

**Moving Toward One Faculty at UTSA: Summary Report by the
NTT Task Force of the Academy of Distinguished Teaching Scholars**

Revised August 2018 for Provost Kimberly Espy
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Executive Summary

This white paper, prepared for Provost Frederick in July 2015 and updated for Provost Espy in August 2018, identifies the status and key concerns of non-tenure-track (NTT) faculty at UTSA. Its aim is to continue the conversation about improving the professional experience of these faculty and the classroom experience of students at UTSA.

The paper is organized as follows:

- Part I (pp. 3-4) presents statistics about NTT faculty at UTSA and briefly discusses issues facing NTT faculty at the national level;
- Part II (pp. 4-6) summarizes findings from four focus groups of NTT faculty at UTSA in spring 2015, including key concerns and representative quotes;
- Part III (pp. 7-8) presents seven recommendations to Provost Frederick in 2015 and includes several updates to these recommendations for 2018; and
- Part IV (p. 8) proposes a future undertaking for the NTT Task Force of ADTS.

Moving Toward One Faculty at UTSA: Summary Report by the NTT Task Force of the Academy of Distinguished Teaching Scholars

The Non-Tenure-Track Task Force was appointed by the Academy of Distinguished Teaching Scholars (ADTS) in the fall of 2014 to explore concerns of non-tenure track full-time lecturers and adjunct faculty at UTSA. By identifying concerns of full-time lecturers and adjunct faculty, the task force aimed to initiate a conversation about improving the professional experience of these faculty and the classroom experience of students at UTSA.

In this document, the term *full-time lecturer* refers to NTT faculty who consistently teach a full course load. The term *adjunct faculty* refers to NTT faculty who teach less than a full course load.

I. Background on NTT Faculty at UTSA

Non-tenure-track positions now account for 76 percent of all instructional staff appointments in American higher education.¹ At the University of Texas at San Antonio, the figure is significantly lower. In the spring of 2018, non-tenure-track faculty, including full-time lecturers (but not teaching assistants) and adjunct faculty, comprised 43 percent of UTSA teaching faculty, or 585 out of a total 1,350 faculty members.² This percentage has remained relatively stable over the past four years. Full-time lecturers and adjunct faculty teach approximately **77 percent of all lower-division credit hours** at UTSA and **45 percent of all student credit hours**.³ Not all full-time lecturers teach the same course load.

In the spring of 2018:

- 14 percent of full-time lecturers teach 1 or 2 courses per semester;
- 58 percent teach 3 or 4 courses per semester; and
- 27 percent teach five or more courses per semester.

The task force was unable to find data on the percent of full-time lecturers and adjunct faculty paid on a class-by-class basis compared to those holding extended (one- or three-year) contracts.

Literature on NTT Faculty

National research on contingent faculty (another term for non-tenure-track faculty) has identified a number of concerns of this group. The NTT Task Force drew upon a special report from the Center for Community College Student Engagement, *Contingent Commitments: Bringing Part-Time Faculty into Focus* (Austin, Texas: The University of Texas at Austin, Program in Higher Education Leadership, 2014) to identify some of these concerns. This report was based on a survey of 71,451 faculty from 2009-2013 and 32 focus groups representing a cross-section of U.S. community colleges. The report focuses on contingent faculty at *community colleges*, but some of its findings appear relevant to full-time lecturers and adjunct faculty at UTSA.

Although contingent faculty nationwide often complain about low pay, the *Contingent Commitments* report identifies “marginalization” as equally important. The report notes, for example, that “part-time faculty have infrequent opportunities to interact with peers about teaching and learning...they are rarely included in important campus discussions about the kinds of change needed to improve student learning, academic progress, and college completion.”⁴ Similarly, “Their access to orientation, professional development, administrative and technology support, office space, and accommodations for meeting with students typically is limited,

unclear, or inconsistent.”⁵ The *Contingent Commitments* report goes on to emphasize the importance of these concerns for achieving institutional teaching goals. “Colleges depend on part-time faculty to educate more than half of their students, yet they do not fully embrace these faculty members. Because of this disconnect, contingency can have consequences that negatively affect student engagement and learning.”⁶

At UTSA, former Provost John Frederick addressed some of these problems through changes to HOP policy. For example, a change to HOP 2.02 created a multi-tier path for lecturer and adjunct promotion based on experience and a history of excellent teaching.

The focus of the NTT Task Force is to strengthen and support UTSA’s commitment to promoting teaching excellence and student retention—key factors underlying Student Success, one of six Presidential Initiatives at UTSA. Our university’s full-time lecturers and adjunct faculty teach most core curriculum courses, allowing them to interact in and out of the classroom with the majority of UTSA’s freshmen.

II. Faculty Focus Groups at UTSA

As an extension of the Provost’s initiatives to professionalize full-time lecturers and adjunct faculty, the NTT Task Force organized several focus groups during the spring of 2015. Based on the recommendations of faculty from the ADTS, department chairs, and others, the task force compiled a list of 40 highly accomplished and well-respected full-time lecturers and adjunct faculty, including members from all colleges. Of the 40 faculty invited to attend the focus groups, 18 participated in one of the four focus groups, for a response rate of 45%. Three focus groups were conducted at the 1604 campus and one at the Downtown campus. Moderators for the focus groups were ADTS members Matthew Gdovin and David Vance and English professor Bonnie Lyons. ADTS members Lindsay Ratcliffe and Diane Abdo compiled focus group responses.

Of the 18 full-time lecturers and adjunct faculty who participated in the focus groups nine had a Ph.D. or terminal degree in their field, and nine had a Master’s degree. Seven of the faculty had taught at the university level for 1-9 years, and the remaining 11 had taught for 10 or more years. All but two of the focus group faculty taught at least 4 courses per semester, with most estimating they taught 200-300 students per semester. One-third of the faculty indicated they were aware of the HOP policy regarding salaries and promotion for full-time lecturers and adjunct faculty, but two of these respondents indicated they were not aware of the substance of the policy or how it is supposed to be enforced.

Focus Groups Summary

This section summarizes the notes from the four focus groups. Although the sample size was small when compared to the large number of UTSA adjunct faculty and lecturers, and sampling was non-random, the consistency across responses is highly suggestive of areas of concern. Key concerns raised by focus group participants fell into four general categories: 1) Contracts and salary, 2) Evaluation and promotion, 3) Integration and acceptance, and 4) Professional development and support. Each section below contains a brief summary of key points and participant comments.

1) Contracts and salary summary: no job security, low university commitment, low pay

- Contract offerings are inconsistent. Some departments offer only semester-to-semester contracts, even for lecturers employed at UTSA for many years. This type of employment uncertainty undermines the university's message, "We want good teaching."
- Some full-time lecturers and adjunct faculty have taught at UTSA for more than 25 years, yet the department chair will not put them on a multi-year contract.
- Some full-time lecturers and adjunct faculty said they receive their teaching assignments only days before the beginning of the semester.
- Full-time lecturers and adjunct faculty appointed on a semester-to-semester basis hesitate to enroll in yearly university benefits because they cannot be assured full-time spring employment.
- Full-time lecturers and adjunct faculty are often asked to take on additional tasks for no extra pay.
- Full-time lecturers and adjunct faculty report feeling stress related to lack of job security.

"It's hard to be dedicated when you don't even know if you'll be here next semester. It takes its toll."

"I am willing to dedicate myself to this university, but I don't have the security of knowing that I'll have a job after my current contract is up. It's all about job security and respect."

"I feel easily replaceable."

"We have lost a lot of good teachers because they couldn't survive based on the salary and the uncertainty."

"The reward I get from teaching comes from my students. But I need better pay."

2) Evaluation and promotion summary: Ineffective evaluation rubric or no department evaluation, limited opportunity for advancement

- Evaluation and promotion process is inconsistent: some departments do not review full-time lecturers and adjunct faculty annually or at all, and other departments review full-time lecturers and adjunct faculty using rubrics designed for T/TT faculty (with the most significant evaluation criterion being research rather than teaching).
- Promotion structure limits full-time lecturers and adjunct faculty without terminal degrees. Full-time lecturers and adjunct faculty without terminal degrees—regardless of recognized teaching excellence—will never rise above Lecturer III. Even though several of these lecturers have received the Regents' Outstanding Teaching Award, they are ineligible for membership in the UT System Academy of Distinguished Teachers because they are barred from seeking the Senior Lecturer title. This ceiling stifles faculty motivation.

"I did not know that there was an established path for NTT promotion."

"I do not have a yearly performance evaluation."

“I have proven that I am a good teacher without a Ph.D. Please don’t limit my ability to move through the ranks.”

3) Integration and acceptance summary: Full-time lecturers and adjunct faculty are often not recognized as part of UTSA faculty

- In some departments, full-time lecturers and adjunct faculty are not invited to or allowed to attend faculty meetings.
- In some departments, full-time lecturers and adjunct faculty are not allowed to vote on department issues, even if the faculty member holds an administrative position, such as UGAR.
- Some full-time lecturers and adjunct faculty do not have an office near their T/TT colleagues with whom they could confer and share best teaching practices.

“Information is not provided to new [contingent] faculty. If you want to know about anything that benefits you, you have to ask.”

“I am not invited to attend faculty meetings.”

“I am invited to faculty meetings—but it’s clear that I should be seen, not heard.”

“I have taught for eight years, full time, [but] my office is not even on the same floor as the [rest of the] department, and my office door does not have my name on it because I share it with graduate students.”

4) Professional development and support summary: limited funds for conferences

- Some departments do not provide full-time lecturers and adjunct faculty with funds for travel to professional development conferences or for conference registration.

“I would love more time for professional development, but I teach five days a week. I paid my own way to attend a conference.”

“I’d love course development leave opportunities, similar to TT faculty development leave. I could attend conferences, develop new courses and service-learning partnerships. I could rethink classes and innovate.”

General Comments:

“As professional teachers, we are committed to the university, and the other faculty don’t realize how embedded we are.”

“Please consider the value of a committed teacher and establish university policies that value teachers committed to UTSA. This is our career; UTSA is our home.”

III. Seven recommendations for improving the experience of NTT faculty at UTSA

Based on its year-long exploration of full-time lecturer and adjunct faculty concerns, the NTT task force proposed the following recommendations to Provost Frederick in 2015. Following each original recommendation below, we now offer a 2018 status update, if one exists, for Provost Espy. The NTT Task Force continues to receive feedback from full-time lecturers and adjuncts that several of the concerns articulated four years ago continue to cause distress and frustration, emphasizing the degree of urgency in addressing these concerns.

2015 Recommendation 1: Department chairs should be accountable for evaluating full-time lecturers and adjunct faculty annually according to HOP guidelines. Department chairs should be aware of how to promote and reward full-time lecturers and adjunct faculty through the established promotion ladder, and chairs must make full-time lecturers and adjunct faculty aware of how to be promoted through this ladder.

UPDATE: We maintain this recommendation. Additionally, we propose revising HOP 2.50 to include language allowing NTT faculty to self-initiate promotion.

2015 Recommendation 2: Departments should not use the same rubric to evaluate NTT faculty as they use to evaluate TT faculty. Currently, many departments evaluate full-time lecturers and adjunct faculty based on the TT rubric (the largest component of which is research). The largest component of a full-time lecturer and adjunct faculty rubric should be teaching.

UPDATE: Following submission of this report in 2015, the NTT Task Force developed a NTT faculty evaluation rubric with teaching-appropriate metrics. This rubric was approved by the ADTS and Provost Frederick and subsequently shared with Deans.

2015 Recommendation 3: Absence of a terminal degree (e.g., MFA, PhD) should not render faculty ineligible for 3-year contracts, nor should it present a barrier to promotion to Senior Lecturer or Distinguished Senior Lecturer where clear evidence of teaching excellence exists (e.g., a teaching award).

UPDATE: We maintain this recommendation and advocate UTSA's adoption of faculty titles appearing in Regents' Rule 31001 Section 2, to include Professor of Instruction series.

2015 Recommendation 4: In the spirit of One Faculty at UTSA, departments should include full-time lecturers and adjunct faculty in departmental faculty meetings and shared governance.

2015 Recommendation 5: UTSA should establish a minimum per-course and full-time salary pay scale for full-time lecturers and adjunct faculty and increase the base pay annually in line with cost-of-living increases (as determined, for example, by the U.S. Social Security Office Cost-of-Living-Adjustment).

UPDATE: The NTT Task Force underscores the recommendation to establish minimum per-course and full-time faculty salary rates.²

- *Approximately 98 percent of full-time NTT faculty at UTSA have a masters or doctoral degree.*
- *Recent data show that 28 percent of full-time NTT faculty at UTSA earn \$20,000 or less for their 9-month salary.*
- *Full-time NTT faculty earning \$20,000 or less teach primarily in the following colleges: COEHD, COLFA and COS.*
- *It is the opinion of the Task Force that this level of remuneration is inconsistent with the significant contributions NTT faculty make to the teaching mission of this institution, and the reliance of the institution on their dedicated service.*

2015 Recommendation 6: Departments should strive to make teaching assignments in a timely manner (e.g., several weeks before the semester) whenever possible. Special attention should be given to ensuring lecturers full-time employment over an academic year rather than on a semester-to-semester basis. Full-time employment enables faculty to prepare their courses in advance of the semester, which, in turn, provides students with important course information before the semester begins. Courses hastily constructed are less likely to provide the best outcome for our students.

2015 Recommendation 7: Recognizing teaching as a professional commitment, UTSA should support teaching-related professional development opportunities for full-time lecturers and adjunct faculty (e.g., provide funds to attend teaching conferences; offer course development leave).

IV. Proposal for future activity by the NTT Task Force

Our research led us to Regents' Rule 31001, Section 2, which includes titles appropriate for faculty whose primary role is teaching. Our task force welcomes the opportunity to develop a proposal that would convert existing NTT titles to those titles more closely aligned with the Regents' Rules.

¹ American Association of University Professors, "Background Facts on Contingent Faculty." Accessed April 24, 2015 at <http://www.aaup.org/issues/contingency/background-facts>.

² The UTSA Office of Institutional Research Faculty Dashboard states that 635 faculty members were tenured or tenure track in the fall of 2017, and 715 faculty were non-tenure track. However, the non-tenure track faculty label here includes titles such as teaching assistants, professor emeritus, research professor, and others who have a 0% lecturer appointment.

³ The Office of Institutional Research provided the task force with more precise data (*Data Request #20180530-IN*) indicating that in spring of 2018 there were 585 non-tenure track faculty at UTSA with titles Lecturer I, Lecturer II, Lecturer III, Senior Lecturer, Distinguished Senior Lecturer, Assistant Professor of Practice, Associate Professor of Practice, and Professor of Practice. The above estimate is thus based on the following figures: 585 non-tenure track faculty; 635 tenured or tenure-track faculty. UTSA, Office of Institutional Research Faculty Dashboard. San Antonio: Office of Institutional Research, fall 2017, Accessed August 8, 2018 at <http://www.utsa.edu/ir/content/faculty.html>

⁴ Center for Community College Student Engagement, *Contingent Commitments: Bringing Part-Time Faculty into Focus* (Austin, Texas: The University of Texas at Austin, Program in Higher Education Leadership, 2014), p.3

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.