

THE CHARGE

S-1806: Review and revisit Senate response to Charge S-0705, Contingent Faculty Proposal, part I, in light of changes at Rutgers the last decade and, if appropriate, make further recommendations. Respond to Executive Committee February 2019.

DRAFT REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Almost 12 years have past since S-0705 came to the Senate Faculty Affairs and Personnel Committee (FAPC) asking for a serious consideration of "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." At that time, the Committee decided to report separately on the issue relating to part-time (PT) faculty - that is, the conversion of some PT appointments to full-time (FT) appointments. The FAPC (and the then later the entire Senate) voted to recommend

that the EVPAA inform unit heads that there are academic benefits to merging some PTL lines into full time appointments, and encourage them to do so, 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 PTL's 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. (p. 7)

Since that time, some departments have in fact converted some PT appointments to FT appointments and some departments already have systems of teaching evaluation in place (beyond SIRS), but the situation for students (number of PT employed at RU, percentage of PT within the faculty, percentage of courses taught by PT) has grown more striking and disturbing, while the situation for PT faculty (semester-to-semester appointment, deplorably low salaries, no health care benefits, little academic support) has more or less remained stagnant.

Comparing 12 Years Ago to Today

While the 2007 Proposal was noting a ten-year decline in TT faculty from approximately 70% to 60%, the percentage seems to have dramatically dropped to **30%** in the next decade. With a percentage of 70% contingent (PT, TA, and NTT) and this 30% TT, it seems the numbers have reversed in the past 20 years at RU. **At the very least, the administration should provide to the Senate accurate data (numbers and percentages of faculty in each category by unit and campus, along with the numbers / percentages of students / courses taught by each category) on an annual or biennial basis.** Looking at examples in the 2007 Report, (on p. 2) PTLs in the NB English department numbered 50 - today that figure is more like 100. PTLs in NB Math were counted at 34 back then while today's number is 56. This enormous growth in the use of PTLs is despite substantial conversion of PTL's to NTT's. Included in the "contingent" percentage are PTL's, NTT's, and TA's. Numbers of TA's have declined as well as TT. Better data should be no problem for a large research institution like Rutgers to produce.

The S-0705 Report discusses the "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." (p. 2) The explanation of line determination and budgeting in the footnotes is even more mysterious and all this confusion relates to a Senate charge to the Budget Committee concerning the line allocation process that has remained incomplete for some years.

While the Report on S-0705 notes that number of contingent faculty had grown to "teach more than half of all undergraduate classes" (p. 3) even without updated data that percentage must be much larger now. The Report details "the most pernicious effects of contingency" which are listed from the 2007 Proposal:

- 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. (p. 4)

The Report notes that the FAPC "expressed agreement and sympathy" with these. [We might note that they remain relevant and even pressing today and we might add to the list.] The Report cites the 2007 Proposal as suggesting "a cause-effect association between low contingency and large endowments. Members of the [2007] FAPC committee suggested that this relationship may simply mean that institutions with bigger endowments can afford to keep numbers of contingent faculty lower" but it's notable that Rutgers has the lowest endowment in the Big Ten and employs the most PTL's / adjuncts.

The following year 2008, the RU Foundation pointed to the importance of faculty / student relationships:

The life-changing power of the relationship between students and professors is what compelled John "Jack" Byrne RC'54 to give the university \$3 million to underwrite a **revolution** of sorts in undergraduate education.

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IMPACT

We might note that:

PTLs are unable to develop the sort of relationships that might lead to alums donating later. Even if they did, why would they?

PTLs themselves (a growing chunk of the faculty, teaching a growing chunk of students) certainly do not earn enough to donate even if they so desired.

As TT faculty, who ARE around to develop relationships with students, do less and less of the teaching (because PTLs, NTTs, and TAs do more), they won't be developing as many relationships.

Dissatisfied employees in general are unlikely to encourage contributions.

Student faculty relationships increasingly revolve around pressing the administration to change its priorities (rather than around how much to give back.)

and so on.

The "Teaching at Rutgers" Proposal was forwarded to NJ State Assemblyman Patrick J. Diegnan, Jr. in October of 2007. He read the Proposal, labelled it "excellent," and offered to provide input. Although it's not clear what input he could provide, he remains in office as our Assemblyman. More recently, members of the NJ Higher Education met with NJ Secretary of Higher Education, Dr. Zakiya Smith Ellis. During the Q&A, contingent faculty issues were addressed frequently and Dr. Smith Ellis certainly got the message. We might send both of them our completed Report and the earlier Proposal.

[Put into recommendation format?]

Given the extent to which contingent faculty number have grown with PTL number comprising the larger portion of that growth, and given the "pernicious effects" noted above, the FAPC must reiterate its endorsement of its 2007 recommendation strengthening the urgency to convert PTL appointments to FT NTT appointments and to enhance the compensation of remaining PTLs. The latter is crucial not simply for professional and ethical treatment but as a disincentive to the continuing replacement of TT faculty with contingent faculty. Therefore,

- 1) The Senate requests that the administration provide data on a regular basis (annually? biennially?) on the number of TT faculty, NTT faculty, PTL's, and TA's by unit and campus on the percentage of each category in each unit / campus on the percentage of courses taught by each category on the number of students taught by each category
- 2) The Senate urges the administration to instruct departments whose faculty consist of a sizeable number of PTLs to convert those willing and eligible to FT NTT's immediately based on teaching evaluation and length of service.

- 3) The Senate urges the administration to provide adequate compensation / benefits so as to remove the incentive to replace TT faculty with PTL's as well as reinforce professional treatment.
- 4) The Senate urges the administration to prompt and fair settlement of all future collective bargaining agreements to facilitate 2) and 3) above.