

VITAL Faculty in our Department

*A Guide for Departments and Academic Programs to Better
Understand Faculty Working Conditions and the Necessity of
Change*

Second Edition
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The Delphi Project on
The Changing Faculty
and
Student Success

Additional toolkits, case studies and reports from

The Delphi Project on The Changing Faculty and Student Success

are available online at

pullias.usc.edu/delphi

including

VITAL Faculty on Our Campus: A Guide for Campus Task Forces to Better Understand Faculty Working Conditions and Necessity of Change examines VITAL or non-tenure-track faculty practices and issues at the campus level. It has been prepared to accompany this guide, but is focused more broadly on the whole campus and can be used as your efforts to improve conditions expand throughout your institution.

Designing Accessible and Inclusive Professional Development for NTTF explores one of the main lessons from the recent pandemic — the importance of professional development for all faculty. With a post-pandemic context, we are provided an opportunity to address long-standing problems in higher education, problems that are particularly prevalent within STEM education, including that professional development has not been a professional norm and VITAL faculty have been actively excluded even though they teach a majority of courses.

The Imperative for Change: Fostering Understanding of the Necessity of Changing Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Policies and Practices is a series of documents explaining the necessity of changes to target audiences among the campus community. Different groups on campus may find some reasons for change to be more compelling than others; these documents present the various reasons and seek to bring together groups around shared interests such as improving conditions for teaching and learning.

Design for Equity in Higher Education describes the framework of liberatory design thinking, a human-centered and design-focused methodology to solving problems that has gained traction as an equity-minded approach that fosters innovation. Two case studies present the way campuses can navigate the liberatory design process.

Example Practices from Campuses and Departments Working to Improve Conditions for Non-Tenure-Track Faculty is a crowd-sourced database of example practices that have been provided by individuals from campuses throughout the country to highlight recent efforts and offer ideas that may be helpful in pursuing changes on your own campus.

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Foreword

Changes in the composition of the American professoriate toward a mostly contingent workforce are raising important questions about poor working conditions for non-tenure-track or VITAL (Visiting, Instructor, Temporary, Adjunct and Lecturers) faculty and connections between these conditions and student learning outcomes. Numerous studies have found the negative working conditions of these faculty to negatively impact student retention, transfer from two- to four-year institutions, and graduation or completion rates. Growing reliance on VITAL faculty who receive little support and whose working conditions place limits on what they can do to support students is impacting student learning and success. The core of our educational missions is at risk if we do not make changes.



The life of our institutions is also being affected. Morale is lower, a sense of community and collegiality is lost, campus governance and academic freedom are deteriorating, and institutional memory is lost with constant turnover. Perhaps most importantly, because institutions are often engaged in exploitive employment arrangements, faculty cannot make enough money to meet their basic needs, have no benefits, and who lack a career path with opportunities for promotion.

The Delphi Project on the Changing Faculty and Student Success was initiated to support a better understanding of the factors that have led to a majority of faculty being hired off the tenure track and the impact of these current circumstances on teaching and learning. The project is a partnership between the Pullias Center for Higher Education in the University of Southern California's Rossier School of Education and the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U). The Delphi Project is funded through generous support from The Spencer Foundation, The Teagle Foundation, the National Science Foundation, the TIAA Institute, and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

We brought together more than 40 key experts representing a broad array of key groups from across the academy over the past years. Participants — including academic leaders and system heads, leaders from higher education professional associations and academic unions, disciplinary associations, and accrediting agencies, as well as education researchers, economists, and organizations representing VITAL faculty — came together to address the current status of the academic workforce, internal and external pressures shaping changes, organizational issues such as faculty morale and preserving academic freedom, and challenges or implications of an overreliance on VITAL faculty for student learning. One of the consistent themes that emerged throughout our discussions was a need for additional data and resources to build awareness and to support organizations' and institutions' efforts.

This Guide and Your Department

To support initiatives on campuses to change practices and policies, we have created a number of resources for your use in making the case for change and to facilitate data collection and dialogue among different groups in your campus community (*A list of some of our resources is*

on Page 2). We have purposefully created this guide to give more specific context to general knowledge of an over-reliance on VITAL faculty and worries about the human costs to teaching and learning. We will ask you to consider aspects of VITAL faculty work that you might not have thought about before. In the process of working through the sections of this guide, it is likely that you will encounter — and hopefully better understand — some of the challenges that are faced by VITAL faculty on a day-to-day basis in your department. You should also have a better idea of what sorts of changes can be made to improve policies and practices that affect VITAL faculty and create better conditions for student learning. By examining some of the issues we cover here, you can better comprehend the challenges faculty and students face on campuses and the *necessity* of working together to change existing practices.

In proposing that departments and the institutions of which they are a part should consider these changes, our goal is to *move our institutions of higher learning toward a better future wherein VITAL faculty are considered and treated as full partners in the teaching and learning enterprise* in a way that also promotes the attainment of student learning outcomes and institutional goals.

This guide can help you with the first steps of considering the current challenges in your department. Filling out this guide and beginning the process of considering and then implementing changes requires an investment of time and effort. It has been our goal to thoughtfully prepare resources that allow you to draw upon the experience of other campuses and research to initiate a process of change on your own campus. Our resources will also help you to consider why changes are needed, how you might pursue change, and offer some examples to help you to see that better policies and practices are attainable.



Whenever you see this symbol in this guide, additional resource documents – either best practice summaries, examples of actual practices from campuses, or department-level questionnaires – have been made available on the Delphi Project website. These open-access resources can be used as you see fit to support your work.

A number of insightful chapters detailing best practices from several campuses are also available in a book edited by Dr. Adrianna Kezar, ***Embracing Non-Tenure-Track Faculty: Changing Campuses for the New Faculty Majority***. There are also more than 100 case studies on our website that explore best policies and practices.

Although the questions in this guide may not address all of the challenges facing VITAL faculty, we hope that it will foster greater awareness. It may raise additional questions and can facilitate an important dialogue across multiple groups comprising the campus community about how to best position the institution as ***a high quality place to work*** and ***a high quality place to learn***.

We are glad that we can support your efforts to examine and change VITAL faculty policies and practices to improve conditions for teaching and learning on your campus.

A Note About Terminology

We recognize that terminology sometimes differs from one campus to another; different terms may even be used on the same campus to denote similar types of positions.

The Campus / The Department

In this guide, we often will use the term **campus** and **institution** interchangeably. We also use the terms **department**, **program** and **academic unit** to denote the various distinct academic programs or subdivisions of the campus organized around disciplines or areas of inquiry.

VITAL or Non-Tenure-Track Faculty

We use the term **VITAL faculty**¹ — an asset-based term — to refer to full-time or part-time contingent or non-tenure-track faculty as a way to affirm what they are, rather than what they are not. **VITAL stands for Visiting, Instructors, Temporary, Adjunct and Lecturers faculty**. While the majority of questions in this guide refer to VITAL faculty as a whole, there are some sections that ask for specific data regarding either full-time or part-time VITAL faculty.

The terms **non-tenure-track faculty** and **contingent** have historically been used to describe both full- and part-time academic staff who are not on the tenure track; they are ineligible to be considered for tenure. It is important to note that this is not a homogeneous group. Individuals may have very different reasons for taking non-tenure-track jobs and the nature of work and working conditions can vary substantially, even on campus.

Full-time VITAL faculty may be referred to as **lecturers, instructors** or **clinical faculty**. Titles and formal classifications may vary by campus and might even differ among the numerous academic units at an institution. They typically work at one institution since they hold full-time appointments.

Part-time VITAL faculty are also commonly referred to as **adjunct** faculty. Depending upon their individual circumstances, some part-time faculty might work only at one institution. However, they are more likely to have positions at multiple institutions and may aspire to full-time or tenure-track positions.

Although these individuals are not considered for tenure and may not be required or permitted to participate in the full range of teaching, research, and service tasks as tenure-track faculty, they are still faculty. The work they do is tremendously important in the teaching and research

¹ Levy, 2019

missions of the institution. On some campuses, VITAL faculty may teach a large share of the students enrolled in courses, particularly freshmen and sophomores or online students. They are often very committed to their field of study and to ensuring the success of the students they teach.

Before you get started...

Take a moment to consider what you already know about VITAL faculty within your department or academic unit. Use this page to jot down any knowledge you have about the proportions of tenure-track and VITAL faculty, current policies and practices, your perceptions of the working conditions of VITAL faculty, or problems you already know you would like to solve. This can help to facilitate completion of the guide and the reflection exercise at the end.



As you begin to organize a group of faculty and staff to complete and discuss this guide, we encourage you to access and review *The Imperative for Change* and *The Path to Change*. These resources are available in the Reports section of the [Delphi Project on the Changing Faculty and Student Success website](#).

Question Sections

Faculty Data Overview | Page 14

Which data are available to inform decision making?

Life of the Department | Page 16

How are VITAL faculty included in the life and functions of the department?

Hiring + Employment | Page 21

What are the employment policies that are in place, and how do they enhance or limit improvement of teaching and learning?

Curriculum + Teaching | Page 25

How do VITAL faculty contribute to curriculum development? How are they supported in teaching? How are they evaluated?

Faculty Development | Page 29

How are development opportunities made available to VITAL faculty?

Leadership + Service | Page 31

How are VITAL faculty encouraged and invited to participate in department decision making?

Compensation + Benefits | Page 34

How are faculty compensated for their work?

Office Space + Support | Page 37

What kind of support is provided to improve teaching and learning?

Department Climate | Page 38

Does VITAL faculty experience a welcoming climate of inclusion and respect?



Faculty Data Overview

Numbers of Faculty and their Roles in the Department

This assessment will help in determining how many faculty are employed within the unit and the distribution of teaching responsibilities. A department faculty worksheet and checklist are available in the Appendix to assist with tabulation. On this page, responses should be for the past academic year.

How many tenured faculty are employed in the department? _____

How many tenure-track or tenure-eligible faculty? _____

How many full-time VITAL faculty? _____

How many part-time VITAL faculty? _____

How many postdocs? _____

How many total graduate students? _____

How many have teaching responsibilities?

How many have research responsibilities?

Teaching Research

Using the information compiled in the department faculty worksheet and checklist in Appendix A, how are teaching responsibilities divided among the different types of faculty in the department?

Please note: We use 100-400 level courses to designate courses for undergraduates. These may differ by campus.

	Tenured	Tenure-Track	Full-Time VITAL	Part-Time VITAL	Grad Students
Number 100-level courses taught					
Number 200-level taught					
Number 300-level taught					
Number 400-level taught					
Number graduate taught					
Total students taught in current term					
Total students taught in last full term					
Total credit hours taught in current term					
Total credit hours taught in last full term					

Numbers of Faculty – Five Years Ago

If records exist, please indicate the number of faculty employed within the department or unit five years ago.

How many tenured faculty were employed in the department?

How many tenure-track or tenure-eligible faculty?

How many full-time VITAL faculty?

How many part-time VITAL faculty?

How many postdocs?

How many total graduate students?

How many had teaching responsibilities?

How many had research responsibilities?

Teaching Research

If possible, also complete the section below, which mirrors the current information gathered earlier.

Please note: We use 100-400 level courses to designate courses for undergraduates. These may differ by campus.

	Tenured	Tenure-Track	Full-Time VITAL	Part-Time VITAL	Grad Students
Number 100-level courses taught					
Number 200-level taught					
Number 300-level taught					
Number 400-level taught					
Number graduate taught					
Total students taught in last full term					
Total credit hours taught in last full term					

Numbers of Faculty – Ten Years Ago

If records exist, please indicate the number of faculty employed within the department or unit ten years ago.

How many tenured faculty were employed in the department?

How many tenure-track or tenure-eligible faculty?

How many full-time VITAL faculty?

How many part-time VITAL faculty?

How many postdocs?

How many total graduate students?

How many had teaching responsibilities?

How many had research responsibilities?

Teaching Research

If possible, also complete the section below, which mirrors the current information gathered earlier.

Please note: We use 100-400 level courses to designate courses for undergraduates. These may differ by campus.

	Tenured	Tenure-Track	Full-Time VITAL	Part-Time VITAL	Grad Students
Number 100-level courses taught					
Number 200-level taught					
Number 300-level taught					
Number 400-level taught					
Number graduate taught					
Total students taught in last full term					
Total credit hours taught in last full term					

Titles and Employment Classifications

Are job titles and employment classifications determined at the department level or are they standardized across the campus?

Full-Time VITAL Faculty

☐ Department ☐ Campus/
Standardized

What are the titles and/or job classifications used in the department?

Part-Time VITAL Faculty ☐

Department ☐ Campus/
Standardized

What are the titles and/or job classifications used in the department?

For each of the titles and classifications you listed, are the roles and expectations clear, unambiguous and applied consistently?

Discussion Questions

Faculty Data Overview

The following questions have been prepared to facilitate discussion about the implications of your findings in this section for how policies and practices shape teaching and learning in your department. They will also help you to think about the process of changing these policies and practices.

Considering what you have found above, how would you assess the composition of the faculty in the department or academic unit (i.e. the numbers of tenure-track and VITAL faculty)?

Thinking back on completing this section, was it easy to produce answers to the various questions or was information difficult to find?

If it was difficult to answer the questions in this section, what are the reasons for this difficulty?

What departmental or institutional factors have influenced the staffing patterns in recent years?

What does the distribution of teaching across different faculty today and over time tell you about the priorities of the department or the institution?

How would you suggest altering the composition of the faculty in the department? What would be the intended outcomes for faculty teaching and student learning?



Life of the Department

What are the expectations for VITAL faculty to hold office hours that allow them to interact with colleagues and students? Please note if expectations are different for VITAL full-time and part-time faculty.

What opportunities exist for tenure-track and VITAL faculty to interact?

Describe the character of interactions among tenure-track and VITAL faculty in the department or academic unit. Is there collegiality among these groups? Are interactions transactional, collaborative, relational and/or hierarchical?

Are VITAL faculty invited to participate in activities that are intended to give faculty opportunities to interact with students outside the classroom (e.g., residential faculty, leading study abroad, advising student organizations)?

Do department chairs have a part of their role allocated to supporting VITAL faculty?

Are VITAL faculty recognized in departmental newsletters, campus websites, and featured as part of the faculty?

Are tenure-track faculty encouraged to interact with VITAL faculty in meetings and events?

Discussion Questions

Life of the Academic Unit

The following questions have been prepared to facilitate discussion about the implications of your findings in this section for how policies and practices shape teaching and learning in your department. They will also help you to think about the process of changing these policies and practices.

How might VITAL faculty in the department be encouraged and invited to have a more complete role in the life of the department?

What are the potential benefits of increasing the amount and quality of interaction they have with faculty colleagues?

What are the potential benefits of increasing the amount and quality of interaction they have with students?



Hiring + Employment

Staffing Plans

Does the campus have a staffing plan in place that defines what should be the composition of the faculty, as well as standardized policies and practices for faculty hiring?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If there is not a campus staffing plan, does a staffing plan exist at the department level?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Which of the following conditions or standards, if any, are adhered to within the academic unit whether or not there is a staffing plan in place?

☐ Proportions of tenure-track and VITAL faculty

Tenure-track: _____ Full-time VITAL: _____ Part-time VITAL: _____

☐ Standardized hiring processes for VITAL faculty

☐ Mandatory search process including an open application period for hiring new faculty

☐ Tenure-track ☐ Full-time VITAL ☐ Part-time VITAL

☐ Right of first refusal for VITAL faculty when a vacancy occurs

☐ Full-time VITAL faculty ☐ Part-time VITAL

☐ Length of contract terms for VITAL faculty

Full-time VITAL: _____ Part-time VITAL: _____

☐ Minimum time period between selection of new hire and the start of the semester

Tenure-track: _____ Full-time VITAL: _____ Part-time VITAL: _____

☐ Other staffing standards:

How far in advance of the start of the academic term are new faculty typically hired to allow them to plan and prepare materials?

Tenure-track: _____ Full-time VITAL: _____ Part-time VITAL: _____

Qualifications

Does the department or academic unit rely on defined minimum qualifications that are requirements for teaching, including degrees held by VITAL faculty?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, what are the minimum qualifications?

Are efforts made to ensure that VITAL faculty are hired to teach courses that match their academic or professional experience or expertise? If so, describe these efforts.

Evaluation

How is the job performance of VITAL faculty evaluated? Are multiple measures considered or are student evaluations the only factor that is considered?

Are they evaluated only on those tasks or functions that are part of their job description, such as classroom instruction and the use of effective teaching strategies?

How, if at all, are VITAL faculty provided with information regarding the measures considered in their evaluation in advance of any formal evaluation process taking place? Is this information provided when faculty are hired?

Who conducts the evaluation of VITAL faculty?

When VITAL faculty are evaluated, are they provided with resources and support to help them to improve their teaching or other aspects of their work?

Reappointment

How are VITAL faculty notified of reappointment to teach in upcoming academic terms?

Are there specific policies to determine how and when VITAL faculty are notified that they will be reappointed for upcoming terms?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, what are the policies?

How much time is typically provided for reappointment? Is the time provided adequate for faculty to prepare for teaching?

Promotion

Do full-time and part-time VITAL faculty have opportunities for promotion?

Full-time: ☐ Yes ☐ No Part-time: ☐ Yes ☐ No

If so, are promotion opportunities clearly defined?

Full-time: ☐ Yes ☐ No Part-time: ☐ Yes ☐ No

What are the criteria for VITAL faculty to be eligible for promotion?

Do promotion criteria differ by type of VITAL faculty (teaching vs. research)?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Discussion Questions

Hiring + Employment

The following questions have been prepared to facilitate discussion about the implications of your findings in this section for how policies and practices shape teaching and learning on campus in your department. They will also help you to think about the process of changing these policies and practices.

What, if any, overall improvements could be made to existing policies and practices for hiring VITAL faculty in your department?

Staffing Plan

If a staffing plan does not exist, what are the benefits of creating one?

What would be the process for creating a staffing plan? Who should be involved in determining its priorities?

Which of the following components of a staffing plan would contribute to improving teaching and learning on your campus?

- ☐ Proportions of tenure-track and VITAL faculty
- ☐ Standardized hiring processes for VITAL faculty
- ☐ Mandatory search process including an application period for hiring new faculty
- ☐ Right of first refusal for VITAL faculty when a vacancy occurs
- ☐ Length of contract terms VITAL faculty
- ☐ Minimum time period between selection of new hire and the start of the semester

How would they improve teaching and learning?

Qualifications

If qualifications for positions do not exist or are inconsistent, how could clear and consistent policies regarding the minimum qualifications for teaching improve the likely quality of teaching and learning?

Who determines minimum qualifications, and what would be necessary to change them?

Evaluation

When VITAL faculty are evaluated, do they receive a fair assessment of performance for their specific job responsibilities, as well as identification of opportunities for improvement?

How could better evaluation practices improve teaching and learning? What changes would you suggest to improve upon existing evaluation policies and practices for VITAL faculty?

Continued on next page...

What steps could be taken to ensure all faculty are fairly evaluated?

Reappointment

Are reappointment policies and practices serving your department well?

If current reappointment policies and practices are not serving the department well, what changes would you suggest?

Are current reappointment policies and practices serving VITAL faculty well? For example, are they provided an adequate amount of time and notice to prepare for teaching each term?

If current reappointment policies and practices are not serving VITAL faculty well, what changes would you suggest?

How could the department go about improving reappointment policies and practices?

Promotion

Would you propose any changes to existing policies and practices for promotion?

What are the advantages and disadvantages of providing enhanced opportunities for promotion to VITAL faculty?

What would be the process for changing existing promotion policies and practices or creating and implementing new ones?



Curriculum + Teaching

Curriculum Design

What, if any, opportunities do VITAL faculty have to provide input regarding the curriculum, including control over the content and materials for the courses they teach?

What measures are taken to ensure that VITAL faculty experience and academic interests are considered when assigning them to teach courses?

How are faculty, particularly VITAL faculty, encouraged to make use of high-impact teaching strategies or other classroom pedagogies?

How are faculty included in culturally-responsive teaching and other diversity, equity and inclusion trainings?

Are faculty provided the opportunity to choose their own texts and customize the syllabus based on their strengths? Are faculty oriented to the learning goals of their course?

How, if at all, are faculty, particularly VITAL faculty, encouraged to participate in teaching that engage them with learning communities, service learning, or students interested in conducting undergraduate research?

How, if at all, are VITAL faculty encouraged to work collaboratively with other faculty in planning for teaching and engaging their students in educational experiences that improve student learning outcomes? If so, how?

How, if at all, are faculty encouraged to use innovative classroom technology and supported with training and resources to optimize its use?

How, if at all, are faculty prepared and supported to provide online or hybrid instruction?

Discussion Questions

Curriculum + Teaching

The following questions have been prepared to facilitate discussion about the implications of your findings in this section for how policies and practices shape teaching and learning in your department. They will also help you to think about the process of changing these policies and practices.

How would giving VITAL faculty a greater role in curriculum design enhance teaching and learning for faculty and students in the department?

What are the benefits of ensuring that VITAL faculty are encouraged and supported in utilizing high-impact practices, innovative pedagogies and classroom technology? What is lost by not ensuring that all faculty can make use of these tools?

How would you suggest altering current practices and policies to encourage all faculty in the department to participate in curriculum design and the use of innovative practices and pedagogies?



Faculty Development

Orientation

When VITAL faculty are initially hired, do they receive a formal orientation to the department?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Are VITAL faculty paid for time spent attending orientation?

Full-time: ☐ Yes ☐ No Part-time: ☐ Yes ☐ No

What is covered during this orientation? For example, does orientation cover general institutional information and human resources material only, or are faculty roles and expectations also reviewed?

If orientations are typically only held on campus and during standard business hours, how is orientation provided to faculty such as part-time or online faculty who cannot attend due to other obligations?

Professional Development



A list of example professional development programs and their successes is available in the [Case Studies section of the Delphi Project website](#).

What sort of professional development opportunities are available to VITAL faculty in the department?

Do VITAL faculty receive pay for time spent on professional development?

Full-time: ☐ Yes ☐ No Part-time: ☐ Yes ☐ No

How are VITAL faculty made aware of professional development opportunities?

Are professional development opportunities provided during times outside of normal business hours?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please list those opportunities and the type of development involved.

Are any professional development opportunities available online?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please list those opportunities and the type of development involved.

Do VITAL faculty have any access to funding to travel to off-campus conferences or professional development?

Full-time: ☐ Yes ☐ No Part-time: ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes for either type, how is this funding determined?

Mentoring


Are formal mentoring opportunities available to VITAL faculty? For example, is there a formal program to link interested VITAL faculty with tenure-track faculty with whom they can share ideas about practices and strategies?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please describe the opportunities that are available:

Are VITAL faculty paid for time spent participating in mentorship meetings or activities?

Full-time: ☐ Yes ☐ No Part-time: ☐ Yes ☐ No

 You can learn more and use the departmental culture survey we have developed in our publication [**"Designing Accessible and Inclusive Professional Development for NTTF"**](#) on the Delphi Project Website.

Discussion Questions

Faculty Development

The following questions have been prepared to facilitate discussion about the implications of your findings in this section for how policies and practices shape teaching and learning on campus in your department. They will also help you to think about the process of changing these policies and practices.

Overall, how could faculty development be improved in the department?

What would be the process for going about making changes to improve faculty development?

Orientation

How can you improve orientation for VITAL faculty?

Professional Development

Are the professional development opportunities available to VITAL faculty on campus, including funding that is available, adequate for supporting them in improving their teaching?

If current opportunities for VITAL faculty professional development are inadequate, how would creating new opportunities or enhancing existing ones improve teaching and learning? What changes would you recommend?

Mentoring

How would creating new opportunities for VITAL faculty to participate in formal mentoring programs or enhancing existing mentorship opportunities improve teaching and learning?



Leadership + Service

Are VITAL faculty able to hold leadership positions in the department or academic unit?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please describe who is eligible to serve and the positions for which they are eligible:

Are VITAL faculty invited or encouraged to attend faculty meetings?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If they are permitted to attend and participate, please describe their roles in these meetings (e.g. do they have the ability to discuss and vote on decisions)?

How are VITAL faculty notified about meetings?

Are efforts made to schedule meetings when VITAL faculty can attend?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Are VITAL faculty paid for time spent on governance activities?

Full-time: ☐ Yes ☐ No Part-time: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Are VITAL faculty included in communications such as emails between department or unit leadership and the faculty?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Are VITAL faculty expected to be involved in service?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Does their contract designate time to conduct service?

☐ Yes ☐ No

How is service defined?

Discussion Questions

Leadership + Service

The following questions have been prepared to facilitate discussion about the implications of your findings in this section for how policies and practices shape teaching and learning on campus in your department. They will also help you to think about the process of changing these policies and practices.

What would be the benefits of greater involvement of VITAL faculty in leadership positions and department meetings?

What steps can be taken to increase or improve VITAL faculty participation in leadership positions and department meetings?



Compensation + Benefits

Salary

Are compensation levels determined through the use of a pay scale or other standardized measure, or is pay determined on a case-by-case basis when hiring VITAL faculty?

If compensation for **full-time** VITAL faculty is not determined through the use of a pay scale or similar measure, how is it determined?

If compensation for **part-time** faculty is not determined through the use of a pay scale or similar measure, how is it determined?

Are salary equity studies conducted for VITAL faculty?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Are salaries compared across faculty types for equity?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Do VITAL faculty receive cost of living increases or merit raises in line with those offered to tenure-track faculty?

Full-time: ☐ Yes ☐ No Part-time: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Are VITAL faculty compensated for time spent during any of the following duties, which require a commitment of time outside the classroom?

	Full-time:	Part-time:
Office hours?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Faculty Senate meetings?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Department meetings?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Professional development?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Mentoring?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Service?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Benefits

Do full-time and part-time VITAL faculty receive health care benefits?

Full-time: ☐ Yes ☐ No Part-time: ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, are the benefits VITAL faculty receive the same as those offered to tenure-track faculty? If no, how do the terms and conditions differ?

Full-time: ☐ Yes ☐ No Part-time: ☐ Yes ☐ No

If VITAL faculty do not receive health care benefits, does either group have other options for paying into a group policy?

- ☐ Yes, full-time VITAL faculty can pay into a group policy
- ☐ Yes, part-time VITAL faculty can pay into a group policy
- ☐ No, there is no option for either to pay into a group policy

Do full-time and part-time VITAL faculty receive paid vacation days? If yes, how many days per year or term?

Full-time: ☐ Yes ☐ No Part-time: ☐ Yes ☐ No

☐ _____ per
☐ Year ☐ Term ☐ _____ per
☐ Year ☐ Term

Do you ensure that VITAL faculty are eligible for unemployment benefits in terms that they are not working?

Full Time: ☐ Yes ☐ No Part-time: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do full-time and part-time VITAL faculty receive paid medical leave? If yes, how many days per year or term?

Full-time: ☐ Yes ☐ No Part-time: ☐ Yes ☐ No

_____ per _____ per
☐ Year ☐ Term ☐ Year ☐ Term

How is benefits eligibility determined for each?

Do full-time VITAL and part-time faculty receive retirement benefits? Paid childcare or eldercare leave? Sabbatical?

Retirement benefits: Full-time: ☐ Yes ☐ No Part-time: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Paid childcare or eldercare leave: Full-time: ☐ Yes ☐ No Part-time: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Sabbatical: Full-time: ☐ Yes ☐ No Part-time: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Discussion Questions

Compensation + Benefits

The following questions have been prepared to facilitate discussion about the implications of your findings in this section for how policies and practices shape teaching and learning on campus in your department. They will also help you to think about the process of changing these policies and practices.

What are the compelling reasons for addressing any issues of pay inequity or access to benefits for VITAL faculty? What would be the benefits?

What steps can be taken in the short-term to provide better compensation and benefits to VITAL faculty? In the long-term?



Office Space + Support

Availability of office space, access to support services, and materials may vary across campus, so indicate which is most common among VITAL faculty employed in the department.

Office Space

Are full-time VITAL and part-time faculty provided office space? What sort of space is provided?

Full-time: ☐ Yes ☐ No

☐ Private office

☐ Shared office

☐ Access to other space

Part-time: ☐ Yes ☐ No

☐ Private office

☐ Shared office

☐ Access to other space

If space is shared, do faculty have ready access to private spaces nearby where they can meet with students?

☐ Yes, space is typically available ☐ No, space is typically not available

Instructional Materials and Office Access

Which of the following are typically made available to VITAL faculty?

	Full-time:	Part-time:
Photocopiers?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Computer?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Phone to place calls?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Phone to receive calls?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Voicemail?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Email?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Paper supplies?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Other office supplies?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Copy of course textbooks?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Sample syllabi	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Student worker assistance?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
After-hours office access?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Support Services

Are VITAL faculty given the same access to utilize student workers as tenure-track faculty?

Full-time: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Part-time: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do VITAL faculty have the same access to classroom technology and academic/instructional support services as tenure-track faculty?

Full-time: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Part-time: ☐ Yes ☐ No

☐ IT/Classroom tech

☐ IT/Classroom tech

☐ Academic services

☐ Academic services

Are these support services promoted to all faculty to ensure they are aware of support?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, how are faculty made aware of these services?

Are the support services above only available during business hours or do extended hours enable faculty who may not be on campus during business hours to make use of them?

☐ During normal business hours only ☐ Extended hours are typically available

Are any of these services made available online?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, which services are made available online?

Do VITAL faculty have the same access to library services as tenure-track faculty, including to check out library books and access online journals or e-books?

Full-time: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Part-time: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Discussion Questions

Office Space + Support

The following questions have been prepared to facilitate discussion about the implications of your findings in this section for how policies and practices shape teaching and learning on campus in your department. They will also help you to think about the process of changing these policies and practices.

How are teaching and learning impacted when VITAL faculty do not have access to office space, instructional materials, and support from the department?

Specifically, how might students be negatively affected when these resources and support are not provided to faculty?

If there are certain items in this section that are not provided, what has been the rationale for not giving VITAL faculty this support? How can a case be made for ensuring all faculty receive the proper resources for teaching?

What steps can be taken in the short-term to provide VITAL faculty office space, resources, and support? In the long-term?



Department Climate

It is essential that VITAL faculty experience a welcoming climate of respect and inclusion. Many campuses identify challenges in the climate, so monitoring it is important.



You can learn more and use the departmental culture survey we have developed in our publication **“Departmental Cultures and Non-Tenure-Track Faculty: A Self-Assessment Tool for Departments”** on the Delphi Project website.

Do you regularly conduct climate studies to understand the climate at the departmental level?

☐ Yes ☐ No

What opportunities do VITAL faculty have to provide feedback about the departmental climate?

Who is charged with addressing departmental climate concerns?

Is there a process in place for making changes to improve the climate?

Discussion Questions

Department Climate

The following questions have been prepared to facilitate discussion about the implications of your findings in this section for how policies and practices shape teaching and learning on campus in your department. They will also help you to think about the process of changing these policies and practices.

What impact does your current departmental climate have on VITAL faculty's job satisfaction, productivity, and motivation to contribute?

What are 1-2 relatively simple changes or additions that could improve VITAL faculty's sense of being respected and included?

Final Questions

The following pages contain concluding questions that will allow an opportunity for participants to reflect on the findings of this guide, what they mean for the work of the department moving forward, and what you have learned about VITAL faculty work in the department that was not known before starting this process.

Answer these only after having filling in as much of this guide as possible. These questions will help to start framing discussions about what is needed to provide better support for VITAL faculty. Feel free to make use of resources in the Publications section of [Delphi Project website](#) as you carry out this process.

Once participants have completed these questions, consider setting aside a portion of the next faculty meeting to discuss these questions and individuals' reactions.

We also encourage you to consider whether a climate survey might be useful to learn more about the day-to-day experiences of VITAL faculty in addition to the information you have collected here.

Final Questions...

Does the department think about VITAL faculty policies and practices as part of a long-term planning effort or staffing plan, or merely to address short-term needs as they arise or become problematic?

What is the overall impact of this approach on the working environment for faculty? On teaching and student learning?

Do the existing policies and practices seem to be uniformly applied?

Thinking about each of the above sections and questions, what are the reasons for existing policies and practices that may not serve VITAL faculty well? Is it clear how or why certain policies have come to exist?

Considering what you have learned in the process of completing this assessment, what are the ways that current policies and practices, particularly those related to VITAL faculty, may be creating obstacles for achieving the best teaching and learning environment to support student success?

Are there other departments on campus that have exemplary policies for VITAL faculty that you might borrow?

What data are missing that may be needed to better understand the status of VITAL faculty or to make the case to leaders that changes need to occur?

How might different groups on the campus work toward making important changes that might improve the working lives of VITAL faculty (keeping in mind the different conditions that may be experienced by full- and part-time faculty) and better enable them to serve students?

Are there resources from your disciplinary society about best practices for supporting VITAL faculty that you might adopt?

What are the prevailing values that exist on campus and within the department and how might proponents of changing policies and practices to support VITAL faculty appeal to these values in pushing for changes?

How, if at all, does the institutional or department mission statement encourage the campus community to think about issues of justice, community and quality in ways that might prompt individuals to consider the treatment of VITAL faculty and the implications of this type of appointment?

If a task force or committee has not already been formed to address some of these issues on your campus, who can you identify as the obvious champions of VITAL faculty and other individuals or groups that might be involved in forming a team to examine these issues?

Consider how you might ensure that a good balance of VITAL faculty perspectives are represented, considering not all faculty have the same experiences or motivations.



We encourage you to make use of *The Imperative for Change* and *The Path to Change*. These resources are available in the Reports section of the [Delphi Project on the Changing Faculty and Student Success website](#).

Summary Checklist

What have you learned in completing the sections of this guide, and what is it that you would like to accomplish by changing policies and practices on your campus?

In this Summary Checklist, make note of the most important information you have learned, successes and challenges you have identified, questions that need further exploration, and goals you would like to accomplish related to each section of this guide.

-
- ☐ **Faculty Data:** What sorts of changes do department faculty data suggest are needed?
 - ☐ **Life of the Department:** How can broader inclusion of VITAL faculty enrich the department?
 - ☐ **Hiring + Employment:** Which changes will you pursue to enhance VITAL teaching and learning?
 - ☐ **Curriculum + Teaching:** How will VITAL faculty be supported in teaching effectiveness and fairly evaluated?
 - ☐ **Faculty Development:** What opportunities will help to enrich VITAL faculty contributions?
 - ☐ **Leadership + Meetings:** How will VITAL faculty be encouraged to participate in decision making?
 - ☐ **Compensation + Benefits:** What constitutes equitable pay, and how can it be achieved?
 - ☐ **Office Space + Support:** How will needed resources be provided to improve teaching and learning?
 - ☐ **Department Climate:** How will VITAL faculty experience a welcoming climate of inclusion and respect?

Notes

Notes

Appendix A – Faculty Teaching Worksheet

Print out as many copies as may be needed to record the following information on each faculty member or instructor and tabulate the totals on each sheet and the cumulative total from all sheets at the end.

	Current Full Term			Previous Full Term		
	Total # Courses Taught	Total # Students Taught	Total # Credit Hrs Taught	Total # Courses Taught	Total # Students Taught	Total # Credit Hrs Taught
Name: Title: Faculty Type: Years of Service: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Tenured <input type="checkbox"/> Tenure-Track <input type="checkbox"/> Full-Time VITAL <input type="checkbox"/> Part-Time VITAL <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate Student						
Name: Title: Faculty Type: Years of Service: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Tenured <input type="checkbox"/> Tenure-Track <input type="checkbox"/> Full-Time VITAL <input type="checkbox"/> Part-Time VITAL <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate Student						
Name: Title: Faculty Type: Years of Service: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Tenured <input type="checkbox"/> Tenure-Track <input type="checkbox"/> Full-Time VITAL <input type="checkbox"/> Part-Time VITAL <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate Student Faculty Type:						
Name: Title: Faculty Type: Years of Service: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Tenured <input type="checkbox"/> Tenure-Track <input type="checkbox"/> Full-Time VITAL <input type="checkbox"/> Part-Time VITAL <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate Student						
TEACHING TOTALS (this page)						
TEACHING TOTALS (cumulative)						

This resource has been prepared by
**The Delphi Project on
The Changing Faculty and Student Success**

For more information please visit
pullias.usc.edu/delphi

Project Description

The nature of the American academic workforce has fundamentally shifted over the past several decades. Whereas full-time tenured and tenure-track faculty were once the norm, more than two-thirds of the professoriate in non-profit postsecondary education is now comprised of VITAL faculty. New hires across all institutional types are now largely contingent and this number will continue to grow unless trends change. The purpose of this project is to examine and develop solutions to change the nature of the professoriate, the causes of the rise of VITAL faculty, and the impact of this change on the teaching and learning environment.

Project Team

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The Spencer Foundation was established in 1962 by Lyle M. Spencer. The Foundation is committed to investigating ways in which education, broadly conceived, can be improved around the world. From the first, the Foundation has been dedicated to the belief that research is necessary to the improvement in education. The Foundation is thus committed to supporting high-quality investigation of education through its research programs and to strengthening and renewing the educational research community through its fellowship and training programs and related activities.

The Teagle Foundation intends to be an influential national voice and a catalyst for change in higher education to improve undergraduate student learning in the arts and sciences. The Foundation provides leadership by mobilizing the intellectual and financial resources that are necessary if today's students are to have access to a challenging and transformative liberal education. The benefits of such learning last for a lifetime and are best achieved when colleges set clear goals for liberal learning and systematically evaluate progress toward them. In carrying out its work, the Foundation is committed to disseminating its findings widely, believing that the knowledge generated by our grantees—rather than the funding that enabled their work—is at the heart of our philanthropy.

The TIAA Institute helps advance the ways individuals and institutions plan for financial security and organizational effectiveness. The Institute conducts in-depth research, provides access to a network of thought leaders, and enables those it serves to anticipate trends, plan future strategies and maximize opportunities for success.

The **National Science Foundation's** mission is to advance the progress of science, a mission accomplished by funding proposals for research and education made by scientists, engineers, and educators from across the country.

The Carnegie Corporation of New York, founded by Andrew Carnegie, was envisioned as a foundation that would “promote the advancement and diffusion of knowledge and understanding.” In keeping with this mandate, our work incorporates an affirmation of our historic role as an education foundation but also honors Andrew Carnegie's passion for international peace and the health of our democracy.

Pullias Center for Higher Education

Promoting Equity in Higher Education

The world's leading research center on student access and success in higher education, the Pullias Center for Higher Education advances innovative, scalable solutions to improve college outcomes for underserved students and to enhance the performance of postsecondary institutions. The Pullias Center is located within the USC Rossier School of Education, one of the world's premier centers for graduate study in urban education.

Since 1995, the mission of the Pullias Center for Higher Education is to bring a multidisciplinary perspective to complex social, political, and economic issues in higher education. Our work is devoted to the key issues of equity in education, including college access, retention, and accountability for underserved students—and the effectiveness of the colleges and universities that serve them. Both directly and through our research, we engage with institutional leaders, policymakers and the community at large to address the major challenges in educational equity today. The Pullias Center is directed by Dr. Adrianna Kezar, one of the foremost experts on change leadership, diversity, equity and inclusion, faculty, STEM reform, collaboration and governance in higher education.

For more information, please visit pullias.usc.edu

American Association of Colleges and Universities

The American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) is a global membership organization dedicated to advancing the vitality and democratic purposes of undergraduate liberal education.

Through its programs and events, publications and research, public advocacy and campus-based projects, AAC&U serves as a catalyst and facilitator for innovations that improve educational quality and equity and that support the success of all students.

The Delphi Project on
The Changing Faculty
and
Student Success