

**Nontenure-Track Faculty Members Serving in Directorship Positions
Taskforce Report**

**Faculty and Personnel Affairs Committee
New Brunswick Faculty Council**

April 2022

Executive Summary

The proportion of contingent faculty (PTLs and full-time NTTs) making up the faculty has increased over the past several years. A survey of center and program leaders at Rutgers suggests that many contingent faculty members also serve in directorship positions. NTT directors who participated in this taskforce complained of inferior working conditions as compared to their tenure-track and tenured counterparts. This unfair treatment of NTTs appears to be unjustified in the context of the “Beloved Community” promulgated by our President. The lack of long-term employment stability discourages programmatic initiatives that require long-term planning also has a negative impact on academic freedom, which is especially critical to perform leadership functions that require making “hard” decisions. Furthermore, NTT directors do not see a clear path for advancement and promotion due to the difficulty in carrying out scholarly activity while they carry a heavy administrative burden. We propose the creation of tenure-track teaching-focused positions and instituting minimum requirements for compensation when NTTs are appointed to leadership positions. Although some of these ideas (teaching tenure notably) were explored but not adopted about 20 years ago, we believe it is time to revisit them. For example, the University of California began to hire tenure-track teaching faculty about 10 years ago, suggesting that similar initiatives are possible at Rutgers. We also propose that programs to support NTT development be created to help them meet promotion criteria. This may include conference funding, professional leave fellowships, opportunities for networking with other NTTs.

Introduction

The Faculty and Personnel Affairs Committee of the New Brunswick Faculty Council organized a taskforce consisting of a diverse group of faculty members from Rutgers – New Brunswick who met several times during the academic year 2021-22 to discuss issues faced by nontenure track (NTT) faculty and part-time lecturers (PTLs), with a particular focus on those serving in directorship positions. The faculty members who participated in this taskforce are listed below:

- ◇ Francois Berthiaume, Engineering, Biomedical Engineering, School of Graduate Studies
- ◇ Lynda Dexheimer, SAS, English Writing Program
- ◇ Jeffrey Dowd, SAS, Sociology
- ◇ Hadi El Farr, School of Management and Labor Relations, Human Resource Management
- ◇ David Ferio, School of Management and Labor Relations, Human Resource Management

- ◇ Lazaros Gallos, SAS, Center for Discrete Mathematics and Theoretical Computer Science
- ◇ Paul Israel, SAS, History, Thomas A. Edison Papers
- ◇ Demetri Lallas, SAS, English Writing Program
- ◇ Eleanor Lapointe, SAS, Sociology
- ◇ Joann Messina, SAS, English Writing Program
- ◇ Tugrul Ozel, Engineering, Industrial Engineering
- ◇ Sara Perryman, SAS, English Writing Program
- ◇ Julia Ritter, Mason Gross School of Arts, Dance
- ◇ Francis Ryan, School of Management and Labor Relations, Labor Studies and Employment Relations
- ◇ Karen Thompson, SAS, English Writing Program
- ◇ Ngwe Zin, SOE, School of Engineering's Micro/Nanofabrication Center

Discussions that began in the fall of 2021 were primarily focused on positions and programs that emphasize teaching. The taskforce was not constrained to limit dialogue around those types of positions; however, the working group had a high proportion of teachers relative to researchers, which may have skewed the discussion. In the spring of 2022, faculty members in research focused positions were recruited to address this gap. We present a summary of the work and recommendations that pertain to teaching positions in Part I, and discussions about research-focused positions are reported in Part II.

Part I: Teaching-Focused Positions

Identifying the Issues for Teaching-Focused Positions

The taskforce began its work by first identifying matters that deserve attention and resolution. For this purpose, taskforce participants spoke freely about problems and issues they face in their directorship positions. After a few meetings, the issues were categorized into four groups to facilitate further discussions, with admittedly some overlap between them. The groups are listed below with a brief description of the relevant topics:

Issue #1: Inferior working conditions for NTT/PTL

The salary differences between NTT/PTL and tenure track (TT) faculty, as well as the lack of job security, creates an unequal system among faculty members. Many NTT/PTL feel that they belong to an inferior class, as compared to TT, while they provide as much value to the university as TT. Therefore, they should be viewed as core faculty and deserve the same rights and privileges. These issues apply to all NTTs but are especially relevant to NTT directors.

Issue #2: Unequal workload division between NTT/PTL and TT

Teaching workload varies from department to department. Compensation for taking on director's duties often takes the form of course release and/or a percentage salary increase (sometimes via academic to calendar year reappointment). This exacerbates existing disparities between NTTs and TTs. Furthermore, the scope of duties is not always clear or transparent. NTT/PTL are in a vulnerable position when it comes to negotiating course load and other labor-intensive duties. NTT directors are often selected for their unique skills and talents but do not enjoy the same standing as their TT counterparts.

Issue #3: Unequal participation of NTT/PTL in department decisions

Although NTT/PTL are part of faculty governance, they are not always included in high level discussions that lead to departmental decisions. One example that was mentioned, is the use of NTTs as faculty observers for evaluation of teaching. While NTT observer's written evaluation would be a critical piece of information being discussed in a department promotion meeting, The NTT themselves were not invited to attend that meeting. This scenario illustrates again a class difference whereby the NTT/PTL faculty member takes on a labor intensive and important task in the department, while they are not able to fully participate in the decision-making process.

Issue #4: Expectations for promotion of NTT/PTL

Promotion criteria for NTT and PTLs are not always clear when candidates are discussed and are often wrongly assumed to be similar to that of TT. This is not a reasonable expectation because NTT who direct programs and teach at the same time have little time left to carry out scholarship activities (raise money, attend conferences, and publish articles) that are typically expected from regular TT faculty. Teaching excellence and program coordination is not always viewed with the same level of "importance" as research endeavors by TT. A different (and clearly identified) set of criteria should be used. This situation contributes to a perception among NTT/PTL directors that opportunity for future growth is very limited. It appears that some departments have done a good job addressing this issue; thus, they may be used as examples to write best practices that could be disseminated more broadly at Rutgers.

Recommendations for Teaching-Focused Positions

After the main issues were laid out, solutions for NTTs directing teaching programs were discussed over several meetings. Ultimately these discussions converged around two ideas: (1) teaching tenure, (2) setting minimum guidelines for compensation (which can be in terms of course release, and not necessarily monetary in nature) for NTTs taking on directorship responsibilities.

Recommendation #1: Teaching tenure

The concept of gaining tenure based on teaching accomplishments has been previously suggested by the AAUP in a report entitled “Tenure and Teaching-Intensive Appointments” released in 2010 and with some updates in 2014 (<https://www.aaup.org/report/tenure-and-teaching-intensive-appointments>). This notion currently exists in many community colleges, where teaching is the main responsibility, and has been adopted in some 4-year colleges as well, notably the University of California (the position being called Lecturer with (Potential) Security of Employment (L(P)SOE)). Furthermore, the AAUP document mentions that conversion of both individuals and positions to the tenure track is possible under contract provisions at Penn State University.

Incidentally, the AAUP document mentions that Rutgers considered a proposal for conversion of contingent fulltime appointments to a new teaching tenure track, but it was rejected due to various concerns.¹ It is unclear that the role of NTT directors was considered at that time. Since NTT directors bear significant responsibilities above and beyond other teaching faculty, including student recruitment, program coordination, workload distribution, and so on, it would seem appropriate that they be viewed as critical as regular TT faculty. In the case of U California, it appears that the title has been reserved to those who perform exceptional duties;² perhaps, a criterion we could use at Rutgers is directorship of a program (perhaps also using a metric such as number of students). Furthermore, criteria for reappointment and promotion would need to be better tailored for these positions, emphasizing teaching accomplishments, and would set the bar high enough such that not very many NTTs would want to pursue it. Promotion to the level of Associate Teaching Professor could be tied to tenure, as is the case for regular faculty. The standards for promotion are set by individual schools and may include directorship as a criterion. Providing long-term job security would enable NTT directors to generate long-term educational initiatives for the benefit of our students.

NTTs are needed to teach critical topics related to practice of a profession in a field. For example, the taught material may include industrial standards and common practices that, while constantly evolving, are not amenable to cutting edge research. TTs may not want to teach or acquire the necessary knowledge in such areas. Offering teaching tenure-track positions to individuals who are subject matter experts in those topics may help attract qualified individuals and improve the quality of education.

There is a common interest between NTT and TT, and there should be a partnership, not a rivalry. The excellent teaching performed by NTTs enables TTs to perform their research, so it should be win-win situation. The proportion of NTTs in a department or

school could be capped (for example, a certain percentage of total faculty) based on individual needs and that limit written into the bylaws. Tenure-track teaching faculty would give full participation in faculty governance, giving recognition that those individuals deserve while positively impacting on quality of education. In addition, departments should give voting rights to all NTTs and PTLs, as appropriate. For example, a teaching load threshold may be used to determine which NTTs and PTLs have voting rights.

Recommendation #2: Minimum guidelines and standards for compensation for directorship

The union contract does not specifically address compensation for directorship. Responsibilities and tasks required in performing directorship positions vary widely and it is therefore difficult to prescribe specific quantitative guidelines to fit all circumstances. Nevertheless, there are common concerns that should be addressed when deciding on workload and compensation for directorship, as listed below:

- ◇ Centers and programs likely require that the responsible person be available for management and decision making on a year-round basis; therefore, where applicable, increasing a 10-month to a 12-month appointment would be appropriate when an NTT is appointed director.
- ◇ NTT directors may return to regular NTT faculty appointments if a program is phased out; however, a suitable advance notice period and appropriate compensation should be provided.
- ◇ Course release for taking on a directorship position should be commensurate with the size of the program and the level of responsibility that running the program requires, and these responsibilities should be clearly spelled out; these may include curriculum development, assigning teaching workload, marketing the program to prospective students and faculty, tracking student progress, and managing the financial aspects of the program.
- ◇ Course release guidelines should be spelled out as a stated minimum and should not be construed as a maximum.

In addition, the Writing Program at Rutgers has an extraordinarily large number of NTTs, PTLs, and teaching assistants (overall greater than 200 staff members), who are managed by a team of 18 NTT directors, which are overseen by one NTT executive director.³ There is one tenured English faculty member who rotates through the Directorship every three years, who is the only regular faculty member involved in running this program. This situation is not unique to Rutgers, as many universities have similar programs to provide first-year writing courses to their students; these programs employ a significant fraction of the NTT faculty on campus. In this case, it is advised to implement the recommendations summarized in April 2016 at the Conference on

College Composition & Communication, in a Statement on Working Conditions for Non-Tenure-Track Writing Faculty. Some of the recommendations include a maximum of 20 students per section with a defined teaching load cap with a 3-fall course – 3 spring course load for those who are not in directorship positions (thus for directors, the course load would decrease from this baseline). A more comprehensive summary is available at this link: <https://cccc.ncte.org/cccc/resources/positions/working-conditions-ntt>.

Part I notes and references:

1: From the AAUP Report on Tenure and Teaching-Intensive Appointments, available at <https://www.aaup.org/report/tenure-and-teaching-intensive-appointments>:

“Members of the Rutgers University senate (a body composed of administrators, staff, students, and faculty), with assistance from the AAUP-affiliated faculty union, submitted a **two-part proposal** to the full senate. Part one called for conversion of some non-tenure-track part-time positions to non-tenure-track full-time positions; **part two called for conversion of contingent fulltime appointments to a new “teaching tenure track.”** The university senate endorsed part one and recommended to departments that they combine part-time positions into full-time positions when practicable. **But the senate rejected part two**, citing, among other concerns, **potential complications involved with hiring and promotions in a two-tier tenure system, the possibility that the addition of a teaching tenure track would compromise Rutgers’s position as a member of the Association of American Universities, and concern that new teaching tenure-track lines might be siphoned from the existing pool of research-teaching tenure lines.”**

Some of the elements of the proposal, which may be used to formulate the next proposal(s) are:

- “- Responsibility for determining teaching tenure-track faculty workloads would be assigned to the department or unit, in accordance with the collective bargaining agreement.
- The promotion and tenure process would parallel the existing research-teaching tenure process but with discipline-based criteria specific to the appointments.
- Quality of teaching and dedication to undergraduate education would be recommended criteria for promotion.
- Integration of service and scholarship of teaching into teaching tenure-track faculty assignments would be encouraged.”

2: Taskforce member Berthiaume spoke to a former Rutgers PTL who was hired as one of the first L(P)SOE at U of California – Davis. She says the job description and criteria for promotion were somewhat “gray” at the beginning as these teaching faculty lines were newly established. She received a small startup package and has been assigned a greater teaching load (1.5 to 2 x more; amounts to 60% teaching, 30% professional activities, 10% service) than other faculty. Furthermore, she is expected to do research on teaching methods (of engineering in this case), although it does not seem to be a major emphasis. She is otherwise treated as any other faculty member in the department (full voting rights, sabbatical leave, etc.). The promotion from assistant to associate teaching professor with tenure is to happen after 6-8 years. Promotion criteria

include Local / National / International impact criteria. The ratio is 1 teaching faculty to 10-15 regular faculty.

3: Faculty involved in running the Rutgers English Writing Program based on data provided by the Program Executive Director (data valid as of fall 2021).

| Row Labels | Count of Category |
|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Coad | 2 |
| Coad/PTL 2 | 2 |
| DB Lecturer | 7 |
| Lecturer | 9 |
| NTT | 88 |
| PTL 1 | 28 |
| PTL 2 | 12 |
| PTL 3 | 10 |
| TA | 26 |
| TAA | 23 |
| Grand Total | 207 |

Part II: Research-Focused Positions

Identifying the Issues for Research-Focused Positions

Although the number of cases we have identified is smaller than for teaching-focused directors, NTTs have also been hired in directorship positions. So far, we can make certain observations that apply broadly to such positions.

NTT directors that participated in the taskforce run research centers that act as independent entities within one of the schools (e.g., SOE, SAS); furthermore, the center may be loosely associated with a department (for example the T.A. Edison Papers is associated with the Dept. of History) or not at all (as in the case of DIMACS and the SoE Micro/Nanofabrication Center). Noteworthy as well is that in the case of the SoE Micro/Nanofabrication Center, the director is hired as staff and not as a faculty member.

NTT directors tend to participate less in departmental activities than regular faculty as they commit most of their time to the operations of their center. It is noteworthy that, in those cases where the center is not affiliated with a department, the NTT faculty director has in effect no departmental home. NTTs in those positions feel somewhat isolated from colleagues who belong to departments. This, together with the NTT's limited time of employment makes it very difficult to recruit PhD candidates, who need a longer timeline to graduate. Therefore, they rely mostly on postdoctoral fellows and other hired staff to conduct the research effort and other activities in the center.

The NTT faculty or staff person may serve as the actual director (such as for the T.A. Edison Papers, and the SoE Micro/Nanofabrication Center). In other cases, a regular (tenured) faculty member may fill the directorship position (e.g., DIMACS or CAIT), but several NTT faculty members are appointed as executive or associate directors, who perform the day-to-day management and in many cases the lion's share of the work. One issue that these directors face in doing their work revolves around hiring and keeping staff that is mostly funded by research grants in the face of rising costs for benefits and F&A at Rutgers.

Job security and potential for advancement are issues for many of the NTT directors. For the majority of these centers, funding comes from a variety of sources, which may include school funding commitment, external research grants (also known as "soft money"), and service user fees. Personnel salaries are contingent upon continued funding, which may be secure no more than a few years in advance, depending on the funding agency. There are few cases where the center has been in existence for a long time and longevity is almost assured. In those particular cases, the need for tenure is not viewed as important by the individual concerned. Nevertheless, it is their view that the

path for career advancement within Rutgers is not clear and there is a sense that faculty mentoring for NTTs is underdeveloped.

Recommendations for Research-Focused Positions

Given the uncertainty of long-term funding available for research centers, it is not plausible to require that all directors be full-time regular faculty. There is nevertheless a concern that NTTs are not in a strong position to defend their views, and it is suggested that every job offer letter includes an addendum that describes the principles of academic freedom.

Expectations from NTTs should be clearly stipulated in the offer letter and promotion criteria should be aligned with those expectations. We also propose that programs to support NTT development be created to help them meet those promotion criteria. Scholarly activity is the main occupation of research NTTs, but they do not always have the resources for conference travel or publications fees. Thus, they would benefit from additional financial support for such things, and professional leave fellowships may be considered.

Opportunities for networking with other NTTs in panel discussions would also be very beneficial.

Part III: Discussion of Report Findings with Vice-Provost for Academic Affairs

The main findings of the taskforce were presented to Ingrid Fulmer (Vice Provost for Faculty Advancement and Faculty Affairs) and Sandra Tomlinson-Clarke (Vice Provost for Academic Affairs) who felt that the session was very informative. They said they were concerned about the inequity that exists between NTT and tenure-track/tenured faculty, which is not consistent with the “Beloved Community” advocated by the President.

They said that from their vantage point, they cannot address issues of teaching tenure and compensation because these are the purview of contract negotiations between the union and the University administration. However, as part of the current initiative to set up the new “Center for Faculty Success,” they are especially interested in the professional development piece. They are interested to work on NTT-specific initiatives for better training (which would be hopefully compensated), as well as specific funding for conference travel or other activities that enhance the faculty member’s ability to meet criteria for subsequent promotions. They also thought that certain “best practices” for NTT faculty could be disseminated in the university community.

They would like to follow up later as they further develop and implement professional development initiatives.

Part IV: Resolution

Be It resolved that the New Brunswick Faculty Council calls for the Chancellor-Provost to take necessary actions to review and implement the recommendations in this report.