

**The Part-Time Faculty Affairs Committee**  
**The Future of Faculty Work Report and Proposals (July 2023)**

Defining Part-Time and Adjunct at USC

As outlined in previous committee reports, Part-Time Faculty (PTF) is a large umbrella within the USC community, including faculty designated at the university level as “part-time” as well as those designated “adjunct.” Individual schools sometimes use different terms for similar positions. In general, the assumption can be made that any faculty member without a clearly noted full-time position on either the T/TT or RTPC track would fall under the constituency of Part-Time Faculty.

Per the USC Response to AB 736, released by the Provost’s office in the spring of 2021, and [the accompanying attestation form](#) emailed out to “faculty teaching less than full-time” in the summer of 2021, adjunct faculty were defined as:

“faculty teaching less than full-time at USC, who are employed full-time in a primary profession or career elsewhere. Adjunct faculty typically *teach only one course per year* but, in exceptional cases, may teach one per semester, if approved by the dean.”

In contrast to that:

“[The term] Part-Time Faculty [is reserved for the] appointment of faculty teaching less than full-time who are not employed full time in a primary position or career elsewhere.”

When using PTF throughout this document, we are intending an all-inclusive term meaning all non-full-time faculty members, all of whom are constituents of the Part-Time Faculty Affairs Committee of the Academic Senate.

Overview

Per [Resolution 15/16-004](#) (see Appendix I), the Academic Senate has recommended as a fundamental principle regarding Part-Time Faculty at the University of Southern California:

Part-Time Faculty are an important and valued part of the university community. They contribute specialized expertise that would not otherwise be available, thereby extending the depth and flexibility of the curriculum. The decision to rely

on a Part-Time appointment to fill a particular function must rest on a sound academic ground, and cost-savings, standing alone, is not a sufficient reason to fill a particular post on a Part-Time Faculty rather than a full-time basis (44-49).

This description should remain a guiding principle in how the university as a whole and the faculty specifically think of how PTF should fit into a more intentional model of faculty work. The value of PTF stems from their particular areas of expertise that may not be covered by full-time faculty, the real-world experience they bring to the classroom, and the ability to teach unique courses based on their outside work and experience. There are many PTF (and positions for part-time work) at the university who fit this description.

However, we remain concerned about the number of times hiring choices related to PTF continue to be rooted extensively if not exclusively in cost-savings. One major element of this is when a “part-time” line is instead of a full-time one when the need is clearly established for the latter; this tends to be done in order to save money and increase flexibility. When this happens, the position is then filled by an academic who wants and continues to seek full-time work.

Furthermore, the practice of hiring multiple such faculty members and declining to retain experienced PTF in order to increase fungibility leads to precarious working conditions, sub-optimal learning and mentoring environments for students, and a dilution of the benefits of having part-time faculty in general. The short-term gain of cost-savings leads to long-term losses for the university and students. It also means that PTF are treated as mere cogs in the university machine, rather than humanely and with deserved respect.

While capable and welcome members of our faculty as individuals, they are essentially serving the role of a full-time RTPC faculty member on a part-time contract. The committee does not want to disrupt the hierarchy of faculty within USC; rather, it is the administration that does so when PTF are hired to usurp the teaching responsibilities of full-time RTPC faculty. This creates just as much of a problem as when full-time RTPC lines are created where there should be T/TT faculty.

A similar problem arises when a faculty member is in a correctly established part-time or adjunct position, but their presence is disrupted by cost-saving decisions. In the wake of the salary standards for PTF designated part-time implemented by the Provost's Office in response to California AB 736, there is notable concern that schools and departments will choose to replace experienced PTF faculty with newer, cheaper adjunct instructors in order to save money. Just as it damages the educational experience of students and

the humanity of the instructors by refusing to open full-time lines when appropriate, so too is it destructive to the fabric of the institution to let cost-cutting remove experienced and proven PTF from the university community.

Given this context, the preferred role that PTF play in the future of faculty work would at the minimum include adhering to the terms of [the Academic Senate Resolution 15/16-004](#), included here as Appendix I. Beyond the guiding principle of PTF not being used for cost savings, the resolution includes: principles of inclusion within the wider faculty body; clearer communication from departments and school administration; and structures for compensation, promotion, and merit review. (The Committee notes that the attempts to ensure the university adheres to these principles have been the driving concerns of our work for the past six years; our third proposal below is aimed at improving the ability of faculty governance to identify and respond to deficiencies around these issues.)

While the desire to reimagine the composition of the faculty assuredly leads to a call to de-emphasize the over-reliance on part-time faculty work, the university must not neglect the people who have been performing this work upon which the university has long relied. In order to center those people and to better situate PTF in the future conception of faculty composition at USC, and to improve the Academic Senate and other faculty governance bodies' ability to support the PTF, a few new policies need to be implemented. They follow here:

#### Proposal I: A One-Time Path to Full Time for PTF

We first propose that, in the interest of properly re-aligning the faculty composition, the University should create a one-time (if not more frequent) opportunity for highly senior, long-term PTF to have a direct path to full-time employment.

We should first note that this would not be something of interest to the majority of PTF at USC. Many, perhaps most, of the current PTF have no desire for a full-time position at the university and are content with their current position and level of employment.

This proposal is for the instances where part-time lines have been used at the university as a cost-savings measure where the demand clearly exists for a full-time one. In those situations, it is clear that the PTF in those lines have been de facto hired to work a full-time job. Keeping a portion of our faculty in a permanent underclass position, without access to the same types of benefits, promotions, and salaries as full-time faculty, while consistently working similar loads, is both unfair and inhumane.

The traditional response to any inquiry from PTF about being hired full-time is that they must apply for a full-time position that is part of a national search and be hired that way. While this seems fair on its surface, it is not an equitable practice. Too frequently, the fact that someone has been a PTF member is often automatically held against them, and their contributions to the university are minimized. This is a bias resulting from the marginalization of PTF where they frequently have not been allowed to contribute in meaningful ways outside of the classroom. And when hired to teach part-time at USC, they are told via university policy that they cannot teach elsewhere to expand on their experience or get additional academic funding for their research. This leads to a Catch-22 where their extended service to USC creates an inferior appearance to full-time hiring committees – which should not be confused with inferior ability.

Furthermore, under [the Academic Senate Resolution 15/16-004](#), the hiring practices for veteran, long-standing PTF should be similarly rigorous as those for full-time faculty:

When hiring Part-Time Faculty, schools should recruit the most highly qualified candidate. It is understood that sometimes initial hires are done by one person in the school, and that schools need to have flexibility to be able to fill last minute hiring needs; however, a school that continues to hire the same Part-Time Faculty member for more than two semesters should use a faculty committee (following a process set by its Faculty Council) to carefully examine the individual's qualifications, and for teaching faculty recent teaching performance, to ensure that he or she provides high quality instruction and/or continues to fit needs of the position and the school generally (54-61).

Assuming that this policy has been adhered to, the level of PTF that would be under consideration for this opportunity would have already passed through the national search criteria needed for a full-time hire, perhaps multiple times. They would be faculty who have been entrusted with educating the students of the university semester after semester for numerous years, deemed as worthy of that position after every annual or semester contract. This would not be an unearned shortcut for the faculty member; instead, it would be justly rewarding a veteran faculty member with the status their service to the university merits.

In addition, if, for some unlikely reason, there were outlier examples of instructors who were routinely qualified to teach on a part-time basis but were not suitable to be a full-time faculty member, there are mechanisms in place during the reappointment process in the initial years of a full-time RTPC contract that would let a department or school separate from the faculty member.

The plan here would be that high-level, long-standing PTF would be given a chance to take one of the full-time lines being created out of the consistent work they have been doing in our classrooms. A special hiring committee could be formed to review this process and ensure that all rigorous university standards are met. This opportunity would be open to only a small fraction of PTF who would meet stringent criteria to be eligible for this.

Determining how many PTF should be eligible for this as well as the specific criteria to recommend are both confounded by the lack of transparency in the demographics and work history of the various constituencies that make up the PTF. (See below for further discussion of this issue.) Given these roadblocks, we are not comfortable making specific proposals at this time; this work should continue in the PTFAC, in conjunction with the Senate Executive Board and the Provost's Office, in the upcoming academic year.

### Proposal II: Right Of First Refusal Policy

In addition to following these already agreed upon terms for the use and treatment of PTF, we propose that Part-Time faculty should have a rehiring system akin to a "Last In, First Out" (LIFO) policy. A more intentional and deliberate approach to faculty composition will likely decrease the number of teaching opportunities for PTF due to an increase in full-time faculty lines; such decreases are also possible in the future due to enrollment changes. The implementation of clearer and enforced policies regarding promotion and merit review, along with the pay calendar set in place by California [AB 736](#), the temptation exists for schools to cycle in new adjunct faculty on a semesterly or yearly basis to replace experienced part-time faculty – again, prioritizing cost-savings over the most effective construction of the faculty body. This represents a loss in institutional knowledge, an added cost of training & developing teaching talent due to the churn of new hires, and hinders the student experience in the classroom.

In order to avoid this scenario, we propose that longer-term PTF should be afforded a "right of first refusal" when rehiring decisions are made. This policy would dictate the criteria by which PTF and their experience would be measured (such as rank, units taught, courses led, semesters or years at the university, etc). Once a defined threshold was met, veteran PTF would be given priority to accept a position to teach a class they have taught regularly in the past, at the commensurate pay their university status dictates.

This would minimize the incentive for "adjunct churn" and retain instructors the university has deemed valuable by the consistent past renewal of their contracts. It also

adds incentive for schools and departments to open full-time lines, as this reduces the degree of continued reliance on PTF as exclusively a cost-saving measure.

The details of how this policy should look is something the PTFAC and Executive Board should continue working on to draft a proposal in the upcoming academic year. As with Proposal I, the details of how this could work and how many PTF could be affected by this are dependent on the final proposal being implemented.

### Proposal III: Transparency of PTF Information from University to Faculty Governance

In working to assemble this report as well as to complete the general work of the PTFAC, a constant problem has been an inability to get clear information from the university administration about the demographics of our constituents. While some general numbers have been given of the breakdown of the entire faculty (dividing PTF up into “more than 50%” or “less than 50%” categories), more detailed information is needed to understand who makes up the PTF.

How many of the “part-time faculty” are adjuncts who teach only one class per semester? How many teach only one per year? How many have been doing so for multiple years? How many faculty have Part-Time status and how many of those have taught for more than two semesters? How many who have taught for two semesters have been reviewed per the mandate of the Resolution? How often do they teach the same classes versus getting swapped around to new ones? What percentage of the PTF have been promoted and how does that correlate with their years of service?

None of these questions seem too far-fetched or granular, especially when the data could be anonymized. However, the Provost’s office has repeatedly claimed they do not have access to such information. Similarly, the Deans of the various schools claim to not know who works for them. Human Resources presumably keeps records of everyone employed at the university, but they have not returned requests to enlighten the PTFAC on who makes up the committee’s constituents.

In this context, there is no effective way for the Academic Senate and PTFAC to be able to monitor working conditions and issues related to part-time faculty. Faculty governance bodies are also hamstrung when it comes to even suggesting new policy, as any attempts to define parameters of part-time employment are being done in total darkness. As we lack basic information about the constituency, we are faced with a central question: how can we address the problems the PTF face when we cannot even know who they are?

The committee calls for the university administration to demonstrate their commitment to the value of transparency by ensuring that the Senate Executive Board and the PTFAC have access to the kind of demographic data and information about PTF to be able to advocate for this, the most precarious members of the university faculty.

We also request a commitment to communication from the administration to part-time faculty. This includes the implementation of the Part-Time Faculty Policies Hub recently proposed by the PTFAC, as well as a framework for the PTFAC and the EB to be able to send communications to the various constituencies of the PTF on an as-needed basis. Without the ability to communicate and share information in both directions, the possibility for problems to go unnoticed and unreported is too high.

### **Co-Chairs**

Linda Hoffman, Rossier School of Education

P.T. McNiff, Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences

### **Committee Members**

Scott Armanini, Iovine & Young Academy

Melanie Calvert, Rossier School of Education

Jill Davis, Dworak-Peck School of Social Work

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Mona Shah, Gould School of Law

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Appendix I: USC Academic Senate [Resolution 15/16-004](#)



# ACADEMIC SENATE

## Resolution 15/16-004

Procedure:

1. A motion should be typed or hand-printed.
2. A motion should first be offered to the Executive Board for review and advice on editing and parliamentary implication.
3. If changes are necessary, the motion should be recopied on another form. Amendments may be indicated in the margin or on the reverse of this form.

### **Proposal on Change in Part-Time Faculty Policies and Practices**

WHEREAS, The University of Southern California employs outstanding faculty who fall into many different categories, each of whom contribute to the university's stature as a top educational and research institution and deserve to have their work and role recognized through policies that demonstrate respect and value for each faculty member, and

WHEREAS, All faculty at USC have the same rights and responsibilities in the Faculty Handbook with few exceptions, and should therefore have similar policies and practices affecting their work environment and work experience, and

WHEREAS, Much progress has been made through Senate Committee work on addressing issues of salary, promotion ladders, multi-year contracts, merit pay, and other work conditions for Full-Time RTPC faculty, and

WHEREAS, Part-Time Faculty members are a vital part of the USC faculty, have been the fastest growing group of faculty on campus, bring a substantial and continuing commitment to the University, and deserve fair and equitable compensation but have received the least amount of systematic review of policies and practices affecting their work environment and work experience, and

WHEREAS, The University's policies and practices relating to Part-Time Faculty should appropriately recognize the differences in the types of the Part-Time Faculty across the campuses, and in how the Part-Time Faculty are utilized and compensated at the various schools, and

WHEREAS, The Committee on Part-Time Faculty Affairs submitted to the Senate Executive Board an interim report outlining initial recommendations to improve the working conditions and lives of the Part-Time Faculty at USC, and these recommendations have been reviewed and amended by Senators and Faculty Councils to better fit the needs of various schools,

Therefore, Be it RESOLVED, That the Academic Senate recommends that the University adopt the principles, policies, and practices listed under the subheadings below: Fundamental Principle, Hiring, Inclusion, Support and Surveys, Contracts/Compensation/Benefits, Job Security, and Governance:

#### **Fundamental Principle**

- A. Part-Time Faculty are an important and valued part of the university community. They contribute specialized expertise that would not otherwise be available, thereby extending the depth and flexibility of the curriculum. The decision to rely on a Part-Time appointment to fill a particular function must rest on a sound academic ground, and cost-savings, standing alone, is not a sufficient reason to fill a particular post on a Part-Time Faculty rather than a full-time basis;

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53 **Hiring**

54 B. When hiring Part-Time Faculty, schools should recruit the most highly qualified candidate. It is  
55 understood that sometimes initial hires are done by one person in the school, and that schools  
56 need to have flexibility to be able to fill last minute hiring needs; however, a school that  
57 continues to hire the same Part-Time Faculty member for more than two semesters should use a  
58 faculty committee (following a process set by its Faculty Council) to carefully examine the  
59 individual's qualifications, and for teaching faculty recent teaching performance, to ensure that  
60 he or she provides high quality instruction and/or continues to fit needs of the position and the  
61 school generally;

62  
63 **Inclusion**

64 C. The Rules, Membership, and Elections committee shall propose, and the Senate should adopt,  
65 amendments to the Senate Constitution to include Part-Time Faculty as members of the Faculty  
66 Assembly. The Faculty Handbook committee should examine the specific rights and  
67 responsibilities, and nature of participation, for which Part-Time Faculty should be eligible, and  
68 bring these recommendations to the Senate for review;

69 D. Part-Time Faculty should be included in all communications sent to faculty that are relevant to  
70 their job duties or that are related to the school, as a whole;

71 E. When they have relevant or specialized expertise or could provide useful input, Part-Time  
72 Faculty should be considered for membership on faculty committees and invited to faculty  
73 meetings, and should be offered fair compensation for such service;

74 F. The school's internal and external communications should describe and include the Part-Time  
75 Faculty appropriately, as an important part of the University faculty;

76 **Support and Surveys**

77 G. Part-Time Faculty who are new to USC should receive appropriate orientation regarding their  
78 new role and responsibilities, and experienced faculty members should be asked to provide an  
79 appropriate level of on-going mentoring to the school's Part-Time Faculty;

80 H. Each school should provide adequate resources, such as staff, office space, and support for all  
81 Part-Time Faculty during the times in which they teach, prepare for courses, and meet with  
82 students. These accommodations should make it easy for faculty to access the support,  
83 information, and services they need;

84 I. A Part-Time Faculty survey should be developed through consultation with the Provost's Office  
85 and the Part-Time Faculty Affairs Committee to better assess the needs of Part-Time Faculty on  
86 campus. Such a survey should take place on a regular schedule to monitor the changing needs  
87 and work satisfaction of the Part-Time Faculty. Results from this survey should be shared with  
88 the Academic Senate so that the Committee on Part-Time Faculty Affairs can focus its work on  
89 addressing challenges and replicating successes;

90 **Contracts/Compensation/Benefits**

91 J. The various categories of work that Part-Time Faculty are expected to perform should be clearly  
92 described in their contracts and be fairly and equitably compensated;

93 K. Recognizing that schools have a legitimate budgetary interest in knowing with reasonable  
94 certainty the amount of compensation to be paid to their Part-Time Faculty, and that most Part-  
95 Time Faculty members are paid on an hourly basis, schools may wish to include hour  
96 expectations or limits in the contracts of Part-Time Faculty members. If so, the schools should

97 take all appropriate steps to ensure that the number of hours described in the contract reflect a  
98 reasonable estimate of the number of hours required to perform the work called for by that same  
99 contract. In addition, schools should explain any such hourly expectations or limits to the Part-  
100 Time Faculty member and inform the Part-Time Faculty member that regardless of any such  
101 contract terms, the Part-Time Faculty member should report all hours that are actually worked  
102 and will be compensated for those hours, with an appropriate means of reporting situations when  
103 they expect to exceed the hours specified in the contract and of receiving approval to exceed  
104 those hours, so that they can be paid for this extra effort;

- 105
- 106 L. Schools should provide all Part-Time Faculty with clear information about potential benefits  
107 packages and eligibility criteria, and whenever reasonable and appropriate, should make Part-  
108 Time Faculty members, who are not employed full-time elsewhere, benefits-eligible by bringing  
109 those who wish it to half-time status;
- 110 M. Schools should have clearly communicated and effectively implemented written merit review  
111 policies in order to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of Part-Time Faculty for contract renewal  
112 and to reward exemplary work with appropriate compensation increases. Merit reviews should  
113 also serve as points of assessment to determine whether Part-Time Faculty members meet  
114 criteria for initiation of a promotion process. Committees responsible for Part-Time Faculty  
115 merit review should whenever possible have Part-Time representation on the committee, so that  
116 Part-Time Faculty are being evaluated by their peers;
- 117 N. Schools should have clearly communicated and effectively implemented written policies on  
118 promotion paths for Part-Time Faculty who demonstrate exemplary performance and high levels  
119 of engagement for a substantial length of time. Promotions should include appropriate  
120 compensation and title changes. The promotion review committees should have Part-Time  
121 Faculty representation whenever possible;
- 122 O. The Provost's office should provide clarifying language describing the process to obtain  
123 approvals to teach concurrently in educational institutions outside USC, including a description  
124 of the factors to be considered in granting or denying an approval, and the steps that should be  
125 taken by Part-Time Faculty members who now have a job at another educational institution but  
126 have not obtained the written approval called for under Section 3-1 (4) of the Faculty Handbook;
- 127 P. To ensure fair and equitable compensation for all Part-Time Faculty, their compensation should  
128 be reviewed regularly using appropriate benchmarking models (to be determined by the School's  
129 Dean in consultation with Faculty Council) and the Provost's Office should exercise oversight of  
130 these compensation levels and benchmarking results;

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132 **Job Security**

- 133 Q. When a course is cancelled, Part-Time Faculty should be given reasonable notice (to be  
134 determined by the School's Faculty Council and Dean) or compensation for work done in  
135 preparation for the course, if reasonable notice is not possible;
- 136
- 137 R. Part-Time Faculty who regularly teach more than one semester per year in schools with stable  
138 enrollments, and have shown exemplary performance and professional engagement for a  
139 substantial length of time, should be considered for annual contracts, and, in schools that have  
140 similar programs for Full-Time RTPC faculty, for multi-year contracts. The same considerations  
141 given to full-time RTPC faculty apply to Part-Time Faculty, where continued employment, even  
142 under multi-year contracts depends on regular enrollments and financial solvency of the  
143 programs in which they teach;

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146 **Governance**

- 147 S. Faculty Councils should have appropriate Part-Time representation or voice, through whatever  
148 model they deem appropriate, so that issues affecting Part-Time Faculty can have input from that  
149 constituency;
- 150 T. Each Faculty Council should determine a fair and reasonable way for Part-Time Faculty voice to  
151 be heard in votes taken at committees and faculty meetings; and
- 152 U. The Provost's office should designate an appropriate person to oversee annual reports from  
153 Deans about the implementation of the aforementioned recommendations. This ensures  
154 implementation and accountability for the Part-Time Faculty.

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157 Resolution Number: 15/16-04

Motion by: Executive Board

158 Date: March 16, 2016

(No second required when moved by committee)

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160 To be presented at the Senate meeting on March 23, 2016

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162 Action taken: Resolution Passed.

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