

2015-16 Committee on Part-Time Faculty Affairs

Year-end Report and Recommendations

May 26, 2016

Report

This Committee was created by the Academic Senate at the beginning of the 2015-16 academic year, with the following Charter :

The Committee on Part-Time Faculty 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.

Membership will include primarily part-time non-tenure track faculty, as well as the co-chair of the CNTTFA, and tenure-track faculty.

The Committee's first year can be described as a combination of discovery, frustration, focus change, interim reports, and then some significant first steps toward improving conditions for USC's part-time faculty.

Discovery. From the outset of our work this year, we have seen significant differences in the types of part-time faculty across the USC system (e.g., having or not having a full-time job elsewhere) and in how they are regarded and treated in the various schools. We were also informed by a look at the recent history of the Senate NTT Committee's work on issues relating generally to the non-tenure-track faculty. The process leading to that Committee's 2009 and 2012 White Papers, and the content and implementation of those White Papers provided other useful guideposts for our new Committee. The suggestions in a 2012 article co-authored by Ginger Clark (the 2015-16 President of the Senate) were particularly valuable as we embarked on a path toward producing a comprehensive White Paper – hopefully in the 2016-17 academic year.

From their own experiences and informal contacts with others, early in the Fall of 2015 the Committee members pooled their initial thoughts on the basic issues facing the part-time faculty. These seemed to

fall into four general categories: inclusion; support; compensation/benefits; and job security. Improvement in these four areas became an important objective for our subsequent work.

Frustration. As the next step on our path toward a comprehensive White Paper, we prepared a list of information we believed was essential for this process. This included requests for such basic facts as the number of part-time faculty at the various schools, the percentages having full-time jobs elsewhere, and the types of part-time faculty contracts being utilized. After submitting our information requests to the Senate leadership, we were advised that none of the requested information would be provided to us by the University Administration – not even data on the distribution of part-time faculty across the campus. As a result, the Committee’s information gathering would have to proceed in other ways that would be complicated by the fact that the faculty members with the relevant information are scattered across the system and, by definition, are only on campus part-time.

Focus Change. Although this information blockage was frustrating, Senate leadership urged the Committee to focus on specific, first-step recommendations on what could be accomplished this year – while not losing sight of the longer-term objectives that might be dealt with in a definitive White Paper. The Committee responded accordingly.

Interim Reports. The Committee then concentrated on developing an Interim Report (with recommendations) which was submitted to the Senate’s Executive Board (EB) on November 19, 2015. In December, the EB prepared a draft Resolutions for consideration by the Senate. Following Senate discussion of a second draft Resolution in January 2016, and in response to the EB’s request, the Committee prepared and submitted a February 23 Addendum to its Interim Report, including recommendations for the Resolution text and an annotation of the entire draft Resolution.

Significant First Steps. On March 23, the Senate (without any dissenting votes, but with four abstentions) approved a Resolution on Proposed Changes in Part-Time Faculty Policies and Practices. This Resolution incorporates many of the Committee’s recommendations and reflects compromises the Senate deemed appropriate in light of the differences among the various schools.

This Resolution is a welcome and significant first step to improve the working conditions and lives of the part-time faculty at USC. It includes recommendations dealing with all four of the key categories identified by the Committee at the outset: inclusion; support; compensation/benefits; and job security.

In an April 5 memo to the USC Faculty, the Provost said that:

“The [Part-Time] resolution reflects the University’s esteem for the work of our part-time faculty and their contribution to USC’s pursuit of excellence. The resolution seeks to align, to the extent it makes sense to do so, the employment conditions of part-time faculty with those of full-time faculty. All employment conditions of our part-time faculty must be based on the principle that they are valued members of our academic community. The resolution also reinforces the crucial role of part-time faculty in shared governance. . . .

For the items that call for action at the school level, I ask the Faculty Councils and deans to work together, with the assistance of Vice Provost Elizabeth Graddy, to take account of the unique situation in each school and to submit for my review concrete plans for implementation. As the resolution provides, there will be regular surveys to monitor the changing needs and work satisfaction of the part-time faculty. The Senate and I will collaborate to make implementation of the resolution successful.”

As all know, much more work remains to be done. And we have some recommendations for next year’s Committee. . .

Recommendations

Committee Membership

1. A substantial majority of the Committee member should be part-time faculty members. Faculty members who have recently moved from part-time to full-time status also can bring valuable insights to the Committee.
2. In deciding on the Committee size and membership, recognition should be given to the fact that part-time faculty who have other jobs are subject to the changing requirements of these other positions (e.g., new assignments or promotions) and may need to leave the Committee or reduce their time commitments.
3. To have a representative Committee, efforts should again be made to find out the actual numbers of part-time faculty members at the various schools and the percentages having full-time jobs elsewhere. The Committee membership should reasonably reflect these numbers.

Committee Leadership

1. The Committee should have Co-Chairs, at least one of whom is a part-time faculty member who does not have a full-time job elsewhere.

Priorities for 2016-17

1. Data gathering and monitoring to follow-up on the implementation of the recommendations in the March 2016 Resolution.
2. Preparation, initiation (by November 2016), completion, and analysis of the first Survey of the part-time faculty. [The 2015-16 Committee has prepared a draft set of recommendations for the Survey. Connie Roque can make this draft available to the 2016-17 Committee.]
3. Further consideration to changes (and consistency) in the job titles and classifications for part-time faculty – including possibly using the “adjunct” term to apply to all part-time faculty.
4. Follow-up consideration and action on the other recommendations made by the 2015-16 Committee in its November Interim Report and/or its February Addendum (but not incorporated

into the Senate’s March Resolution) – including those relating to compensation levels, hourly “expectations” in part-time contracts, time reporting methods, and changes in the Faculty Handbook and Senate Constitution.

5. Monitoring implementation of the Senate’s May 11, 2016, Resolution regarding Salaries and Benchmarking to track how it is being applied to part-time faculty.
6. Continued focus on the development of a comprehensive, data-rich White Paper.

Special Recognition and Appreciation . . .

. . . to Ginger Clark. As Senate President and wise counsellor, she contributed in a very important and essential way to the progress made this year in moving toward improvements in the lives and working conditions of USC’s part-time faculty.

[Note: Connie Roque can make available the Committee’s November 19, 2015, Interim Report, its February 23, 2016, Addendum to the Interim Report, and the Senate’s March 23, and May 11, 2016, Senate Resolutions.]