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Promoting a Greater Sense of Inclusion and Stability for NTTF at Loyola Marymount University

2023 Winner of the Delphi Award

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From the Delphi Project database of

Example Best Practices to Support Non-Tenure-Track Faculty

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Example Best Practices in Process to Support Non-Tenure-Track Faculty

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Loyola Marymount University (LMU), a private, four-year comprehensive institution in Los Angeles, has been committed to improving working conditions for its non-tenure-track faculty (NTTF) over the past decade. Out of a total of 1,391 faculty members at LMU, 989 are currently NTTF, including 815 part-time and 174 full-time. Recognizing that this group is vital to student learning, LMU is dedicated to fostering a community where they can feel valued and included. Grounded in its core institutional value of community built on relationships, LMU included NTTF into its system of shared governance and ensured that their perspectives are central to the decision-making process concerning policy and practice changes that affect them. Through shared governance and continuous evaluation identifying the areas for improvement and addressing NTTF's needs, LMU has successfully enhanced the working environments for these faculty members. This success promotes their sense of belonging and job security, which, in turn, positively impacts classroom environments and student success.

Example Best Practices

Ranks, Responsibilities, and Promotion Guidelines

Since 2010, LMU has refined the ranks, responsibilities and promotion guidelines for non-tenure-track faculty, including both full-time and part-time. In 2010, promotion policies and procedures for full-time clinical faculty were established. In 2017, LMU created the university-wide part-time faculty ranks and promotion criteria. The new policy allows part-time faculty, or Lecturers, to apply for promotion to Senior Lecturer in the eighth term of teaching. It also stipulates detailed promotion procedures and required review materials. By 2019, each school and college at LMU created its own localized NTTF promotion guidelines for all faculty positions, including part-time and full-time.



Faculty Evaluation

The process of NTTF review and evaluation has been changed to be clear and fair to all, including both part-time and full-time. In 2012, the faculty service report, which was used for full-time NTTF's evaluation process, was tailored to fit their roles and responsibilities, ensuring a fair process. In 2016, LMU developed the evaluation and review system for part-time faculty, drafting clear and appropriate periodic review and promotion criteria.

Improved Compensation and Benefits

LMU has improved compensation and benefits for both part-time and full-time non-tenure-track faculty. In 2017, part-time faculty teaching at least six units per semester became eligible for health insurance and professional development funds and received salary raises commensurate with their ranks and responsibilities. In 2019, benefits and healthcare were further expanded for NTTF teaching six or more units per semester, and now they receive full benefits that take effect at the point of hire. Some NTTF groups have also become eligible for off-cycle, mid-year increases in their compensation.

Priority in Scheduling Classes

LMU recognizes the importance of accommodating the schedules of part-time faculty members, given that many of them teach at other institutions as well. Although there is currently no official policy in place regarding scheduling priority for part-time faculty, the university encourages department chairs to consider the schedules of these faculty members, allowing for flexibility and assigning classes mindfully.

Grants and Awards

LMU has allowed full-time and part-time NTTF to apply for some internal LMU grants. Examples of the grants made eligible to them include the grants that support courses addressing antisemitism, curriculum development incorporating global-local learning, and innovative uses of technology for teaching and learning. Full-time NTTF are eligible for all three types of grants, while part-time NTTF are eligible only for the innovative use of technology grants.

LMU also offers Distinguished Teaching Awards to nominated full-time and part-time NTTF who have made outstanding contributions in the areas of teaching. They are also recognized and awarded for their years of service at the annual Faculty Awards Ceremony.



Annual and Extended Contracts for Employment Stability

In 2022, LMU decided to allow departments to offer annual contracts for all NTTF, including part-time lecturers. This new policy was designed to address their concerns about employment stability. To ensure effective implementation, the university leadership hosts workshops for department chairs about how to implement annual contracts for NTTF. Additionally, LMU is in active discussions about offering extended contracts to full-time NTTF who achieve promotions.

Professional Development Funds

LMU provides a Professional Development Award, which grants NTTF an additional \$1,000 to support their ongoing growth as a teacher-artist-scholar. They are actively encouraged to apply for these funds, aimed at enhancing their skills and knowledge in pedagogy and curriculum through various professional development programs. LMU recognizes the tangible benefits of this investment, as it positively impacts the quality of student experiences in the classroom.

Faculty Handbook Revision

LMU ensured that the faculty handbook was updated accordingly with consistent language each time policies were revised. Great care was taken for clearly defining each faculty title and accurately describing the policies regarding appointments, evaluation and review process, rights and responsibilities, as well as shared governance for each faculty category (e.g., tenure-line faculty, clinical faculty, instructor, lecturer).

Inclusion in Shared Governance

LMU changed its policy regarding shared government to include non-tenure-track faculty. The Faculty Senate established a Clinical Faculty Special Committee in 2012 and conducted a review of NTTF satisfaction with their governance participation. This review revealed that they wanted greater participation in shared governance and led to the establishment of three seats dedicated to NTTF on the Faculty Senate in 2014. Since then, NTTF representatives on the Faculty Senate have played significant roles in advocating for their own rights, being part of Working Groups dedicated to improving the NTTF policies and practices and working with tenure-track faculty and senior university leaders. Elected NTTF senators also have served on the Faculty Senate Executive Committee since 2015. As their voices have grown and become more prominent in LMU's community, the Faculty Senate voted to double the number of NTTF seats from three to six in 2021. LMU ensures that non-tenure-track faculty voices lie at the heart of its shared governance process.

Example Best Practices

Institutional Values in Community Building and Student Success

LMU's efforts in investing in NTTF are guided by its belief that the well-being of all faculty is crucial in creating a positive classroom environment and enhancing student success. The university's commitment to the well-being of NTTF is also supported by its institutional values of "inclusion, solidarity and respect for human dignity" and "community built on relationships." Putting these values into practice, LMU has striven to improve their working conditions, recognized their tremendous contributions to student learning and included their voices in shared governance and institutional decision-making.

Shared Governance and Collaboration

The practice of shared governance and collaboration across various positions and offices, including university leadership, Faculty Senate representing both tenure track and non-tenure-track faculty, the Center for Teaching Excellence (CET), the Office of Faculty Development (OFD), Office of Mission, and Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) office, has been central to LMU's effort in expanding support for NTTF. In 2014 when they gained seats on the Faculty Senate, the Faculty Senate began to address part-time faculty needs, creating a Part-Time Faculty Working Group working with university leadership. As a continuous effort to support both part-time and full-time NTTF, the Faculty Senate established a Contingent and Term Faculty Working Group in 2018, which made suggestions on the 2021-2026 Strategic Plans based on the group's report. Currently, LMU is developing a new professional development program and awards for NTTF and offices across campus, including CET, OFD, Office of Mission, and DEI, have been collaborating for the development of this new opportunity.

Data Collection and Organizational Learning

Continuous data collection and organizational learning have been crucial in refining policies and practices in support of non-tenure-track faculty at LMU. The initiative to support NTTF started with the Clinical Faculty Special Committee, which gathered their insights and experiences to identify the challenges they faced. This review led to meaningful alterations in the relevant policies and practices. LMU has maintained its effort in evaluating the support structures for NTTF by collecting and analyzing data. For instance, during the 2018-2019 academic year, a Contingent and Term Faculty Working Group undertook an extended study to capture the perspectives of NTTF and identify additional areas for improvement. The study findings directly influenced changes in NTTF policies and practices and were incorporated into the 2021-2026 Strategic Plans. Continuous evaluation and development have been at the heart of LMU's effective strategy to enhance the working conditions for NTTF, which has yielded positive impacts on both classroom environments and student learning.

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.

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