

Committee on Part-Time Faculty Affairs 2017-2018 Year End Report

Charge

The Committee on Part-Time 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 part-time faculty. It monitors compliance with the Faculty Handbook and with stated school policies of the schools or units as they relate to part-time faculty. It makes recommendations to relevant Senate and University committees, and to the Academic Senate, concerning any policy issues that have an impact on Part-Time faculty.

Chair and Co-Chair

Linda Hoffman, Rossier School of Education, Chair
Elisa Warford, Viterbi School of Engineering, Co-Chair

Members

Maria Colman, Marshall School of Business
Omar Ezzeldine, Rossier School of Education
Jessi Johnson, Dornsife College of Arts and Letters
Mike Lee (Executive Board liaison), Viterbi School of Engineering
Patricia Libby, Gould School of Law
Daniel Pecchenino (RTPC Faculty Affairs liaison), Dornsife College of Arts and Letters
Daniela Schmid, Ostrow School of Dentistry
Miki Turner, Annenberg School of Communication
Ashley Blair York, School of Cinematic Arts

Committee Activities and Accomplishments

Annual Academic Senate/Provost Retreat Participation

Both Linda Hoffman (Chair) and Elisa Warford (Co-Chair) attended the fall 2017 Senate Retreat. Elisa Warford also attended the spring 2018 Joint Senate-Provost Retreat.

Regular Meetings

The committee met regularly on a bi-weekly or monthly basis, as needed. The committee met via videoconference using the BlueJeans platform. While most committee members agreed that in-person meetings are preferable to online forums in terms of the richness of communication, the online platform made it much easier for members to attend, since many part-time faculty members are not on campus every day and for whom an extra trip to campus can prove burdensome. All faculty members, however, do not have access to the BlueJeans program. If the Academic Senate were able to secure their own account for committee chairs to utilize, that may help future iterations of the committee who may not include a member with access.

Faculty Affairs Committee Participation

Elisa Warford served as liaison to both the RTPC Faculty Affairs committee and the T/TT Faculty Affairs committee. Dan Pecchenino served as liaison to the PT committee from the RTPC committee. We find this cross-committee participation to be a valuable way of sharing information such as successful strategies, making personal connections between different groups of faculty, and increasing faculty awareness of both the overlapping and divergent issues faced by other faculty groups.

2017-2018 Work and Accomplishments

The major accomplishment of the year was to distribute the first university-wide survey on part-time faculty working conditions. The purpose of the survey was to gauge the level of compliance of the academic units with the Resolution on Part-Time Faculty Affairs passed by the Senate in 2016. The committee worked with the Executive Board of the Senate and the Provost's office to finalize the contents of the survey and obtain a university-wide email distribution list for part-time faculty. The survey was distributed to all part-time faculty in March 2018. It included questions regarding demographics, employment profiles, contracts and benefits, merit reviews and promotion paths, support, and governance. We received 541 completed responses to the survey out of 651 people who began the survey. The committee has compiled the data and has begun a broad analysis that will be detailed in a separate report. The survey has provided the committee with a wealth of data about the part-time faculty that should allow us to identify issues and craft recommendations to improve their working conditions. We are proud of this effort and hope that similar surveys will be regularly distributed to part-time faculty.

The committee also sought to clarify new part-time faculty hiring and course load policies. We received several anecdotal reports of part-time faculty members' course loads being reduced or eliminated based in part on their outside employment status. To seek clarification on these new policies, we drafted a plan of action and submitted it for review by the Executive Board.

The committee also updated a list of part-time faculty groups—committees, caucuses, or other bodies—across the school and identified point-people for these groups. This list can be used to gather and distribute information about part-time faculty across the university, identify candidates who may be interested in serving on the Senate committee, and coordinate efforts among schools.

The committee also reviewed the faculty handbook for language that related to part-time faculty. We found a lack of clarity in language about part-time faculty eligibility to serve on faculty councils (Chapter 4-C (2):

- (c) Each school must have active participation by research-track, teaching-track, practitioner-track, and clinical-track, faculty members in faculty governance, including on faculty guidelines for those tracks, but not including matters concerning tenure and the tenure system. Part-time faculty are eligible to be elected or appointed to faculty governance bodies. The Academic Senate Constitution has provisions concerning participation in faculty governance by research-track, teaching-track, practitioner-track, and clinical-track, faculty (Article I, Sections 2 and 3).

We found that some faculty councils interpret this as meaning that part-time faculty must be eligible to serve on faculty governance bodies, while others interpret the language as giving the schools permission to allow part-time faculty to serve but not requiring the school to grant eligibility to part-time faculty. We believe that only the first interpretation is valid and that schools

that do not allow part-time faculty to run for or be appointed to governance are in violation of the faculty handbook.

Future Goals

We anticipate that the focus of the committee for next year will be to further analyze the data provided by the survey to identify areas in which the committee can intervene to improve working conditions of the part-time faculty. We also recommend that the aforementioned section of the faculty handbook to be revised to clearly state that part-time faculty may not be excluded from elected or appointed positions on faculty governance bodies.

Conclusion

We believe that this committee represents a vital constituency of the faculty and serves an important role in extending shared governance to this typically underserved group. We wish to express thanks to our committee members who dedicated their time, expertise, and insight to the committee this year. We are pleased that we were able to distribute the survey, which was a major undertaking, and we hope that it will result in actionable, effective policy changes that will benefit part-time faculty and the university at large.