

The Employment of Part-Time and Temporary Teaching Staff

The employment of scholars as part-time and temporary teaching staff has increased dramatically in recent years in many fields. Such appointments have traditionally been used only occasionally to supplement course offerings and to provide temporary replacements for tenure-track or tenured faculty. More recently, an increasing proportion of colleges and universities have responded to financial exigencies by firmly embedding part-time and temporary positions in their employment structure.

Because the option of employing linguists part-time and/or in a temporary position offers great financial benefits for the institution and it may also greatly enrich curricular programs, the desideratum of making sure these individuals are assured of appropriate privileges may have in some cases been lost sight of. For this reason, the Linguistic Society of America has joined other professional and scholarly organizations in reviewing both the impact of such institutional practices on the quality of education and their effect on the fair treatment of the teaching staff. As a result, the LSA wishes to submit to you as a decision-making person at your institution a set of recommendations based on those adopted by the American Historical Association, to help departments and institutions balance budgetary and instructional exigencies and to give would-be employees a broader context in which to negotiate their terms of employment.

A. THE APPOINTMENT

A-1. CRITERIA

Departments hiring part-time and temporary faculty should do so based on clearly formulated standard criteria.

A-2. CONTRACTUAL STATEMENT

For each appointment, the Department should provide a clear contractual statement of expectations and specific assignments, including in-class teaching and other responsibilities such as student advising and service.

A-3. TIME TABLE

Departments should engage in long-term planning whenever possible, providing for:

1. sufficient job security to encourage and support continuing involvement with students and colleagues;
2. the possible extension of appointments, where it is consistent with institutional needs;
3. sufficient notice of appointment or reappointment.

A-4. STATISTICS

Departments should keep careful statistics of the percentages of courses taught by teaching staff members who are permanent, full-time employees and should be prepared to keep this information widely available.

B. COMPENSATION

B-1. SALARIES

Institutions should provide equitable salaries for part-time and temporary faculty, based on an explicit salary policy.

B-2. COMPENSATION FOR EXTRA TASKS

Additional compensation should be provided to part-time and temporary faculty who are willing to undertake additional duties that enhance educational quality (e.g. advising on major research projects, committee assignments, and the like).

B-3. MERIT INCREASES

In institutions where part-time and temporary faculty serve with some continuity, they should have opportunities for merit increases and professional advancement.

B-4. FRINGE BENEFITS

Institutions should allow part-time and temporary teaching staff access to fringe benefits, especially health and life insurance, sick leave, and retirement plans.

C. RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES

C-1. WORKING CONDITIONS

Institutions should provide appropriate working conditions essential to performing assigned responsibilities. These would include office space, supplies, support services, equipment (for example telephone, computer access, and fax) library access, email account, and the like.

C-2. ACCESS

Departments should provide orientation, mentoring, and access to all appropriate departmental communications to part-time and temporary faculty in order to incorporate them as colleagues in the intellectual life of the institution.

C-3. SCHOLARLY DEVELOPMENT

Part-time and temporary instructors should have access to opportunities for scholarly development, including campus grant programs, support for research travel, and support to present their work at professional conferences.

C-4. TENURE-TRACK POSSIBILITIES

Part-time and temporary teaching staff should be considered fairly for tenure-track opportunities for which they are qualified.

C-5. EVALUATIONS

Institutions should implement the regular evaluation of part-time and temporary teaching staff, based on established criteria consistent with their assigned responsibilities. This will aid in maintaining high standards of classroom instruction, equity in reappointment, and the recognition of merit. Class evaluations are also important because they will also provide documentation to support departmental letters of recommendation written for part-time and temporary faculty seeking full-time employment.

C-6. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Institutions should provide a grievance procedure for part-time and temporary faculty, to deal with cases of alleged discrimination, violation of contract, or denial of academic freedom.

Adopted by LSA Executive Committee, February 2000