
Contingent Appointments and the Academic Profession

(JULY 2024)

The report that follows was prepared by a joint subcommittee of the Association's Committee on Contingent Faculty and the Profession (formerly the Committee on Part-Time and Non-Tenure-Track Appointments) and Committee A on Academic Freedom and Tenure and adopted by the Association's Council in November 2003. A revised text prepared by the Committee on Contingent Faculty and the Profession was approved by Committee A and adopted by the Council in 2023. Statistical information was updated in 2024.

Thirty years ago, the Association addressed the conditions and status of part-time and non-tenure-track faculty in a thoroughly documented report.¹ Since that time, faculty work has become more fragmented, unsupported, and destabilized. Faculty are now classified in a growing number of categories with new titles and with distinct responsibilities, rights, and privileges.²

The proportion of faculty who are appointed each year to tenure-line positions is declining at an alarming rate. Because faculty tenure is the only secure protection for academic freedom in teaching, research, and service, the declining percentage of tenured faculty means that academic freedom is increasingly at risk. Academic freedom is a fundamental characteristic of higher education, necessary to preserve an independent forum for free inquiry and expression and essential to the mission of higher education to serve the common good. This report examines the costs to academic freedom incurred by

the alarming current practice of the steady elimination of tenure.

A common thread runs through earlier statements and reports on the topic of part-time and non-tenure-track appointments. They acknowledge the economic and managerial pressures that have been presented—in good economic times and bad—as justification for a constantly increasing reliance on part- and full-time non-tenure-track appointments. But they also clearly articulate the dangers to the quality of American higher education that are inherent in this trend.³

To be clear, the threat to the public good of higher education is not in the work of contingent faculty themselves. Contingent faculty are often excellent teachers and scholars, frequently have terminal degrees in addition to their desirable experience, and are as deeply committed to their students as any of their colleagues. Rather, the threat comes from

1. "The Status of Non-Tenure-Track Faculty," *Academe* 79 (July–August 1993): 39–46.

2. Douglas McGray, "Title Wave," *New York Times*, sec. A, August 4, 2002, national edition. McGray notes that "the Army has fewer titles to classify soldiers (24, from private through general) than a typical research university has to classify teachers (40, from teaching fellow to professor emeritus, at Harvard)."

3. Over the last five decades, the Association and its committees have issued a number of statements and reports on part-time and non-tenure-track faculty, including *Academic Freedom and Due Process for Faculty Members Who Serve Less Than Full Time* (1979), *The Status of Part-Time Faculty* (1980), *On Full-Time Non-Tenure-Track Appointments* (1986), *The Status of Non-Tenure-Track Faculty* (1993), *Tenure and Teaching-Intensive Appointments* (2010), and *The Inclusion in Governance of Faculty Members Holding Contingent Appointments* (2012).

the structural problems of contingency itself—the isolation of part-time faculty within their campus communities, the exclusion or underrepresentation of contingent faculty in shared governance, and the chilling effect on academic freedom caused by their insufficient pay, worse job security, and shocking lack of access to health care provided by affordable health insurance.

Consistent with the Association’s earlier statements, this report and its recommendations proceed from the premise that faculty in higher education must have academic freedom protected by academic due process. It emphasizes the importance of preserving for all faculty the integrity of the profession, founded on the interaction of research, teaching, and service, and it offers recommendations for institutions and academic departments going forward.

This report recognizes the significant contrast between current practices and the recommendations on faculty work offered here as necessary for the well-being of the profession and the public good. Therefore, the statement both offers guidelines by which institutions and faculties can plan and implement gradual transitions to a higher proportion of tenurable positions and, at the same time, affirms the development of intermediate, ameliorative measures by which the academic freedom and professional integration of faculty currently appointed to contingent positions can be enhanced by academic due process and assurances of continued employment.

Definition of Contingent Faculty

The term *contingent faculty* includes both part- and full-time faculty who are appointed off the tenure track. The term calls attention to the tenuous relationship between academic institutions and the part- and full-time non-tenure-track faculty who teach in them. For example, teachers hired to teach one or two course sections for a semester, experts or practitioners who are brought in to share their field experience, and whole departments of full-time non-tenure-track English composition instructors are all “contingent faculty.” The term includes adjuncts, who are generally compensated on a per-course-section or hourly basis, as well as full-time non-tenure-track faculty who receive a salary.

For purposes of a policy discussion, these faculty cannot be separated neatly into two groups—part time and full time—based on the number of hours they work. Some faculty are classified by each of their institutions as “part time,” even though they

may teach four or more course sections per term within or across institutions.⁴ Whether these faculty teach one course section or five, the common characteristic among them is that their institutions make little or no long-term commitment to them or to their academic work. The fact that many contingent faculty are personally committed to academic careers, even while putting together a patchwork of teaching opportunities in one or more institutions in order to sustain themselves, has become all but irrelevant in institutional practice.

Some part-time faculty bring the benefit of expertise in a narrow specialty to add depth or specificity to the course offerings otherwise available at an institution.⁵ Some are practitioners of a profession in fine arts, law, or business and bring their direct experience into the classroom. While many individuals with such appointments may find the conditions of part-time academic employment acceptable, their situation is the exception rather than the norm and therefore should not serve as the primary model for a policy discussion.⁶

Graduate student employees who teach classes fall along a spectrum. At one end are the graduate students who teach a reasonable number of classes as part of their graduate education. At the other end are those who teach independently, perhaps for many years, but not in probationary appointments, while they complete their dissertations. To the extent that individuals function in the former group, their teaching load should be carefully structured to further—not

4. Long-standing Association policy determines full-time status by the individual’s functions in the institution, regardless of title. The fifth “1970 Interpretive Comment” on the 1940 *Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure* states, “The concept of ‘rank of full-time instructor or a higher rank’ is intended to include any person who teaches a full-time load, regardless of the teacher’s specific title.”

5. For example, instruction in the performance of an unusual musical instrument or in the application of a particular computer program to a specific industry.

6. This report does not address the complexities of “clinical” faculty appointments in disciplines such as law, social work, and health sciences. The Association addressed clinical appointments in medical schools in “Tenure in the Medical School,” AAUP, *Policy Documents and Reports*, 11th ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015), 73–78. That report states, in part, “To the extent that a faculty appointment at a medical school resembles a traditional academic appointment, with clearly understood obligations in teaching, research, and service, the burden of proof on the institution is greater to justify making the appointment a non-tenure-track position.” This provision may well be applicable to clinical appointments in other disciplines.

frustrate—the completion of their formal education. To the extent that they function in the latter group, undertaking independent teaching activities that are similar in nature to those of regular faculty, the term *contingent faculty* should apply. (For a more detailed discussion, see the AAUP's *Statement on Graduate Students*.⁷)

Because many institutions do not or cannot accurately report the number of graduate student employees with independent teaching responsibilities to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), more general reported figures must suffice to indicate the increasing reliance on such labor. According to the AAUP analysis of NCES data, the number of graduate student employees engaged in teaching or research increased 36 percent from fall 2002 to fall 2022, compared with an 18 percent increase in instructional staff during that period.⁸

Postdoctoral fellowships are being used in new ways that, in effect, create a new employment tier prior to a tenure-track appointment. The concept of “contingent faculty” includes postdoctoral fellows who are employed off the tenure track for periods of time beyond what could reasonably be considered the extension and completion of their professional training. Institutions' increased reliance on postdocs to handle their teaching and research needs tends to delay the access of these individuals to appropriate security in the profession and to create yet another requirement for new PhDs seeking tenure-line appointments, thereby undermining reasonable expectations of long-term institutional commitments to new faculty. Academic institutions have grown increasingly reliant on such academic labor, with National Science Foundation data showing the 13,600 postdocs in science and engineering in 1979 more than tripling to 45,500 in 2021.⁹

Nontenured Majority

At most universities and colleges, the number of tenure-track positions now available is insufficient to meet institutional teaching and research needs. To staff essential courses, most institutions hire both part- and

full-time faculty off the tenure track on short-term contracts and in other less formal arrangements.

According to AAUP analysis of federal data, in fall 2022 less than one-third of faculty in US colleges and universities were on tenure lines, and 68 percent of faculty held contingent appointments, compared with about 47 percent in fall 1987. Nearly half (49 percent) of US faculty members were employed part time in fall 2022, compared with about one-third of the professoriate in 1987. Full-time contingent positions rose from 13 percent to 19 percent in that same period. The situation is worse at two-year institutions. In fall 2021, fewer than one in five faculty at such institutions were in tenure-line positions, with about 65 percent of the faculty employed part time.¹⁰

“Non-regular” contingent appointments have become the norm.¹¹ These appointments require only minimal commitment from the institution, and they result in a predictably high level of faculty turnover. Most part-time contingent appointments are very brief in duration, with 89 percent lasting for only one or two terms in fall 2022.¹² Full-time contingent faculty often work on longer contracts, either multiyear (25 percent) or continuing/at-will contracts (10 percent), but most work on annual contracts (57 percent) or on single-term contracts (5 percent).¹³

Measuring the scope of the contingency problem—and whether higher education is making progress—is extremely difficult. As noted in a December 2020 AAUP “Data Snapshot,” the annual Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) human resources survey component conducted by the NCES “collects the numbers of part-time faculty members by ‘primary occupational activity’” but “collects data disaggregated by gender, race and ethnicity, and academic rank only for full-time faculty members.”¹⁴

7. *Policy Documents and Reports*, 387–88.

8. Glenn Colby, “Annual Report on the Economic Status of the Profession, 2023–24,” *Academe* 110 (Summer 2024): 84, figure 4.

9. National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics, *Survey of Graduate Students and Postdoctorates in Science and Engineering: Fall 2021*, <https://nces.nsf.gov/pubs/nsf23312/assets/nsf23312.pdf>.

10. Glenn Colby, “Data Snapshot: Tenure and Contingency in US Higher Education,” March 2023, <https://www.aaup.org/article/data-snapshot-tenure-and-contingency-us-higher-education>.

11. Martin J. Finkelstein and Jack H. Schuster, “Assessing the Silent Revolution: How Changing Demographics Are Reshaping the Academic Profession,” *AAHE Bulletin* (October 2001): 5.

12. Colby, “Annual Report on the Economic Status of the Profession, 2023–24,” 86, figure 5. The figure (89 percent) represents part-time faculty on renewable “annual” contracts (13 percent) that are typically two terms (usually semesters) and those on nonrenewable “less-than-annual” contracts (76 percent).

13. Colby, “Annual Report on the Economic Status of the Profession, 2023–24,” 86, figure 5.

14. Glenn Colby and Chelsea Fowler, “Data Snapshot: IPEDS Data

Additionally, NCES has not collected faculty demographic data by discipline since 2004, which makes it difficult to make definitive statements about the prevalence of contingent appointments in particular disciplines.

Women are more heavily represented among contingent faculty than among full-time tenure-line faculty. Just over half of all faculty members in US higher education are women, and recent federal figures show that nearly half (48 percent) of all full-time faculty were women in fall 2021, up from only 27 percent in fall 1987. Women have been making slow progress in their representation in full-time tenured faculty positions, and as of fall 2021 women occupied only 41 percent of such positions. Women are more strongly represented among lower ranks, holding 54 percent of assistant professor positions and 47 percent of associate professor positions, but only 36 percent of full professors were women in fall 2021.¹⁵ Although the representation of women in the academic profession has increased overall, the increase comes at a time when opportunities for full-time tenure-track positions are declining.

The contingency of part-time underrepresented minority (URM) faculty is difficult to track accurately, according to the 2020 AAUP “Data Snapshot” report discussed above. (The designation URM indicates all faculty in IPEDS race and ethnicity categories other than white or Asian—Black, Hispanic, Pacific Islander, and American Indian/Alaska Native—to retain consistency with prior reports in higher education research.) NCES collects more detailed information on full-time faculty, and, according to AAUP analysis of fall 2022 NCES data, URM faculty make up only 12 percent of full-time contingent and tenure-line faculty across the country, despite making up 34 percent of the US population.¹⁶ Just 6 percent of full-time contingent and tenure-line faculty self-identify as Hispanic or Latino and 6 percent as Black or African American.

(Faculty categorized as Asian were about 11 percent of full-time faculty of all ranks.) The racial composition of the faculty does not mirror that of the US population.¹⁷

NCES has not collected data on the prevalence of faculty with disabilities since 2004 and has never collected data on LGBTQ+ faculty, contingent or otherwise. The paucity of research on these and other historically marginalized populations in academia, with even less research on intersections between marginalized identities, suggests that such faculty may face increased barriers to receiving tenure and perhaps to entering the profession. We need more research on faculty in historically marginalized groups, including data regarding their access to and navigation through tenure and promotion systems.

The minimal institutional commitment and relatively rapid turnover that characterize appointments of part- and full-time contingent faculty mean that few faculty are available for long-term institutional and curricular planning, for mentoring newer faculty, and for other collegial responsibilities such as peer reviews of scholarship and evaluations for reappointment and tenure. The faculty as a whole is less stable when its members are increasingly unable to support these key academic activities. Fewer and fewer faculty can do essential service work even as the amount and complexity of that work grows along with the industry’s size. All of this is a threat to shared governance.

Administrations typically justify employing contingent faculty by arguing that they provide flexibility in times of economic turmoil. The record is mixed. For example, during the Great Recession of 2008–09 and its aftermath, the industry’s response to soaring student enrollment was to hire more faculty on contingent appointments rather than adding tenure-line appointments to meet the demand. The recession ended in June 2009, and by the time the US unemployment rate returned to prerecession levels in 2014, the number of faculty employed on full-time contingent appointments had increased by over 33,000 (19 percent), while the number of full-time tenure-track appointments had increased by only about 2,100 (0.6 percent).¹⁸ This trend continued until the COVID-19 pandemic, to which colleges and universities responded by eliminating tens of thousands of

on Full-Time Women Faculty and Faculty of Color,” December 2020, <https://www.aaup.org/news/data-snapshot-full-time-women-faculty-and-faculty-color>.

15. Glenn Colby and Ziyang Bai, “A Path toward Equity for Women Faculty in Higher Education,” *TIAA Institute Research Paper Series* (June 2023), https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4486376.

16. Colby, “Annual Report on the Economic Status of the Profession, 2023–24,” 85. The national URM percentage was derived from the US Census Bureau’s July 1, 2022, “QuickFacts” population estimates available at <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045223>.

17. Colby and Fowler.

18. Glenn Colby, “Annual Report on the Economic Status of the Profession, 2020–21,” *Academe* 107 (Summer 2021): 57–58, table F.

contingent appointments. The AAUP's *Annual Report on the Economic Status of the Profession, 2022–23*, found that during the first two years of the pandemic, the number of faculty employed on contingent appointments decreased by over 57,000 (6.9 percent) from fall 2019 to fall 2020, and contingent faculty employment had recovered by only about 28 percent in fall 2022. Notably, during the early pandemic era, many contingent faculty who remained employed lacked access to employer-subsidized health insurance. The number of graduate student employees also plummeted during the COVID-19 pandemic, decreasing by 13,551 (3.7 percent) from fall 2019 to fall 2020 but then recovering by 99 percent in fall 2022.¹⁹ As the AAUP's Committee on Contingency and the Profession noted in the August 2020 statement "Contingent Faculty and the Global Pandemic," in such crises our ideals are more, not less, important, and faculty "must aim to hold administrations to the highest ideals of equity and justice espoused by their institutions."²⁰

Diminishing Investment in Education

The diminishing level of institutional commitment to a stable, full-time, tenured faculty might suggest that higher education is a fading value in our society. But that lack of commitment has manifested itself even during periods of enrollment growth. Between 1970 and 2010, student enrollment in degree-granting institutions grew by 136 percent, the number of bachelor's degrees conferred increased by 104 percent, the number of master's degrees conferred increased by 210 percent, and the number of doctoral degrees conferred increased by 152 percent. During the same time, the percentage of faculty employed full time decreased from 78 percent to 50 percent.²¹

But even during that period of sustained enrollment growth, colleges and universities, especially public institutions, experienced serious budgetary pressures. In 1980, state, federal, and local governments appropriated just over one-half (50 percent) of the current-fund revenue of public degree-granting institutions, with the

rest of the revenue coming from sales and services (20 percent); tuition and fees (13 percent); gifts, grants, and contracts (15 percent); endowment income (less than 1 percent); and other sources (3 percent).²² By 2010, the burden had shifted considerably, with state, federal, and local appropriations providing just 23 percent of the total revenue of public institutions. To compensate for reduced appropriations, public institutions increased their reliance on revenue from gifts, grants, and contracts (26 percent) as well as tuition and fees (19 percent), while revenue from other sources stayed about the same.²³ In 2023, no public institution can hope to receive 50 percent of its budget from government sources.

At the same time as state support for public education was contracting significantly, additional factors have contributed to create regimes of austerity. The Great Recession of 2008–09 caused universities and colleges to tighten their budgets and eliminate spending even more.²⁴ Between 2020 and 2022, the COVID-19 pandemic led to historic cancellations of programs and layoffs of faculty and staff nationwide.²⁵ Further, the impending "enrollment cliff"—the looming dip in the number of college-aged applicants in some states—portends painful competition among institutions for a shrinking pool of students.

Through the 1980s and 1990s, as budgets tightened and tuition and fees increased, institutions set new priorities. But even with substantial increases in student enrollments, many institutions chose to allocate proportionately less to their instructional budgets and instead to increase spending on athletics, physical plants, new technologies and technology upgrades, and administrative costs, a choice they have continued to make into the 2020s. In 1998, the congressionally appointed National Commission on the Cost of Higher Education confirmed that investments in faculty had decreased in recent years, even

19. Glenn Colby, "Annual Report on the Economic Status of the Profession, 2022–23," *Academe* 109 (Summer 2023): 93–122.

20. AAUP Committee on Contingency and the Profession, "Contingent Faculty and the Global Pandemic," August 11, 2020, <https://www.aaup.org/news/contingent-faculty-and-global-pandemic>.

21. "Digest of Education Statistics 2021," NCES, US Department of Education (<https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d21/>), Tables 307.10 and 318.20.

22. "Digest of Education Statistics 2001," NCES, US Department of Education (https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/2001menu_tables.asp), Table 331.

23. "Digest of Education Statistics 2021," NCES, US Department of Education (<https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d21/>), Table 333.10.

24. See Saranna Thornton and John W. Curtis, "A Very Slow Recovery: The Annual Report on the Economic Status of the Profession, 2011–12," *Academe* 98 (March–April 2012): 1–83, <https://www.aaup.org/reports-publications/2011-12salarysurvey>.

25. The AAUP investigated eight such cases in "Special Report: COVID-19 and Academic Governance," *Academe* 107 (Summer 2021): 2–41, <https://www.aaup.org/report/covid-19-and-academic-governance>.

as tuitions rose.²⁶ In their testimony and comments to the commission, representatives of public and private institutions described pressures to compete for students by investing heavily in recreational facilities, updated dormitories, and the latest computer technologies. Institutions made up for these heavy expenditures by reducing instructional budgets, which they accomplished by hiring more contingent faculty instead of making a commitment to tenure-line faculty. While this choice may have improved the infrastructure on many campuses, it has undoubtedly struck a blow to the quality of instruction. Though incoming students may find finer facilities, they are also likely to find fewer full-time faculty with adequate time, professional support, and resources available for their instruction.

Costs of Increased Contingency

The dramatic increase in the number and proportion of contingent faculty in the last thirty-five years has created systemic problems for higher education. Student learning is diminished by reduced contact with tenured faculty, whose expertise in their field and effectiveness as teachers have been validated by peer review and to whom the institution has made a long-term commitment. Faculty governance is weakened by constant turnover and, on many campuses, by the exclusion of contingent faculty from governance activities. Inequities and physical distance among potential colleagues undermine the collegial atmosphere of academic institutions and hamper the effectiveness of academic decision-making. The integrity of faculty work is threatened as parts of the whole are divided and assigned piecemeal to instructors, lecturers, graduate students, specialists, researchers, and even administrators. Academic freedom is weakened when a majority of the faculty cannot rely on the protections of tenure. The following paragraphs examine each of these problems as an educational cost that institutions incur when they choose not to invest adequately in their instructional missions.

Quality of Student Learning

Most educators agree that maintaining the quality of student learning is a major challenge for higher education. Studies have identified informal interactions with faculty outside the classroom, which “positively influence persistence, college graduation, and graduate school enrollments” of students, as

one of the strongest positive factors contributing to student learning.²⁷ Unfortunately, part-time faculty, who are typically paid by the course section, are discouraged by their employment arrangements from spending time outside of class with students or on student-related activities, whether in office hours and less formal interactions or in class preparation and grading papers. In addition, the practice of paying very low wages to adjuncts pressures many to support themselves by seeking multiple course section assignments on multiple campuses, thus further limiting their opportunities to interact with students. However, as a diminishing proportion of full-time tenured and tenure-track faculty must take on additional institutional responsibilities that are not typically shared with contingent faculty, including faculty governance and institutional support of various kinds, tenure-track faculty may find that they are also pressed for time to spend with students outside of class. Students clearly bear the direct impact of reductions in institutional instructional budgets. The Association’s 1986 statement *On Full-Time Non-Tenure Track Appointments* cautions:

We question whether the intellectual mission of a college or university is well served when the institution asserts that certain basic courses are indispensable for a liberal education but then assigns responsibility for those courses to faculty members who are deemed replaceable and unnecessary to the institution. Indeed, we believe that an institution reveals a certain indifference to its academic mission when it removes much of the basic teaching in required core courses from the purview of the regular professoriate.²⁸

Because of increased reliance on contingent faculty, students entering college now are less likely than those of previous generations to interact with tenured or tenure-track professors who, in turn, are fully engaged in their respective academic disciplines. It is the professional involvement of faculty in academic disciplines that ensures the quality, currency, and depth of the content being offered to students. But now, because

26. National Commission on the Cost of Higher Education, *Straight Talk about College Costs and Prices* (Washington, DC: Oryx Press, 1998).

27. Ernst Benjamin, “How Over-Reliance on Contingent Appointments Diminishes Faculty Involvement in Student Learning,” *Peer Review* (February 2002): 4–10. Benjamin discusses studies by Alexander Astin, George Kuh, Ernest Pascarella, and Patrick Terenzini.

28. *Academe* 72 (July–August 1986): 14a–19a.

of the time constraints imposed on contingent faculty, especially part-time faculty, teachers of undergraduate courses are less likely to be informed about the latest developments in an academic discipline and to be challenged by recent research and writing. It is difficult for part-time faculty to be flexible and responsive to students' interests and abilities when they lack class preparation time and are required to deliver courses according to a predetermined curriculum. Contingent faculty, especially part-time faculty, are less likely than their tenure-line colleagues to have professional support such as office space, personal computers, and professional development opportunities. Because of this lack of resources and compensated time, contingent faculty may not be as able to assign and supervise complex and meaningful projects.²⁹ Contingent faculty sometimes cannot commit hours of their time to writing letters of recommendation for students applying for scholarships and other opportunities. Indeed, contingent faculty may no longer be employed by the same institution when students need such letters. Students of contingent faculty may have diminished opportunity to reach beyond the limits of the course outline and the classroom, with their instructor's support, to encounter a passion for scholarship and freedom of inquiry. Moreover, the heavy use of contingent faculty in fundamental first- and second-year undergraduate courses tends to separate tenure-track faculty from the introductory teaching that is critical to their understanding of the student body and of the basic questions that new students ask about their disciplines. This reduced contact with undergraduate students makes it more difficult for tenure-track faculty to sustain the cohesion and effectiveness of the curriculum. Finally, as the Association's 1993 statement *The Status of Non-Tenure-Track Faculty* points out, faculty with non-tenure-track appointments "serve with their academic freedom in continuous jeopardy." It is therefore not surprising, the statement notes, that "the more cautious among them are likely to avoid controversy in their classrooms" and thus to deprive their students of that quintessential college experience. An era of program closures and online harassment of faculty ensures that even tenure-line faculty may feel concerned for their job security in

ways that undermine academic freedom in teaching, research, and public discussion of sensitive topics.

Equity among Academic Colleagues

Inequities begin in the appointment process. Appointments of full-time tenure-track faculty typically follow rigorous national searches, which include a review of the candidate's scholarly record, an assessment of teaching potential, and consideration of other attributes by faculty in the department offering the appointment. Contingent faculty, by contrast, are often appointed in hurried circumstances. Department chairs select likely candidates from a local list, reviewing their curricula vitae and perhaps their past student evaluations. Faculty in most contingent positions are rarely reviewed and evaluated during their appointments, and little care is taken to plan their professional development and advancement when they are hired. In many institutions, evaluations are the responsibility of the busy dean or chair who appointed the individual and may be neglected unless complaints or problems arise. By contrast, in other institutions, contingent faculty are evaluated to the brink of surveillance, sometimes by faculty with much less experience.

Economic differences provide an even sharper contrast between part-time contingent faculty and tenured faculty. While part-time faculty who teach in professional and vocational schools or programs are more likely to hold full-time positions outside the academy, those who teach in core liberal arts fields such as English, foreign languages, history, and mathematics are more likely to rely on teaching for their livelihood. This means that a sizable corps of college teachers lacks access to employment benefits, including health insurance and retirement plans. Only 34 percent of institutions completing the 2022–23 AAUP Faculty Compensation Survey indicated that they contributed toward retirement plans for part-time faculty paid per course section the prior year, and just 31 percent of institutions contributed to premiums for medical insurance plans for such faculty.³⁰ To support themselves, part-time faculty often must teach their courses as piecemeal, commuting between institutions, preparing for courses on a grueling timetable, striving to create and evaluate appropriately challenging assignments, and making personal and professional sacrifices to maintain interaction with their students.

29. For examples, see "Part-time Instructional Faculty and Staff: Who They Are, What They Do, and What They Think," National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), US Department of Education, tables 36–39 and 40–47, <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2002/2002163u.pdf>.

30. Colby, "Annual Report on the Economic Status of the Profession, 2022–23," 101.

A large gap in working conditions exists between even the most experienced part-time faculty and newly appointed tenure-track faculty.

Contingent faculty, both part and full time, are constantly confronted with reminders of their lack of status in the academic community. Contingent faculty have fewer opportunities to interact with their tenured or tenure-track colleagues in faculty governance, professional development, and scholarly pursuits. This isolation promotes divisions and distinctions that undermine the collegial nature of the academic community. The socioeconomic divide between tenure-stream and contingent faculty also contributes to a lack of community feeling and takes a serious toll on the mental health and well-being of contingent faculty. Taken together, these inequities weaken the whole profession and diminish its capacity to serve the public good.

Integrity of Faculty Work

Higher education achieves its unique standing in our society because it is characterized by original research, teaching that is grounded in scholarly disciplines, and service to the larger community—all supported and protected by academic freedom. Institutions rely on the professional responsibility of the faculty to maintain a strong commitment to student learning and to the development of scholarship. The relative emphasis placed on teaching, scholarship, and service by faculty varies according to the terms of their appointment and academic discipline and the type of institution at which they work. But although emphases vary, these functions are not completely divisible. Faculty work cannot be sliced cleanly into component parts without losing the important connections that make up the whole. For example, while teaching may be the primary mission of certain types of institutions or programs, teaching faculty recognize the need to engage in scholarly work in order to remain current and effective as teachers in their respective disciplines. Similarly, research universities support original research, but research faculty typically share new information and insights with the university community by teaching in a graduate program and by consulting with academic colleagues. (And current market trends and rising tuition and fees has many of these institutions acknowledging the importance of undergraduate teaching to remain competitive.) In all types of institutions, faculty share a responsibility for academic decision-making. Faculty participation in governance structures is an essential feature of higher education, ensuring that programs and courses are of

high quality and are academic in nature. Faculty also serve the university or college in many ways, such as by acting as faculty advisers to student organizations, providing information to prospective students and their parents, formal and informal mentoring of students, supporting student activities, unpaid consulting, service to their disciplinary associations, and the diversity, equity, and inclusion work frequently performed by faculty of color. Finally, the university's ability to be of service to the community at large depends on the availability of faculty to share their academic knowledge outside of academe. Services ranging from providing economic development advice to local governments and community organizations to advising local schools on college preparatory courses tie the university or college to the larger community and help to inform the institution's research and teaching functions.

Tenured and tenure-track faculty are expected to engage to some extent in teaching, scholarship, and service, and their salaries and teaching loads may reflect that expectation. Faculty holding contingent appointments, on the other hand, are rarely compensated for time spent on research or shared governance and other service work. The professional development and scholarly accomplishments of contingent faculty are often viewed as irrelevant or simply ignored.

To maintain the quality of higher education, faculty must stay in contact with other scholars in their disciplines. Contingent appointments frustrate such involvement and hamper original research because they are unstable and because they rarely include institutional support for scholarly activities and professional development. Scholarship requires continuity. It is particularly difficult for faculty with contingent appointments to engage in scholarly work when the conditions of their appointments vary from year to year (or even term to term). Access to scholarly resources such as libraries, collections, or laboratories varies widely with different types of appointments. Even full-time non-tenure-track appointments, which can be more stable than part-time appointments, leave little time for scholarly development, because faculty with these appointments tend to teach many more classes than tenured or tenure-track faculty.

To support the essential mission of higher education, faculty appointments, including contingent appointments, should incorporate all aspects of university life: active engagement with an academic discipline, teaching or mentoring of undergraduate or graduate students, participation in academic

decision-making, and service on campus and to the surrounding community. Faculty who are appointed to less-than-full-time positions should participate at least to some extent in the full range of faculty responsibilities. For all faculty in contingent positions, this participation should be supported by compensation and institutional resources and recognized in the processes of evaluation and peer review.

Academic Freedom

Academic freedom in colleges and universities is essential to the common good of a free society. Academic freedom rests on a solid base of peer review and therefore is the responsibility of the entire profession. The profession protects academic freedom through a system of peer review that results in institutional commitment to faculty. Faculty peers make careful judgments in the appointment process, conduct ongoing reviews that may lead to reappointments, and make evaluations that may determine the completion of the probationary period and the beginning of continuous tenure. Individual faculty members can exercise their professional inquiry and judgment freely because peer review affirms their competence and accomplishments in their fields.

There is no academic freedom unless all academics are free to teach without fear of reprisal. The attenuated relationship between contingent faculty and their department or institution means that academic freedom is in no way guaranteed. Currently, neither peer review nor academic due process is available for most contingent faculty. The lack of adequate protection for academic freedom can have visible results. The structure that contingent faculty work in discourages them from taking risks in the classroom or in scholarly and service work. The free exchange of ideas may be hampered by the specter of potential dismissal or nonrenewal for unpopular utterances. In such an atmosphere, students may be deprived of the robust debate essential to good citizenship. They may be deprived of rigorous and honest evaluations of their work necessary for their intellectual growth. Likewise, faculty may be discouraged from explorations of new knowledge and experimentation with new pedagogies. Perhaps most important, institutions may lose the opportunity to receive constructive criticism of academic policies and practices from a significant portion of the academic community. And the very specter of contingency itself chills the academic freedom of all—tenured, tenure-seeking, and continuing contingent faculty alike.

To secure academic freedom for the entire profession, and to ensure the highest quality in teaching and research, the responsibilities of faculty peers in the appointment and evaluation of colleagues for contingent faculty positions should resemble those for appointments on the tenure track. They largely do not. Faculty appointed and reappointed to contingent positions should receive conscientious and thorough peer reviews in which they can demonstrate their effectiveness; their successive reappointments would then validate their record of competence and accomplishments in their respective fields. Student evaluations have been shown to be unreliable, badly designed, and biased sources of information regarding the efficacy of current faculty performance. As many contingent faculty are evaluated annually for renewal solely by their student evaluations for a handful of course sections, the sample sizes make these reports neither descriptive of current work nor predictive of future performance. No contingent faculty member should be reviewed solely on the basis of student perceptions unconfirmed by professional observation and with no opportunity to respond. Contingent faculty should be invited to supply other evidence of their success for the purposes of evaluation.

Academic freedom is best guaranteed by tenure and academic due process resting securely on the foundation of peer review. We here affirm long-standing Association policy that, with carefully circumscribed exceptions, all full-time appointments are of two kinds: probationary appointments and appointments with continuous tenure. According to the joint 1940 *Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure*, “After the expiration of a probationary period, teachers or investigators should have permanent or continuous tenure, and their services should be terminated only for adequate cause . . . or under extraordinary circumstances because of financial exigencies.”³¹ For full-time faculty the probationary period should not exceed seven years, and those who are reappointed beyond seven years should be recognized as entitled to the protections that accrue with tenure—termination only for adequate cause and with due process.

To protect academic freedom and to ensure the highest quality in college and university education,

31. The 1940 *Statement* also allowed termination of tenured appointments “in the case of retirement for age,” a provision that has since been rendered obsolete by federal law.

colleges and universities need the stability of a tenured faculty. The Association's 1993 report *The Status of Non-Tenure-Track Faculty* urges: "Whenever possible, the regular academic instruction of students should be the responsibility of faculty who are responsible for the curriculum and participate in the governance of the institution, and to whom the institution is willing to make the commitment of tenure." Where the ideal is not immediately reachable, faculties and administrations should both adopt concrete plans to increase the proportion of positions that are protected by tenure, and in the interim develop and implement practical safeguards for academic freedom for all faculty, and assurances of conscientious peer review and continued employment of well-qualified faculty, in order to maintain the quality of the education offered at the institution. This transitional phase should include at least these three elements:

1. Part- and full-time contingent faculty should be provided opportunities to move into tenured positions (part or full time), the requirements for which should be defined, as always, by faculty peers.
2. Part-time faculty, after a reasonable opportunity for successive reviews and reappointments, should have assurances of continued employment. (For examples of measures that provide such assurances, see the recommendations on tenure and academic due process in the following section of this report.)
3. Faculty and administrators should exercise great care in recruiting and appointing new faculty, for any position, to ensure that new faculty may have some prospect of eventually achieving tenure. Finally, it is important to note that tenure can be granted at any professional rank (or without rank); the Association does not link tenure with a particular faculty status. The professor in a research university whose appointment includes a significant responsibility for original research should not be the sole or primary model for tenurable academic work. A faculty member whose position focuses primarily on teaching, supported by sufficient opportunity for scholarship and service, is also engaged in tenurable academic work. Just as there are different emphases in the range of faculty appointments in research universities, comprehensive universities, liberal arts colleges, and community colleges, all of which define tenurable faculty work, so, too, there may be different models for tenurable faculty work within a single institution.

Recommendations on Faculty Work

The work of faculty comprises an integrated whole: teaching, research, service, mentoring, hiring, administrative work, community outreach, and more. Segmenting that work threatens the quality of higher education, undermines the reliability and effectiveness of academic decision-making, undercuts the necessary protections of academic freedom, and imposes an unacceptable cost on student learning. The increased reliance of the academy on faculty whose academic freedom is not protected diminishes the professional autonomy and the intellectual independence of all faculty—essential elements of the mission of higher education. Knowing from long experience that academic freedom thrives in a relationship of commitment and responsibility between faculty and their institutions, the Association makes the following recommendations.

Faculty Work as an Integrated Whole

Faculty appointments, part or full time, should be structured to involve the full range of faculty responsibilities, including teaching activities both in and outside the classroom, scholarly pursuits such as contributions to an academic discipline or maintenance of professional currency, and service that ensures that academic decisions are well informed by the experience and expertise of all faculty and that the wider community shares in the benefits of the knowledge fostered by the university community.

Peer Review

Collegial support of academic freedom for the profession requires conscientious and thorough reviews of the work of all faculty, including contingent faculty. Reviews should be conducted by faculty peers and should be structured to permit faculty to demonstrate their competence and accomplishments in their respective fields. The records of reviews should validate faculty members' effectiveness in their positions. Appointment, review, and reappointment processes should incorporate accepted practices of academic due process and should give careful attention to the quality of education that the faculty member contributes to the institution.

Tenure and Academic Due Process

Teaching, scholarship, and service must be protected by academic freedom and due process. As noted in the AAUP's *Recommended Institutional Regulations on Academic Freedom and Tenure*, "There should be

no invidious distinctions between those who teach and/or conduct research in higher education, regardless of whether their appointments are tenured, tenure-track, or contingent. All faculty members should have access to the same due-process protections and procedures.”³² For faculty with full-time appointments, regardless of their titles, academic freedom should be protected by tenure following a reasonable probationary period. For faculty with full-time appointments the probationary period should not exceed seven years. In addition, all part-time faculty, after appropriate successive reviews for reappointments, should have assurance of continuing employment. Such assurance can be provided through a variety of measures, some of which were initially recommended by the Association in 1993. Examples include longer terms of appointment, opportunities for advancement through ranks, due-process protections (described below), recognition of seniority (such as first opportunities for reappointment and course selection), conscientious peer evaluation, and part-time tenure.

The Association insists on the following minimum due-process protections for all contingent faculty, whether they are classified as full time or part time: written terms and conditions of appointments, including modifications and extensions thereof; access to a faculty grievance committee; timely notice of nonrenewal; a written statement of the reasons for nonrenewal if requested; opportunity for review of a nonrenewal decision by a faculty committee; a hearing before a duly constituted faculty committee if the faculty member makes a prima facie case that a nonrenewal decision involved an academic freedom violation or improper discrimination; and, prior to involuntary termination during a period of appointment, a written statement of reasons and an opportunity to be heard before a duly constituted faculty committee with the burden of proof for demonstrating adequate cause resting with the administration.³³

Shared Governance

Curricular and other academic decisions benefit from the participation of all faculty, especially those who teach core courses. It is feasible to transition an

institution’s shared governance structure to include full and appropriate representation and participation for all faculty in governance. The path to doing so is laid out in the 2012 AAUP report *Inclusion in Governance of Faculty Members Holding Contingent Appointments*.³⁴ Governance responsibilities should be shared among all faculty at an institution, including those appointed to less-than-full-time positions. Although part-time faculty have proportionately less time available for governance responsibilities, their appointments should provide for appropriate participation and recognition of their service work in evaluation processes. (And if not recognized in evaluations, this service work should be compensated.) Faculty and administrators in each institution, program, or department should together determine the appropriate modes and levels of participation in governance for part-time faculty, considering representation and inclusion in committees and governance bodies, with the primary aim of obtaining the best wisdom and cooperation of all colleagues in the governance of their institutions. But all faculty should be eligible to vote in all elections for governance bodies if they meet the requirements for time-in-service. Participation in shared governance requires vigilant support of academic freedom and the protections of due process. In order to protect the right and the responsibility of nontenured as well as tenured faculty to participate freely and effectively in faculty governance, it is incumbent on all faculty to protect the exercise of academic freedom by their colleagues in faculty governance processes.

Compensation

All faculty work should be compensated fairly. Positions that require comparable work, responsibilities, and qualifications should be comparably compensated, taking into account variations by discipline and seniority. As the Association recommended in 1993, compensation for part-time appointments, including those in which faculty are currently paid on a per-course-section or per-hour basis, should be the applicable fraction of the compensation (including benefits) for a comparable full-time position.³⁵ Although the variety of responsibilities and qualifications required of each position may make

32. “Recommended Institutional Regulations on Academic Freedom and Tenure,” *Academe* 109 (Summer 2023): 89n14.

33. These procedural standards are set forth in Regulations 1–10, 12–13, and 16 of the “Recommended Institutional Regulations on Academic Freedom and Tenure,” 81–92.

34. *Policy Documents and Reports*, 197–209.

35. “The Status of Non-Tenure-Track Faculty.” Essential benefits include health-care insurance, life insurance, and retirement contributions.

comparability difficult to determine, it is the responsibility of duly constituted faculty bodies to take this challenge seriously and meet it. Furthermore, contingent faculty should be compensated on an hourly pro-rata basis, per their negotiated per-credit rate, for all activities not included in their contract that they undertake outside the classroom on behalf of students or the institution, such as participating in mandatory faculty training, attending meetings, engaging in professional development, or writing letters of recommendation.

Limitations of Contingent Appointments

Recognizing that current patterns of faculty appointment depart substantially from the ideal, the Association affirms its 1980, 1993, and 2003 recommendations that no more than 15 percent of the total instruction within an institution, and no more than 25 percent of the total instruction within any department, should be provided by faculty with non-tenure-track appointments.

For the long-term good of institutions and their students, the use of non-tenure-track appointments should be limited to specialized fields and emergency situations. Faculty who hold such special and emergency appointments should have the protections of academic freedom, due process, and fair compensation as described above. Special appointments refer, for example, to sabbatical replacements, substitutes for leaves of absence, or limited “artist-in-residence” appointments. Special appointments should not exceed a small percentage of all faculty appointments, and the Association’s allowance for special appointments should not be construed as an endorsement of the thousands of full-time non-tenure-track faculty appointments.

Flexible Scheduling

Within the context of tenure, a certain amount of flexibility in scheduling is an appropriate response to the needs of faculty at various career stages. The Association affirms the recommendation made in the 1987 statement *Senior Appointments with Reduced Loads* for opportunities “for faculty member[s] to move from a full to a reduced load and back to full-time status, depending on the needs of the individual and the institution.”³⁶ Modified appointments—possibly with reduced workloads and salary, but without loss in

status—might serve faculty at various stages of life or career. The Association’s 2001 *Statement of Principles on Family Responsibilities and Academic Work* recommends, among other accommodations for faculty who are new parents, adjustments in the probationary period at the request of the faculty member.³⁷

These recommendations speak to all faculty—tenured, tenure track, and contingent. They urge a renewal of the conception of faculty work as an integrated whole that fits with and supports the mission of higher education for the public good. They urge an integration of principles of academic freedom and due process in the work of all faculty and recommend inclusion of all faculty in the academic work of the institution. The Association recognizes the gap between these recommendations and current practices. This gap must be bridged in two ways: (1) by developing concrete mechanisms to integrate contingent faculty into the academic work of their institutions and to protect the academic freedom of faculty currently appointed to contingent positions, and (2) by increasing the proportion of positions protected by tenure. We offer below some practical guidelines for transitions to an improved ratio of tenured faculty. Each plan for transition, of course, must be customized to a particular institution, as developed by administrations and all faculty working together collegially.

Transition from Current to Best Practices

Transitions happen gradually. The professoriate’s transition from a body composed mainly of full-time tenure-line faculty to a body composed mainly of contingent faculty occurred over several decades. Now, some institutions seek to recover the stability and quality of instruction lost in that transition. Some simply seek to improve the ratio of tenure-line faculty in one or more departments. Such changes do not have to be precipitate and jarring to institutions, to students, or to faculty who were appointed on a contingent basis and have nonetheless tried to build an academic career. Both faculty and administrators participated in the decisions that have resulted in heavy reliance on contingent faculty, especially for undergraduate teaching. Both faculty and administrators now share the responsibility for reducing such reliance while minimizing the costs of change to current contingent faculty.

Instructional budgets, of necessity, compete for funds with other college and university priorities.

36. *Academe* 73 (July–August 1987): 50.

37. *Policy Documents and Reports*, 339–46.

Students, alumni, parents, and local legislators may be among the first to recognize the value of investments that strengthen the quality of undergraduate education and may assist in identifying the resources necessary for a transition.

An example of careful transitioning from contingent to tenure-track positions is presented by Western Michigan University, where the faculty successfully bargained for a contract that offered tenurable positions to a group of “faculty specialists” including health specialists and teachers in the College of Aviation. Because the faculty union and the institution had moved incrementally toward this step, first regularizing the positions by adopting position descriptions and promotional ranks and agreeing on some due-process provisions and then offering job security with four-year reviews, the cost of the transition to the tenure track was negligible. WMU saw the percentage of faculty with tenure increase from 35 percent in fall 2002 to 48 percent in fall 2010. The impact was long lasting, and in fall 2022, 45 percent of faculty were tenured.³⁸ This example demonstrates that institutions committed to high-quality undergraduate education can plan appropriate steps to reduce their reliance on temporary faculty.

Preparation for a Transition

We make the following recommendations for systems, institutions, departments, or programs preparing to make a transition from an unstable academic environment characterized by overreliance on contingent faculty appointments to a stable academic environment characterized by a predominantly tenure-line faculty.

Assess the current situation. How many faculty in each department are currently appointed off the tenure track? How many of such appointments are needed to serve the long-term best interests of the students and the institution? The current ratio of contingent faculty to tenured and tenure-track faculty should serve as a benchmark. As a transition begins, the institution or department should seek to reduce that ratio.

Define and describe the goal. Faculty and administrators should consider the end result sought. The goal of the academic institution should be to further the public good. Different profiles of tenurable positions, with varied emphases given to teaching, research, and service as integral parts of faculty work, might suit the mission and work of different departments, programs, or institutions. Each department, program, or institution should consider which profile best fits its long-term needs. For example, the work of some tenured faculty, particularly at the undergraduate level, may emphasize teaching or service, while the work of others may emphasize research and graduate education, especially at institutions that need enough tenurable positions to sustain and develop research activities. Some faculty may be eligible for tenure as specialists, as clinical instructors, or in other positions that vary from conventional faculty ranks of assistant, associate, and full professor.

To determine the number of tenured positions needed for each department, program, or institution, faculty and administrators should begin with the premise that core and advanced courses should be taught by faculty who have the protection of academic freedom, secured by tenure and academic due process, as well as the ability to participate fully in their profession and in the collegial environment of the academy. Administrations must work diligently with duly constituted faculty bodies to determine the full complement of tenured and tenure-track faculty needed in a department, program, or institution. The number of tenure lines in the budget of an institution or statewide system should reflect at least the number of faculty needed to teach the students enrolled in core and advanced courses offered on a continuing basis. Budget constraints and other concerns may prevent the immediate realization of a full complement of tenured faculty. Nevertheless, the goal should be defined.

Consider appropriate criteria for tenure. A duly constituted body of faculty peers should determine tenure qualifications and requirements for each type of appointment. When a position is made “tenurable,” the relative emphasis on teaching, scholarship, and service necessary for that position and therefore the qualifications that should be emphasized in tenure criteria for that position, may vary among departments and programs and among types of appointments.

Stabilize the situation. Having made a commitment to reduce reliance on a contingent teaching force, institutions should avoid appointing new contingent faculty during the transition. New contingent

38. Information on Western Michigan University’s contract is drawn from Gary Mathews, “Contract Issues Continue to Percolate and Brew,” *WMU-AAUP Advocate* (October 2002); Piper Fogg, “Widening the Tenure Track,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, January 3, 2003; and Article 20 of the WMU-AAUP contract, on the WMU-AAUP website at <http://www.wmuaaup.net/>. The percentage of tenured faculty in fall 2022 was calculated based on survey data retrieved on January 20, 2024, from <https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/>.

appointments, if any, should be limited to candidates whose qualifications, after a probationary period, are likely to meet the institution's standards for tenure in the type of position being filled, in anticipation of eventual tenure eligibility. Such appointments should be made only in the context of a definite timetable, coupled with the commitment of appropriate resources, to convert the positions to tenure-track positions. As recommended in the AAUP's 2010 report *Tenure and Teaching-Intensive Appointments*, the tenure-track position should have substantially the same job description as the contingent position.³⁹

Institutions should also avoid the proliferation of new types of contingent appointments and the proliferation of new names for existing types of appointments. Such proliferation increases the instability of the faculty and damages the careers of individual faculty who are rotated through a variety of non-tenure-track positions.

Design a deliberate approach. Plans for a transition to a primarily tenured and tenure-track faculty should be structured to ensure the least possible disruption to student learning and faculty careers. A transition can be achieved through an incremental approach that relies in large part on the voluntary attrition of faculty holding contingent appointments. Contingent faculty, especially those who have been reappointed several times, should be included in faculty decision-making processes about the conversion of positions or the creation of new positions.

The faculty may determine that, during a period of transition, individuals currently holding teaching-only positions or other positions not presently recognized as tenurable may be moved automatically into tenured or tenurable positions. Based on their existing qualifications and consistently demonstrated effectiveness in their current work responsibilities, full-time non-tenure-track faculty who are reappointed for a period of time equivalent to the probationary period for tenure-track faculty should be recognized as being entitled, in their current positions, to the protections that would accrue with tenure. Part-time faculty whose effective academic service and accomplishments lead to successive reappointments should be accorded assurances of continued employment. (See the recommendations on tenure and academic due process, above.) When positions formerly held by contingent faculty become vacant through attrition or retirement, new candidates can be recruited according to qualifications that

faculty peers determine are necessary in the long term for the tenure-track positions.

When institutions create new tenurable positions in order to increase the proportion of tenured and tenure-track faculty, part- and full-time contingent faculty who have experience, length of service, and a record of accomplishments should be welcomed as applicants for such new positions. Because some of these faculty may have been serving ably in similar positions for many years, faculty peers should design an appropriate probationary period for tenure that takes into account their individual qualifications and experience, as well as the time such faculty have already taught at the institution.

Recognize costs and plan for necessary resources. Just as overreliance on contingent faculty has long-term costs to students and institutions, transition to a full-time tenured and tenure-eligible faculty has immediate costs. These costs represent an appropriate investment, primarily in undergraduate education. They are offset somewhat by the diminished administrative expense of handling high turnover among faculty teaching essential courses, but nevertheless may be significant, especially in times of tight budgets.

Converting full-time non-tenure-track positions to tenurable positions represents the smallest increase in expenditures, as the compensation for full-time contingent faculty is only marginally less than for assistant professors overall. But, as noted earlier, full-time contingent faculty typically carry a heavier teaching load than assistant professors on the tenure track. To integrate these positions fully into the profession, these full-time teachers would need to be relieved of some teaching duties to allow time for scholarship and service, even if their positions continue to emphasize teaching as a primary activity. However, as is suggested by the example of Western Michigan University, incremental budget increases may be sufficient to accommodate a conversion from contingency to stability.

Converting part-time positions to full-time tenurable positions presents a greater economic challenge. Among institutions completing the 2022–23 AAUP Faculty Compensation Survey, part-time faculty paid by the course section in 2021–22 received an average of \$3,874 per course section, compared with an average annual salary of over \$108,000 for full-time faculty.⁴⁰ In addition, the institution typically incurs

39. *Policy Documents and Reports*, 188.

40. Colby, "Annual Report on the Economic Status of the Profession, 2022–23," 101.

much less financial liability for employment benefits for part-time faculty. The costs of a transition toward full-time tenure-track appointments can be spread out over time by such incremental steps as restructuring per-course-section appointments into fractional half-time or full-time appointments, with proportionate pay and benefits. Some part-time appointments, particularly of specialists and professional practitioners, may be appropriate to continue over a long term. In such cases, tenure eligibility for the part-time position, with proportionate compensation, should be considered.

Consistent with these recommendations, there are at least two ways to begin a transition from an unstable academic environment characterized by overreliance on contingent faculty appointments to a stable academic environment characterized by a predominantly tenure-line faculty. One option is for institutions to convert the tenure-eligible status of faculty currently holding contingent appointments. Another option is for the institution to create new tenure-eligible positions, recruiting broadly for these positions and gradually phasing out contingent positions.

Further Recommendations on Conversion of Status

Faculty and administrators at an institution may consider changing the status of existing positions from non-tenure-track to tenure-line. The tenure-line positions can be either part or full time, depending on the needs of the department or program. When status is changed, the individuals holding the positions are offered a probationary period for tenure, and the following guidelines should be observed:

1. Faculty should consider the work to be undertaken by those holding newly converted positions. Formerly non-tenure-track positions may need to be restructured or rearranged to allow the faculty members in such positions to assume the full range of faculty responsibilities, appropriate to the position, and to be compensated and recognized for those responsibilities.
2. The experience and accomplishments of faculty who have served in contingent positions at the institution should be credited in determining the appropriate length and character of a probationary period for tenure in the converted position in accord with AAUP guidelines.
3. If the requirements of the position change when it becomes a tenure-line position, faculty members in the position should be given time and appropriate professional development support during a

probationary period to enable them to meet the new requirements.

Creation of New Positions

Faculty and administrators at an institution may decide to create new tenure-track positions while reducing the number of new appointments of contingent faculty in accordance with the following guidelines:

1. Faculty should reconsider the academic work to be undertaken by those holding both new and existing tenure-line positions. Faculty responsibilities may need to be restructured or rearranged in order to ensure that undergraduate as well as graduate courses are appropriately staffed.
2. When colleges and universities create new tenure-track positions, they should advertise widely to generate a diverse pool of applicants but should also consider the qualified diverse faculty presently serving in contingent positions in the same departments and institutions through internal hiring policies.
3. Experienced, effective, and qualified faculty currently holding contingent appointments should be encouraged to apply for the new tenure-track positions. In the selection and appointment process, faculty and administrators should recognize the value of continuity in teaching and familiarity with the institution's programs as desirable criteria. Contingent faculty should be given fair and careful consideration when new tenure-eligible positions are created, and their experience and accomplishments should be taken into account. Certainly, faculty charged with the selection of new colleagues should scrupulously avoid discrimination against applicants currently employed in contingent positions. In the context of a transition, faculty who have served many years in contingent appointments should have the option of continuing in the same position, with the same qualifications and responsibilities.
4. When institutions replace part-time positions with full-time positions, or contingent positions with tenure-track positions, they should create timetables that rely, insofar as possible, on attrition and voluntary terminations in order to introduce the least possible disruption in the work lives of contingent faculty who have served the institution well over a period of years.
5. Plans for transition should be multiyear plans, including a realistic assessment of the resources

needed to accomplish the change, and the steps necessary to commit the appropriate resources.

Conclusion

The integrity of higher education rests on the integrity of the academic profession. To meet the standards and expectations appropriate to higher education, faculty need to incorporate teaching, scholarship, and service in their work, whether they serve full time or less than full time. The academic freedom that enlivens and preserves the value of academic work is protected by a responsible and reasonable commitment between the university or college and the faculty member. For the good of higher education and the good of society as a whole, this commitment must be preserved for all faculty. But the majority of faculty now work without such a commitment from their institutions and therefore without adequate protection of academic freedom.

This report has identified some of the real costs of overreliance on contingent part- and full-time faculty: costs to the quality of student learning, to equity among academic colleagues, to the integrity of faculty work, and to academic freedom. These costs are now borne primarily by students and by contingent faculty. In the long term, however, the cost of cutting corners on education will be borne by society as a whole as it gradually loses its independent academic sector.

For the good of institutions, of the educational experiences of students, and of the quality of education, the proportion of tenured and tenure-track faculty should be increased. Institutions that are now experimenting with ways to increase the proportion of tenured and tenure-track faculty are finding that the way back is complicated. The guidelines for transition presented here do not offer a complete blueprint; they are intended instead as a beginning diagram or sketch to assist faculty and administrators who have made a commitment to enhance the structure of their faculty appointment and reappointment processes. Many details described in this report are left to the judgment of faculty working within their institutional governance structures. Good-faith efforts to strengthen the commitment between institutions and the faculty members who carry out their academic missions will improve the quality of education offered at these institutions while preserving the integrity of the academic profession. ■