

# Appendix: Implementing a Teaching-Intensive Tenure Track at Portland State University

The university publicly announces a plan to immediately stabilize the employment of a large percentage of the PSU faculty by converting the positions of Senior Instructor from NTT to TT.

- All Senior Instructors who were hired through regional or national competitive searches will become eligible for tenure in 3 years. Their job titles and duties will remain largely the same (i.e., focused on instruction). At the 3-year mark, they will either receive tenure or their employment with PSU will be terminated and their positions will be open to new applicants.
- Those Senior Instructor positions currently occupied by employees who were “fast-tracked,” or not initially hired through regional or national competitive searches, will be eliminated and replaced with tenure-track Senior Instructor positions. These positions will then be advertised and filled through regional or national competitive searches. Faculty whose employment was terminated as a result of this change will be invited to apply for the new tenure-track positions.
- *Exception:* Senior Instructors who have been continuously employed at PSU since September 2008 and who were not hired in competitive searches **may keep their current positions** or transition to tenure-track positions and become eligible for tenure in 3 years. If they choose the second option their job titles and duties will remain largely

the same (i.e., focused on instruction). At the 3-year mark, they will either receive tenure or their employment with PSU will be terminated and their positions will be open to new applicants.

- NTTF who have been grandfathered as Assistant/Associate/Full Professors and whose job duties and qualifications are commensurate with those of Senior Instructors will have the following options:
  - If hired in a competitive search or employed continuously at PSU since 2008, they may keep their current positions and titles or transition to tenure-track positions **in the Senior Instructor track** and become eligible for tenure in 3 years (they must change job title).
  - If not hired in a competitive search or employed continuously at PSU since 2008, their position will be discontinued and replaced with a tenure-track Senior Instructor position to which they will be invited to apply as part of a regional or national search.
- The university *will not* reduce the total number of full-time faculty it employs as a result of this process.

At the same time, the university will issue press releases and internal communications to explain the above actions, citing these reasons:

- Job security for faculty is necessary to foster innovation in teaching, research, and university governance. To be competitive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we need a faculty with the security to take risks and develop new strategies in delivering cutting-edge, high-quality, and affordable education in Oregon.
- This administration considers robust shared governance to be one of the most important ingredients of a healthy university. Expanding access to tenure will increase the percentage of faculty who can engage in shared governance with confidence.

- This administration considers academic freedom to be the legitimating principle of the American university. As universities increasingly relied on off-tenure faculty, academic freedom at these institutions has been diminished. It is time to correct this and restore faculty autonomy and integrity.
- The old model of tenure was based on the idea that faculty would divide their time evenly between research and teaching; while the university still needs faculty to teach advanced scholarship in their fields, the increased demand for higher education and explosion in our student population necessitate that we include faculty whose primary responsibility is instruction, and who are especially expert in helping students develop basic knowledge and skills in their disciplines. While up until now PSU, like most US universities, has hired these faculty on a temporary and often casual basis, it has become clear that this practice hurts students and the university as a whole. Only faculty with job security can participate freely in the academic life of their institutions and larger scholarly communities.
- To ensure this high quality and enrich faculty members' sense of belonging to the university community, it is necessary that these faculty members be hired in competitive searches. In the past, the university has too often hired on a casual basis and this practice needs to cease and its consequences, to the extent possible, corrected. Hiring competitively will also give the university's large part-time faculty workforce, many of whom have been teaching at PSU for several years, the opportunity to compete for full-time, tenure-track jobs.
- However, the university recognizes the invaluable contributions of faculty who have taught here for many years. Their years of excellent service demonstrate their value, even if they were not initially hired in competitive searches. Although in general it is more fair to open valuable faculty positions to competitive searches, in the case of these

faculty it is more fair to allow them to retain their positions or have the option to transition to tenure-track positions.

- To demonstrate its commitment to the academic quality that comes with tenure, the university is instituting a new, rigorous post-tenure review process to ensure that job security increases, rather than encourages, a dynamic approach to higher education. The university is also instituting new training programs for tenure-line faculty in university governance, so that the institution's direction can become increasingly faculty-driven and therefore responsive to the needs of students and the larger scholarly/professional community.

## Bottom lines

The above scenario puts the university administration in the lead position. However, faculty will and should have the right to negotiate its terms, whether through faculty governance or collective bargaining. We have purposely built flexibility into the terms above, therefore. However, we believe the university's bottom lines should be the following:

- No faculty who have been at PSU less than 7 years will automatically be eligible for tenure; their jobs must be terminated and replaced with tenure-track positions open to competitive searches. In many cases, full-time NTT faculty do not hold terminal degrees in their field. Casual hiring kept many jobs out of reach of qualified applicants. This significantly weakened the job market in many disciplines. We owe it to the graduate students in those disciplines as well as our own students to open these positions to all qualified applicants.
- The stringent "up or out" moment of tenure is retained. Because the university is giving an extraordinary degree of job security to those it tenures, the bar must be high for the system to possess legitimacy for those involved as well as

for outside stakeholders (students, parents, the community). Faculty who have undergone an “eye of the needle” evaluation will in turn enforce a high standard when they are in a position to evaluate their peers. Having been successful in achieving tenure, they will be better able to see themselves as fully entitled members of the university community, which will mitigate the perceived need for adversarial collective negotiations.

## **Why specify regional or national searches?**

In making similar reforms about a decade ago, the University of Oregon stipulated that all “career NTTF” be hired through national searches. We want to include the possibility of regional searches, however, because we believe that this will give PSU’s adjunct population an enhanced opportunity to compete for full-time, tenure-track positions. There are many long-term (adjunct) faculty at PSU who have not been treated fairly because they have been shut out of competitive searches for full-time positions.

The hiring process must involve a committee and as much departmental participation as possible. One of the perceived and real problems with casual hiring of NTTF is that the instructor’s relationship is often with an individual (usually, the chair) and not with the department as a whole. This encourages a patronage culture. Conversely, TT faculty often resent the chair’s ability to staff the schedule with people she or he has handpicked. To avoid these problems and generate a sense of legitimacy for both the individual faculty member and the department at large, a committee and some substantial degree of department participation in the hire will be expected. The hiring of TT senior instructors should parallel the intensive process undertaken when the department has hired TTF in the past. This will add some cost but is crucial if the culture is going to improve. This will also add considerable labor. We will have to think about how to reassure departments who do not feel they have time

to undertake this level of due diligence. (The fact that very little department labor is involved in hiring casually has been one of the reasons for our increasing reliance on casual hires.)

Evaluations for tenure will include extra-departmental assessments of teaching. This means that people outside the person's department—either from another department at PSU that is within the same 'family' (humanities, social sciences, etc.)—or from another institution provide evaluations of the person's teaching materials and teaching. This is critical for two reasons: (A) There can be no perception of corruption, no sense that friends are evaluating friends (and people in the same department often become or are perceived to be friends). The person evaluated by people s/he does not know will feel legitimated by a good evaluation and will be less able to argue that foul play was involved if given a negative evaluation. (B) In order to reframe the narrative from one about "two classes of university citizens, the elite and the proletariat," we launch a narrative about two tracks of faculty, those excellent in conventional jobs and those who excel in teaching. The teaching workforce—the Senior Instructor I and II—are valued for their excellent teaching at a university that is still as much about teaching and access as it is about research. When we try to make the claim in our current environment that we value teaching just as much as research, this rings false because we do not systematically evaluate teaching in a way comparable to the way we evaluate research for tenure (through outside review). Outside evaluations of teaching will go a long way toward increasing the prestige—and status—of teaching and we believe that this, in turn, will improve the culture.

### **Will the tenure-track positions differ from the previous NTT positions?**

We believe it is important for the job duties of these positions to remain largely the same, even as they are converted from NTT to TT, both so that faculty currently in those positions will have

an optimal chance of success, and because the university needs faculty positions with high teaching loads. However, the TT positions will need to incorporate university service explicitly, whereas currently NTT positions do not require service. Our current recommendation is that the tenure-track Senior Instructor positions stipulate that 10 percent of faculty workload be devoted to service (this is the current maximum for NTT provided in the CBA).

Because service will be part of the expectations for tenure-track Senior Instructors, we believe that immediately when these faculty are put on the tenure track their contracts should include this expectation. Service expectations should be described in detail in the contract. Because one goal of these changes is to better integrate this group of faculty, all service expectations should include attendance at department meetings. Other expectations to be determined after a greater understanding of the different cultures that currently exist across campus.

### **What differences will there be between faculty who are converted to TT Senior Instructor positions and those newly hired into those positions?**

While faculty who are converted will have 3 years to prepare their tenure cases before the up-or-out moment, the track for new hires will be the same as what is currently in place, with the tenure decision happening during the 6th year of employment.

### **How will Senior Instructors be evaluated for tenure?**

We recommend that this evaluation be carried out by tenured faculty only. In the past, non-tenure-track faculty could argue that they should be evaluated by their “peers.” This was akin to junior tenure-track faculty evaluating each other. Within the new system, a senior, tenured cohort will be available to evaluate junior instructors.

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