REPORT ON THE FCWA SURVEY OF NON-LADDER UW FACULTY
by
The UW Faculty Council on Women in Academe
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report details the results of a June 2010 survey of non-ladder faculty (NLF) at the University of Washington conducted by the Faculty Council on Women in Academe (FCWA). This is the third in a series of FCWA reports on faculty careers at UW. FCWA surveyed voting faculty in 2008, as detailed in our “Report on the FCWA Survey of UW Faculty Careers and Workload”; we combined these results with other data about career trajectories at UW to produce the 2009 “Baseline Report for the FCWA Career Cycle of Female Faculty Project.” These two earlier reports are available at the FCWA website.\(^1\)

Important in generating the current report is our observation that the majority of non-ladder faculty positions are held by women, and non-ladder faculty are 50% more likely to be female than ladder faculty (56% vs. 37%). In a period of financial exigency, this can create a gendered at-risk population. To develop a more nuanced understanding of the non-ladder faculty experience than was available in earlier data, FCWA conducted a survey in 2010 of all non-ladder faculty, both voting (288 members) and non-voting (1187 members).\(^2\) This report documents the findings of FCWA’s “Survey of UW Lecturer Careers and Workload” questions in categories: Demographic and Employment Information, Teaching, Service, Flexible Policies, Career Status and Progression, and Mentoring. Each section included space for comments. The full survey instrument is included in the Appendix.

In the report, we highlight gender differences when they occur, but we also focus on issues common to both male and female non-ladder faculty.

RESPONSE RATE AND RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

In June 2010 the survey was emailed to all non-ladder faculty who had a valid email address in the Academic Human Resources (AHR) database in the previous month. This comprised 1475 distinct individuals (another 159 NLF were in the database, but did not have valid email addresses). Over a period of three weeks, responses were received from 475 individuals (32% of those who received the survey). A total of 528 comments were submitted by 245 different individuals. There was a slightly higher response rate from female than male NLF; although females comprise 56% of the non-ladder faculty, they represent 62% of the respondents. There was also a higher response rate from full-time than part-time NLF (43% vs. 27%).

\(^1\) Copies available at http://www.washington.edu/faculty/committees/fcwa/issues.html

\(^2\) Voting NLF comprise full-time Lecturers, Senior Lecturers and Principal Lecturers (or Artist in Residence); non-voting are full-time Teaching Associates, part-time Lecturers, Senior Lecturers and Teaching Associates, and both full- and part-time Instructors within Educational Outreach (designated “Extension Lecturer” in the AHR database).
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Similar Findings for All Faculty

A number of the findings echo those of our earlier reports on all voting faculty:

- **Professional Commitment.** Open-ended comments document faculty members’ deep commitment to their students and to their intellectual work, even in the face of daunting resource challenges.

- **Teaching.** Women were less likely than men to be satisfied with their teaching load.

- **Service.** NLF participate in committees at a high rate; many believe their service is unrewarded. Female NLF were less likely to report serving on influential committees than were their male counterparts.

- **Flexible Policies.** A large fraction of NLF, including both full-time and part-time, were unaware of flexible policies and/or, unlike ladder faculty, believed themselves to be ineligible.

- **Mentoring.** Faculty across the career cycle reported wanting more mentoring. Relative to ladder faculty, NLF were more interested in increased professional mentoring, and less interested in additional work-life mentoring.

Findings Specific to Non-Ladder Faculty

Many other findings were unique to non-ladder faculty (or report on areas not queried by the earlier survey).

**Contract Issues and Salaries.**

- A major issue for non-ladder faculty is the uncertainty in their employment with the university. Most NLF have contracts lasting one year or less, including many who have taught at the university for more than six years (the point at which ladder faculty can attain tenure). Many comments document the toll this uncertainty can take on faculty.

- Short-contract NLF expressed strong dissatisfaction with the absence of merit reviews and an associated progression of salary, as well as the lack of any accrual of rights to be “on the list” to be hired in a subsequent quarter.

- The issue of salary appears throughout the comments, particularly in the College of Arts and Sciences. Low salaries can force already overworked NLF to moonlight.

**Teaching Load and Advance Notice.**

- The number of courses taught by NLF each quarter varies widely, as does the percentage FTE associated with the number of courses. Two-thirds of part-time NLF (ranging from 85% of those in Medicine to 10% of those in the Professional Schools) responded “don’t know” to the question about the level of teaching required for a full FTE in the individual’s department and rank.
Faculty at the Bothell and Tacoma campuses expressed alarm at a recent major increase in the teaching load required to be eligible for benefits.

The distribution of types of classes is similar among full- and part-time NLF, although part-time NLF are less likely to teach small undergraduate classes. The distribution is quite different from that of ladder faculty, whose teaching load was more heavily weighted towards graduate and smaller undergraduate classes rather than larger undergraduate classes.

**Satisfaction with Factors Impacting Teaching**

- On average, respondents are satisfied with many factors related to teaching, including influence over and type of courses taught, lead-time about which courses will be taught, teaching load, and the relation of load to FTE.
- At the same time, many concerns about work-load, lead-time and resources appear emphatically in the qualitative data.
- Women were less likely than men to be satisfied with support for their teaching or with the relationship between teaching load and FTE.

**Service**

- The hours dedicated by NLF to service vary widely, with some positions primarily administrative, and others with no service activities.
- Most NLF report spending at least as many hours on non-committee service and administration as on committee work.
- Non-ladder faculty report a wide variety of non-committee service activities.
- Given the variety of responsibilities held by NLF, it can be unclear which criteria are or should be used for merit review.

**Career Issues**

- Three questions related to careers were asked on both this survey of non-ladder faculty and the 2008 survey of all voting faculty. In general, there is a regular progression with male faculty responding more positively than female, ladder faculty more so than NLF, and the female full-time NLF and the part-time NLF of both genders having the least satisfaction with their career advancement to date and prospects for the future, including a potential for leadership.
- The non-ladder faculty overall disagreed with the statement “I am satisfied with my job security”; the only group with a positive mean was men in Medicine and Allied Health.
- Overall, female full-time NLF are significantly less satisfied than their male counterparts with the level of support they perceive from their departments and UW.
- In some units, eligible Lecturers are not being put forward for promotion to Senior or Principal Lecturer status.
• An area of ambiguity for a number of respondents is whether or not one needs to have been hired initially with a national search to be considered for promotion to Senior Lecturer without the department opening up a national search. Comments expressed concern that seeking promotion might jeopardize one’s job.

**Mentoring**

• The comments revealed that mentoring of NLF is happening only occasionally, and on an ad hoc basis. Many NLF expressed a desire for mentoring, especially on professional and career issues. The greatest reported need is for full-time NLF in Medicine and Allied Health.

• Of those who reported receiving mentoring, most were satisfied with the mentoring they received on professional and career issues, but only about half were satisfied with the mentoring they received on work-life issues.

**Flexible Policy Issues**

• There is significant uncertainty among NLF about eligibility for flexible policy options.

• Among full-time NLF, women were more likely to have used family/medical leave or partial leave without pay, and less likely either to be aware of or to believe themselves eligible for teaching release for administrative duties or for paid professional leave.

• Notably, some respondents indicated they would be afraid to use these options.

**Voting Rights**

• There is considerable variation and/or confusion across campus with respect to the implementation of voting rights.

• A sizeable fraction of full-time Lecturers and Senior/Principal Lecturers report either being uncertain of their rights or not having the right to vote on departmental matters (including curriculum) — this is in contradiction to the Faculty Code.

• Voting rights appear to vary both by department and by field, with a wide distribution of perceived rights apparent in each of the four groups investigated, but a lower average level of rights in Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, especially for women.

• Among full-time NLF of voting rank, women are far less likely than men to report being able to vote.

**Climate Issues**

• Taken together, the concerns documented by the survey help explain the deep wells of disappointment and even desperation that we found in some of the comments. Aside from contract issues, many of the negative comments focused on questions of status and respect. It was impossible to read these without being aware of the worrisome climate issues they document.
RECOMMENDATIONS

Contract Issues & Salaries.

- All reasonable efforts should be made to decrease the employment uncertainty faced by NLF, particularly by providing reasonable lead-times for employment notification and by providing multiple-quarter (for part-time) and multiple year (for full-time) appointments for the longest period over which the need for a lecturer can be projected.

- Units should establish and/or clarify policies on merit review and criteria for (re)hiring decisions for short-contract NLF.

- Full-time employees at UW should make a living wage. Long-serving, experienced employees should earn more than less-experienced, even if hired on a quarterly basis.

Workloads and Related Issues

- Units should examine the workloads of NLF to assure that teaching and service expectations are humane: standardized, reasonable, and transparent.

- The role of research in merit and FTE calculation differs across the institution and would benefit from local clarification.

- Service contributions should be valued in determining merit; units should make service expectations transparent.

Career Issues

- Units should clarify criteria for promotion across Lecturer ranks, and this progression should be encouraged. The role of a national search in later promotion opportunities should be reviewed.

Mentoring

- To maximize potential for faculty success in all arenas, professional and work-life mentoring should be provided across career stages.

Flexible Policies

- The university should continue efforts to enhance the visibility and consistent implementation of flexible policies. Eligibility for such policies should be clarified and publicized. Their use should not be discouraged.

Voting Rights

- Voting policy should be widely distributed and publicized, including in an email to all non-ladder faculty (including those who are not eligible to vote).
Implementation

- Deans can make a significant contribution by encouraging chairs to communicate and implement clarified policies.

Climate Issues

- The university should make every effort to address the significant morale issues facing our NLF. A number of specific suggestions appear above. Morale issues can also be addressed by increasing benefits (including relatively modest additions such as IMA usage, parking, etc.) for part-time faculty. Where this is not already the case, teaching awards should be developed for NLF.

Looking Ahead

- Data on the categories addressed in this and previous FCWA reports should be collected on an ongoing basis, and these results should be updated regularly.

- Finally, we reiterate a recommendation from our “Benchmark” report: The university needs to prevent or remedy situations in which women and/or minority faculty bear a disproportionate burden of instructional budget cuts (e.g., in terms of teaching and service loads, promotion, layoffs of non-tenure-stream faculty, etc.).