



The Instructor-Track Faculty Affairs Committee would like to express our appreciation for the consideration of instructor-track faculty in the Academic Futures report. Instructors are integral to our undergraduate mission, and their role and participation in every aspect of Academic Futures should be acknowledged and strengthened. We offer the following comments and recommendations that are especially relevant to instructors.

Project 1: Student-Centered Approach to Learning – Recommendation 4: “*Emphasize the importance of teaching excellence...in annual merit and promotion processes*” (p.11 & 43 in the draft report)

- a) Because instructor contracts are weighted 85% teaching, it is especially important that multiple measures of teaching be recognized, and teaching effectiveness not simply defined by FCQs. FCQs, while gauging student opinions, can be biased and are not measures of effective teaching practices; students are not experts in evaluation or teaching. **We recommend** adopting other measures of teaching for both formative feedback, and merit and promotion processes. We **also recommend** recognition of professional development activities and incorporation of research-based, innovative teaching approaches in merit review (*see Project 5, c & e, below*).
- b) Instructors commonly do educational research or engage in scholarship of teaching and learning. **We recommend** this either be acknowledged as a research component in their contracts, or through another mechanism in the merit process, as currently this work is rarely considered in evaluations.

Project 2: Interdisciplinary Teaching – Recommendations 2 & 5 (p.11, 45, 49 & 52; & p43)

- a) **We recommend** that not only tenure-track faculty (TTF) but also instructors, many of whom have terminal degrees and specialize in educational pedagogy, be supported in this regard. **We suggest** to either explicitly include instructor-track faculty, or simply refer to ‘all faculty’ (pp. 11,45,49 & 52; also where referenced in *Project 1*, p43). To determine how to realize this goal, it is important to **clarify** what is meant by granting ‘control’ of courses, and courses ‘belonging’ to faculty.

Project 4: Teaching & Technology, Online & Distance Education (p.13 & 58)

- a) **We endorse** the recommendation to support faculty in their developmental and oversight activities in this area as it is time-consuming but highly necessary. Rethinking instructor contracts/workloads would assist with this (*see Project 5b recommendation, below*).
- b) The current mechanism for teaching online courses precludes instructors from teaching online in the academic year. **We recommend** the same policies apply to instructors and TTF, and **reconsidering** the organizational relation between Main and Continuing Education ‘campuses’.

Project 5: Sustaining, Supporting & Inspiring Our Community

a) *Inclusive Culture* (p.15 & 65)

- Many instructors report feeling less valued than TTF in the faculty community. **We endorse** efforts to eliminate barriers and promote a nonhierarchical and inclusive environment that recognizes and values the contributions of all campus community members. For example, **we recommend** better capturing a broader variety of perspectives by integrating instructors into the campus community, including greater representation on campus committees, especially those directly involved in undergraduate education (e.g., formulation of the campus-wide common curriculum). (*Also see recommendations 5b-g and IV. Governance.*)
- b) *Our strength lies with our people* (p.65) – who “cannot move into the future if their present makes work or life too stressful or confusing or dispiriting”.
- 1) To make the campus student-centered (*Project 1*), it is necessary to improve the professional lives of teaching faculty who bear a major responsibility for undergraduate teaching. Many A&S instructors have expressed concern that the move from a 3/3 (75% teaching, 25% service) to



Boulder Faculty Assembly

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER

4/4 contract (85% teaching, 15% service) compromises their ability to maintain teaching excellence and contribute to the campus community (including mentoring of students and participating in faculty governance and service). **We recommend** either reducing the teaching load with increased service or more broadly interpreting course equivalencies to allow instructors to better contribute to our mission.

- 2) The campus should also give attention to converting long-term lecturers to instructors to recognize their commitment and involve them more fully in the campus community.
- c) *Teaching Excellence (p.16 & 67) – “To support our students, we must make sure we are providing faculty with the time and training to develop creative new approaches to teaching and learning”.*
 - Time and opportunity to incorporate research-based, innovative teaching approaches are especially relevant for instructors as they teach a large proportion of first-year classes and could make a significant impact on retention. (See recommendation 5b1.)
- d) *For Our Faculty (p. 71) - “The university makes an optimistic, long-term investment when it first recruits each tenure-track faculty member...”*
 - **We recommend** removing ‘*tenure-track*’ and simply saying ‘each faculty member’.
- e) *Recruitment & Review: A Unified Experience, Mentoring & Professional Development (p.15&72)*
 - Instructors have chosen a career centered on undergraduate education. **We endorse** establishing a clearly defined career path with mentoring to help individuals navigate this path, and **also endorse** providing time and resources for the continued professional development of instructors (see 5b1) and rewarding those efforts in merit reviews (see 1a).
- f) *Recruitment & Review: “Regularly perform salary reviews...to discover inequities” (p.18 & 72)*
 - Salary compression is of concern to all faculty. For instructors, compression issues were compounded as base salaries increased. Some longer-serving instructors were raised to the same salary as new hires. Instructors typically do not have the bargaining power of TTF to address salary inequities and may not have a Chair willing to champion them with the administration. **We strongly endorse** resolving these salary inequities.
- g) *Research Faculty & Instructors: “Recognize the significant contributions instructors make...and revisit policies and ideals...In addition, improve the language of contracts for instructors” (p.18)*
 - **We endorse** the sentiments expressed here. We would like to **also emphasize** the importance of consistency in communicating and adhering to policy.

IV. Governance (p.19) – Review of bylaws by departments and divisions

- a) **We applaud** the recommendation to review bylaws with attention to appropriate rights and participation of all departmental members, including instructors. There is currently great variability and often disparity in this regard. The chance to participate more fully and equally in departmental meetings and other service is crucial to creating an inclusive community.

Instructors are willing and eager partners in our Academic Future. Let us ensure they can contribute to their fullest potential and recognize their value in achieving academic excellence.

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