**Research, Teaching, Practitioner, & Clinical-Track Faculty Affairs Committee**

**2018-2019 Year-End Report**

**Ongoing Charge**

The Committee on Research, Teaching, Practitioner, & Clinical-Track Faculty Affairs monitors and evaluates the working environment, terms and conditions of employment, job security, compensation, benefits eligibility, opportunities for participation in governance, opportunities for professional advancement, and participation in the academic life of the university provided for non-tenure-track faculty. It monitors compliance with the Faculty Handbook and with stated school policies of the schools or units as they relate to Non-Tenure-Track faculty. It makes recommendations to relevant Senate and University committees, and to the Academic Senate, concerning any policy issues that have an impact on non-tenure-track faculty.

**Specific Charge for 2018-2019 Academic Year**

The RTPC Faculty Affairs Committee was tasked with exploring three specific issues this year:

1. Salary benchmarking: Compensation remains a major concern for many RTPC faculty, and has significant equity and diversity implications given that RTPC tracks contain a disproportionate number of USC's female faculty and faculty of color.

2. Salary compression: While new salary floors are intended to benefit newly-hired faculty, they have brought attention to the concern that some longer-serving RTPC faculty earn salaries only barely above (and potentially below) those of less-experienced colleagues within the same schools.

3. RTPC titles and tracks: Some schools reportedly have titles and tracks in place that unreasonably extend the amount of time required to become eligible for promotion to the Associate Professor rank.

The following sections provide an overview of the Committee's activities relating to this charge.

*Salary Benchmarking*

This issue was the primary focus of the Committee's efforts this year. The Committee conducted a salary benchmarking exercise using publicly-available individual-level data on faculty employed in the University of California and California State University systems. All elements of this activity, including specific recommendations for identification, collection, analysis, and reporting of relevant data, were documented in the White Paper on Faculty Salary Benchmarking submitted to the USC Academic Senate Executive Board. That report, along with the Committee's reports from previous years, can be obtained from the Academic Senate website at https://academicsenate.usc.edu/committees/rtpc/.

*Salary Compression*

Without access to USC salary data, the Committee was unable to address this issue as directly as the benchmarking charge. We were nonetheless able to confirm that salary compression (and salary inversion) are viewed as significant problems by faculty in multiple schools. We found that current school-level administrative practices to detect, prevent, and/or remedy these issues tend to be insufficiently transparent; a number of faculty reported being unaware of any such policies within their schools, and the remainder generally had little or no knowledge of specific procedures and had only received vague assurances that their deans' offices would monitor and attempt to address any such inequities in compensation. We also note that certain recommendations on reporting of internal salary data in our White Paper on Faculty Salary Benchmarking would increase transparency regarding the extent of salary compression both across and within ranks and thus provide a foundation for further efforts in this area.

*RTPC Titles and Tracks*

The Committee collected school-level governance documents specifying titles and tracks in place for RTPC faculty as well as expected number of years spent in each rank prior to eligibility for promotion. We found no evidence of title sequences in use that would unduly extend the time required for promotion to either the Associate or Full Professor ranks in any RTPC track, with the exception of the Viterbi School of Engineering's Teaching track as discussed below. Although schools vary substantially in their use of the Teaching, Practitioner, and Clinical tracks for faculty whose primary role is teaching, we found significant standardization in titles and time to promotion, with nearly all schools using Assistant, Associate, and Full Professor ranks within each track and specifying usual intervals of six and twelve years prior to promotion to Associate and Full Professor ranks, respectively. Notable exceptions include the following:

- The Viterbi School of Engineering uses the Lecturer and Senior Lecturer ranks as the first steps in the Teaching track (with no Assistant rank), with three years to promotion to Senior Lecturer and four additional years to promotion to Associate. This requires teaching faculty to go through an additional rank and associated promotion review prior to reaching Associate and puts the expected time to promotion to Associate at seven years rather than the typical six.
- Dornsife College uses the Lecturer rank as the first step in the Teaching track, with three years to promotion to Assistant and three additional years to promotion to Associate. Like Viterbi's system, this requires faculty to go through an additional promotion review prior to reaching Associate; however, it leaves total time for promotion to Associate at the standard six years observed elsewhere at USC.
- Distinct Lecturer tracks (with ranks of Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, and/or Master Lecturer) are used within a few units such as Dornsife College.
- The Gould School of Law has relatively short promotion intervals for RTPC faculty: two years for promotion from Assistant to Associate and an additional three years for promotion to Full Professor.

Our findings relating to this issue come with two caveats. First, we were not able to obtain documents from all schools, and thus our analysis is based on a convenience sample of documents from 20 schools (of which 13 specified time to promotion) rather than the full population of USC schools. Second, our findings are based on governance documents and thus reflect statutory time to promotion; to the extent that any schools do not consistently conduct RTPC promotion reviews according to this timeline, we would not have been able to detect such discrepancies between policy and practice.

**Priorities for Future Consideration**
The Committee identified a number of topics for consideration in the upcoming year:

- *Salary benchmarking:*  It is critical that the Committee monitor and facilitate adoption of recommendations outlined in the White Paper on Faculty Salary Benchmarking and continue to advocate for better and more transparent policies both at the university level and within academic units.

- *Salary compression:*  Following this year's initial review, work remains to be done to promote increased transparency and efficacy of practices relating to salary compression.

- *Promotion criteria:*  Concerns have been raised about RTPC promotion criteria throughout the university, with central elements including the transparency of the criteria and of the promotion review process more generally as well as the consistency of promotion criteria with workload profiles at the previous rank.

- *Job security:*  Significant gains have been made in recent years in the area of job security for RTPC faculty, but USC's policies still fall short of those observed at leading peer institutions; for example, the University of California system offers teaching faculty a Security of Employment status that provides the same protections as tenure.

- *Faculty loads:*  Faculty in some schools have indicated inconsistency in workloads among full-time faculty both within their schools and in relation to colleagues at other schools. More generally, it has been reported that in some instances workload expectations are not clearly documented and may even fluctuate without commensurate compensation.

- *Merit review:*  A number of schools' faculty have raised concerns about the transparency and robustness of merit review processes and have expressed dissatisfaction with the extent to which substantive feedback and direction for improvement are provided.

- *Teaching by postdoctoral scholars:*  A trend has been observed in some academic units toward use of postdoctoral scholars with appointments centered on teaching rather than research, and concerns have been expressed regarding both the potential for such positions to serve as a means to circumvent appointment of full-time RTPC faculty and the potential for exploitation of individuals appointed in these positions (who we note do not have a committee within the Academic Senate given their non-faculty status).

- *Roles of RTPC faculty:* Given significant changes in the traditional structure of the higher education system that have already taken place and are expected to continue in the future, many faculty have expressed a desire for explicit and intentional discussions of the roles of RTPC faculty in contributing to a long-term strategy by which USC can successfully navigate this shifting landscape.

**2018-19 RTPC Faculty Affairs Committee**

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