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President's Blog

The Part-Time Appointments Policy and Precarity

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UTFA has been working on part-time issues for some time. There are approximately 250 faculty in the part-time teaching stream. Many are long-serving.

The official title of the part-time policy: Policy and Procedures on Employment Conditions of Part-Time Academic Staff
[The term "staff" no longer refers to academic appointees.]
Date of first publication of the policy: June 17, 1976
Last date of revision: March 7, 1994
Length of policy: 2.5 pages
Link

UTFA will seek to re-negotiate this policy in the upcoming bargaining round. Why?

Because U of T and UTFA together must begin to address the precarity of part-time academic employment and the deep inequities that accompany it.

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Language still in U of T's part-time policy appears to recognize the disadvantaged status of part-time appointees and the need to do something about it. In 1999, something was done for full-time members of the teaching stream, when the ranks of Lecturer and Senior Lecturer were created. But nothing has been done to regularize part-time faculty, especially those who have been long-serving. I am investigating whether the policy language quoted directly below was ever acted upon:

“(12) The Vice-President and Provost shall give careful consideration to collecting information regarding teaching, research and University service by part-time academic staff and, after five years, make recommendations on the employment conditions of part-time academic staff.

(13) The transition will be effected by the appointment of a committee to be set up by the Vice-President and Provost which shall review the disposition of all individuals presently holding part-time appointments for the academic year in which these proposals are implemented. The review shall involve an activity analysis, and the establishment of entitlement of rank, continuing appointment, and research or study leave due to past service.”

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Here are some additional reasons we must re-negotiate the part-time policy:

1. UTFA has discovered through surveys, focus groups, and in-depth interviews that working conditions for part-time faculty are poor, especially in terms of workload, but also in terms of salary, opportunities to conduct scholarship, standing, career advancement, security, and academic freedom.
2. Part-time faculty were excluded from access to new professorial ranks when UTFA and the University Administration completed negotiations on the teaching stream policy in December of 2014. Part-time and full-time teaching stream faculty should have the same professorial titles. The part-time policy lists ranks that are no longer used for new hires at U of T: Tutor, Senior Tutor, Instructor, and Clinical Associate. The reference to “Lecturer” in the policy refers to an early title for Assistant Professor, Conditional.
3. The policy defines part-time in the following way: “A part-time appointment is one that does not exceed 75 per cent [sic] of full-time employment.” The revised teaching stream policy (2015) defines full-time as 100 percent. By implication, *anything* less is part-time. So two policies are currently in conflict.
4. The part-time policy outlines research leave for part-time appointees. That leave should be covered in the Memorandum of Agreement, as it is for full-time appointees.
5. The role of the grievance procedure in a part-time appointment must be clarified.
6. The ability to drop from full-time tenure or continuing status to part-time must be clarified and governed by clear guidelines. The rights of the appointee to move back to full-time must be ensured.
7. Most faculty who are part-time are in the teaching stream. The current teaching stream policy should be revised to include provisions for part-time appointees, setting out how they are appointed and for what duration.

UTFA has heard from many part-time faculty and is always willing to learn more about their conditions of employment. If you are part-time and believe that you need advice or that information on your conditions of employment might help UTFA in negotiations, please contact us at faculty@utfa.org.

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