The Path to Change

How Campus Communities Worked to Change Non-Tenure-Track Policies and Practices

In these documents, we hope to assist change agents in creating positive changes for non-tenure-track faculty (NTTF) by highlighting examples of how different change agents and levers have been used to advance change on actual college campuses. Changes can originate with the efforts of many different actors at different levels. Too often, we have heard change agents voice frustration that there was no shared vision about the need for change. These cases show how changes can emerge from one part of an institution and eventually spread, leading to much broader institution wide changes. We have observed these four processes as being the most common:

Union-led   **Senate-led**   **Joint Faculty and Administrative Task Force-led**   **State- or System-led**

Change processes can also be led by departments, although we find this less frequently.

There are also many different levers used along each path to change, including data collection, relationship building, strategic planning, accreditation, institutional values and mission, open forums, and creating key documents. Each case demonstrates the ways that certain change agents orchestrate and use levers at their disposal in their particular context to create change. Yet, as you will see, there are many common levers that can be used across different campuses.

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

In this document, we highlight the path and change agents involved in helping to facilitate positive change for non-tenure-track faculty.

This is an example of a **Joint Faculty and Administrative Task Force-Led** path to change.

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University's (Virginia Tech) path to change began with a group of NTTF instructors convening to create change within their department, which spread to create university-wide change with the help of the Provost. As the departmental discussion was continued at the institution level, leaders in the administration took a lead role in collecting data on NTTFs and formed a task-force. Here, we highlight the path and change agents involved with creating a promotion policy for instructors and a task force for research faculty.

Underlined headings indicate the main levers used in this change process.

The main change agents involved are: ***NTTF Leaders*** *and* ***Administration,*** *including the* ***Provost.***

Departmental Leadership among NTTF Instructors

NTTF Instructors – In 2011, a group of instructors in the English department formed the Instructor Concerns Committee and began to raise concerns about instructor promotions. The committee developed a promotion proposal, which was presented to the dean and then to the provost and associate provost. The promotion proposal received positive feedback and the administration suggested a university-wide expansion modeled on the draft promotion policy.

Partnership with the Associate Provost and Others – The associate provost and English department faculty worked together to convene other department heads, particularly of those units with large numbers of instructors, to determine their support and concerns. The department heads were also encouraged to recommend an instructor to help shape the proposal. Together, the group reviewed various NTTF promotion processes in use across Virginia Tech and formed a preliminary framework for a proposal. Next, the instructors and department heads convened a forum to openly discuss their model; adjustments were made based on the discussion. The associate provost and department head in English introduced this version of a career ladder promotion proposal to the Commission of Faculty Affairs. Suggestions were given and additional modifications were made. Another forum was held, which resulted in the addition of new rank descriptions and changes to the faculty handbook. Other

employment policies (including NTTFs in decision making, program planning, graduate advisory committees), which were already in use, but had not been formally included in handbook were also added at this time. Lastly, The Instructor Career Ladder Promotion Policy was approved by the Commission of Faculty Affairs, University Board, and Board of Visitors and went into effect 16 months after the initial discussion among instructors in the English department had taken place.

Convening Department Administrators and English Department Instructors – Department heads and the Instructor Concerns Committee in the English department began writing a draft of promotion criteria and departmental guidelines including a common dossier format (a variation of the format used for tenure-track faculty). This format was reviewed in a university-wide meeting of instructors, department heads, and deans hosted by the provost's office. In addition, the English department faculty worked through their candidate statements together and discussed what accomplishments might be reported and where each would appear in the dossier. After revisions, forty-five instructors were approved for promotion after the first cycle. Next the associate provost met with instructors to debrief the first cycle and seek ideas for improvement. In turn, a session was held for instructors considering the submission of dossiers for round two where recently promoted instructors spoke about how they compiled their dossiers and composed their candidate statements.

A copy of the dossier template is available at: http://www.provost.vt.edu/promotion_tenure/promotion_and_tenure.html.

Also, samples statements collected in the process were posted online to assist others in replicating the model, which are available at: http://www.provost.vt.edu/promotion_tenure/instructor_promotion_sample_statements.pdf.
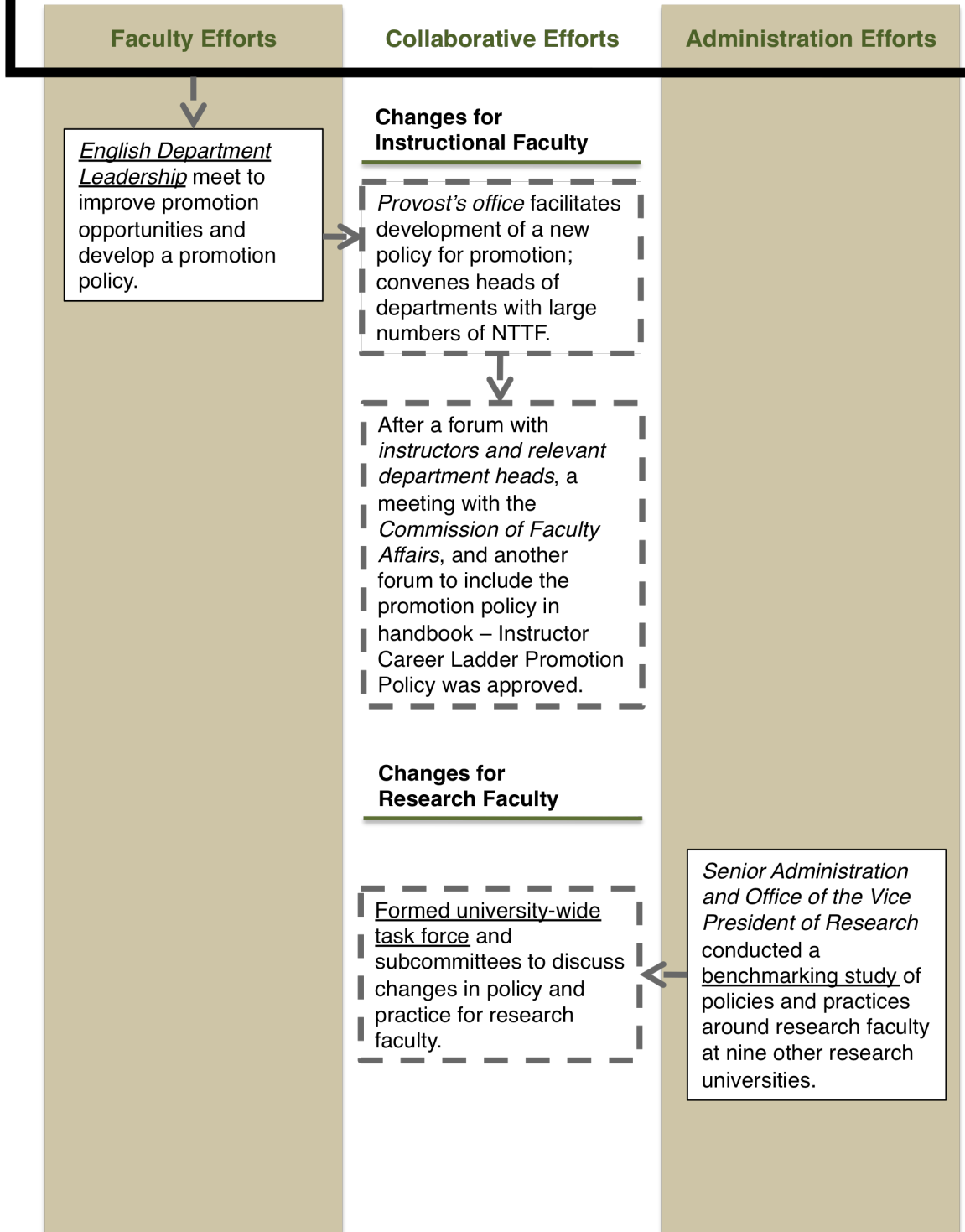
Data Collection and Formation of Task Force

Leadership in the Central Administration and Office of the Vice President of Research – In addition the promotion policy for instructors, Virginia Tech also initiated data collection on their research faculty in order to understand how policies and practices might better support those faculty, as well. The Office of the Vice President for Research conducted a benchmarking study of selected policies and practices at nine other research universities and a survey of Virginia Tech research faculty.

Formation of University-wide Task Force and Subcommittees – Next, the office convened a university-wide task force to discuss research faculty. Subcommittees were formed to discuss changes in policy and practice for research faculty. Nine issues were being discussed at that time and were in the mobilization stage.

The information from this document was excerpted from Patricia Hyer's chapter in Kezar, A. (Ed.), *Embracing Non-Tenure Track Faculty: Changing Campuses for the New Faculty Majority*. See Chapter 6 for additional details on Virginia Tech's experience with evolving policy around NTTF.

Mapping the Path to Change

Virginia Tech is an example of a **Joint Faculty and Administrative Task Force-Led** path to change. Here we highlight the levers used (underlined) and change agents (italicized) involved to create change.

Faculty Efforts	Collaborative Efforts	Administration Efforts

Changes for Instructional Faculty

English Department Leadership meet to improve promotion opportunities and develop a promotion policy.

Provost's office facilitates development of a new policy for promotion; convenes heads of departments with large numbers of NTTF.

After a forum with *instructors and relevant department heads*, a meeting with the *Commission of Faculty Affairs*, and another forum to include the promotion policy in handbook – Instructor Career Ladder Promotion Policy was approved.

Changes for Research Faculty

Formed university-wide task force and subcommittees to discuss changes in policy and practice for research faculty.

Senior Administration and Office of the Vice President of Research conducted a benchmarking study of policies and practices around research faculty at nine other research universities.

Example Practices
From the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University's Path to Change

Example practices from the **Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech)** case include multi-year contracts, benefits, salary equity, and the beginning of conversations around improving practices for research faculty.

> For additional resources, please visit The Delphi Project on the Changing Faculty and Student Success Resources and Tool Kits website, which contains information and tools for examining non-tenure track faculty (NTTF) conditions on your campus. For example, ***Non-Tenure-Track Faculty on Our Campus: A Guide for Campus Task Forces to Better Understand Faculty Working Conditions and Necessity of Change*** is designed for use by task forces, committees, or groups who would like to examine non-tenure-track faculty practices and issues at the campus level. Its question sections, discussion questions, and concluding questions guide practitioners through the process of examining non-tenure-track faculty issues on campus and help them to better understand challenges associated with current practices and begin to build the rationale for change.
>
> **http://resources.thechangingfaculty.org**

Below we highlight the levers (underlined) under which the change (bolded) took place and provide detail on the policy or practice.

The following policies Virginia Tech had already implemented:

Multi-year Contracts – The first initiative for instructors implemented at Virginia Tech was the elimination of a required termination of full-time employment at the end of their sixth year, forcing continuing instructors into part-time appointments and denying them access to retirement and health benefits. The new policy initiative allowed for unlimited multi-year, (two-year) renewable contracts for full-time appointment. Research faculty are usually funded by grants and contracts and they typically hold restricted employment contracts. However, some research faculty employed in larger-scale research programs were provided regular, ongoing appointments through multi-year contracts.

Benefits – Full-time regular (or ongoing) positions receive the same health insurance, retirement, life insurance, sick leave, and disability benefits as tenured and tenure-track faculty. Restricted faculty (those with fixed end dates) also receive benefits for the duration of their contract, although they receive less sick leave time as determined by their work load.

Through departmental leadership among NTTF instructors the following example practice was implemented:

Promotion Policy and Salary Equity – Virginia Tech created an Instructor Career Ladder policy that promotes faculty based on time spent holding a specific rank and their accomplishments. The ranks included: instructor, advanced instructor, and senior instructor. Accomplishments considered included service beyond just teaching courses. The instructors were rewarded with title changes, salary adjustments, and a longer-term contracts.

Through data collection the following example practices are beginning to be discussed around research faculty:

Federal Contract Compliance, Access to International Travel Funds to Present Research Papers, Consulting, Short-Term Disability, Opportunity to Work with Students and be Compensated for Overload Teaching Responsibilities, Governance, Job Security Issues, University-Level Promotion Process, and Postdoctoral Researchers – Because research faculty are subject to a different set of policies at Virginia Tech than instructors, the university conducted a benchmarking study of selected policies and practices at nine other research universities and a survey of Virginia Tech research faculty. Subcommittees were formed to discuss changes in policy and practice for research faculty. The nine issues above are being discussed among the subcommittees.

For the current policies related to instructor and research faculty go to:
http://www.provost.vt.edu/faculty_handbook/faculty_handbook.html

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 non-tenure-track 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 non-tenure-track faculty, and the impact of this change on the teaching and learning environment.

In partnership with the Association of American College and Universities

AAC&U is the leading national association concerned with the quality, vitality, and public standing of undergraduate liberal education. Its members are committed to extending the advantages of a liberal education to all students, regardless of academic specialization or intended career. Founded in 1915, AAC&U now comprises more than 1,250 member institutions - including accredited public and private colleges, community colleges, and universities of every type and size.

Project Funding

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