

Faculty Feedback Regarding the NTT Proposal to Add NTT Divisional Members to the Senate

Most faculty that are tenured track or tenured are clueless to what non-tenure track faculty go through on this campus. I've been here for 12 years and it wasn't until just recently that I fully understood that most non tenure track faculty are on a one or two year contract which to me is scary and a very powerless position. I collaborate with some rockstar NTT faculty members who go above and beyond and are included in my long term grant projects and I just realized that there is no guarantee that they will even be here to complete the work if funded. I don't know if the University truly understands how valuable the NTT faculty are on this campus and how disenfranchised they are under the current system. [Jennifer Ellis]

I'd like to share with you my support for the proposal to increase the number of NTT faculty on the Faculty Senate. That being said, I am concerned about the trend in higher ed to move away from making investments in tenure-track faculty in favor of "less expensive" NTT and adjunct faculty, but that seems like a much bigger, more global issue than effectiveness and representativeness of Faculty Senate at UTC.

I am leaning against it. The Senate is a powerful institution, and this means experienced people with a full understanding of the institution need to be in the driving seat. When I say experienced, it means those who understand not only teaching side of it, but also research and everything else that we go through when we are on the tenure track. NTT faculty just does NOT have those experiences to give them full understanding to make a fully informed decision. The argument about democratic process... This just makes no sense to me.

Please oppose the proposal to add NTT senate seats. If implemented, this proposal will substantially weaken faculty governance and have a chilling effect on debate in the Faculty Senate.

I want to voice my support for the additional senate representation for contingent, non-tenure-track faculty. I listened to the senate's conversation this week and support greater representation for these faculty when it comes to a vote. I do not share the fear that some voiced in giving these faculty more votes. I did understand what I was saying with my survey responses. As a person who worked NTT contingent faculty for a decade before I was able to find a TT position, this is personally important to me. In my field, it was not enough to have two degrees from a top 5 R1, have multiple publications, and 2 years of teaching experience prior to graduation; I needed a decade of 100% soft money research salary replacement, 15 international presentations and peer review publications, and 10 years of teaching (grad, undergrad, executive Ed both online and F2F as well as curriculum development and program assessment experience) to be competitive. When I found my excellent UTC job, the simultaneous 2 FT jobs (FT research and FT NTT) and the struggle was all worth it, but I was lucky and defied the extreme odds that do not favor people in my field. To give perspective in my field there are only 89 TT positions globally posted this year, far fewer than the number of graduating this spring in the field from the top 10 programs. [Deborah Mullen]

I'm writing to express my support for the proposal to have equitable representation of NTT faculty in the faculty senate and hoping that you as a faculty senator will support this proposal. I have listened to the recent faculty senate meeting recordings and after hearing concerns from those who oppose the measure, I feel even stronger that this measure is necessary to have any semblance of a democratic process. I see no relationship between NTT representation in faculty senate and an erosion of the institution of tenure. Instead, we as faculty (TT and NTT) need to see our interests collectively.

I am writing to add to what I hope will be a growing chorus of voices supporting the measure for NTT faculty to achieve proportional representation in the faculty senate. I understand during the meeting on 2/18, a minority of faculty expressed concerns that due to university administration's decisions to hire more NTT faculty rather than open TT lines, NTT faculty could perhaps not be trusted to vote fairly and cogently on matters that border on TT faculty concerns. As a NTT faculty member, I find this offensive - and I know that neither of you hold this view, but I hope that adding my two cents to this debate will help both of you demonstrate in further meetings that NTT faculty are just as invested in the success of UTC as TT faculty are. We serve on committees. We teach full loads of classes. Many of us still maintain full scholarly agendas. We are citizens of the university, and we deserve an equal voice in its governance. To imply that TT faculty are somehow more competent to decide issues pertaining to NTT faculty than the inverse is infantilizing and problematic. Many NTT faculty are eminently qualified to hold TT positions. Some fell victim to the vagaries of a declining and capricious job market, but this does not mean

they are not capable of examining the business of the university and deciding appropriately how it should be governed. We deserve nothing less.

Respectfully, I write today to express my support for the proposal to increase full-time NTT representation on Faculty Senate in proportion to FT NTT makeup of full time faculty. I am alarmed and dismayed that these arguments have moved beyond departmental chatter by a small but vocal TT minority across a few departments into the larger university forum. I am further dismayed (though not entirely surprised) by some of the people who have bought into these illogical arguments and attempts to further disenfranchise FT NTT. It's disheartening that some of these people fit into identity groups that have themselves been historically disenfranchised in this country.

What's most alarming is hearing the suggested amendments to the proposal, such as 1) limiting what NTT can vote on, 2) limiting representation so that NTT faculty on the senate are never more than 1/3 of the total senate—no matter what the NTT proportional percentage is at any given time.

The first point here is often predicated on the idea that NTT would vote to harm the tenure system or to harm TT faculty in general. First, as scholars in academia, NTT do understand the importance and value of having a strong tenure system. Although we are not on the tenure-track ourselves (many because we choose not to be, not because we are incapable of being), it is ludicrous to think we don't support this system or that we'd propose or support measures that would harm tenure. We know that NTT are better protected by having a strong, functioning tenure system. Believing that we'd somehow vote against TT interests is asinine and fear-mongering, plain and simple.

Another point often claimed is that NTT should not vote on TT issues because perhaps somehow we can't understand TT issues. The belief that we wouldn't understand TT issues is absolutely absurd as, last I checked, NTT are still fully, functioning adults and scholars of higher education with advanced degrees in a variety of fields. Many NTT faculty on campus have terminal degrees in their chosen fields. Just because we are not on the tenure track doesn't mean we should be infantilized and treated as children who can't understand the complex issues related to tenured faculty or the tenure system. Further, there are currently NTT on the faculty senate who have been voting on issues relating to the entire campus—NTT and TT issues alike. So why is it suddenly a potential concern that NTT should be limited in what they vote on? Is it only an issue now because NTT are seeking proportional representation on the faculty senate? If we're concerned about NTT faculty voting on TT issues, shouldn't the reverse also be true? TT faculty members can't fully understand everything that NTT faculty experience, so why should TT vote on NTT issues? When the reverse is proposed, the absurdity of both becomes clearer.

If we're all invested in making sure the university is thriving and doing the best for all— faculty, students, and staff—then we all should be able to participate in a representative level

proportionate to each groups' numbers on campus. As Dr. Felicia McGhee said at the Full Faculty meeting, she's been an adjunct, a FT NTT faculty member, and now a TT faculty member and department head during her time at UTC and the only thing she's ever cared about is what's best for the students and the campus overall. It's mind-boggling that some TT members of our campus community would think that NTT would think any differently than what Dr. McGhee expressed.

As to the second point above, limiting representation so that NTT faculty are never more than 1/3 of the total senate is akin to offering representation in name only and is dancing dangerously close to looking like the 3/5ths clause of the Constitution, wherein enslaved people were counted as 3/5ths of white people. This comparison may shock and disturb some, as it should, but the comparison still stands. This comparison is relevant because what's most disheartening is this infantilization and suggestion to limit representation harkens back to the many arguments that white men used to make when denying everyone except landowning white men the right to vote. And even when white women were granted the right to vote and incrementally Black men, then more people of color, there were still rules, obstacles, and hurdles set in place to limit their full participation in their own governing. These arguments being made by some of our colleagues are all too familiar when we examine the history of voting in the U.S.—a history that has repeatedly been proven wrong, discriminatory, and unfair. As an institution of higher learning, we should not want to emulate racist, sexist, and bigoted policies that worked to disenfranchise large swaths of the U.S. population.

I hope the proposal passes so NTT can have proportionate representation in the Faculty Senate.

I don't know how much my words are worth after watching the Senate meeting, but I felt that I had to say something. Because it felt like cutting the nose off to spite the face. And if you think my words would do more damage than good, by all means don't use them. But I had to say something.

I stepped into the meeting briefly after my class resolved. I left quickly after listening to such awful words. We are faculty, we teach. Some of us are required to research, others to do service, some to do all 3. I know in Comm I teach upper division classes. I write my own courses. I create new classes that my department has never offered. I am asked to have my research, in this case my film showings, included in our AEJMC accreditation and yesterday I was asked to create a screenwriting festival for my department that would also support our community; that is service. I have been on the NTT committee; that is service. I have been on hiring committees; that is service. I have been on my department's curriculum committee; that is service. I attend trainings in new advancements in my field. I am not on the tenure track, but whether my contract says I must do these things doesn't matter, because they need to be done. That is how you show the students what to do, by example. I think there is this stereotype of NTT that gets bought into by many of my TT track peers. That we don't take part in academia. That we barely have credentials because we are a substitute teacher. Many of us have a terminal degree. All of us try

to be better. ALL OF US CARE. All of us put our student's education first. Quite a few of us left graduate school when there was no TT track positions available in our field. For instance, I found myself chairing a department at Ohio University Lancaster and still being considered non tenure track. I have found myself here, where I have support of my department to act the part of the rest of the faculty, we do what is best for our students and support others in our team and our community. Even my colleagues who teach without a terminal degree pull more weight than you can see at first glance. Between internships, events, mentoring and teaching, we are here and doing it. Which is why I was so appalled when I attended the senate faculty meeting where it was insinuated that we don't put our students first. That our labor was considered less, and didn't require a voice to be heard. There was a lot of punching down.

There is a harsh reality that we need to face in higher education. First of which is that NTT now comprises most of higher education. According to 2018 Insider Higher education article I have posted here 73% of faculty nationwide are NTT. This was pre pandemic.

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2018/10/12/about-three-quarters-all-faculty-positions-are-tenure-track-according-new-aaup>

A Second reality that we need to face is that the pandemic has hit academia hard. LIKE REALLY HARD. Places like Iona, Concordia and MacMurray don't even exist anymore. Illinois Wesleyan and University of Kansas have cut their Humanities departments. Pre pandemic Wisconsin cut their Tenure of the Wisconsin System. Now, after Covid 19, Iowa currently has a bill to do the same thing statewide. And even Georgia has been experimenting with non-tenure track 4 year public schools like Georgia Gwinnett College. This is not going to go away. The question is not just about TT vs NTT but about faculty shared governance vs an administrative monolith. We don't need to fight among ourselves but instead to look outside our walls and see what is happening there and fight against it.

These factors combined means that overall, NTT appoints will rise. Not TT.

So Punch Up.

Not just at our Universities hiring, but at the state legislature for the way it chooses to allocate funds, or not to. Even at the federal level. When labor stands together everyone wins. You want the NTT to stand with you when politicians come to TN and say maybe we don't need tenure either. You want them to buy in. Denying a voice defeats this practice. Healthy schools that don't resemble for profit education have shared governance. Don't be afraid of us; work with us.

As a NTT faculty member, I am in favor of the proposal, and any proposal to increase NTT representation on faculty senate, and in other decision making processes on the UTC campus. I have worked at two other higher-ed institutions prior to UTC and I must say that working at UTC as an NTT faculty member has been the least rewarding experience. I can only speak from

my personal experience, but it is clear that my department head and Dean do not value their NTT faculty, despite the significant contributions of NTT, to the department.

Along those same lines, substantial revisions to the faculty handbook, with respect to NTT faculty are also needed. I am working through an appeal through the Provost's office, and much of the appeal process language is only recorded for TT faculty. I was told by Matt Matthews that we would have to refer to the TT process for anything that isn't spelled out for NTT faculty. It is unnerving that this much handbook language related to due process is not included in the handbook for NTT faculty.

I believe the Senate and/or Provost's office should examine the disparity issue by College, race, and gender related to NTT faculty who held the title of Clinical Instructor, and instead of being named Clinical Professor (as stated in the faculty handbook) were instead given the title Lecturer. This re-naming that took place at the start of 2019-2020 was not handled fairly or equitably.

With regard to NTTF, we need a bigger voice on the Faculty Senate considering that we make up 30% of the faculty and usually teach the survey courses with the largest enrollments. Plus, NTTF, although not required, serve on committees, advise students, and conduct research.

NTTF already have a precarious position within the university. They are usually some of the first instructors that UTC students meet. Students develop relationships with NTTF. There's a link between faculty retention and student retention. If UTC want to improve student retention and graduation rates, it needs to give its NTTF a larger voice, among other things.

I just wanted to voice my support for the NTT representation on Faculty Senate. Our lecturers provide a valuable service to our department and university. They deserve representation that reflects their contribution.

I am reaching out to you as a NTT faculty member regarding representation of NTT faculty and the proposal under review.

As NTT faculty, I would like to offer my support for the resolution that would increase representation of NTT faculty in the faculty senate relative to the number of NTT faculty at UTC. To me, the core issue is that representation in the senate should reflect the makeup of the faculty - no ifs, ands, or buts. I do not believe that the present of NTT faculty, either at UTC or in

the senate, as levied in the meeting, "degrades the tenure-track institution." Both now and in the future, if NTT positions are more common the university, then it is imperative that the shift is recognized in the faculty senate. The presence of NTT faculty on campus isn't the fault of NTT faculty and we should not be penalized for it. Rather, that is an important issue to bring up with the Administration, the Chancellor, the Provost, the Deans, and our respective Department Chairs.

To be frank, I was astounded at some of the dismissive and offensive comments made by TT faculty in the most recent senate meeting. Perhaps those individuals were speaking from experience within their own departments, but I was surprised to hear TT faculty accuse NTT faculty of not being vested in the longterm success of the institution or intentionally voting against the interests of their home departments, faculty, or students. While I recognize that the departure of NTT can impact curriculum and departmental policies, those issues should be addressed within each discipline or through departmental bylaws. That specifically isn't an issue for the Faculty Senate. Faculty from some disciplines seemed to a lot to say on that front, but again, that seems like a departmental issue. At least in my own department, I can't vote on departmental issues until I've been here for 3 years. When we revised our curriculum, my colleagues saw fit to include NTT faculty in that discussion, which I appreciate.

The faculty senate represents faculty. If NTT faculty are no longer to be considered faculty, then that is another issue entirely. If there are concerns about NTT voting on TT issues and vice versa, then perhaps that should also be addressed by adjusting how the quorum is tallied in the senate. It seems like most of the issues that come up, though, are not specific to NTT or TT faculty, but speak to faculty as a whole.

The largest issue that I see is that NTT faculty would be assuming additional service responsibilities that would not necessarily be recognized in RTP/Annual Reviews. Asking people who are making less money to continue to do unpaid or unrecognized work is a serious problem all around. I don't have a solution for that, other than continuing to advocate for faculty, appropriate job descriptions, and appropriate departmental bylaws.

I am wholeheartedly in support of giving the NTT Faculty proportional representation in the Senate. The thing about giving people voices is that it's rarely convenient or helpful to those who already hold power. In fact, it's the opposite. However, more voices make us stronger. Hearing those who are in a different situation means that we will make decisions that benefit everyone for a longer time because we will be less likely to need to go back and fix it later.

The arguments against this remind me of the arguments against Voting Rights everywhere: What if we don't like how they will vote? It's a specious argument, because we never know how anyone will vote. Playing "what if" isn't fair because we can never predict the future and we have no idea what dramatic thing can throw everything up in the air. (The last year certainly taught us THAT.) If people are worried about weakening Tenured status, we should focus on how we

strengthen it in other ways, not on the backs of the people who have the least power. As Dr. Felicia McGee said, "It's the right thing to do." [Emily Thompson]

With regard to the proposal for having a more representative number of NTT faculty members on the Faculty Senate, I am in full agreement.
