

# Part-Time Faculty Affairs Committee

Year End Report, 2019-2020

## Committee 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.

Specific Charge for 2019-2020 Academic Year:

1. Identifying the different types, titles, workload profiles, and needs of Part-Time faculty across the schools.
2. If possible, determining where paths for promotion and/or merit-based salary increases exist and where they don't, as well as the criteria for such promotion paths and salary adjustments.

## 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. By consensus of the committee members, this year we held all our meetings on the Zoom video conferencing platform. This arrangement seemed the most equitable for committee members for whom the extra commute to campus was inconvenient or impossible, and it allowed us to continue our work without disruption after the campus closure.

Elisa Warford attended the Fall and Spring Senate retreats.

Elisa Warford and Julianna Kirschner alternated as liaisons 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.

## Compensation and Wage Issues

This year the committee worked on compensation, contract, and wage issues. In February 2020, the committee co-chairs met with Felicia Washington, Senior VP for Human Resources, and Dawn Kennedy from the General Counsel's office. The following topics were discussed:

- Barriers to gathering wage and employment information across the university; difficulty of inconsistent titles and contracts

- Timekeeping for non-exempt faculty. According to the SVP, non-exempt faculty should be completing their own time sheets and should be entering hours contemporaneously. Timesheets should accurately reflect time worked.
- Reports from part-time faculty about problems that arise when hours faculty need to perform their jobs exceed the hourly limit in the contract.
- Lack of clarity around service hours and compensation.

On many of these issues, the vulnerability of the part-time faculty was addressed: for example, they may be reluctant to report additional hours worked, or they may feel unable to refuse to perform “voluntary” service work, out of fear that they will not be rehired.

A follow-up meeting was scheduled with the Senior VP and Ms. Kennedy, but this was canceled due to the urgent concerns presented by the coronavirus epidemic. We look forward to returning to these issues in the 2020-2021 academic year.

### Handbook Language

The committee discussed at length potential revisions to language in the Faculty Handbook pertaining to part-time faculty. We sought to revise language that we felt was unnecessarily derogatory toward part-time faculty, such as the clause, “Part-time appointments are generally to be avoided” 4B-4(a), and confusing language regarding part-time faculty titles and promotion, such as that found in section 4-B (2)(f).

Our work on this issue also was delayed due to the coronavirus. We look forward to returning to this discussion next year as part of a comprehensive analysis of the roles of part-time faculty at the university.

### COVID-19 Issues Related to the Part-Time Faculty

When the university transitioned to online courses in March 2020 due to the coronavirus epidemic, the focus of the committee pivoted from the issues described above to the urgent concerns faced by many part-time faculty as a result of the pandemic. During the remainder of the academic year, the committee worked to advise the Executive Board and administration on practices and policies related to part-time faculty. This advisement took the form of two memos sent to the Executive Board.

#### **Memo 1: Part-Time Faculty Compensation for Online Course Delivery**

The committee sent a memo to the Academic Senate Executive Board on March 11, 2020. The memo discussed the impact of making the transition into online on part-time faculty. The extra work needed to make this shift was not covered by part-time faculty contracts. The committee asked the Senate to support overtime compensation for part-time faculty for current and future work related to this transition.

The Executive Board forwarded the committee’s memo to the Provost, who sent a memo dated March 19, 2020, to the Deans requiring this compensation. As of this writing, according to anecdotal reporting, it appears that not all academic units have initiated this compensation. We continue to monitor whether this policy is being implemented in the academic units.

The memo is appended to this report.

## **Memo 2: Part-Time Faculty Recommendations for Academic Year 2020-2021**

The committee sent a second memo to the Academic Senate Executive Board on April 27, 2020. The memo focused on the impact of COVID-19 on part-time faculty and made recommendations for ways the university can support part-time faculty. The recommendations include guidance on contracts, teaching evaluation, equipment, and unemployment insurance.

The Executive Board forwarded this memo to the Provost on April 30, 2020. The memo is appended to this report.

### **Recommendations for Future Work**

The coronavirus pandemic has already radically disrupted higher education and will continue to challenge the university. The university should not use this crisis as an excuse to exploit or marginalize vulnerable PT faculty but rather as an opportunity to draw on their considerable expertise and talents in a mutually beneficial relationship. PT faculty issues are intertwined with those of all faculty tracks, and therefore we hope to work with the Senate next year on a holistic review of the faculty composition: the roles and values each track can offer the university; titles and promotion paths; and handbook language. We also recommend that next year's committee continue to work on the wage and compensation issues that were begun this year. We also suggest that the committee continue to monitor COVID-related issues concerning part-time faculty.

In closing, we want to recognize the faithful service of the committee members to the university. Especially during this period of extraordinary disruption to all of our personal and professional lives, their service on this committee has demonstrated their continued commitment to the university and their unwavering dedication to their students. We're grateful for their ideas, their expertise, and their esprit de corps.

### **Co-Chairs**

Julianna Kirschner, Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism  
Elisa Warford, Engineering Writing Program, Viterbi School of Engineering

### **Committee Members**

Reza Bavafa, Marshall School of Business  
Renee Campbell, Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work  
Mina Chow, School of Architecture  
Linda Hoffman, Rossier School of Education  
Patricia Libby, Gould School of Law  
Jie Lie, Keck School of Medicine of USC  
Navid Pour-Ghasemi, Keck School of Medicine of USC  
Tyson Roberts, Dornsife College (Fall semester)  
Daniela Schmid, Ostrow School of Dentistry  
Char Scott, Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work  
Aaron Settipane, Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism  
Ian Spatz, Sol Price School of Public Policy

Daniel Pecchenino (EB Liaison), Dornsife College  
T.J. McCarthy (RTPC Liaison), Sol Price School of Public Policy  
Amy Cannon (RTPC Liaison), Dornsife College  
Thomas Cummings (TTTFAC Liaison), Marshall School of Business  
Velina Hasu Houston (TTTFAC Liaison), School of Dramatic Arts

## Appendix A

To: Executive Board, Academic Senate  
From: Part-Time Committee on Faculty Affairs  
Elisa Warford and Julianna Kirschner, Co-Chairs  
Date: March 11, 2020  
Re: PT faculty compensation for online course delivery

The Provost's memos dated March 6, 2020 and March 10, 2020, directing that classes be moved online through March 29, 2020, have required many faculty members to spend extra time to prepare for the shift. Faculty may be spending time attending training sessions or otherwise learning how to use the platforms, developing new course materials and documentation, and helping students adjust to the new platforms. As we shift our courses to online platforms, most faculty will be required to continue to spend additional time on this effort. For some faculty, this effort might be mostly upfront, decreasing once they have set up the appropriate online platforms and procedures. For other faculty, the effort may be ongoing and substantial, as their courses may require multiple platforms and procedures for a variety of class activities and assignments.

For full-time and exempt faculty, this extra effort can reasonably be expected to fall under the job duties stipulated in their contracts. However, this may not be the case for part-time, non-exempt faculty. The PTFAC is concerned that this effort has already required and may continue to require part-time faculty to work more than the number of hours allotted in their contracts for teaching duties.

Given the rapid spread of COVID-19 throughout the state of California, the committee recognizes the importance of testing online course delivery and delivering online courses for a longer duration. The part-time faculty are dedicated to helping their students through this difficult crisis. But we believe they should be compensated for the additional work they may be required to perform that exceeds the hours stipulated in their contracts.

The committee therefore asks the Senate to support overtime compensation for part-time faculty for any additional work they have already performed and future work they may be required to perform to move their classes to online platforms.

## Appendix B

To: Executive Board, Academic Senate  
From: Part-Time Faculty Affairs Committee  
Elisa Warford and Julianna Kirschner, Co-Chairs  
Date: April 27, 2020  
Re: Part-time faculty recommendations for academic year 2020-21

The part-time faculty at USC have demonstrated their continuing commitment to our students and the University by rapidly moving classes online and working many additional hours to ensure that students continue to receive a high-quality education and support during this difficult time. The Part-Time Faculty Affairs Committee (PTFAC) appreciates the support the Executive Board has shown to ensure that the part-time faculty are compensated for the additional work they have been asked to perform.

As the ongoing coronavirus pandemic continues to disrupt higher education everywhere, putting budgets, course offerings, and course modalities for the upcoming academic year under profound uncertainty, the PTFAC would like to emphasize the value to the university of the part-time faculty. The part-time faculty allow the university to respond flexibly to changing enrollments and to supplement its full-time faculty with faculty who have valuable professional and scholarly expertise. Given the current hiring pause, current part-time faculty stand ready to staff courses that might have otherwise been taught by new full-time hires. Part-time faculty may also be called to teach courses for full-time faculty who cannot safely teach in the classroom due to the health risks involved. For large classes that cannot be offered safely on campus, students may benefit from smaller online sections, some of which could be staffed by part-time faculty. Many part-time faculty also have experience teaching online courses. Their expertise could be used to assist other faculty teaching online. In these and other ways during this uncertain period, part-time faculty can continue to be of great service to the university and its students.

All tracks of faculty need support during these difficult times. However, many of the difficulties facing faculty are amplified for part-time faculty, who face even higher job insecurity than they normally do and possibly less access to university support services. The committee, therefore, recommends the following ways the university can support part-time faculty so that they can continue to benefit the university to the fullest extent possible.

- Course loads for part-time faculty should be announced and contracts delivered as soon as practicable to allow part-time faculty to prepare for courses, especially if the courses will be taught online for the first time. This will allow faculty to develop high-quality courses for our students, benefiting both the students and the university. Contracts and paychecks should be delivered without delay. On the other hand, if course loads of part-time faculty members are reduced, it is especially important that the faculty be informed as soon as possible.
- If courses normally taught on campus are offered online for the first time, part-time faculty contracts should allot time to prepare for the online conversion. Part-time faculty should be compensated for time for training on online platforms and online pedagogy.
- Faculty should be allowed whenever possible to supplement their income by teaching at other institutions. We remind the administration that USC faculty can be approved to teach at other institutions under certain circumstances, such as “responding to a request from a peer institution,

after identifying the special or emergency needs that occasion their request” (Faculty Handbook 4-I (4) (b)). If faculty can show that the courses they are offered do not “largely duplicate a course in the USC curriculum” (Faculty Handbook 4-I (4) (b)), we recommend that they be allowed every reasonable opportunity to teach elsewhere. This will also allow USC to retain top faculty.

- Student learning experience surveys or other forms of teaching evaluation from the Spring 2020 semester should not negatively affect decisions regarding reassignment of part-time faculty to future classes. Likewise, course evaluations from the Spring 2020 semester should not negatively affect decisions regarding future merit reviews or promotions. Faculty should have the opportunity to learn from feedback they obtain without fear of penalty.
- Zoom lectures or other online course materials developed by part-time faculty should not be archived for the purpose of offering the course without rehiring the faculty or adequately compensating them for the materials.
- Part-time faculty should be offered use of equipment needed for delivering courses online and should be included in any reimbursement program offered by the academic units to offset broadband access costs.
- Academic units should be aware of their part-time faculty’s current outside employment status and should ensure their faculty’s course loads are not limited based on incorrect data. It is likely that the outside employment conditions for many faculty will change during this period, which would change the maximum number of units they are allowed to teach each semester.
- The university should pledge not to contest unemployment insurance claims filed by part-time faculty for the Summer and Fall 2020 semesters.

Given these types of support, the part-time faculty can play a crucial role in helping the university continue to offer its students a world-class education during these uncertain times. In addition to the value these faculty represent, the university has an ethical duty to meet them with humanity and care. We fully expect USC to rise to the occasion.