

Part-Time Faculty Affairs Committee

Year-End Report, 2018-19

The PTFAC is charged with monitoring part-time faculty working conditions and terms of employment, and this year its specific charge was to further analyze the results of the 2018 University-wide survey of the part-time faculty. To those ends, the Committee produced a white paper on exemplary practices at USC around issues revealed by the survey, and clarified course load policies for Adjunct faculty. We also discussed compensation issues but decided not to act on them this year. These and other activities and suggestions for next year's committee work are described in more detail below.

Committee Meetings and Senate Participation

The Committee held regular monthly meetings, alternating days of the week so that all members would have opportunity to participate. We held most meetings in URC 102 with online video access.

Elisa Warford presented the results of the 2018 survey to the full Senate at the November 2018 Senate meeting. She also attended Fall and Spring Senate retreats and the fall Senate meetings.

Elisa Warford served as a liaison to the T/TT Faculty Affairs Committee and the RTPC Faculty Affairs Committee. We find that cross-pollination between committees increases institutional knowledge, awareness of the common goals across faculty groups, and the effectiveness of shared governance.

White Paper on Exemplary Policies and Practices

The Committee spent much of its time this year working on a white paper presenting exemplary policies and practices across the University regarding part-time faculty. The white paper focuses on four areas revealed in the 2018 survey to warrant further attention: merit review, promotion, inclusion in shared governance, and communication. The Committee analyzed the results of the 2018 survey, collected information about part-time faculty policies and practices from the academic units, and collaborated on the white paper. In highlighting these exemplary policies and practices, we acknowledge the substantive policy improvements that have resulted from the University's sustained attention to part-time faculty affairs, and we encourage wider adoption of similar policies and practices.

The white paper is in draft form and will be finalized in the coming weeks for submission to the Executive Board.

Course Load Policies

In the Spring semester of 2018 the Committee began receiving anecdotal reports of reductions in part-time faculty course loads being reduced and a policy change regarding course loads. In response to these reports, we sought clarification from the Provost's office on University policy. This matter was not resolved during the 2017-18 academic year, and so the Committee continued to seek clarification this year. This involved numerous email exchanges between Vice Provost Elizabeth Graddy; the Committee's Executive Board liaison, Rebecca Lonergan; and Committee Chair, Elisa Warford, and discussion in Committee meetings.

As a result of these activities, we have obtained a policy statement from the Provost's office. This policy also applies to full-time University staff. The statement is appended to this report.

Compensation Issues

The Committee discussed but did not act upon the issue of part-time faculty compensation. In the 2018 survey, many faculty members reported not having enough time to fulfill their job duties as described in their contracts in the time allotted in the contract. The survey did not ask direct questions about compensation, and thus the comments we received on this subject were unprompted. The comments may indicate a possible lack of equity and support under which part-time faculty members work. According to University policy, PT faculty compensation should be pegged to that of full-time faculty at the same rank and for equivalent work. We are not certain the extent to which this policy is being followed. However, in our discussions about whether and how to address this issue, we noted the difficulty of gathering quantitative evidence of this problem, since we do not have access to faculty contracts nor an accurate way to determine how many hours faculty are actually working. We therefore decided not to act on this issue at this time.

Suggested Areas for Future Work

For future committees, we suggest the following areas of work:

Follow up on the white paper to ensure that it is distributed appropriately across the University, and monitor conditions in the four areas it covers.

Monitor the reorganization at Dworak-Peck to ensure it follows transparent, clearly defined criteria in terms of part-time faculty appointments and non-renewal of appointments.

Propose an amendment to faculty handbook language that currently states, "Part-time appointments are generally to be avoided." The Committee suggests that this language could better acknowledge the valuable role of part-time faculty at the University.

Review titles of part-time faculty, and determine a way to classify and identify different constituencies of part-time faculty (e.g., part-time faculty who wish to become full-time faculty, part-time faculty who do not wish to become full-time faculty, long-term part-time faculty). Titles have implications for promotion and professional status, both internal and external.

Conclusion

Given that service requirements are not typical in part-time faculty contracts, we are grateful to the part-time faculty on the committee, whose service demonstrates their dedication to the University and its continued improvement. We are encouraged by the strides the University has made in regards to part-time faculty, and the Committee looks forward to continuing to monitor part-time faculty affairs and to recommend policy to the Senate that will better allow these faculty to benefit the University and the constituents it serves.

Special thanks to Connie Roque for arranging conference room space and video conferencing setup. Thanks also to Rebecca Lonergan, our Executive Board liaison, for her guidance and championship of the committee's work.

Co-Chairs

Elisa Warford
Patricia Libby (Fall semester)

Committee Members

Linda Hoffman, Rossier School of Education
Jessi Johnson, Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences
Julianna Kirschner, Annenberg School of Communication
Derrick Kranke, Dworak-Peck School of Social Work
Michelle Lee, Keck School of Medicine
Jessica Maxfield, Thornton School of Music
Joe Nihom, Price School of Public Policy
Larry Pryor, Annenberg School of Communication
Tyson Roberts, Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences
Daniela Schmid, Ostrow School of Dentistry
Ashley York, School of Cinematic Arts (Fall semester)

Rebecca Lonergan, Gould School of Law, Executive Board Liaison
Myka Winder, Occupational Therapy, RTPC Liaison
T.J. McCarthy, Price School of Public Policy, RTPC Liaison
Randy Beatty, Marshall School of Business, T/TT Liaison
Sharon Cermak, School of Occupational Therapy, T/TT Liaison

Appendix: Policy Document on Part-Time Faculty Course Loads

Faculty Teaching Less Than Full Time

All those asked to teach less than full-time, whether adjunct, part-time faculty, or volunteers should have such an assignment “because of special expertise” (Handbook 4-B(4)) and provide expertise in an area of specialty that is needed within a program, or bring a unique set of experiences or stature that adds breadth of perspective to the curriculum and student experience.

Exceptions to this policy are: (1) one-time emergency, to meet an unforeseen need, for not more than one year; (2) short-term appointment of a recent USC Ph.D. to provide teaching experience; (3) retired USC faculty recalled to duty; (4) dual career situations, where the appointment aids in the recruitment or retention of a USC full-time faculty member; (5) full-time USC staff employee (who retains staff status but is entered into faculty records with a concurrent academic title, by agreement of the employing unit.)

Faculty teaching less than full time may be categorized as adjunct faculty, part-time faculty, or volunteer faculty as defined below. The individual’s status must be accurately entered in Workday at the time of appointment.

Adjunct Faculty

The “Adjunct Faculty” appointment is reserved for faculty who have “a primary profession, or career elsewhere” (Faculty Handbook 4-B(2)) that amounts to a “full-time position or career” (Faculty Handbook 4-B(4)) with health and other benefits outside the university.

Adjunct faculty typically teach only one course a year in their area of specialty. If it will not interfere with the demands of their outside full-time employment, teaching one course per semester in their area of specialty can be approved by the dean. Teaching by adjuncts beyond one course per semester requires advance provost approval.

Because of the range of experience and stature of Adjunct Faculty and their unique motivations for teaching part time, their compensation may vary based on individual negotiations at the time of appointment. Performance-based merit pay increases should be provided periodically.

Appropriate titles include “Adjunct Lecturer” and “Adjunct Professor of <discipline>”, or “Adjunct Assistant” or “Adjunct Associate” Professor. (Handbook 4-B(2)) Exceptions to titles require Provost approval under Faculty Handbook 4-A.

Part-time Faculty

The “Part-time Faculty” appointment is reserved for those, teaching less than full-time, who do not meet the requirement set out above on having a primary position elsewhere.

Part-time faculty should receive performance-based merit pay increases annually. Each school should have well-defined promotion paths for part-time faculty who demonstrate exemplary performance and high levels of engagement for a substantial length of time.

Part-time faculty who regularly and frequently teach courses for which there is stable demand, and who have shown exemplary performance and professional engagement for a length of time should be considered for annual contracts and multi-year contracts.

The appropriate title is “Lecturer (part-time).” Exceptions to titles require Provost approval under Faculty Handbook 4-A.

Volunteer Faculty

This type of appointment is intended for faculty who volunteer their services. Handbook 4-B(2). They are not to be the instructor of record, but may serve in a training capacity at USC, either co-teaching a course, or serving as a specialist who trains students on a particular area of practice. These positions should only be available to faculty who have well-compensated, full-time employment outside the university.

Volunteer faculty understand that other part-time faculty are typically paid for their service to the university, but see their volunteer service as a contribution to the field provided as part of their ethical, legal, or professional guidelines (e.g., pro bono work). Under the law, they cannot be paid an honorarium or other compensation, as that is inconsistent with volunteer status.

Reporting Requirement

Each dean must:

1. Certify to the Provost in the annual faculty salary proposal that all less than full-time teaching faculty are accurately categorized in Workday according to the definitions in this document.
2. After the 3rd week of each semester, submit to the VPFA office a list of all instructors of record who are less than full-time showing: name, number of semesters teaching at USC, and either a brief explanation of the “special expertise,” or an indication of exception (1) – (5), or a notation SPECIAL NEED. Since these “special need” cases are not in compliance with the Faculty Handbook the dean will be asked to submit a memo to the Provost justifying the need and explaining the plan to phase out all such cases.