

Faculty Council Standing Committee on Faculty Governance

Questions and Concerns Arising in COFG Discussions CoNTTF Motions for Changes to Section C

Acronyms:

- NTTF = Nontenure track faculty
- TTF = Tenure track faculty
- PoP = Professor of Practice

The following issues are relevant to multiple parts of the proposed changes. Comments on any of these issues are invited.

1. The proposed changes will include a class of NTTF, namely the PoP, in the calculations for representation of the Colleges in Faculty Council. Colleges with a large number of PoP would gain a significant increase in representation in Faculty Council. Is this desirable and/or fair? Note, per #3, the responsibilities of NTTF are typically more focused than responsibilities of TTF.
2. The proposed changes will restrict the participation of NTTF in Faculty Council Committees and as Faculty Council Representatives to PoP and give PoP full voting rights in Departments while other NTTF may have no voting rights. Can the interests of all NTTF be represented by the small subset consisting of PoP? By way of analogy, it would be unacceptable to restrict participation of TTF in voting and in Faculty Council to, say, tenured or full professors. Should there be concern that this would reduce the participation of the broad class of NTTF in Faculty Council?
3. The proposed changes will allow PoP voting rights on a wide range of issues occurring in Departments and in Faculty Council. However, NTTF typically have focused responsibilities in their assignments. This is not only at the level of, say, an assignment for 100% teaching, but often a very restricted subset of the full teaching mission, e.g. teaching only large non-major courses for first- and second-year students. Is it desirable and/or fair to have NTTF vote on issues for which they have a slight or no direct interest, such as Department planning for resources and research directions?
4. The protections provided by tenure form the foundation of shared governance in a university. Tenured faculty may disagree with administration and may express that disagreement by voting in Departments and in Faculty Council without fear of being dismissed. Regardless of what their appointment is called, NTTF will not have those protections. What will be the effect of including a large number of NTTF who are vulnerable to pressure from the administration in faculty governance processes?
5. One suggestion that has been raised several times is to create a Faculty Council for NTTF, which would be separate from Faculty Council. This would be similar to the situation of the Administrative Professional Council and the State Classified Employee Council. That would eliminate several difficulties that arise in trying to include NTTF in Faculty Council.
6. The basis for requesting special status for PoP in voting is “long standing commitment to the University, a high level of knowledge in his or her field, and years of teaching, clinical,

or research experience” at a 50% appointment or higher. CoFG discussions have raised several concerns about these criteria:

- a. Faculty on tenure track invest 6 years working in research, teaching and service through a wide range of responsibilities. Nonetheless, they can be dismissed if they do not meet the criteria for tenure, despite their 6 years of commitment to the university. In general, working for a length of period for an organization does not imply commitment to the organization. This is the basis of “post-tenure review” for TTF. How can these observations be balanced against the rationale that NTTF who have been working for the university for a given length of time (which appears to be less than 6 years) deserve elevated status because length of service implies commitment?
 - b. Is it feasible to quantify achievements in qualities like “long standing commitment” and “high level of knowledge”? Such vague criteria cannot be used for tenure.
 - c. Is it problematic to equate the Faculty Council participation of NTTF on a 50% appointment with TTF who have 100% appointments, TTF who have a 100% appointment split between faculty and administration duties, and NTTF who have 100% appointments?
 - d. If the University establishes criteria for promoting NTTF to PoP, is this creating a tenure-like system without the protection of tenure?
7. In view of the history of academic freedom issues in universities in the United States, it can be stated without reservation that teaching in universities demands the protection of tenure. Whether or not this is practical for a part time instructor hired to teach an isolated course, faculty that teach over a long period of time at a university should be protected by tenure. Members of the CoNTTF have stated several times that acquiring some kind of tenure protection is a long term goal, but they have also encountered resistance on several levels. Should Faculty Council investigate the possibility of creating a tenure system for faculty who primarily teach or perform service? Note: Tenure is different from promotion, and establishing tenure does not necessarily require all faculty to be evaluated and rewarded under the same uniform work load assignment. Several departments have recently hired TTF with the great majority of workload assignment given to teaching.
 8. If the motions to have PoP participate fully in Faculty Council is enacted, what is the justification for having a Committee on Nontenure Track Faculty? In that case, should Faculty Council establish a Committee on Tenure Track Faculty?
 9. How would the University insure that there would be a uniform policy for promoting NTTF to PoP, given that PoP would represent the only voice of NTTF in Faculty Council?
 10. The rationale for allowing NTTF to serve as advisors for students in the University Honors Program does not address some potential consequences. A traditional argument made for supporting research in a Carnegie Research I university as a core mission is that research contributes synergistically to improve education provided to students. This is the reason that a standard tenure track work load includes research, teaching and education responsibilities. Would allowing NTTF to serve as Honors advisors undermine the importance of teaching and research to the university mission and the paramount need to hire tenure track faculty who have responsibilities in all three areas of research, teaching,

and service? This is an area that would appear to provide a strong reason for the university to *increase* the number of TTF.

The mentoring of undergraduate senior and honors theses is a prototypical intersection point for research and teaching. Honors students should work with research-active faculty who have experience with the full range of undergraduate and graduate courses. Also, the credentials of typical NTTF are not as broad when they serve as references. Are students in the Honors Program are better served by working with TTF?

11. It is proposed that only PoP will provide evaluations of NTTF during a probationary period. Should not the TTF play the key role in such evaluations, since they are involved in all aspect of the broader mission of their departments?