

Study of Higher Education Faculty in West Virginia Faculty Personnel Issues Report

Introduction

This personnel study of West Virginia Higher Education faculty is part of a larger Higher Education personnel study mandated at legislative request (§18B-1B-13) and commissioned by the Higher Education Policy Commission (HEPC) in fall 2005. The Select Committee on Higher Education Faculty in West Virginia¹ was composed of a representative selection of faculty and administrators from across the state colleges and universities. The two committee co-chairs, WVU Associate Provost for Academic Personnel Dr. C. B. Wilson and Advisory Council of Faculty Chair Dr. Sylvia Bailey Shurbutt, Shepherd University, worked jointly on a plan to gather data and information, collate and organize that information, and determine formats for reporting information and writing the individual institutional summaries that were the basis for this report.

After reviewing the legislative mandate for the personnel study and studying HEPC Series 9 "Procedural Rules for Academic Freedom, Professional Responsibility, Promotion and Tenure," the committee met on December 2, 2005, and approved the content areas that the Report would address: 1) current merit pay and salary policies and practices; 2) policies and procedures for faculty evaluation, promotion and tenure; 3) instruments for faculty evaluation; 4) adjunct faculty policy and practice; and 5) faculty workload policies. The committee also endorsed the format for reporting the data and information requested from institutional academic officers. As institutional information and data were reported to Dr. Wilson in the following months, he then forwarded the materials to those committee members responsible for writing the respective individual institutional summaries. Prior to the June 8, 2006 committee meeting, individual summaries had been drafted, and these were reviewed by the committee as a whole at that time. It was determined at that time that each drafted institutional summary would be returned to the contact academic officer for review and emendation.

During the months of June and July, Dr. Wilson and Dr. Shurbutt drafted the Faculty Personnel Issues Report, organized in the same format as the individual institutional summaries; the institutional summaries were then returned for final review and approval by the academic contacts at each institution. The report draft was reviewed by committee members, as well as Dr. Flack and Dr. Stotler, all of whom had opportunity to suggest revisions to the text. The finished report draft was amended and approved by committee members during the month of August. The committee met for a final review of the document on September 21, 2006, at the HEPC office; their suggestions are reflected and incorporated in this report. During October 2006, the individual institutional summaries were once more reviewed for accuracy.

¹ Membership in the Select Committee on Higher Education Faculty included, at its inception, Janet Amos, Dean for Academic Affairs at Marshall CTC; Betty Dennison, Marshall CTC; Dr. Barry Good, Dean of Instruction at WVNCC; Dr. Galan Janeksela, Provost and Vice-President for Academic and Student Affairs at WVU-Tech; Leslie Lovett, MLT Education Coordinator at Pierpont CTC; Dr. Ben Miller, Marshall University; Dr. Sylvia Bailey Shurbutt, Shepherd University, Advisory Council of Faculty Chair; Dr. Mark Stotler, HEPC; and Dr. C. B. Wilson, Associate Provost for Academic Personnel at WVU. Dr. Bruce Flack, Director of Academic Affairs, served as ex-officio committee member.

At the time the Select Committee was appointed, twenty-two institutions of higher education were identified for purposes of the study. In the meantime, Potomac State College of West Virginia University became a division of West Virginia University and several of the Community and Technical Colleges (CTCs) have changed names. For purposes of the study, the committee has continued to treat Potomac State as a separate institution, but the new CTC names are in use.

The generally positive impression from the reported data indicates that most institutions are in compliance with rules and mandates concerning merit pay, salary policy, faculty evaluation, promotion and tenure, faculty workloads, and oversight of adjunct and full-time faculty. As the specifics below will indicate, institutional policies and practices in most of the areas reported are clearly articulated and followed. Where appropriate, the Select Committee has offered recommendations and comments.

Institutional Mission Statements

Each institution provided a mission statement. In general, the statements are consistent with the nature and public perception of the institutions.

•Recommendations or Comments:

None.

Current Merit Pay and Salary Policies and Practices

With the exception of one CTC (at which all but one faculty member are adjuncts), all institutions will have a merit salary plan in place for FY 2007. Most have operational merit plans, ranging from 51% to 100% of the salary pool devoted to merit. For those not at the 100% level, institutional formulas accommodate concerns for salary equity, market pressures, and “locality” (geographic) cost-of-living inequity. In a few cases, the faculty member must apply to be considered for a merit increase; in most cases, however, the calculation of a merit adjustment is based on the faculty member’s annual review. Annual reviews, by and large, are rendered according to a standardized format that takes into consideration the institution’s mission, including but not limited to 1) teaching quality, 2) professional activity (i.e., research, publication, scholarly or creative presentation, etc.), and 3) service to the institution and to the community.

Twenty-one of the twenty-two institutions currently provide a 10% increase upon promotion in rank (Eastern CTC does not provide the 10% salary increase upon promotion).

•Recommendations or Comments:

- 1) Faculty at many institutions continue to express concern that the legislative mandate for the 10% salary increase upon promotion in rank was removed from State Code (§18B—8—3, Item c). The 10% salary increase upon promotion is the most significant and rigorously evaluated “merit” event for faculty in West Virginia Higher Education. Though the majority of institutions, with the support

- of their Boards, currently adhere to the promotion increase, some add the caveat “when funding is available,” suggesting the possibility of some inconsistency from year to year in awarding the 10% salary increase.
- 2) Institutional interpretation of the HEPC language for merit-based salary increases is diverse. One section of the original motion on faculty salaries (HEPC Minutes, June 29, 2001) states: “Faculty shall be compensated based on the salary goals established in the campus compact. Salary increases may be based on a mix of merit and catch-up funding until the salary goal has been achieved. Once the goal has been achieved, but *not later than FY 2005, all or a substantial portion of salary increases shall be based on merit [emphasis added].*” As there is a wide range of percentage variation awarding merit pay among institutions, it appears that not all institutions have achieved the original 2005 merit goals.
 - 3) At some institutions, salary adjustments based on either annual merit or promotion may be contingent upon legislative funding or “when funds are available.” If salary adjustments are not possible due to a lack of funding, it is recommended that institutions develop plans in which adjustments for such a year, particularly those for promotion, are made in the subsequent year or as soon as resources are available.

Policies and Procedures for Faculty Evaluation, Promotion and Tenure

All institutions adhere to HEPC Series 9 at fundamental levels, and most are consistent with Series 9 in the context of the expectation that the quality and quantity of a faculty member’s professional achievements over time will be the basis for decisions about promotion and tenure. The requirement that all faculty be reviewed every year is met at some level. The majority of institutions have several levels of review, particularly for tenure and promotion decisions; it is common to have reviews by peer committees, department chairs, and deans.

•Recommendations or Comments:

- 1) It appears that most institutions “close the assessment loop” in the sense that 1) faculty receive feedback by way of copies of annual evaluations by peers and administrators and that 2) faculty are effectively counseled by administrators when improvement is required. However, every institution needs to make feedback to faculty a priority in practice, and every institution needs to describe this process in the faculty handbook or an equivalent document. It is particularly useful for “tenure-track” faculty who have not yet achieved tenure (those who have not yet achieved tenure but will be considered for tenure in their sixth year of service) to receive a formal mid-point review detailing tenure status and to receive any necessary remedial actions well in advance of the final tenure decision.
- 2) Some institutions have adopted or are considering a more rigorous pre-tenure review after three or four years.
- 3) The use of annual work plans developed in some institutions by faculty members and chairs seems to be a useful practice in order to provide focus and clarity for the coming year, and in anticipation of a decision for tenure or promotion.

- 4) The mentoring of newer faculty by those more senior is likewise an important part of faculty retention and faculty success.

Instruments for Faculty Evaluation

There are a variety of forms or the equivalent used on the various campuses during the annual review process. Most campuses have a standardized form (annual productivity report) used by faculty to report their work. At most institutions, either a form or a letter is used by peers and/or administrators to evaluate or assess the faculty member's work. In some instances, there is a specific form on which to evaluate adjunct faculty; in others, the "regular" faculty form is used for adjunct evaluation. All institutions report a process in which students use a form to evaluate both adjunct and full-time faculty.

•Recommendations or Comments:

- 1) Most institutions have some linkage between the faculty annual productivity instrument or report and the review for merit. This linkage helps to streamline the process of merit consideration for faculty, as well as to provide a more transparent process.

Adjunct Faculty

All institutions reported having a policy or statement on adjunct faculty. The adjunct staffing issue is also addressed in the former State College System Board of Directors Series 18, *Productivity of Faculty and Employment of Faculty and Administrators and Employment of Adjunct Part-Time Faculty*, which was transferred to the state college governing boards. The percentage of faculty holding adjunct status (by headcount) and the percentage of courses/sections taught by adjuncts are provided below in Tables 1-2. Identification of institutional adjunct policies or indication of policy statements can be found in Table 3; most adjunct policy documents can be obtained at institutional BOG websites.

Disciplines with a high proportion of adjunct instruction vary from campus to campus, depending, in part, upon the institutional mission and the immediate community in which the institution is located. However, there does appear a consistent trend toward using adjunct faculty (or graduate students) in General Studies instruction, particularly in English/literacy, Math, Modern Languages, and Sociology. Other disciplines where there is a high rate of adjunct usage include Criminal Justice, Fine Arts (Music, Art), Allied Health, and Business.

Minimum salary levels per semester hour for adjunct faculty vary and, at some institutions, depend upon the degree level of the faculty member. Minimums reported ranged from \$300 to \$660, with an average of \$405, per semester credit-hour.

Nearly all baccalaureate institutions reported at least one full-time person employed for each program offered. Nearly all CTC institutions reported at least one full-time person employed for most programs offered.

Adjunct Faculty Data

Table 1
Adjunct Faculty Headcount: Percentage of Total Faculty
[Descending Order]

<u>Four-Year Colleges and Universities</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>2004 DOE%²</u>
Potomac State College WVU	59	66.7 [2-year figure]
Shepherd University	57	50.8
Fairmont State University	52	50.8
Bluefield State College	49	50.8
Concord University	48	50.8
Glenville State College	44	50.8
West Virginia State University	41	50.8
West Liberty State College	37	50.8
WVU Institute of Technology	37	50.8
*Marshall University	26	22.2
*West Virginia University	22	22.2
WV School of Osteopathic Medicine	NA	NA
*Graduate Assistants not included		

<u>Community and Technical Colleges</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>2004 DOE %</u>
Eastern West Virginia CTC	97	66.7
New River CTC	86	66.7
Blue Ridge CTC	81	66.7
Pierpont CTC	78	66.7
WV Northern Community College	70	66.7
WVU – Parkersburg	63	66.7
West Virginia State CTC	57	66.7
Marshall CTC	46	66.7
Southern WV CTC	38	66.7
CTC at WVU Tech	24	66.7

² U.S. Department of Education national averages are based on type of institution as provided by the DOE (*National Study of Postsecondary Faculty Report on Faculty and Instructional Staff*, National Center for Education Statistics).

Adjunct Faculty Data

Table 2

Course Sections Taught by Adjunct Faculty: Percentage of Total Sections

[Descending Order]

<u>Four-Year Colleges and Universities</u>	<u>%</u>
Shepherd University	44
Bluefield State College	41
Potomac State College WVU	37
West Virginia State University	33
Fairmont State University	31
Concord University	25
Glenville State College	20
*West Virginia University	18
WVU Institute of Technology	18
West Liberty State College	15
*Marshall University	14
WV School of Osteopathic Medicine	<5
*Teaching by Graduate Assistants not included	
<u>Community and Technical Colleges</u>	<u>%</u>
Eastern West Virginia CTC	97
Blue Ridge CTC	78
New River CTC	68
Pierpont CTC	55
Marshall CTC	54
WV Northern Community College	44
WVU – Parkersburg	40
Southern WV CTC	38
West Virginia State CTC	29
CTC at WVU Tech	08

Adjunct Faculty Policies

Table 3
Identification of Institutional Adjunct Policies or Policy Statements

FOUR-YEAR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Bluefield State College	Board Policy 26
Concord University	Board Policy 8
Fairmont State University	Board Policies 36, 37
Glenville State College	Board Policy 25
Marshall University	Board Policy MUBOG AA 5
Potomac State College WVU	WVU Board Policy 12
Shepherd University	Board Policy 24
West Liberty State College	Board Policy 248 Pending
WV School of Osteopathic Medicine	Statement
West Virginia State University	Policy Statement
West Virginia University	WVU Board Policy 12
WVU Institute of Technology	WVU Board Policy 12

COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGES

Blue Ridge CTC	Board Policy 24
CTC at WVU Tech	WVU Board Policy 12
Eastern West Virginia CTC	Policy AR 5.2
Marshall CTC	Board Policy MUBOG CC 2
New River CTC	Board Policy 26
Pierpont CTC	Board Policies 36, 37
Southern WV CTC	Board Policies 2250, 2580
WV Northern Community College	Board Rule
West Virginia State CTC	Statement
WVU – Parkersburg	WVU Board Policy 12

•Recommendations or Comments:

Institutions should make every effort to ensure that adjunct faculty are not exploited or treated as second-class citizens.

- 1) Although Adjunct faculty salaries vary widely, salary levels are consistently low across the system, and in many cases have remained static for decades. Raises for adjunct faculty should be strongly considered by local BOGs.
- 2) Some of the four-year institutions reporting to the HEPC Select Committee on Higher Education Faculty expressed interest in developing renewable term appointments for full-time non-tenurable instructional faculty. Such appointments over time (and in the aggregate) could allow an institution the flexibility to exceed the present limitation of six one-year appointments. Term faculty would still be subject to annual review and thus would be accountable for the quality of their contributions.
- 3) Administrative/supervisory evaluations and annual feedback to all adjunct faculty are recommended. These evaluations will help to serve the professional development needs of the adjunct faculty and the institutional need for information on the quality of its adjunct instruction.
- 4) Mentoring and Orientation Programs for new adjunct faculty should parallel those for full-time faculty.
- 5) It is recommended that adjunct faculty have some representation, either direct or indirect, in faculty senates and that they be included in the distribution of information on campuses.
- 6) All institutions should revisit adjunct policy statements and procedures, and some adjunct and tenure-track faculty should be appointed to committees established for this purpose.
- 7) Institutions should ensure that adjunct faculty are integrated into the academic departments in a manner that enables them to understand their importance to the academic mission of the department.
- 8) Professional development and workshop opportunities should be made available for adjunct faculty, particularly those with General Studies or other crucial departmental responsibilities.
- 9) Where possible, each institution, particularly Community and Technical Colleges, should strive to employ at least one full-time faculty member employed, for whom the majority of his/her time is devoted to the discrete program offered.

Faculty Workload Policies

All institutions reporting to the Higher Education Policy Commission require the equivalent of teaching from 12 to 15 credits per semester. Community and technical colleges are in compliance with the rule of the Council for Community and Technical College Education, in that their workload policy requires the equivalent of teaching 15 credits per semester.

•Recommendations or Comments:

- 1) In some instances a desire was expressed to define more clearly the basis for reassignment of duties (i.e., the equivalent of teaching a reduced number of

credits when one is assigned such specific non-teaching duties as research, service, or administrative work).

CTC Institutions only

CTC institutions offer term appointments in the following configurations: (1) three years; (2) up to three years; (3) one year; (4) term appointment not used (in this instance, nearly all faculty are part-time).

•Recommendations or Comments:

None.