

**WHITE PAPER ON EXEMPLARY PRACTICES AND POLICIES  
RELATING TO  
NON-TENURE-TRACK FACULTY\***

**SUBMITTED TO THE ACADEMIC SENATE EXECUTIVE BOARD**

**by the**

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON NON-TENURE-TRACK FACULTY AFFAIRS**

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\* This report identifies practices and guidelines at some USC schools or other universities that are not current USC general practice or policy but that, in the view of the Committee, should be drawn to the attention of other USC schools, the University administration, and the Academic Senate.

# I. INTRODUCTION

## A. Background

As defined in a motion unanimously approved by the USC Academic Senate in the 2007/2008 academic year, the mission of the Committee on Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Affairs (CNTTFA) is

To monitor, evaluate, advocate, and make recommendations to the Executive Board of the Academic Senate regarding: the working environment; conditions of employment; long term security; compensation; benefits eligibility; opportunities for participation in governance; opportunities for professional advancement; titling nomenclature; status; participation in the academic life of the university, and other matters of concern to the non-tenure-track faculty.

In the 2008-2009 academic year the principal task of the Committee on Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Affairs was to develop an inventory of exemplary practices and policies relating to Non-Tenure-Track (NTT) faculty. The inventory, on which this White Paper is based, is intended to serve as a resource for faculty and administrators involved in the review and formulation of NTTF-related policies, guidelines and procedures in the University and in their respective units, in keeping with the requirement stipulated in the USC Faculty Handbook that schools formulate such policies and submit them for review by the Academic Senate Executive Board and approval by the Provost. Having a common reference point will enable different units on campus to compare the practices of their own schools with those of others, identify proven options, and make more informed decisions.

This report identifies practices and guidelines at some USC schools or other universities that are not current USC general practice or policy but that, in the view of the Committee, should be drawn to the attention of other USC schools, the University administration, and the Academic Senate. At USC, practices vary widely among schools, while policy requires the approval of the President or Provost. The sharing of information is encouraged and it is hoped that the NTTF Policy Inventory and this White Paper, both of which will be updated as appropriate, will become valuable resources.

## B. Research

A combination of primary and secondary research served as a basis for the development of the criteria to be utilized in distinguishing “exemplary” practices from others, and in selecting those policies:

1. Primary:
  - a. Development of an inventory of the NTTF faculty-related policies of all USC academic units compiled by means of interviews with, and or completion of questionnaires by, appropriate administrative staff.
  - b. In-depth discussions among the committee membership, which consists of NTT faculty from all USC academic units.
2. Secondary research sources included:
  - a. The practices of other major universities (Stanford, Cornell, Carnegie Mellon, and the University of Texas at Austin);
  - b. The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) 2006 Contingent Faculty Index (which reviews and assesses national trends in hiring of full-time faculty off the tenure track),
  - c. A 2001 report on contingent faculty compiled by the American Association of Universities (AAU).
  - d. A 2002 Academic Senate “White Paper on Non-Tenure-Track Faculty.”

### **C. Core Issues**

The research revealed that the most important issues pertaining to NTT fall into five interrelated categories:

1. Workload profile
2. Annual merit review
3. Periodic evaluation, promotion, non-reappointment, and contract
4. Professional development
5. Participation in governance

### **D. Criteria**

The research also indicated that criteria to be utilized in distinguishing “exemplary” practices, procedures and policies from others should include:

1. Substance, i.e. content that effectively addresses one of the five issues listed above.
2. Clarity, i.e. adequate written detail and explanation.
3. Fairness and consistency, i.e. an indication that the policy can be applied fairly and consistently in multiple, similar situations.
4. Rationale, i.e. the reasoning behind the policy is logical and relevant.
5. Implementation, i.e. the extent to which the practice or policy is actually utilized in the unit.

## **II. EXEMPLARY PRACTICES AND POLICIES**

### **OVERARCHING QUALITIES**

The CNTTFA identified two factors that can be seen as ideally applying across the board to NTT Exemplary Practices and Policies:

1. Recognition of the administrative flexibility required by the varying needs of the many schools and departments in the University.
2. Recognition of the interconnected and interdependent nature of the five Core Issues listed above, so that they are seen collectively as an interdependent whole (or system) that, in its entirety, governs the relationship between the NTT faculty, the academic units, and the University.

### **WORKLOAD PROFILES**

#### **1. USC Inventory**

- a. The Schools of Law, Business, and Social Work have clear definitions of service that include four levels: (1) school; (2) university; (3) professional; and (4) public, community and society.
- b. The School of Social Work has clear definitions of both teaching and research. Regarding teaching, Social Work describes the role of faculty in student advisement, field placements, and other out-of-classroom teaching obligations.
- c. The School of Cinematic Arts utilizes a three-component profile: Teaching, Professional Development/Creative Work, and Service. These components, with varying percentages, apply to TT and NTT faculty.
- d. The Schools of Business and Education apply flexibility when developing the Workload Profiles of NTT. Varying levels of Service and Scholarship (i.e. scholarship of discovery, application, teaching, and/or integration) can be negotiated and substituted for each other.<sup>1</sup>
- e. The Schools of Journalism, Social Work and Education provide teaching release for faculty involved in significant, teaching-related, out-of-classroom activities.

#### **Secondary Source Input**

- a. A memo from the Provost dated July, 24, 2006, on Part-time Non-tenure Track Instructional Faculty, based on a report of the Senate NTT committee, said “We have extended NTT faculty eligibility for university prizes, the Zumberge Research Innovation Fund, and appointment as Center for Excellence in Teaching faculty fellows.”
- b. An invitation to apply for research fellowships, distributed to all faculty by Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs Martin Levine on January 23, 2009, included the following statement: “USC faculty members from all ranks, both tenure-track and non-tenure-track, are eligible to apply. Successful proposals are those that describe a concrete, well-defined set of activities that promote research development at USC.”

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this document the term “Scholarship” refers to scholarship of discovery, application, teaching, and/or integration, as defined in Boyer, E. L. *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professorate*; San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1990. (E.L. Boyer was president of The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.)

- c. The 2001 AAU report on contingent faculty recommends that Workload Profiles should be made public and serve as the bases for annual and merit reviews, renewal, promotion, development, etc.
- d. The same AAU report recommends the adoption of clear, consistent, definitions of “standard courses.”

## **2. Workload Profile: Exemplary Practices and Policies**

- a. Schools and units are encouraged to comply with the Provost’s memo of July, 24, 2006, on Part-time Non-tenure Track Instructional Faculty, and the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs’ message distributed on January 23, 2009.
- b. Preference for full-time (versus part time or adjunct) appointment, in accordance with University policy and the past recommendations of the Senate Committee on Non Tenure Track Faculty Affairs.
- c. Clear, concise definitions for teaching, scholarship (as previously defined), professional development, and service, as appropriate for each unit and positions within the unit. While definitions may vary, specific descriptions of each component of the profile can be established with NTTF participation, published, and implemented.
- d. Individual Workload Profiles, using the established definitions, developed by the unit after consultation with the affected faculty member or members.
- e. Use of individual Workload Profiles, and the definitions on which they are based, as points of reference for annual and merit reviews, contract terms, contract renewal, promotion, development, etc.
- f. Establishment and maintenance, to the extent reasonable, of parity and transparency vis-à-vis the Workload Profiles of faculty within specific ranks in each unit.
- g. Application of flexibility, wherever appropriate and possible, in assigning percentages to the components of Workload Profiles, recognizing that there will be variances in the scholarship, teaching, service, and professional development loads of faculty within similar ranks. (In adherence to the general guidelines outlining professional responsibilities of faculty members in the University Handbook Section 3-B (2).)
- h. With regard to the teaching element of Workload Profiles, clear definition of a “standard course,” based on units, enrollment, and/or contact hours, along with a maximum teaching load (for purposes of fairness and consistency in Workload Profiles).

For example, in an academic unit where the definition of a “standard course” includes three units and four contact hours per course, Workload Profiles for NTT faculty operating under nine-month contracts might include a maximum of three courses per term (for a total of six courses within nine months); Workload Profiles for those operating under twelve-month contracts might include a maximum of eight courses. (It must be noted that these examples refer to maximum course loads only. The teaching expectation is defined by the school and some units may require different, i.e. smaller, workloads.)

Voluntary teaching “Overloads” agreed to by the instructor and academic unit would not be affected by such a policy. Such arrangements are also subject to special approvals by school deans and the Provost, as noted in the University Handbook Section 3-D (2).

- i. With regard to the teaching element of Workload Profiles, recognition of situations and/or responsibilities that may fall outside the common classroom teaching scenario, i.e. very large class size, online courses with significant numbers of students, the variations in workload associated with four-unit versus two-unit courses, etc. For example, two large online courses may equate to three regular courses taught in person.

- j. With regard to the teaching element of Workload Profiles, recognition of out-of-classroom activities and/or situations such as advising large numbers of students, supervising large numbers of students in internships and/or field assignments, mentoring students and/or faculty, etc., whether that recognition takes the form of compensation or the provision of course release.
- k. With regard to scholarship (as previously defined), professional, and/or creative activities commonly conducted by NTTF and designated by the unit as part of the responsibilities of NTTF, recognition in Workload Profiles of the actual scope and substance of such activities as a separate and distinct category, apart from Teaching, Service, etc.

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**1. USC Inventory**

- a. The Schools of Business and Social Work utilize a systematic, comprehensive and regular process of review of non-tenure-track faculty. Each year non-tenure-track faculty complete a detailed annual review form that assesses their performance relative to clear criteria that were developed by faculty, with the full and equal participation of NTT faculty. These criteria are shared with faculty well before the review process, simultaneous with the explanation of their Workload Profile. These schools employ a peer review process through which one or more non-tenure-track faculty members reviews each file to ensure that the process includes input from people with comparable experience.
- b. The Schools of Business and Social Work utilize several methods to evaluate teaching, including peer observation, classroom assessment, review of class materials, and professional development, as well as teaching evaluations. (Concern has been raised by non-tenure-track faculty that they are often measured on very limited criteria such as student evaluations only, when other valid measures are available.)
- c. The Schools of Business and Social Work provides specific feedback to NTT faculty each year as part of its merit review process, including guidance regarding progress toward promotion. (The School of Social Work also has a Professional Development Committee that provides feedback and guidance to each non-tenure-track faculty member.)

**2. Annual Merit Review: Exemplary Practices and Policies**

- a. A consistent, comprehensive, and systematic evaluation process for NTT faculty, based on written criteria; process and criteria developed with the full participation of NTT and TT faculty.
- b. Review criteria that assess the individual's performance relative to the specifics of his/her Workload Profile.
- c. Allocation of merit pay increases based on instructors' performance relative to annual merit review criteria.
- d. Comprehensive, consistent, yet individually relevant measures applied to the evaluation of teaching, scholarship, professional development and service.
- e. Use of the annual review process as a mentoring opportunity, including discussion and guidance regarding future prospects, i.e. retention, promotion, and/or non-renewal.
- f. With regard to scholarly (as previously defined), professional, and/or creative activities commonly conducted by NTTF and designated by the unit as part of the responsibilities of NTTF, distinct recognition of such activities as a separate category in Annual and Merit Reviews, rather than potentially diminishing these contributions by categorizing them as either Teaching or Service.
- g. Inclusion in the annual merit review process of peer review by NTTF colleagues.

## **PERIODIC EVALUATION, PROMOTION, NON-REAPPOINTMENT, AND CONTRACT**

### **USC Inventory**

- a. The School of Education utilizes clear promotion standards that have been thoroughly communicated to faculty, as well as a three-level structure through which non-tenure-track faculty are actively progressing. Social Work also has exemplary criteria for promotion of non-tenure-track faculty.
- b. The School of Cinematic Arts requires two years of experience with the school for appointment as a Lecturer; three years as a Lecturer to be eligible for promotion to Senior Lecturer; and six total years as Lecturer/Senior Lecturer to be eligible for promotion to Master Lecturer.
- c. The School of Journalism requires non-tenure-track candidates for promotion to compile a comprehensive dossier demonstrating their accomplishments in their current positions and potential for success in the next level position. NTTF promotions are voted upon by the entire faculty, with the Director of the unit, and the Dean of the school, determining their ultimate disposition.
- d. The School of Business employs a very clear promotion track with varying criteria for advancing levels.
- e. With regard to non-renewal, the School of Business has a detailed policy that includes review by a Committee on Clinical Faculty.

### **Secondary Source Input**

- a. The Provost's Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Initiative of February 3, 2006, "asked schools that do not have promotion tracks for NTT faculty to establish them and to evaluate NTT faculty for such promotions on a schedule they establish."
- b. The aforementioned 2001 AAU report on non-tenure-track faculty recommends, and such peer institutions as Stanford, Cornell, and University of Texas offer additional compensation and longer-term contracts to non-tenure-track faculty who are promoted.

## **2. Periodic Evaluation, Promotion, Non-Reappointment, and Contract: Exemplary Practices and Policies**

- a. Schools and units are encouraged to comply with the Provost's Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Initiative of February 3, 2006.
- b. A clear, systematic, written, and published process for periodic evaluation, promotion, contract renewal, or non-reappointment, with written criteria directly reflecting the Workload Profile and annual review process. Factors to be addressed in the process include:
  - The scheduling of merit reviews, i.e. exactly when and how often they will take place. (At a minimum such reviews should take place prior to the renewal of a multi-year contract.)
  - The criteria by which each element of an instructor's Workload Profile will be evaluated.
  - The metrics to be applied to those criteria.
  - Possible outcomes of the review (reappointment, non-reappointment, promotion, postponement of consideration for promotion, multi-year contract, etc.).
  - The methodology and/or metrics applied to (i.e. select) each outcome.
- c. A three-level system for rank and title designations (i.e. Assistant, Associate, Full) that embodies sufficient flexibility to make it adaptable to the variety of rank and/or title designations currently given to NTT.
- d. A clear timeframe and three-level promotion progression that specifies the required minimum length of time in the school and in each level. For movement from Level I to Level II a 3 year to 6 year window may be

appropriate. For movement from Level II to Level III an additional 3 year to 6 year window may be appropriate.

- e. Recognition that merit, rather than time in rank, should be the determining factor in the promotion process.
- f. Explanation in criteria for promotion of the role to played in the promotion decision-making process by prior academic and/or professional experience.
- g. Granting of an increase in pay in recognition of promotion from one rank to the next (while allowing flexibility necessitated by the school's budgetary situation).
- h. A clearly defined, rigorous promotion review process that includes preparation of a comprehensive dossier demonstrating the candidate's accomplishments based on the Workload Profiles of both the current and next position; dossier reviewed by all departmental faculty at or above the rank being sought by the candidate for promotion, as well as cross-departmental subcommittees, as may be appropriate; a vote by all faculty at or above the rank being sought determines a recommendation on whether or not to advance the promotion decision to the Dean or Director of the academic unit for final disposition.
- i. Recognition of promotion from one rank to the next by the granting of a multi-year contract (as distinct from a series of individual, rolling, one year contracts); recognition in such contracts of the academic unit's need to maintain staffing flexibility in times of financial difficulty. For promotion from Level I to Level II a three year contract may be appropriate. For promotion from Level II to Level III a five year contract may be appropriate.
- j. With regard to scholarly (as previously defined), professional, and/or creative activities commonly conducted by NTTF, distinct recognition of such activities in the promotion and contract renewal process, in direct reflection of Workload Profiles, rather than potentially diminishing these contributions by categorizing them as either Teaching or Service.
- k. Within the context of the need to maintain the privacy of any affected party, as well as the contract employee nature of non-tenure-track appointments, clear, written, published policies and procedures for the performance-related non-reappointment of NTT faculty, including (but not limited to): the criteria by which the individual's performance relative to each element of his/her Workload Profile will be evaluated, the metrics to be applied to those criteria, prior merit reviews, etc; and review of the matter by a faculty committee that includes in its membership a representative number of non-tenure-track faculty.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### 1. USC Inventory

- a. The School of Social Work has a professional development committee that works to assist non-tenure-track faculty in becoming oriented to the university, the annual review process, and the promotion process.
- b. The School of Education provides the same level of support for non-tenure-track and tenure track faculty in terms of professional development funds.
- c. The Schools of Business, Law and Pharmacy have all awarded paid, 6-month sabbaticals to non-tenure-track faculty members active in scholarship and/or teaching-related work.

### Secondary Source Input

- a. The University Handbook guarantees that non-tenure-track faculty are entitled to share equally in professional development benefits and makes no distinction between tenured and non-tenure-track faculty in matters such as applying for sabbatical leaves. See Sections 4-C(2) and 3-E(2) of the Handbook.
- b. Various peer institutions, such as Stanford, UCLA, and Cornell, offer professional development leaves for non-tenure-track faculty after they have been with the institution for approximately 6 years. During leaves faculty can work on projects related to the scholarship of teaching, create new programs, re-immense themselves in professional practice, or conduct other scholarly activity depending on their field.
- c. While leaves times vary by institution, they are typically a quarter/semester in duration. Some schools also offer unpaid leaves of up to a year with guaranteed employment upon return, for faculty who want to renew themselves professionally.

### 2. Professional Development: Exemplary Practices and Policies

- a. Schools and units are encouraged to comply with the Faculty Handbook as it applies to NTTF professional development and other NTTF-related matters.
- b. Comprehensive, written processes designed to meet the need for non-tenure-track faculty to continually enhance their expertise relating to teaching, service, and scholarship (as previously defined).
- c. Mentoring and other faculty development activities for non-tenure-track faculty at the department, school and university level.
- d. Availability of professional development funds for non-tenure-track faculty to attend conferences and be involved in professional activities.
- e. Consideration of professional development leaves, for scholarly (as previously defined), creative, and/or professional development activities, the duration of which might be a minimum of one month up to a maximum of one semester. Such leaves could be available every five years to non-tenure-track faculty who have reached the associate level.

Traditionally, such leaves (also known as sabbaticals) involve freedom from teaching duties to concentrate on scholarship duties, and so generally have been available for those who have both teaching and scholarship assignments. Given that many NTTF are involved in both teaching and substantial scholarship (as previously defined), it is possible that scholarship related to pedagogy, curriculum development, etc., may qualify. Under current budgetary practices, leaves for non-tenure-track faculty are school-paid. Funding for such leaves by the Provost, as is done for tenured and tenure track faculty, is a topic worthy of consideration.

## **PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNANCE**

### **1. USC Inventory**

- a. A number of USC academic units, including Architecture, Social Work, Cinema, Education, and Computer Science, have recently undergone changes in their governance and now fully include non-tenure-track faculty
- b. The School of Education specifies that NTT faculty participate in its Faculty Council, and rotates the chair of the Faculty Council among non-tenure-track and tenure track faculty on an equal basis. Non-tenure-track faculty participate in all decisions (other than those relating to the granting of tenure), and provide input on the merit reviews of NTT and tenure track faculty alike.
- c. The School of Business, the Dean of which was until recently a member of the NTT faculty, sends both NTT and tenured faculty representatives to the Academic Senate, and includes NTT faculty on its Faculty Council.
- d. The Law School and Medical School have long had NTT on their elected faculty bodies.
- e. NTT have been nominated and run for the position of Academic Senate President, and have been elected and served as Senate officer and Executive Board member, as well as chair of school elected faculty council.

### **Secondary Source Input**

- a. The University Handbook explicitly calls for refers to such participation in Sections 2(B)(1) and 4(C)(2), among others.
- b. The Provost's Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Initiative of February 3, 2006, said, "We have already increased NTT faculty participation in a wide range of University committees. I join in the Academic Senate's call to increase the participation of NTT colleagues in faculty councils and other school and departmental bodies."

### **2. Participation in Governance: Exemplary Practices and Policies**

- a. Schools and units are encouraged to comply with the Faculty Handbook as it applies to NTT participation in governance and all other NTT-related matters, as well as the Provost's Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Initiative of February 3, 2006
- b. Full participation by NTT faculty in governance and administrative processes, with the sole exception of tenure decisions.
- c. Encouragement of NTT faculty to run for positions representing their units in the Academic Senate and in their units' Faculty Councils, and eligibility for appointment to all administrative task forces and committees. In principal the NTT/Tenure Track make-up of a unit's Faculty Council should reflect the NTT/Tenure Track makeup of its full time faculty

**2008 - 2009 ACADEMIC SENATE COMMITTEE ON  
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