Revisions to Section E.13 Redress NTTF Grievances but Require Commitment to Expand Tenure

Marcela Velasco

The proposed changes to Section E of the Faculty Manual address the longstanding claims of non-tenure-track faculty for job stability and opportunities for advancement and promotion in their academic careers. This is a welcome solution to some of the problems affecting contingent faculty. The purpose of this piece is not to undermine these efforts, but to discuss a set of technical and political concerns about the implications of these changes for tenure and academic work.

The new policy would identify “six available ranks for faculty” that can be “grouped into four levels as follows: (1) Instructors, (2) Senior Instructors and Assistant Professors, (3) Master Instructors and Associate Professors, and (5) Professors.” This language protects NTT faculty by affording them the same status recognition as tenure-track faculty, but it also combines TT and NTT faculty in a way that blurs the fact that there is a difference in pay, security, and academic freedom between the two categories.

The new policy also asks Department and College codes to utilize guidelines from the Provost to define all titles used for faculty and the expectations for each of the six ranks. This brings up questions about the existence of separate guidelines not included in the manual. If such guidelines exist, they should be in the Faculty Manual to maintain the university’s culture of shared governance.

The other set of concerns deal with the political effect of the new policy. The reality across universities is that a growing number of faculty are teaching or doing research without enjoying the protections afforded by tenure, or any protections whatsoever. This has created a dual academic workforce. The amendments to Section E.13 of the Manual redress some of the grievances of contingent faculty by formalizing their rights to a career path and some stability. This is an advance for their rights. Yet, the amendments also set formal boundaries between fully protected academic work under the institution of tenure, and academic work protected under the instructor track using different criteria.

Will this new policy then expand the number of TTF and invigorate academic freedom? By closing the gap between NTTF and TTF the amendment increases the cost for employing NTTF (by providing them with longer contracts for example) and may ultimately support hiring more TTF. However, it could also justify not
hiring more TTF if the administration or departments find that there are enough permanent non-tenured faculty that enjoy adequate status and recognition.

In conclusion, any efforts to address the academic and contract rights of contingent faculty are just and warranted, but so is protecting and expanding the institution of tenure. The changes do not grant NTTF the full rights and freedoms of tenure to pursue scholarly concerns unhindered by partisan, administrative, or financial efforts to influence their speech or their scholarship. This calls for a strong commitment by the University, and the different Colleges and departments to increase the ratio of TT to NTT faculty, in favor of tenure, or whenever possible to facilitate the transition of qualified NTT faculty to the tenure-track.
A CALL FOR A NEW KIND OF ACTIVISM

William M. Timpson

In this article just published for Academic Labor: Research and Artistry, Steve Mumme describes what is missing from the professional lives of teachers in the community college system. In the excerpts below you will see many that resonate with Colorado State University. What we need is to follow the lead of so many teachers across the U.S. and especially in Colorado to address the needs of our campuses to the conditions that support instructors, from inequitable pay for adjuncts and Non-Tenure Track Faculty (NTTF) to the lack of resources and leadership in providing for the needed professional development, sharing of ideas, research and innovation.(See https://digitalcommons.humboldt.edu/alra/vol2/iss1/9

The open-access Colorado Community College system serves 138,000 students annually…CCCS member institutions also served 22,117 high school students in undergraduate coursework, facilitating their advancement to post-secondary education…(and) 24,370 students with some form of remedial education designed to prepare them for college-level coursework…There is no dispute that CCCS colleges provide an essential post-secondary springboard to success in the state of Colorado. Nor can there be any dispute that CCCS has a substantial beneficial impact on Colorado economy, contributing 5.8 billion USD annually to the state’s economy.

Yet we can argue that the teaching staff within CCCS are underpaid as are K-12 teachers throughout Colorado when compared with those who have similar educational achievements. The same argument holds for NTTF at CSU who do the bulk of the teaching in many units,, allowing tenure track faculty to concentrate on the rewards and priorities that are so heavily skewed toward funded grant work, in particular. The indictments of the Carnegie Commission in the 1990’s still hold for research universities, i.e., a fundamental neglect, even exploitation, of undergraduate education along with a call for rethinking basic paradigms of instruction (Boyer, 1990; Glassick, Huber & Maeroff, 1997; Kenney, 1998).

Given all of this, we will argue for need a new activism on campus to support all those who teach both in salary improvements and commitments, in the professional development activities that support student learning and in the research and development that underlie ongoing improvements and innovation. The same situation exists at the community colleges.

While enrollments and instructional demands on the System have grown steadily over the past decade, investments in instructional personnel have not. The System’s regular instructional staff, the key to its existence and performance, has grown modestly, while reliance on part-time staff, adjunct instructors, has spiked…Since 2007 CCCS institutions have added 169 full-time instructors, a 17% increase, while during the same period they added 1425 adjuncts, a 44% increase—most of this growth since 2014. Adjunct instructors now number more than 4600 individuals, constituting 80 percent of CCCS’s instructional workforce.

This clear shift to adjunct-based instruction follows national trends in college and university instructional employment over the past couple decades. It is evident at Colorado’s 4-years institutions as
well. Essentially, enrollment growth in higher education has been sustained and supported with temporary instructors.

For CSU the needs clearly parallel what Mumme’s analysis shows for the community colleges:

*Adjunct instructors worked for less, less wages, less benefits and supports. Adjunct instructors worked at-will, allowing administrators maximum personnel flexibility in serving variable student demand for instructional services. Lost in the personnel calculus was an appreciation of the academic, mentoring, and advisory values that regular, stable, full-time faculty bring to student learning and career development.*

Consider the rewards or incentives that are available or absent at CSU for efforts to improve or innovate instruction, to experiment with new approaches. In the community college system, Mumme found a similar void.

*As instructor impermanence prevails in the CCC System its prevalence is reinforced by the lack of incentives for instruction and mentoring presently available for adjunct faculty. All elements of the adjunct instructional experience are conducive to instructor turnover and transience. With modest exceptions, adjunct instructors at CCCS colleges are denied regular office space, lack dedicated access to computers and office supplies, lack professional development opportunities, are docked pay for health related and professional development related absence from the classroom, and are seldom credited for mentoring or extracurricular investments in student success. These realities limit adjunct faculty capacity to meet with, provide instructional feedback, or otherwise counsel students concerning academic performance, academic opportunities, and career options that are vital to student success.*

*While some of these services are provided by professional counseling offices at CCCS institutions, these are no real substitute for effective faculty-student engagement in and out of the classroom. Experienced instructors are essential and non-substitutable for providing scholarly guidance and feedback on student learning and mastery of course materials. They are considerably more likely than generic counselors to know of learning techniques, of developments in their disciplines, and useful knowledge networks and resources students can avail themselves of to boost their performance and success in a particular course.*

The answer everywhere we believe is for a new campus activism that demands more attention, resources and expertise to be invested in ongoing instructional support, improvement and innovation. With their skills in discovery and analysis, research universities can and should lead the way.

**References**


AAUP STATE CONFERENCE NEWS


• Don Eron, Executive Committee member from CU Boulder and our conference representative to the AAUP’s prestigious Committee A, held a workshop on advocacy letter writing at the AAUP’s annual Summer Institute at the University of New Hampshire at Durham, New Hampshire. Caprice Lawless and Melinda Myrick also represented the Conference at UNH, with a panel focused on organizing community college faculty advocacy groups.

• The conference also produced a detailed report on working conditions in the Colorado Community College System, recently published in Vol. 2 of the Journal of Academic Labor, Research and Artistry [ https://digitalcommons.humboldt.edu/alra/vol2/iss1/9/ ].

• The Colorado Conference annual meeting will be held on the Denver University campus on Saturday, December 1. All faculty are welcome to attend. Contact Steve Mumme at Stephen.Mumme@ColoState.edu for further details.

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