long-term (multiyear) lines, including the creation of “teaching specialist” lines¹¹ (or their equivalent), as often as possible.
- Institutions should develop pathways to tenure-track or other secure positions for NTT faculty whose quality performance has kept them continually renewed.¹²
- Departments should provide timely notification of renewals and non-renewals so that NTT faculty have enough time and notice to find other work and/or apply for unemployment insurance and other forms of assistance.
- NTT faculty should be granted due process rights, including written rationales for renewal and non-renewal decisions, and opportunities to respond to evaluations and non-renewal decisions.

Basic Workplace Resources

- NTT faculty require office space that allows them to comply with FERPA and Title IX regulations. They also should have access to a desk and locked storage space; building and workspace access on weekends and nights, including building/office keys or electronic passkeys; access to faculty lounges and dining halls; mailboxes in the main department office; and adequate faculty parking.
- NTT faculty need access to technology required for teaching including but not limited to: campus email address and phone service; course management software; photocopy machines and codes; and representation on mailing lists, listservs, and rosters for departmental and university opportunities.
- NTT faculty should receive written notice of policies that differ for TT/T and NTT faculty. Such policies should not discriminate arbitrarily based on status.

Support for Professional Development and Scholarly Activity

- NTT faculty should receive funding for travel and professional opportunities. This support should be proportional to NTT faculty workload.¹³
- NTT faculty should be eligible for no- or low-cost access to graduate courses at institutions with graduate programs, or for subsidized graduate credits if their institutions do not have graduate programs, where such credits enhance professional development or lead toward improved credentials for the teaching of writing.
- NTT faculty should be eligible for institutional grant funding without requiring TT/T sponsors. Where such eligibility violates policies, departments should offer opportunities to NTT faculty, including collaborations on projects, in order to help NTT faculty become eligible for such resources.

Compensation and Benefits¹⁴

- Consistent with MLA's current recommendation, NTT faculty should be paid a minimum (as of 2016) of \$7,350 for a standard 3-credit-hour semester course or \$4,900 for a standard 3-credit-hour quarter or trimester course.¹⁵
- NTT faculty should be eligible for health insurance.
- NTT faculty should be offered retirement benefits.
- NTT faculty should be offered support for filing unemployment claims, and other non-salary benefits.
- NTT faculty should be eligible for additional benefits available to TT/T faculty, including sabbatical leave, family/maternity leave, and sick leave.

Endnotes

1. Reported by Steven Shulman, Chair of the Research Committee for the AAUP and co-director of the Center for the Study of Academic Labor (CSAL).
2. As reported by the Coalition on the Academic Workforce (CAW).
3. The term *equity* is used deliberately. The term is distinct from but in service to *equality*.

While equal compensation and institutional support for equal responsibilities is important, achieving equality will also involve adopting restorative policies (e.g., low-/no-cost access to PhD programs; retirement buyouts for longtime NTT faculty; etc.) that help to redress injustices that have been endemic to the contingent system.

4. Adapted from the New Faculty Majority's "Seven Goals."

5. These recommendations are consistent with both ADE recommendations and the CCCC Principles for the Postsecondary Teaching of Writing.

6. Following the recommendation that no faculty teach more than three writing courses per semester or more than sixty students, NTT writing faculty whose contracts mandate four sections per semester will need assignments beyond introductory courses to fill their workloads. Furthermore, teaching across a curriculum improves teaching at each level of it. Finally, access to different courses/areas enhances NTT faculty inclusion in departments, especially as they are more involved in developing and assessing courses.

7. The NFM/CFHE "Who Is Professor Staff?" report highlights harms to students and faculty from just-in-time hiring. Also harmful for faculty and students are sudden changes/reductions in schedules enabled by NTT faculty's contingent status. Departments should not allow TT/T faculty to force NTT faculty schedule changes unless the change is required by policy.

8. NTT faculty should have governance responsibilities as part of their base workload calculation. An array of models exists for crediting committee work, including several that constitute 10 to 20% of an NTT's base workload. Alternately, NTT faculty's shared governance responsibilities can be compensated via reassigned time or overload pay.

9. The Delphi Project and others advocate aligning NTT with TT/T hiring practices as closely as possible. Hiring NTT faculty under dubious conditions enables systemic, untenable bias and disrespect. Formal processes provide institutions the benefit of the full range of an NTT faculty member's qualifications. Poor hiring practices also hurt students and expose the institution to legal risk.

10. Rigorous evaluations are essential faculty development tools. They also buffer against arbitrary and capricious non-renewals. Evaluation processes should reflect the actual work of NTT faculty, providing faculty opportunities to document teaching excellence and improvements, and be rewarded. Such processes should be connected to career ladders and potential rank and salary advancement.

11. Long-term contracts offer some job security. We endorse them as improvements over casual and temporary employment, but we advocate for the codification of formalized long-term protected employment, or instructor tenure.

12. Those pathways should not deny NTT faculty access to continued part-time work if they want it. Pathways should also exist for faculty who have been in part-time positions. One model for NTT-to-TT conversion process is in the Association of Pennsylvania State College and University Faculty (APSCUF) Collective Bargaining Agreement (see Article 11.G).

13. Such that a full-time NTT faculty member receives the same travel funding as TT/T faculty; a 50% NTT faculty receives half as much; etc.

14. SEIU's aspirational call for a combined salary/benefits package of \$15,000/section in 2015 offers a strong reminder that per-section salary is not the only relevant figure. Models for benefited positions include Colorado State University, where a 50% appointment qualifies the employee for full benefits participation, including retirement and health, maternity leave, family leave, and sick leave, employee study privileges, tuition scholarships for family members, etc. See <http://www.hrs.colostate.edu/benefits/>.

15. See "MLA Recommendation on Minimum Per-Course Compensation for Part-Time Faculty Members" for an explanation of how they arrived at this figure.

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