

Implementing the Recommendations of the Panel on Part-time and Contingent Faculty and Staff

Progress Report
15 September 2016

Background – In the fall 2014 semester President Jones called for a “blue ribbon” panel to review UAlbany’s policies and practices relating to contingent faculty and staff and to make recommendations concerning this essential part of the labor force where needed or desired. Accordingly, then Interim Provost Tim Mulcahy appointed a 13-member Panel on Part-time and Contingent Faculty and Staff, to be chaired by the Provost. Convened initially in February 2015 by Provost James Stellar, the Panel met weekly throughout the spring 2015 semester and the early part of the fall 2015 semester. Their Report was issued on October 1, 2015 [http://www.albany.edu/academics/files/Contingent_Faculty_Committee_Report_10-1-2015.pdf]. Following review by several campus constituent groups, the Report was accepted and in the spring 2016 semester an Implementation Team was formed to begin carrying forward the Panel’s recommendations.

Structure – The Implementation Team is composed of an oversight committee, chaired by Senior Vice Provost William Hedberg, and three working groups – compensation and benefits, the professional environment, and career paths, including pathways to permanence. There are 7-10 members serving on each committee; the members were identified in consultation with the deans, the University Senate, and the UUP chapter leadership. Each committee has a task agenda referenced to one or more of the Panel recommendations (see recommendations and assignments at the end of this report).

Outcomes – The oversight committee and the compensation and benefits working group was constituted and met several times during the latter part of the spring 2016 semester. The working groups for the professional environment and career paths, including to permanence, are being finalized and will engage their task agendas in earnest beginning in the fall 2016 semester. Specific accomplishments to date include the following:

- The minimum per course stipend was increased from \$2,800 to \$3,600 (+28%) effective the fall 2016 semester. This was accomplished through a combination of investments, including \$400,000 in recurring base funds obtained via the campus’s compact budget process.
- A proposal was submitted for additional funds from the compact budget process to continue to raise the minimum per course stipend effective the fall 2017 semester.

- A brochure describing all benefits available to part-time lecturers was compiled and distributed to part-time faculty at the beginning of the fall 2016 semester. See <http://www.albany.edu/hr/assets/Benefits-at-a-Glance-PT-UUP-Academic.pdf>.
- Baseline data were developed for charting course loads for part-time lecturers, including eligibility for health benefits, with the goal of increasing the duration of appointments and increasing eligibility for benefits.
- UUP and System Administration were urged to negotiate amended language in the Agreement to change the eligibility for health benefits from two or more courses in a semester to two or more courses or an equivalent instruction related assignment in a semester.
- We have also stepped up recognition of the contributions of part-time faculty and staff. Four part-time lecturers and one part-time professional were selected for the President's Excellence Awards in Teaching and for Professional Service. These individuals were honored at a public event and reception in April. In addition, two part-time lecturers were nominated for and received the Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Part-time Teaching.

Next Steps – The Implementation Team is resolved to make as much progress as possible on all fronts during the 2016-17 academic year. The oversight committee and all three working groups will be meeting on a regular basis throughout the fall and spring semesters. Another Progress Report will be issued at the beginning of the spring 2017 semester.

Contingent Panel Recommendations (assigned working group)

- 1. The University should affirm a value for fair and equitable compensation for contingent faculty and staff. (C&B)**
- 2. The University should affirm that improved compensation is important for recognizing the essential contributions provided by contingent faculty and staff in delivering a quality, student-centered academic program. (C&B)**
- 3. The University should adopt a goal of raising the minimum per course rate for part-time lecturers to \$5,000 over the next two to three years. (C&B)**
- 4. The University should establish a policy that encourages deans and department chairs, in assigning courses, to try to insure eligibility for health benefits to part-time lecturers and staff who desire them (e.g. half-time or two courses per term). (C&B)**
- 5. The University should work with UUP and System Administration to improve access to health and retirement benefits for part-time faculty and staff. (C&B)**
- 6. The University should compile and promulgate, in a single place, comprehensive information about eligibility and terms for all benefits available to contingent employees. (C&B)**

- 7. The University should develop and promulgate policies and practices to encourage increased integration of contingent faculty and professional staff in the programs and cultures of departments, schools, and colleges. (PE)**
- 8. The University should promulgate a policy and framework for providing longer-term employment commitments for contingent faculty and professional staff. (PP)**
- 9. The University should create career ladders and pathways for progression to permanence for contingent faculty and professional staff. (PP)**
- 10. The University should establish a set of “best practices” for hiring and supporting contingent faculty and professional staff and should incorporate these practices in a handbook for deans, chairs, directors, and contingent faculty and staff. (PE)**
- 11. The University should develop and install an effective (i.e., timely, multi-faceted) mechanism for evaluating the performance and contribution of contingent faculty and staff, including both formative and summative components. (PE)**
- 12. The University should enhance and increase support for the professional development of contingent faculty and professional staff. (PE)**
- 13. The University should promote existing opportunities and develop additional mechanisms to recognize and reward exemplars of excellence among the part-time and contingent faculty and professional staff. (PE)**
- 14. The University should establish a Task Force to continue the work of the Panel primarily by assisting the administration in implementing these recommendations. (OC)**