

To: Senate Agenda Committee  
From: Senate Committee for Full-time Non Tenure Track Faculty  
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APRIL 17, 2015

The Full-Time Non-Tenure-Track (FTNTT) Faculty Senate committee was charged with the following:

*Examine whether full-time, non-tenure-track faculty members are appropriately protected against possible retaliation by administration and, if not, report and recommend possible steps that may be taken toward that end.*

In an effort to better understand the experiences of FTNTT faculty, a focus group was conducted consisting of more than 20 participants with representatives from each of the nine colleges. Deans from each of the colleges were invited to identify and recommend participants. Attendees were divided into small teams and asked to discuss the aforementioned charge. Participants were also asked to identify additional areas of concern for FTNTT. Teams identified the most salient issues shared with the larger group and several themes emerged:

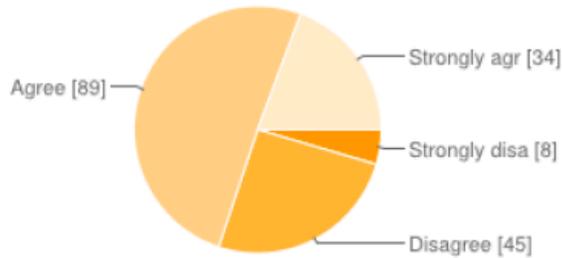
- 1) A large degree of variability in perceived job security exists.
- 2) Perceived job security was often linked to the size of the FTNTT faculty within a unit (e.g. those who were part of a larger FTNTT perceived greater levels of job security).
- 3) Experiences and perceptions varied both within and among colleges.
- 4) Several faculty members expressed role ambiguity.
- 5) Concerns were raised over annual and merit review procedures.
- 6) Most individuals were unaware of existing protections, and contract renewal/nonrenewal procedures.
- 7) Many did not understand promotion options or procedures.
- 8) Several identified transparency of pay internally and externally as a concern.

Many faculty expressed a strong interest in participating on the senate; however the aforementioned issues contributed to others expressing concerns over inadequate job security. Using the themes identified by the focus group the committee designed a survey to identify the extent to which the themes were consistent in the larger FTNTT

population. The survey was distributed to all 440 FTNTT faculty, and 178 individuals participated (40.5% response rate).

**Findings:**

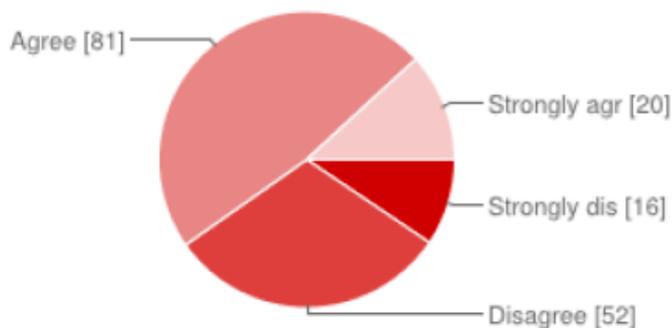
When asked if they would consider accepting a nomination to serve on the senate, if eligible, 69% either agreed or strongly agreed with that statement.



If FTNTT were eligible to serve on the faculty senate, I would consider accepting a nomination.

Strongly disagree	<b>8</b>	4.5%
Disagree	<b>45</b>	25.3%
Agree	<b>89</b>	50%
Strongly agree	<b>34</b>	19.1%

However only 57% indicated that they felt sufficiently protected against retaliation by the administration if they were to participate.



I feel protected against retaliation by the administration if I were to participate in the Faculty Senate.

Strongly disagree	<b>16</b>	9%
Disagree	<b>52</b>	29.2%
Agree	<b>81</b>	45.5%
Strongly agree	<b>20</b>	11.2%

When asked to suggest steps that could increase protections respondents provided the following suggestions/comments (sample):

*“If the Faculty Handbook were revised to clearly show what role FT NTT faculty have at the university and clearly state what protections we have in one place, that would help. As it is, I have no idea where to find out what kinds of protections I might have.”*

*“A longer contract term with presumptive renewal (nonrenewal only for good cause).”*

*“Although I feel protected I understand that for many they could feel very vulnerable. This is why the expectations around teaching and service need to be made very clear in agreement letters. Then the service on the faculty senate is viewed appropriately.”*

*“Longer contracts for more job security.”*

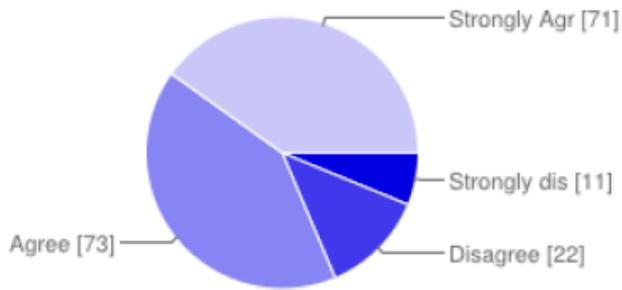
*“Longer contracts with longer notice for nonrenewal.”*

*“We work on yearly contracts, so there is little to no protection. Opportunities for retaliation would be reduced if our contracts would be lengthened.”*

*“I have only a one year contract so I don't feel protected from anything. My contract could simply not be renewed.”*

Length of contracts along with a deeper understanding of existing protections were consistent themes in both the focus group and in the survey feedback.

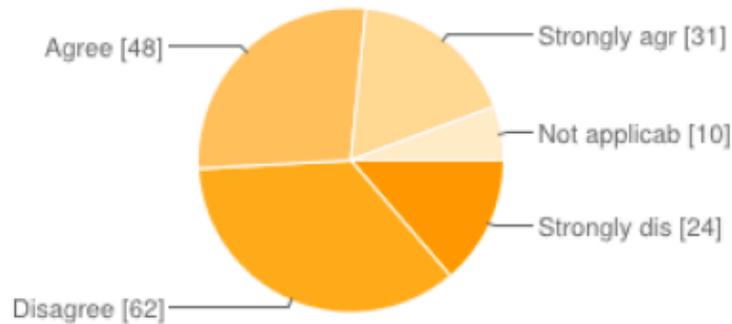
Generally FTNTT faculty are very clear on their teaching responsibilities. Approximately 82% of participants stated that they either strongly agree or agree when asked if their teaching responsibilities are clearly defined.



**My teaching responsibilities are clearly defined.**

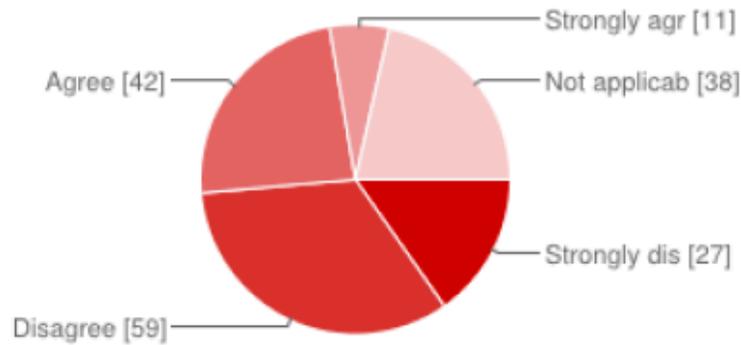
Strongly disagree	<b>11</b>	6.2%
Disagree	<b>22</b>	12.4%
Agree	<b>73</b>	41%
Strongly Agree	<b>71</b>	39.9%

Conversely, FTNTT faculty stated that their service and research responsibilities were not clearly defined. Approximately 48% disagreed or strongly disagreed when asked if their service and research responsibilities were clearly defined.



**My service responsibilities are clearly defined.**

Strongly disagree	<b>24</b>	13.5%
Disagree	<b>62</b>	34.8%
Agree	<b>48</b>	27%
Strongly agree	<b>31</b>	17.4%
Not applicable	<b>10</b>	5.6%



**My research responsibilities are clearly defined.**

Strongly disagree	<b>27</b>	15.2%
Disagree	<b>59</b>	33.1%
Agree	<b>42</b>	23.6%
Strongly agree	<b>11</b>	6.2%
Not applicable	<b>38</b>	21.3%

The committee concludes that this ambiguity likely stems from three factors:

- Lack of clarity and procedures for annual and merit reviews;
- Lack of clearly established and/or utilized promotion procedures; and
- Lack of understanding around contract renewal/non-renewal procedures.

When asked if evaluation measure were clearly defined in annual reviews, approximately 53% either disagreed or strongly disagreed with that statement. Exemplars include:

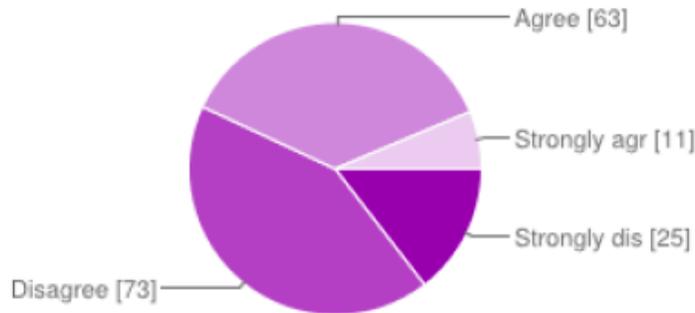
*“My performance has never been discussed.”*

*“Performance evaluation is conducted ad hoc. It is not executed each year, as the unit head often misses evaluations for multiple consecutive years.”*

*“The evaluation measures for service is the one area that is undefined for me.”*

*“This year’s meeting was improved from last year, and I am hopeful that a clearer understanding of my roles and responsibilities will be generated as an outcome of this initial meeting. However, I have no formal job description for my position and this has been a challenge in terms of determining goals and next steps in my role in the Department. I feel that this would help make my performance review more structured and with clearer objectives.”*

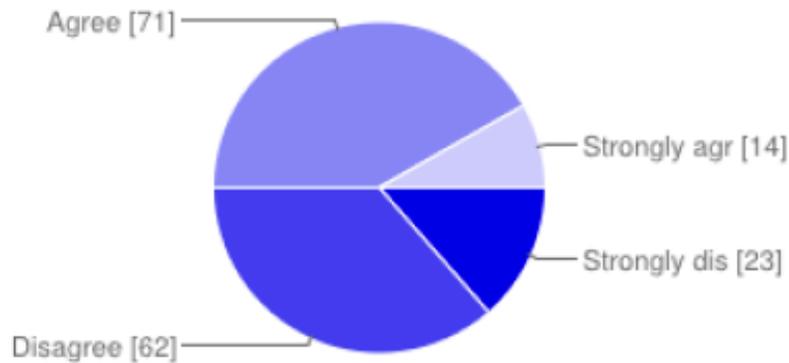
Several faculty members stated either an absence of/or lack of clarity related to promotion procedures. Furthermore, many FTNTT faculty expressed frustration at being instructed to use the tenure dossier model to generate their promotion portfolio. The committee concludes that this contributes to the role ambiguity in the areas of research and service. Given that so many FTNTT faculty have one-year contracts the committee concludes that better clarity and utilization of the promotion track would promote an increased sense of job security and reduce concerns over retaliation. When asked if they understood the criteria for getting promoted, 55% disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.



I understand the criteria for getting promoted.

Strongly disagree	<b>25</b>	14%
Disagree	<b>73</b>	41%
Agree	<b>63</b>	35.4%
Strongly agree	<b>11</b>	6.2%

When asked if they understood the procedures for getting promoted 48% either disagreed or strongly disagreed.



**I understand the procedures for getting promoted.**

Sample comments included:

*“Despite my occasional request, there has never been a specific explanation of what it takes to be renewed or promoted.”*

*“I was told to follow the tenure document for promotion. Since research is not an expectations, 1/3 of the guidelines/dossier from the provost office does not apply to me.”*

*“We had about 3 weeks' notice that we could even apply for a promotion, without clear explanations of what criteria were and no clarity on if there would even be a raise, never mind how much. The extremely short time period to put together a full dossier was a huge barrier to apply for promotion, especially since the short notice came right at the end of term when we're dealing with four classes' worth of student work.”*

*“I was told that I needed to publish in order to be promoted and yet as a faculty member that is not part of the job description. I find this deeply troubling and inconsistent across the university.”*

*“I was informed that there was a service commitment that goes along with the application for promotion. How is this service reflected in our contract? Is this legal to ask for extra work without laying that out in a contract with extra compensation? What is that extra service? Is there a specific time commitment?”*

*“I have no idea what, if any, promotion possibilities there are for me.”*

Both the focus group and the survey illuminated a lack of understanding in the contract renewal procedures. One responded states:

*"It is amazing that we don't know whether or not our contracts will be renewed until late spring, and sometimes midsummer. Teaching jobs are usually hiring out in the fall and spring, so by the time contracts are sent out, we are out of luck in terms of finding a job. That's just stressful..."*

## **Recommendations:**

Our examination of appropriate protections illuminated many interrelated issues that directly impact perceptions of job security and concerns over potential retaliation. Overall, the committee believes that FTNTT benefit from many of the same protections as tenured faculty, such as academic freedom. However there were concerns in the area of "non renewal of contract", particularly since many FTNTT faculty are currently on year-to-year contracts. Many of these concerns stem from perceived ambiguity surrounding job responsibilities, the annual review process, undefined promotion procedures and an overall lack of understanding of the existing protections. As such, the FTNTT faculty committee concludes that current systems could be improved in order to more fully prohibit retaliation, and address identified issues. Formalizing, refining, and following these procedures would ameliorate the risk of retaliation while promoting a healthy and productive work environment.

In order to remedy the identified issues, and provide sufficient protections against retaliation, the Committee hereby recommends that the Faculty Senate adopt *all* of the following specifically to allow for FTNTT faculty inclusion in the 2016 senatorial election cycle:

1. The faculty senate adopts a policy that explicitly protects FTNTT faculty against retaliation. As an example, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) policy for contingent<sup>1</sup> faculty states: "All faculty members, regardless of their status or appointment type, should, in the conduct of governance activities, be explicitly protected by institutional policies from retaliation in the form of discipline, nonreappointment, dismissal, or any other adverse action".
2. Information for FTNTT faculty related to protections, promotions, and dismissal is made available in a separate section of the faculty handbook and in an easily located on-line format.
3. All colleges will distribute promotion guidelines to all of their FTNTT faculty no later than October 1, 2015. Committees within colleges will consist of a

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1 "contingent"—lacking the benefits and protections of tenure and a planned long-term relationship with an institution—has increased dramatically over the past few decades and continues to increase (AAUP, 2013).

majority of FTNTT faculty to review and vote on all promotion cases involving FTNTT faculty.

4. All colleges will have a promotion track that will allow for a minimum of five-year contracts for promoted faculty.
5. All FTNTT will be provided with a written articulation of their roles and responsibility annually by their college include teaching load, general service responsibilities and where appropriate, research expectations. Annual review procedures will be established in each of the colleges/units for FTNTT faculty. These faculty will be provided with this information by October 1, 2015.
6. A committee of FTNTT faculty will be established in each of the colleges to meet 1-2 times per year to identify issues of concern relevant to FTNTT faculty and provide recommendations to the FTNTT Senate committee.
7. All faculty (tenured or FTNTT) who believe that they are being retaliated against can request a review by a committee consisting of five faculty members, three of whom must be of the same rank and title as the grieving faculty member. Findings will be reported to the provost office.
8. Recognizing that the configuration of the existing committee does not sufficiently represent the perspectives of FTNTT, in termination or non-renewal of contract appeal procedures, the review committee shall consist solely of FTNTT faculty.
9. The FTNTT faculty Senate standing committee remains intact to make recommendations for future agenda items.