

Relevant Research and Innovative Strategies

Rhoades, Gary. "Reorganizing the Faculty Workforce for Flexibility: Part-time Professional Labor," *Journal of Higher Education* 67 (6), November/December 1996: 626-659.

During the last twenty-five years there has been a steady increase in both the number and percentage of part-time faculty. Rhoades sees this trend as a direct challenge to the academic traditions that regard definition of faculty as full-time, and as a threat to tenure. As evidence for these concerns, he offers his analysis that existing literature focuses on practical issues of part-time faculty and that these works are "sympathetic" to part-timers by suggesting that they offer flexibility to management otherwise constrained by tenure. Rhoades' interest in studying the part-time faculty is to seek a better understanding of the issues of flexibility and stratification of the academic work force.

Looking at 183 institutions and systems with collective bargaining agreements, Rhoades asked two questions:

1) To what extent do collectively bargained faculty contracts provide for managerial discretion or professional constraint regarding the use of part-time faculty?

2) To what extent are part-time faculty's conditions of employment different from those of full-time faculty?

To answer these questions, he analyzed the content of faculty contracts for the presence or absence of specific references to issues of appointment, release, rankings, duties, privileges, and evaluation, and coded the language and conditions.

In regard to the first question, Rhoades found that because almost none of the contracts mentioned specific conditions for appointment or release, there is little constraint on managerial flexibility in hiring and releasing part-time faculty. Further, he found language that limited the role of full-time faculty in the hiring of part-time faculty.

In addition, managerial flexibility is rarely constrained on the subject of individual rights of part-time faculty in situations of layoff or recall; any language on these issues tends to have more to do with affirming the priority of full-time faculty. He found that 29% of contracts mentioning part-time

29% of contracts mentioning part-time faculty had language that was meant to limit the number or ratio of part-time faculty. A few prohibited the replacement of full-time with part-time faculty, but most served to preserve managerial flexibility in determining both the mix and the priority order in situations of retrenchment or attrition.

Overall, union strategies emphasized control of the quantity and uses of part-time faculty more than issues about part-time appointment or release. Only one contract specified the rights of part-time faculty in work force actions.

On the conditions of part-time employment, Rhoades found that part-time faculty are often categorized in terms of course load and some references to privileges most often refer to those with the largest loads and the longest history of employment with the institution. Only 74 contracts discussed privileges for part-time faculty, and most of those were used to name privileges denied.

Rhoades believes the situation for part-time faculty is worsening in spite of recent rhetoric suggesting better integration of part-timers into the life of the academy. "Significantly, only 10 contracts provide some sort of professional development opportunity or support to part-time faculty, only eight ensure the provision of workspace, and none enfranchises part-time faculty in the academic decision making of their units" (p. 645).

This lack of inclusion in non-instructional academic work activities is also evident in the absence of language that describes specific duties or procedures for review or evaluation. The part-timer is most often asked only to teach, and managerial discretion about all aspects of the part-timer's life is broad.

In sum, Rhoades finds that managerial flexibility is not only relatively unconstrained but also on the increase as full-time faculty influence over employment of part-timers decreases. While unions may be advocating better treatment of part-time faculty, the continuing exclusion of part-timers from nonteaching roles in the academy and the ongoing absence of clear language regarding their evaluation or employment rights continues to deprofessionalize and ostracize part-time faculty.

Rhoades raises many interesting questions that call for further study. While there are some data on the uses of part-time faculty across disciplines (career-oriented fields tend to use them most, as do certain liberal arts departments with responsibility for general education and service courses), little is known about the distribution of part-timers across lower and upper division or graduate courses or their impact on students. The proportion of part-time faculty is increasing at some types of institutions (especially private comprehensives) and decreasing at others (private doctoral in particular), but the explana-

tory factors for these changes are unknown.

Rhoades asserts that because of growing managerial flexibility, an overall increase in the proportion of part-time faculty, and the expansion of the numbers of non-faculty academic professionals, the traditions of faculty autonomy and job security are endangered. It would be interesting to pose some of his research questions to faculty at metropolitan universities where the use of part-time faculty has a long history. We need to learn if some of our institutions may provide models for better integration of part-timers into campus culture, although most would say there is much more work to be done.

Gappa, Judith M. "New Employment Alternatives: Full-Time Nontenure-Track Appointments." New Pathways Working Paper Series, Fall 1996. Washington, DC: American Association of Higher Education.

For a different perspective on changes in patterns of faculty appointments, this report from the AAHE project, "New Pathways: Faculty Careers and Employment for the 21st Century," describes new types of employment categories and arrangements that are being used at some institutions as alternatives to traditional tenure-track appointments.

Gappa tells us that 59% of faculty

are full-time and 41% are part-time. Of those in full-time positions, 26% are not eligible for tenure. Over the last five years, only 64% of faculty have been hired into tenured or tenure-track positions. Her report explores seven case studies that illustrate forms of full-time faculty appointments that are not tenurable. For each of these Gappa discusses the issues of culture, status, security, academic freedom, and career development.

The report presents six models of innovative full-time nontenure-track appointments that can be very briefly described in the following ways:

- **Teaching appointments**—These are faculty appointed to 3-5 year renewable contracts for purposes of undergraduate teaching. While they tend to have lower base salaries, evaluation and merit are explicit and about the same as for regular faculty. They were found to be well-qualified focused on teaching, and represented significant flexibility for the institution.

- **Professors of practice**—These positions offer significant status when they are occupied by individuals with extensive nonacademic experience. They are used for such academic support roles as supervising internships or serving as mentors to students. They may also be used in professional schools to augment curriculum with special expertise.

- **Research professors**—These appointments are usually contingent on

the acquisition of grants and may offer most of the rights and status of a tenured faculty member. The occupants often have had careers in industry or careers, or may have dual careers.

- **Distinguished senior lecturers—** These are senior faculty late in their career, from another institution or industry, who are generally unconcerned about status, salary, or security. Like professors of practice, they may be as qualified as tenured faculty, but have credentials from other sources. They serve as resources to students and faculty and may teach or participate in research.

- **Limited tenure—**This model is drawn from one case example where only full professors were eligible for tenure and only when there was a demonstrated need. Other faculty serve on the basis of contractual agreements but were not found to suffer from status issues.

- **Integrated tenure and non-tenure—** This model permits faculty to choose whether to pursue tenure or not, and allows for several decision points where they may change their career path.

These definitions are extremely brief in this review; the report explores in much greater detail the aspects of each model and its implications for the individuals, for tenurable faculty, and for the institution.

Gappa's cases are primarily from professional schools and colleges such as medicine, law, and education,

where some might argue that such nontenurable innovations are made easier by the possibility of outside income or other professional employment. But she asserts that these models have the potential of transferability, especially to liberal arts and sciences programs where the integration of society's experts may improve teaching, free faculty for other work, help an institution fulfill its mission, or achieve economic flexibility. She believes some models of nontenurable appointments can be helpful in improving academic quality especially when regular faculty place a high value on the experience and expertise gained through nonacademic work.

While more work and more case studies will expand the understanding of the long-term implications of these innovative models, the Gappa report is useful for metropolitan university academic leaders who have long recognized the importance of nonacademic experts as contributors to the teaching, research, and service mission of our institutions. While many metropolitan institutions have used part-time or adjunct appointments for these kinds of roles and individuals, the Gappa models offer more sophisticated and deliberate approaches to including nonacademic professionals in the teaching corps without the loss of status or sense of isolation common to traditional part-time appointments.