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Equity for lecturers and counseling faculty at California State University, Dominguez Hills

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Example Best Practices to Support Non-Tenure-Track Faculty

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In fall 2017, CSU Dominguez Hills president Willie Hagan and academic senate chair Laura Talamante initiated a task force to examine the working conditions of non-tenure-track faculty. At this time, faculty-student ratios were increasing for these faculty, a concern that needed to be acknowledged and addressed. As a result of the task force investigation and recommendations, the university launched an impressive set of reforms to pursue equity for all faculty and to initiate a new non-tenure-track faculty culture. Notably, a decision was made to give non-tenure-track faculty in the counseling department promotional opportunities that, until recently, had been available only to non-tenure-track faculty in other departments. This and the many other changes CSUDH made reinvented the university's non-tenure-track faculty model, better aligning it to meet both faculty needs and the university's student success mission.

Compensation and Benefits Increases

After analyzing the salaries of all non-tenure-track faculty, CSUDH increased non-tenure-track faculty compensation through equity pay programs and contractual service salary/range elevation pay increases, narrowing the compensation gap between non-tenure-track faculty and tenured/tenure-track faculty. The pay increases allow non-tenure-track faculty to focus more deeply on their teaching and less on establishing additional, alternative income streams to supplement too-low wages and limited benefits. This fundamental support allows non-tenure-track faculty at CSUDH to do what they do best: support students, engage in scholarly work and create exceptional learning experiences.

A More Professionalized Faculty

In line with the union-negotiated collective bargaining agreement, CSUDH reviews non-tenure-track faculty for advancement into multi-year contracts and encourages them to apply for reassigned time and sabbaticals for scholarly projects. Non-tenure-track faculty in the university counseling department have more recently been included in the collective bargaining agreement as eligible for sabbaticals, with the first counseling faculty member awarded a sabbatical in 2018.



Similarly, non-tenure-track faculty are eligible to apply for and have been granted university research funds, scholarships, creative activity awards and other research awards, providing them with the time and funds to pursue creative and scholarly work. Non-tenure-track faculty are also included as participants and leaders of the Faculty Learning Communities and Freshman Dream Seminars that are a growing part of the university's learning culture. Through these opportunities, CSUDH recognizes that all faculty are scholars and deserve opportunities to build and share their scholarly work.

Additionally, CSUDH now actively encourages campus leaders to hire non-tenure-track faculty for tenure-track roles. In the past, while non-tenure-track faculty were permitted to apply for tenure-track positions, they often did not end up getting hired. This was due to a culture in which non-tenure-track faculty were often not accepted as peers of tenured and tenure-track faculty because the hiring of and professional development for non-tenure-track faculty was largely expedient and not systematic. Since CSUDH made changes to its faculty culture, several non-tenure-track faculty have successfully entered the ranks of tenure-track faculty, proving that the university's efforts have started creating a process and pipeline for non-tenure-track faculty to transition into tenure-track roles.

CSUDH also initiated and awarded its first annual outstanding lecturer faculty awards, dedicated to recognizing and honoring a non-tenure-track faculty member's contributions to the university. In addition, CSUDH created dedicated positions on the academic senate for non-tenure-track faculty, formally including this population in university governance. Non-tenure-track faculty are compensated for their service in all areas of shared governance and university-wide task forces, effective 2019.

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Guiding Principles and A New Culture

Beyond implementing specific policies to treat non-tenure-track faculty more equitably, CSUDH follows key guiding principles to design and implement its reforms that focus on changing the faculty culture as a whole. For one, these principles emphasize clarifying communication and making procedures around hiring and evaluation more systematic and transparent. In addition, the principles acknowledge vast differences between the working conditions and social standing of non-tenure-track faculty compared to those of tenured and tenure-track faculty on campus, and recognize

that these differences create problems for campus culture, faculty experiences and student learning. There's now a shared recognition that treating non-tenure-track faculty fairly contributes to a broader culture of diversity, equity, inclusion, learning and respect, contributing to the richness and interconnectedness of the campus community. Narrowing the gap in compensation and social standing between non-tenure-track faculty and tenured/tenure-track faculty also contributes to a less stratified culture that fosters more natural collaboration between non-tenure-track faculty and tenured/tenure-track faculty. All in all, the new faculty model contributes to a stronger culture of learning on campus, in which faculty are supported in their efforts to foster student success, which helps sustain student persistence and graduation.

Learn more about CSUDH's efforts to support all faculty on the university's Faculty Affairs & Development webpages at csudh.edu/faculty-affairs. Related surveys and reports can be found at csudh.edu/academic-senate/reports-surveys.

Visit The Delphi Project on the Changing Faculty and Student Success for more example practices and a wide range of resources and toolkits to better support faculty off the tenure track at pullias.usc.edu/delphi.

