VITAL Faculty on *our* Campus

A Guide for Campus Task Forces to Better Understand Faculty Working Conditions and the Necessity of Change

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

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including

VITAL Faculty in our Department: A Guide for Departments and Academic Programs to Better Understand Faculty Working Conditions and Necessity of Change examines VITAL faculty practices and issues at the department level. It has been prepared to accompany this guide but is focused more narrowly on individual academic programs and can be used to collect information from specific departments to produce a more clear understanding of how practices might affect faculty on campus in different ways.

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.

Contents

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, Instructors, Temporary, Adjuncts 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 because of constant turnover. Perhaps most importantly, institutions are now often engaged in exploitative employment arrangements characterized by a growing number of faculty who 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. The Delphi project is funded through generous support from The Spencer Foundation, The Teagle Foundation, the TIAA Institute, the National Science Foundation 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 over reliance 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 Campus

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 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 here 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. You should also have a better idea of what sorts of changes can be made on your campus 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.

Our goal in proposing that campuses consider these changes 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 on your campus. 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 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. You are free to use all of these resources as you see fit.

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*. As you work through each section, you will be prompted to think about policies and practices largely at the campus level. In some places, you might wish to collect some additional information from specific offices or groups on campus; you may also see the need to bring them into this process to better understand how policies and practices are interpreted and applied across the campus.

We are glad that we can support your efforts to examine and change VITAL 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. This guide may also be utilized by multi-campus institutions or systems. 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, Instructor, Temporary, Adjuncts and Lecturers faculty.** The terms **non-tenure-track faculty** and **contingent** commonly denote 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 only work 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 required of tenure-track faculty, they are still faculty. The work they do is tremendously important in the teaching and research 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.

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[1] Levy, 2019

Before you get started... ✏️

Take a moment to consider what you already know about VITAL faculty on your campus. 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

Data

Availability of VITAL Data and Sources

The following are common sources of data about VITAL faculty on campuses. For each, indicate whether or not these sources collect and maintain data on VITAL faculty. These sources may be helpful for answering questions in this guide, so we also encourage you to identify the best contact in each office. More than being just sources of data, these individuals and offices can be valuable partners in conducting this assessment and as you proceed with recommending changes in practices and policies.

The types of data available may include personnel files, campus survey results, case studies, task force/committee reports, faculty handbooks and more. Data may include individual or aggregate information related to VITAL faculty's identities (e.g., race/ethnicity, sex), employment characteristics (e.g., date hired, salary, highest degree earned, home department/unit), role (e.g., job title, workload, evaluations) and/or perceptions (e.g., job satisfaction, perception of campus climate).

Provost's Office   Human Resources   Institutional Research Office

The National Center for Education Statistics/Digest of Education Statistics/Digest of Education Statistics offices: **https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d19/tables/dt19_315.20.as**

American Association of University Professors/Data Snapshot March 2023: **https://www.aaup.org/sites/default/files/AAUP%20Data%20Snapshot.pdf**

Which of the following offices collect and maintain data on VITAL faculty on campus?

Provost's Office _____ ☐ Yes ☐ No _If no, skip to next data source._

    Type(s) of data/information available:

Are data disaggregated by: ☐ Role (Research/Instruction) ☐ Full-time/Part-time

Primary contact for VITAL data/information in office:

Are the data this office maintain available online? If so, where and how can it be accessed?

Institutional Research Office ☐ Yes ☐ No If no, skip to data next source.
Type(s) of data/information available:

Are data disaggregated by: ☐ Research/Instruction ☐ Full-time/Part-time

Primary contact for VITAL faculty data/information in office:

Are the data this office maintain available online or through the campus network? If so, where and how can it be accessed?

Human Resources Office ☐ Yes ☐ No If no, skip to next source.
Type(s) of data/information available:

Are data disaggregated by: ☐ Research/Instruction ☐ Full-time/Part-time

Primary contact for VITAL faculty data/information in office:

Are the data this office maintain available online or through the campus network? If so, where and how can it be accessed?

Other Source (e.g. Center for Teaching, Instructional Technology Office, faculty senate, faculty union):

Type(s) of data/information available:

Are data disaggregated by: ☐ Research/Instruction   ☐ Full-time/Part-time

Primary contact for VITAL data/information in office:

Are the data this office maintain available online or through the campus network? If so, where and how can it be accessed?

Other: _____

Type(s) of data/information available:

Are data disaggregated by: ☐ Research/Instruction   ☐ Full-time/Part-time

Primary contact for VITAL data/information in office:

Are the data this office maintain available online or through the campus network? If so, where and how can it be accessed?

Are campus-wide data on any of the following maintained by any of the offices above?

Number of undergraduate courses by level and graduate courses taught by tenured, tenure- track, and VITAL faculty

☐ Yes   ☐ No

If yes, which offices maintain these data, and are they accessible? How many years of data are available?

Number of students taught by tenured, tenure-track, and VITAL faculty

☐ Yes   ☐ No

If yes, which offices maintain these data and are they accessible? How many years of data are available?

Number of student credit hours taught by tenured, tenure-track, and VITAL faculty

☐ Yes   ☐ No

If yes, which offices maintain these data and are they accessible? How many years of data are available?

The Delphi Project's *VITAL Faculty in Our Unit: A Guide for Departments, Programs, and Academic Units* includes a worksheet that can be used by individual departments to record and compare the types of data on this page and is available on the **Toolkits section of our website.**

Titles and Employment Classifications

Are job titles and employment classifications for VITAL faculty uniform across campus?

Full-Time VITAL Faculty	**Part-Time VITAL Faculty**
☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
What are the titles and/or job classifications that exist on campus? *If they are not uniform, indicate where or when each is used.*	What are the titles and/or job classifications that exist on campus? *If they are not uniform, indicate where or when each is used.*

Are the roles of faculty holding each of these titles or classifications defined at the institution level? Are they unambiguous?

Unfortunately, many campus dashboards are not publically accessible but a few include:

> *Cal State University Long Beach dashboard*
> *The University of Texas at Austin dashboard*

💬 Discussion Questions

Data

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 among the members of your task force, committee or planning group. They will also help you to think about the process of changing these policies and practices.

Considering what you have found in the preceding section, how would you assess the collection and maintenance of data on VITAL faculty on campus?

Are data accessible and complete?

Are the data on VITAL faculty that are available on your campus sufficient for the campus community and policymakers to understand the problems or challenges?

Which data are missing or not easily accessible that would help the campus community and policymakers to better understand conditions on your campus?

If they are not already included on your task force, committee, or planning group, how might data professionals such as institutional researchers be encouraged to participate as partners in your efforts?

If access to data is inadequate, what steps can be taken to improve the availability and accessibility of data on VITAL faculty on your campus?

Do you have a data dashboard for faculty data that different departments and units can access?

Have you explored how titles can reflect respect for VITAL faculty and their work?

Hiring + Employment

How are vacant faculty positions for each faculty type typically filled, and what policies, if any, exist to to determine how jobs must be posted, the length of time the position is advertised, the search committee process, and criteria for hiring?

Tenure-track:

Full-time VITAL:

Part-time VITAL:

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:_____

On average, how long are the contract terms of VITAL faculty? Individual Terms? Nine or ten months? Annual? Multi-year?

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

Campus Staffing Plan

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 no, read over the following questions before moving on, even though you may not be able to answer them.

What are the main directives of the campus staffing plan? For example, does it prescribe ratios for the numbers or percentages of faculty employed in different types of positions (e.g., tenure-track, part-time)?

How are the directives of the staffing plan communicated to academic units across campus?

Does it appear the staffing plan is uniformly followed across the campus?

Who is responsible for ensuring adherence to the staffing plan?

Which of the following conditions or standards, if any, are articulated in the campus staffing plan?

☐ 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   ☐ Part-time VITAL

☐ Length of contract terms 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:

Qualifications

Does the campus set minimum qualifications that are requirements for teaching, including degrees held by VITAL faculty?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

If yes, what are the minimum qualifications? If they are different for tenure-track and VITAL faculty, describe the differences.

Do qualifications for vacant tenure-track positions ever specify that candidates will only be considered or are preferred if they have completed a doctoral degree in a minimum number of years prior to the position start date?

What efforts, if any, are made to ensure that VITAL faculty are hired to teach courses that match their academic or professional experience or expertise? Describe these efforts, if possible.

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?

What forms of feedback are provided to VITAL faculty to understand their performance (including annual reviews, observations, review of portfolios, student assessment data)?

Who conducts the evaluations 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

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? If no, what are the common practices for reappointment on campus?

Do policies exist that define a specific date or minimum amount of time before the start of the academic term when faculty must be notified that courses they are scheduled to teach will be cancelled?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

If yes, what are the policies? If no, what are the common practices for this notification on campus?

Promotion

Are there policies or formal practices in place that outline when and how full-time VITAL and part-time faculty receive 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)?

Full-time:

Part-time:

What conditions or incentives typically accompany promotion for VITAL faculty? If "other," please describe the conditions or incentives.

Full-time: ☐ Increase in pay?   ☐ A longer contract term?   ☐ New title?   ☐ Other?

Part-time: ☐ Increase in pay?   ☐ A longer contract term?   ☐ New title?   ☐ Other?

Are the criteria for promotion in a handbook or policy document?

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

Are they distributed and well understood among VITAL faculty?

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

What faculty are involved in the promotion process for VITAL faculty?

Are faculty who are part of the promotion process for VITAL faculty trained and understand the criteria?

Full-time: ☐   Yes   ☐ No   Part-time: ☐   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 among the members of your task force, committee or planning group. 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 on your campus?

Campus Staffing Plan

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

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

Which of the following components of a campus 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?

Evaluation

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

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

Do evaluations explore multiple dimensions of research faculty work — grant management, grant acquisition and quality of research?

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 quality of teaching and learning?

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

Reappointment

Are reappointment policies and practices serving your campus well?

If current reappointment policies and practices are not serving the campus 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 campus community 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?

Are the criteria for promotion in a handbook or policy document?

Are they distributed and well understood among VITAL faculty?

What faculty are involved in the promotion process for VITAL faculty?

Are faculty trained and understand the criteria who are part of the promotion process for VITAL faculty?

Faculty Unions

Representation of VITAL Faculty

Is there a faculty union(s) on the campus?

☐ Yes   ☐ No   If no, skip to final question at the end of this page.

Which unions represent faculty on the campus, and what are the categories of faculty each represents?

Are all categories of faculty — tenure-track and VITAL —covered by these unions and their respective collective bargaining agreements?

☐ Yes   ☐ No   If no, answer the next question to clarify who is represented and who is not.

Which of the following are not represented by unions on campus?
☐ Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty
☐ Faculty holding appointments as Department Chair
☐ Full-Time VITAL Faculty – Primarily Research
☐ Full-Time VITAL Faculty – Primarily Instruction
☐ Part-Time Faculty – Primarily Research
☐ Part-Time Faculty – Primarily Instruction
☐ Graduate and Research Assistants
☐ Postdoctoral Fellows
☐ Particular Academic Units: _____

If the campus or any of the above categories of faculty are not unionized, have any efforts been made to unionize faculty in recent years?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

💬 Discussion Questions

Faculty Unions

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 among the members of your task force, committee or planning group. They will also help you to think about the process of changing these policies and practices.

If unions represent tenured and tenure-track faculty, but not full-time or part-time VITAL faculty, how are faculty that are excluded from the collective bargaining process affected?

If tenured and tenure-track faculty and VITAL faculty are included in the same bargaining unit, are the needs of different types of faculty addressed separately? Are the needs of all faculty types in the bargaining unit considered?

If faculty are able to unionize, but efforts to organize VITAL faculty have not succeeded or this has not been attempted, what might be done to include them in collective bargaining?

If attempts have been made to organize VITAL faculty, which groups on campus, including student organizations, supported or opposed the effort?

What are relationships like between the administration and the collective bargaining group?

Are there opportunities to look for mutual interests such as student success and improved learning?

Are there opportunities to strengthen shared governance as part of the collective bargaining process?

If your VITAL faculty are having difficulty organizing, there are examples that can be useful to learn from:

> *AAUP — Fighting for Non-Tenure-Track Faculty*
> *Delphi Project —University of California Case Study*

Some campuses believe that they cannot engage faculty in shared governance if there is collecive bargaining, but that is not correct:

> *AAUP — Statement on academic government institutions engaged in collective bargaining*

Curriculum + Teaching

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, if at all, to make use of high-impact teaching strategies or other classroom pedagogies?

Information about high-impact teaching strategies is available online from the **American Association of Colleges and Universities website.**

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

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

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

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

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?

💬 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 on campus among the members of your task force, committee or planning group. They will also help you to think about the process of changing these policies and practices.

In general, how could better opportunities for VITAL faculty to participate in curriculum development improve teaching and learning on your campus?

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 on campus 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, campus-wide orientation?

☐ 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 only cover general institutional information and human resources material, or are faculty roles and expectations also reviewed?

Is an online orientation available for VITAL faculty who may not be able to attend an on-campus orientation scheduled during business hours?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

Do policies at the campus level also indicate they should receive a formal orientation at the department level?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

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 and at the institutional level?

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

Is formal mentoring available to facilitate opportunities for VITAL faculty to interact regularly with a faculty member on the tenure track to share knowledge, discuss teaching strategies and practices, and provide guidance regarding their careers?

☐ 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

💬 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 among the members of your task force, committee or planning group. They will also help you to think about the process of changing these policies and practices.

Overall, how could faculty development be improved on your campus?

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

Orientation
How could the way orientation is provided for new faculty be improved on your campus?

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 mentorships with tenure-track faculty or enhancing existing mentorship opportunities improve teaching and learning?

👥 Governance

Participation in Campus-Wide Governance

What, if any, provisions exist to ensure VITAL faculty are represented in faculty governance?

How do VITAL faculty participate, if at all, in the faculty senate, committees, and other governance or decision-making structures? Do they have voting rights?

If VITAL faculty participate, is the level of representation proportionate in any way to the balance of tenure-track and VITAL faculty on the campus? Conversely, does it seem there are few VITAL representatives considering the number employed on campus?

Are VITAL faculty paid for time spent on governance activities?

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

Are VITAL faculty governance rights written down and codified in policy documents or handbooks? Are they regularly reviewed?

Are there ways to hold departments accountable for following campus policies about governance?

Do VITAL faculty participate in departmental decisions about curriculum, pedagogy and other key areas of departmental work?

Are VITAL faculty invited and encouraged to attend departmental meetings?

Governance

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 among the members of your task force, committee or planning group. 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 governance and decision making?

What steps can be taken to increase or improve VITAL faculty participation in governance and decision making on campus?

Academic Freedom

What are the policies that exist to protect VITAL faculty academic freedom in the classroom? In research or publication? Regarding extramural utterances? Are these policies different than what is available to other faculty?

How are cases handled when VITAL faculty are involved?

Do VITAL faculty have the ability to freely voice concerns through governance structures? To the senior administration? Can they do so without fear of penalty? If so, how are they protected?

Academic Freedom

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 among the members of your task force, committee or planning group. They will also help you to think about the process of changing these policies and practices.

Considering the purposes of academic freedom, what are the benefits of ensuring that all faculty receive the same protections in the classroom? In research or publication? Regarding extramural utterances?

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?

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

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

Are salary equity studies conducted for VITAL faculty?
Full-time: ☐Yes ☐ No Part-time: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Are salaries compared across faculty types for equity?
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?	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Yes	☐ No
Faculty Senate meetings?	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Yes	☐ No
Department meetings?	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Yes	☐ No
Professional development?	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Yes	☐ No
Mentoring?	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Yes	☐ No

Benefits

Do full-time VITAL and part-time 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   _____ per
☐ Year   ☐ Term   ☐ Year   ☐ Term

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

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

Are VITAL faculty eligible to receive these benefits?
    Retirement?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No
    Paid childcare or eldercare leave?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No
    Sabbatical?   ☐ 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 among the members of your task force, committee or planning group. 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, support, and materials may vary across campus, so indicate which is most common. If you would like to survey individual academic units to determine whether there are differences in how faculty are supported, please refer to *VITAL Faculty in Our Department: A Guide for Departments and Academic Programs to Better Understand Faculty Working Conditions and Necessity of Change*, which is available in the Resources and Toolkits section of the Delphi Project website.

Office Space

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

Full-time: ☐ Yes   ☐ No   Part-time: ☐ Yes   ☐ No
☐ Private office   ☐ Private office
☐ Shared office   ☐ Shared office
☐ Access to other space   ☐ 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 and Office Materials

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

	Full-time:		Part-time:	
Photocopiers?	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Yes	☐ No
Computer?	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Yes	☐ No
Phone to place calls?	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Yes	☐ No
Phone to receive calls?	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Yes	☐ No
Voicemail?	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Yes	☐ No
Email?	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Yes	☐ No
Paper supplies?	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Yes	☐ No
Other office supplies?	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Yes	☐ No
Copy of course textbooks?	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Yes	☐ No
Sample syllabi	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Yes	☐ No
Student worker assistance?	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Yes	☐ No
After-hours office access?	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Yes	☐ No

Access to Instructional Support Services

Are VITAL faculty given the same access to utilize student workers and departmental staff 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 among the members of your task force, committee or planning group. 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?

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?

Clarifying Leadership and Service

Research has identified that VITAL faculty are often tapped for service but that these responsibilities are not added into their contract and/or expectations around service are not clear. VITAL faculty often report that they do not know if they can say no to service requests. This can result in unpaid labor and exploitation. Research also shows that VITAL faculty often have skills that would make them strong candidates for leadership roles but they are often overlooked. Ensuring opportunities for VITAL faculty benefits the faculty members in terms of seeing a career path and the institution in terms of maximizing their human resources.

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?

Are VITAL faculty expected or invited to play leadership roles?
☐ Yes   ☐ No

What types of leadership positions do they have access to? What types of positions are they mentored for?

Are VITAL faculty provided guidance on planning over the lifetime of their careers?
☐ Yes   ☐ No

Campus Climate

It is essential that VITAL faculty experience a welcoming climate of respect and inclusion. Many campuses identify challenges in the climate and policies that can also shape the climate.

Do you regularly conduct climate studies to understand the climate, both at the institutional level as well as encourage departmental climate studies?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

Do you include VITAL faculty in harassment and bullying protections?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

Are there due process and grievance procedures for VITAL faculty?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

If yes, are they communicated at orientation and other key opportunities?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

Are wellness resources available and shared with VITAL faculty?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

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

☐ Yes   ☐ No

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

☐ Yes   ☐ No

Do department chairs and others in academic affairs have a part of their role allocated to supporting VITAL faculty?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

Download the Pullias Center's Departmental Cultures and Non-Tenure-Track Faculty: A Self-Assessment Tool for Departments

🗨 Discussion Questions

Campus 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 among the members of your task force, committee or planning group. They will also help you to think about the process of changing these policies and practices.

What impact does your current campus 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?
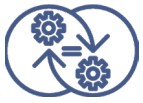
Consistent Policies

Inconsistent policies can create inequities. VITAL faculty report that there are divergent policies within their institutions, and colleges and departments may vary considerably in terms of interpretation and implementation of policy without any explanation. There may be meaningful reasons for the variations, but campus leaders usually do not communicate the reasons for different policies which creates poor morale. This section will help you reflect on policies and what customization is needed to respond to differences by field or discipline or local culture.

Are policies consistent across departments?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

If differences exist, are they important for the goals of that unit?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

Have you conducted an audit of policy implementation to ensure units are complying with policies?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

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 group moving forward, and what individual participants have learned about VITAL faculty work on the campus 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 Reports, Case Studies and Toolkits sections of the Delphi Project website as you carry out this process.

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

We also encourage you to consider whether a campus climate survey might be necessary 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 campus 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 across the campus?

Thinking about each of the sections and questions in this guide, 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 on your campus, may be creating obstacles for achieving the best teaching and learning environment to support student success?

How might different groups in the campus community be able to make contributions to efforts to improve the working life of VITAL faculty (keeping in mind the different conditions that may be experienced by full- and part-time faculty) and better support them to maximize their efforts to teach students?

> We encourage you to access and review *The Imperative for Change* and *The Path to Change* as a reference for answering this question. These resources are available in the **Reports section of the Delphi Project website.**

What are the prevailing values that exist on campus, 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 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 on the campus?

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

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.

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?

☐ **Data:** Which data do you require to make progress and which offices can help?

☐ **Hiring + Employment:** Which changes will you pursue to enhance teaching and learning?

☐ **Faculty Unions:** How will unions play a role in improving policies and practices?

☐ **Curriculum + Teaching:** How will VITAL faculty be supported in teaching and fairly evaluated?

☐ **Faculty Development:** Which improvements will help to enrich VITAL faculty contributions?

☐ **Governance:** How will VITAL faculty be encouraged and invited to participate in governance?

☐ **Academic Freedom:** Which steps will be taken to ensure academic freedom for all faculty?

☐ **Compensation + Benefits:** What constitutes equitable pay and how can it be achieved?

☐ **Office Space + Support:** How will support be provided to improve teaching and learning?

☐ **Clarifying Leadership and Service:** What leadership and service opportunities will VITAL faculty be offered?

☐ **Campus Climate:** How will they experience a welcoming climate of inclusion and respect?

☐ **Consistent Policies:** How can you ensure consistent policies to mitigate inequities for VITAL faculty?

Notes

Notes

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 and Partner Organizations

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In partnership with the American Association of College 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.

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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.

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

The Delphi Project on
The Changing Faculty
and
Student Success