Teaching at Rutgers:  
A Proposal to Convert Part-time to Full-time Appointments and Instructional Full-time Non-tenure track Appointments to Tenure Track Appointments

Abstract

The overuse of contingent faculty threatens Rutgers’ status and prestige while weakening undergraduate education by institutionalizing disincentives to excellence. Reducing contingency and professionalizing instruction will enhance the academic community at Rutgers, help build our endowment, lift our ranking, and attract and retain the most qualified teachers and students. The conversion of part-time to full-time positions and the conversion of non-tenure track positions to a teaching tenure track are wise and practical investments that will help Rutgers and New Jersey realize significant benefits at a modest cost.

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Teaching at Rutgers: A Proposal to Convert Part-time to Full-time Appointments and Instructional Full-time Non-tenure track Appointments to Tenure Track Appointments

A. Introduction

Despite the sweeping changes transforming Rutgers, the University’s core asset is still faculty members and the work they perform. Faculty members facilitate the human relationships essential to quality instruction and innovative research. Knowledge has a social life and, along with students, the faculty are the primary actors animating the educational process and modeling a love of learning and inquiry.

Yet, the Rutgers’ faculty has been fundamentally transformed in ways that fragment the university community, disrupting learning and research. Contingent appointments now outnumber tenure track appointments at Rutgers and a majority of all new full-time hires are off the tenure track. The percentage of tenured faculty at Rutgers has steadily decreased 1% per year (from 67% to 59%) over the past nine years.¹ (See Appendix A)

Part-time Lecturers, full-time non-tenure track Instructors and TAs teach more than half of all undergraduate classes. Non-tenure track Researchers, GAs, and Post-Doctoral Fellows are crucial to our research mission. The nationwide transformation of faculty roles has been comprehensively documented by Jack H. Schuster and Martin J. Finkelstein in, The American Faculty: the Restructuring of Academic Work and Careers.

While the national problem has been clearly stated, local solutions remain tentative. Successful efforts to address this problem have typically taken a dual approach. The first is to improve working conditions for contingent faculty (including longer terms of appointment, due process, and better compensation) and we have made a beginning of this at Rutgers for some contingent faculty. The second is to increase the ratio of full-time and/or tenured appointments. This proposal suggests that initial efforts to rebalance the proportion of full and tenure bearing appointments should focus on a) converting part-time appointments to full-time appointments and b) converting contingent full-time appointments to tenure-track appointments.

Retrieved from http://oirap.rutgers.edu/instchar/factpdf/factf05.pdf
This document focuses on the ways that increasing contingency may be addressed at Rutgers, to make the case for more durable and productive relationships between Rutgers and its faculty through proposing some practical, achievable, and cost effective means of restoring a more full-time and tenure track faculty at Rutgers.

B. Reducing Contingency and Professionalizing Instruction Will Enhance Undergraduate Education at Rutgers

A more professional, stable and less contingent faculty would allow Rutgers to address problems with undergraduate education and improve the way that students, alumni, faculty and the public perceive Rutgers.

Rutgers now withholds any serious commitment to a near majority of its faculty and in so doing sets a bad example that invites doubt as to our commitment to education and research. The policy of reliance on a body of contingent faculty that are treated as second class citizens lowers morale and threatens quality by promoting disengagement and indifference. Instead, the relationships between instructors and Rutgers should reflect the idea that a sense of community and dedication are among the driving values of the academic community.

Professionalizing instruction promises to be an effective remedy because it enhances the student-teacher relationship by addressing the institutional and systemic obstacles to excellence created by overuse and abuse of contingent faculty.

There is a lingering question regarding the quality of instruction offered by faculty in contingent relationships with the university. This question is unresolved by current research and is likely to remain so for the foreseeable future. Some studies suggest that contingent instructors are as effective as tenure track faculty involved in research despite systematic obstacles. Other research finds that significant educational deficiencies arise when institutions rely too heavily on contingent faculty.


2 For a recent summary of the pervasive overuse and exploitation of contingent Faculty see Monica F. Jacobe, “Contingent Faculty Across the Disciplines, “ Academe, November 2006. Research on contingency by various Disciplinary Associations can be found at: http://www.aaup.org/AUP/pubsres/academe/2006/ND/Feat/sidebar2.htm

3 Umbach Paul D., How Effective Are They? Exploring the Impact of Contingent Faculty on Undergraduate Education. The Review of Higher Education 30.2 (2006)
The lack of a definitive answer to the question of how increasing contingency impacts quality education is rooted in characteristics common to contingent labor systems: they resist inquiry, evaluation and accountability and tend to increase the variability of the service or product. Contingency may make systems more managerially flexible in regard to current circumstances but the same flexibility makes the quality of the service more vulnerable to a host of unknown and unpredictable factors. For example: How does the lack of health care for PTLs impact the quality of instruction? That depends on the health of the individual and the nature of their health problems, their legal status as a spouse or partner of someone who may have family coverage, the income and additional employment of the individual. It also depends upon the health of the students involved and the current disease environment.

If, however, we turn our attention from the micro level of individual instructors and students to the macro level of institutional policy and culture, the increasing reliance on contingent faculty and the unprofessional working conditions under which they labor have observable and important consequences for the quality of education and research.

While lack of professional salaries, benefits, office space, access to university resources and other sub-standard working conditions presents obstacles to excellence, the most pernicious effects of contingency are to be found in the contingent relationship itself.

- The labor-intensive and highly skilled nature of faculty work is ill-suited to precarious working conditions because uncertainty acts as a powerful disincentive inhibiting the full commitment of time, energy and expertise to the educational mission.

- Excellence in the classroom--the kind of excellence based on ideas and innovation--has been strongly linked to systems of shared governance in which the opinions and experience of faculty members are central to the development of curriculum and other academic policies. The University Senate and New


Peer Review, Contingent Faculty and Student Learning, Fall 2002 Vol. 5 No 1
Brunswick Faculty Council regularly make recommendations for evaluating teaching, establishing best practices, reforming curriculum, setting academic regulations and standards, and promoting, in collaboration with the Center for Teaching Advancement and Assessment Research, dialogue regarding teaching. Because contingency discourages involvement in governance, Rutgers forfeits an important source of knowledge and creativity.

- Contingency limits faculty involvement in non-class related activities, such as student life organizations or orientation for new students.

- Contingency results in divided loyalty and time because other jobs often become necessary and necessarily distract attention, cut into preparation time and reduce the possibilities of contact outside of the classroom.

- The resulting lack of familiarity with departmental culture and policy inhibits the advisory and mentoring capacity of contingent faculty. Contingent faculty are all too often out of the information loop.

- As the end of annual or semester contracts approach, it is reasonable to assume that contingent faculty members will experience increased stress as more time and attention is diverted away from teaching and research to securing a future position.

- Growing contingency and part-time work means that a significant proportion of Rutgers’ faculty do not have health care insurance. In times of emergency, this health and safety risk may present a serious health hazard to Rutgers’ students and employees exposing Rutgers to possible legal and financial liability.

- Contingency weakens the time-tested link between research and teaching. While quality undergraduate teaching may not require direct involvement in research, the heavy course load or multiple employments of many instructors and lecturers limits their ability to maintain currency in their field.

- The overuse of contingent appointments inhibits collegial interaction at the departmental level. Contingent faculty members are less able to engage in the formal and informal discussions regarding teaching techniques, texts, and emerging ideas in the field that characterize strong departments. Similarly, the physical and social dislocation created by contingency makes mentoring by senior colleagues the exception rather than the rule.
These ethical and pedagogical dilemmas are intensified and complicated by the fact that most contingent faculty mount heroic personal efforts to overcome Rutgers’ policy and practice. It is unseemly for Rutgers to routinely expect self-sacrificing efforts from some of its lowest paid employees as they carry an increasing share of undergraduate education— the very activity that the university community now agrees is a major focus vital to our reputation and our students.

C. Reducing Contingency May Also Help to Build Our Endowment and Slow the Loss of Potential Students through Out-migration and Attrition.

Professional reforms would benefit not only instructors and lecturers, but also students. Rutgers as an institution and the state in general would be strengthened by enriching the academic community through our superior ability to attract the very best instructors.

Reducing contingency could help increase the Rutgers University endowment, currently one of the lowest among comparable large state schools. The University of Michigan has an endowment 12.7 times that of Rutgers; The University of Virginia’s fund is 5.66 times larger than Rutgers; Ohio State University enjoys an endowment 4.41 times that of Rutgers; University of Washington has 3.86 times our figure and the University of Delaware a considerable 2.59. (U.S. News & World Report see www.usnews.com/ranking presented in Appendix B).

It is disturbing that despite Rutgers’ standing as the oldest public institution among those ranked in the top 60, its endowment per alumni is lowest as is, tellingly, its percentage of full-time faculty. (For additional data on Rutgers’ Endowment see Appendix B1)

Introducing more tenured and full-time positions would enhance future alumni loyalty and involvement by encouraging more enduring and rewarding faculty-alumni relationships. Since the student experience is the formative time for alumni attitudes, a stable and stellar teaching faculty can only improve social relations at Rutgers. Stronger bonds within the academic community are likely to counter the tendency many Rutgers’ alumni have to forget their alma mater when it comes to charitable giving.

Student out-migration and attrition may also be improved by conversion programs. Out-migration needs to be reduced in order to “draw business and industry to New Jersey and retain them in the state” to benefit our colleges, employers, and the state’s
vitality (NJ Commission on Higher Education\(^1\)). New Jersey has the nation’s second highest net migration ratio (number of NJ students leaving over the number of NJ students staying) of high school graduates. 7.57 graduates leave the state in order to attend college for every student that stays. And the rate has been increasing. Our state is second only to Alaska’s ratio of 8.03. This is compared to Illinois, the third highest, with a ratio of 2.33, and the US average of 0.93 (US Department of Education). This is illustrated in Figure 1 below:


Migrating students also include those underclassmen who transfer out-of-state after first attending a New Jersey college or university. A more stable and professional teaching corps could lower the rate at which Rutgers’ students drop out of the university. From the results of a multiple answer attrition study done by Rutgers’ Office of Institutional Research, 56% of the students who left Rutgers said that they “transferred” to another college. Since the general response “transferred” does not specify why students left, it is excluded from the following analysis. Of the other reasons given, 28% of those said that they were “dissatisfied with the quality of teaching” or “academic performance”, or “received inadequate academic support”, or “the learning environment”, or they “could not connect the classroom to the outside world” (Office of Institutional

Research, “Rutgers Rising”, 23, 29). If those responses can be grouped together as “academic”, then they indicate that, for other than the general response of “transferred”, a plurality of students left because of their academic experience in the classroom. (See Figure 2) Moreover, 97% of students who leave the university do so before their junior year. Thus, most of these students leave after only taking lower level courses, which are mostly taught by contingent faculty.

![Figure 2: Reasons for Leaving Rutgers](http://oirap.rutgers.edu/surveys/unexp/attrit_app.pdf)


**D. The (Re)balancing Act**

The following recommendations are achievable, practical and cost effective. They can be adopted with minimal costs to the university while providing maximum benefits to our teaching and research mission.

1. **Proposal for Tenure Track Teaching Appointments (TTT)**

Full-time TTT appointments could be created by converting the excellent and experienced instructors and lecturers currently serving in contingent positions into tenure eligible faculty members and by recruiting faculty with proven and promising teaching abilities. TTT faculty workloads would be determined by the department or unit in accordance with collective agreement. TTT faculty would be periodically reviewed and considered for promotion and tenure using a process parallel to the existing one but with
different criteria specific to their appointments. Promotion criteria should give primacy to the quality of teaching and dedication to undergraduate education. Service in departmental and university governance regarding curricular reform, educational policy and standards should also carry considerable weight. Finally, scholarship on teaching methodology, curricular development, pedagogical practice and theory should be encouraged. In addition to teaching, TTT faculty may be assigned to other academic duties such as: advising of students, administrative tasks, curricular development, lab supervision, libraries, and research.

TTT appointments would add enormous value to Rutgers University by enhancing the coherence and continuity of undergraduate education and curriculum. A body of seasoned, professional, and tenured full-time instructors would significantly improve the sense of belonging and commitment to the academic community for both faculty and students.

2. **Proposal for converting part-time faculty to full-time faculty**

Part-time faculty members are generally employed, with modest salaries and no health benefits, to cover core introductory courses or they are hired to provide highly specialized expertise in certain narrow subject areas. Those in the first grouping might be the target of conversion proposals that aim to enhance undergraduate education by replacing contingency and lack of commitment with stability and continuity. In the context of such a transition, faculty members who have served many years in contingent appointments should have the option of continuing in the same position, with the same qualifications and responsibilities. Some part-time appointments, particularly of specialists and professional practitioners, may be appropriate to continue over a long term. In such cases, tenure eligibility for the part-time position, with proportionate compensation, should be considered.

When there are many part-time faculty members teaching year after year in a department, two considerations emerge: 1) Why many when fewer would do? and 2) Why contingent when the need continues so consistently? A larger pool of teachers only adds to the University’s administrative burden with no parallel increase in reputation or prestige. To address these concerns, a system to convert part-time lecturer appointments to full-time appointments would be beneficial.

In accordance with the instructional needs of the department, a department with more than ten [or some reasonable number] part-time lecturers should convert those appointments beyond ten to full-time appointments over the next five years. For example, if there are generally 40 PTLs in a department, then two or three full-time
appointments should be added each year until the ten PTL limit is achieved. Relying on attrition and voluntary terminations to achieve this goal would ease any disruption to departmental continuity.

Experienced PTLs who have been teaching the relevant courses should be first in line for these new appointments, with the employee option to remain part-time if positions exist. Full-time appointment brings more attentive instruction, advising and mentoring for students while faculty members gain basic necessities, such as health coverage. With a conversion plan, the same experienced and tested teachers would be in place as before, but with more informed and stable relationships to the University.

Programs for part-time to full-time conversion at other universities have demonstrated that such transitions can be successfully and economically accomplished with a gradual, well thought out plan. (Note the experience at Georgia State and University of Indiana in Appendix C) At Rutgers, students would benefit from the stabilized teaching force, some part-timers would gain more reliable careers, and the University would profit from a reduced administrative burden and the pride of implementing a positive transformation toward a higher quality education.

E. Benefits of Conversion to the University

- Revitalizing faculty–student relationships should improve Rutgers University’s ranking according to four of the nine *U. S. News and World Report* ranking criteria: “average freshman retention rate”, “graduation rate”, “faculty who are full time”, and “average alumni giving rate”.¹

- TTT appointments would give Rutgers a competitive edge in undergraduate education. The prospect and award of tenure would attract and retain the most talented and committed teaching faculty. Tenure review would serve as the best possible quality control for instruction.

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¹ Peer assessment score
Average freshmen retention rate
2005 graduation rate
Faculty resources rank
% of classes with 50 or more (2005)
% faculty who are full-time (2005)
SAT/ACT 25th-75th percentile (2005)
Acceptance rate (2005)
Alumni giving rank (NOTE ENDOWMENT IS ALSO A RANKING FACTOR)
• Ranking of the U.S. Academic Institutions is heavily based on the percentage of faculty who are full-time (see for example the US News & World Report, the main source of academic data for prospective students and their parents, See Appendix B).

• TTT faculty can consistently release active faculty from teaching one course per year and make their research more efficient and productive increasing research labor capacity. The more research active departments are, the more they will benefit from TTT lines and such appointments will facilitate research activity in general.

• TTT and full-time faculty would assist Chairs and Graduate Directors in administrative tasks, providing release time for chairs and graduate directors to perform research and improve graduate studies.

• TTT can build rich and lasting academic relationships with students from the student’s first year at the Rutgers University.

• TTT can serve as long-term mentors and student advisors for a broad range of courses on a regular basis. Improved student-faculty relationships will certainly help reverse the culture of complaint commonly expressed as “The RU Screw”.

• TTT faculty members can serve as Undergraduate Directors being able to fully dedicate their time to the student undergraduate education and to advise students about graduate schools and their careers.

• TTT and full-time faculty members may also serve as tutors to help students having difficulties maintaining good academic standing thereby reducing the drop-out rate from the university (another criterion for ranking, “average freshman retention rate” according to the U.S. News & World Report) and increasing the student graduation rate.

• Conversion programs resulting in more tenured and full-time instructors would bring Rutgers national recognition as an innovator in undergraduate education by eliminating the covert yet powerful message we send to students that undergraduate education is unworthy activity suited to a second class faculty. (See Appendix D for a schematic summarizing the potential benefits provided by this proposal)
APPENDIX A

THE DECLINE OF TENURE AT RUTGERS

Percent Tenured Faculty by Campus

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<td>65</td>
<td>96</td>
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<td>53</td>
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Source: IPEDS 2005 Fall Staff Survey
Office of Institutional Research

Percent Tenured Faculty for Total University

Source: IPEDS 2005 Fall Staff Survey
Office of Institutional Research
# U. S. Public Schools Endowment


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<th>Year founded</th>
<th>% full-time faculty ('05)</th>
<th>Undergrad enrollment</th>
<th>Endowment (millions)</th>
<th>Alumni per year</th>
<th>Total alumni</th>
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**Notes:**
This table includes all public universities ranked in the top 60 by U. S. News & World Report. The remaining schools in the top sixty are private schools (not shown).

**Calculated values from the data:**
- Alumni per year = Undergrad enrollment / 4 years
- Total alumni = Alumni per year x age of school
- Endowment per alumni = Endowment / Total alumni
APPENDIX B p.2
Endowment Analysis

Endowment for public and private schools as functions of rank
It is modeled as endowment = k / rank

At a rank of 60, RU has lowest %FT and lowest endowment per alumni
APPENDIX C

Best Practices and policy initiatives relating to conversion and professionalization of instructional faculty

See [http://face.aft.org/](http://face.aft.org/) for ongoing legislative initiatives aiming at converting part-time to full-time, maintaining 75% FT:PT faculty ratios, pro-rata compensation, etc.

Examples of programs that include the conversion of Part-Time to Full-Time Faculty:

**Georgia State University** (1999)  [IHE]

At Georgia State University, between 1999 and 2006, full-time faculty numbers were increased by over 20% with more than a 5% increase in tenure track and a near doubling of full-time non-tenure track appointments. Part-time faculty were reduced by almost half. Basically, existing part-timers were converted to full-time non-tenure track positions along with a gradual small increment of additional tenure track faculty. Although more growth on the tenure track than off would be preferable, this approach can be a step in that direction if part of a two-prong approach: increase tenure track lines along with converting part-time to full-time non-tenure track.


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</table>


Another example of successful conversion of part-time to full-time occurred at Indiana University. Here a full-time non-tenure track “career path” was created to reduce reliance on part-time / adjunct faculty. These teaching-only positions receive multiple year appointments with annual review, and an opportunity for promotion. Teaching-only faculty members are without tenure and only participate in governance as determined by the academic unit. These new appointments were “phased-in” over a period of years, at approximately 50-60 a year system wide. In this case, fiscal necessity prevented the further addition of tenure track faculty, which all admit would have been desirable.
The following is password protected:
“Full-Time, Non-Tenure Track Appointments: A Case Study” by Myles Brand
http://web.ebscohost.com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/ehost/pdf?
vid=3&hid=2&sid=069e4280-bbd-4e75-8d4e-8f77e6e7cf3c%40sessionmgr7

“Trustee Lecturer Initiative” (IUPUI)
http://www.imir.iupui.edu/IUPUIfolio/teach/teach_iupuc.htm
http://www.iport.iupui.edu/iport/selfstudy/tl/teaching/EnsuringRewardsAndIncentives/

University of Maryland – Baltimore County IHE, 3-6-06

Faculty Hiring Principles:

The above recommendations are based on a much longer August 2003, Report on the
UMBC Faculty Size, Composition, and Allocation

Virginia Commonwealth University (scroll down to budget allocations)
http://www.vcu.edu/president/speeches/convocation99.html

Rhoades and Maitland: “More Than They Bargained For: Contingent Faculty” NEA
2006
http://www2.nea.org/he/healma2k6/images/a06p65.pdf

Examples of Conversion from Non-Tenure Track to Tenure Track Faculty:

Western Michigan University converts some NTT to TT [CHE 1-03]
http://chronicle.com/weekly/v49/i17/17a00801.htm

University of Wisconsin – Madison
“Converting Academic Staff to Tenure Track at the UW – Madison: A viable Strategy?”

Syracuse University, Dec. 7, 2005
Report and Recommendations: Appointments and promotions for NTT (See chart of
titles)
http://universitysenate.syr.edu/academic/non-tenure-report.html

University of Central Arkansas

Indiana University Northwest
http://www.iun.edu/~facorg/meeting04/Summary%20of%20fac%20comp.doc

MISC:
Financial Commitment to Tenure

Study of Non-Tenure Track Faculty at AAU Institutions
http://www.aau.edu/reports/NonTenure4.01.pdf
How the Proposal to Professionalize and Convert Part-time and Contingent Appointments Benefits Rutgers and New Jersey

By increasing the complement of full-time faculty, the faculty-student relationship is enhanced. This will increase the freshman retention rate, and thus the graduation rate. These both reduce net-out migration from Rutgers and New Jersey, thereby increasing the University’s endowment and supporting the State’s vitality, and together improve the University’s ranking. Research at the University is increased by FTI taking over more teaching burden, and by increased endowments, and by attracting world-class researchers, all consequently contributing further to the State’s vitality. In turn, the State is more able to further contribute to Rutgers’ growth.

This process is illustrated in the flow diagram below:
APPENDIX D p.2

Benefits Calculation Flow Chart

- added FTI
- %FT
- interpolation from US News
  - freshman retention rate
  - graduation rate
  - interpolation and calculation
    - increased enrollment
    - improved rank
    - interpolation from US News
      - added tuition and fees
      - increased endowment
      - increased research capacity dollars minus costs
      - calculation
        - RU net surplus dollars
        - calculation from Rutgers Return on Investment
          - NJ net surplus dollars

Data Source:
APPENDIX E
Costs of Conversion Programs at CSU and WMU

In 2001, the California legislature passed a resolution to increase the percentage of tenured and tenure track faculty in the California State University system to 75 percent over an eight-year period. A system wide working group adopted a plan that outlined a goal of improving the ratio of tenured and tenure track faculty by 1.5 percent each year. The plan anticipated that many faculty holding non-tenure track lecturer positions would apply successfully for newly created tenure track positions, and that the remaining replacements of lecturer positions with tenure track positions could be handled through attrition and retirements of lecturers. To meet the goal, the state undertook to conduct between 1,800 and 2,000 annual searches for new tenure track faculty. The cost of recruiting, appointing, and compensating the new positions was estimated to be between $4.8 and $35 million in each of the eight years, which reflected an increase of 0.18 percent to 1.3 percent in the system wide budget. See Office of the Chancellor, California State University, “A Plan to Increase the Percentage of Tenured and Tenure Track Faculty in the California State University,” July 2002. To put this figure in context, in the same year, CSU considered a system wide computer upgrade that would have cost $160 million.

At Western Michigan University, the faculty successfully bargained for a contract that offered tenurable positions to a group of “faculty specialists” including health specialists and teachers in the College of Aviation. Because the faculty union and the institution had moved incrementally toward this step, first regularizing the positions by adopting position descriptions and promotional ranks and agreeing on some due process provisions, and then offering job security with four-year reviews, the cost of the transition to the tenure track was negligible. Information on Western Michigan University’s contract is drawn from Gary Mathews, “Contract Issues Continue to Percolate and Brew,” WMU-AAUP Advocate (October 2002); Piper Fogg, “Widening the Tenure Track,” Chronicle of Higher Education, January 3, 2003; and Article 20 of the WMU-AAUP contract, WMU Web site at www.wmu.edu/aaup/2002_2005_contract.pdf.