

RIT Non-Tenure Track Faculty Talking Points

**for discussion with RIT Provost, Dr. Jeremy Haefner
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Introduction

During the past several months, non-tenure track RIT faculty have been meeting to discuss areas of concern that we share as lecturers and adjuncts. In an effort to express these concerns in a clear and appropriate manner, we have collaborated to arrive at these talking points that emphasize our belief that all faculty at RIT (tenure track and non-tenure track alike) be protected by clearly stated policies that ensure professional respect, guarantee fair and equitable compensation, provide for shared governance, and enhance participation in the RIT academy.

The following categories of concern are detailed in the following pages:

A. Employment and Position related:

- Promotion and Rank policies that are clearly stated and fairly implemented.
- Compensation policies that are equitable throughout the Institute and take into consideration merit, rank, promotion, seniority, teaching load, and service.
- Contracts that detail in writing the terms of employment: time period, benefits, responsibilities, evaluation process, resources, and supervisory contact.
- Consideration of benefits for adjunct faculty based on half-time or part-time employment.

B. Academic Policies:

- Shared Governance at all levels of the Institute and inclusion in decisions that impact non-tenure track faculty and their contribution to RIT academic goals.
- Participation in decisions regarding teaching assignments and professional development.
- Meaningful Participation in the process of a transparent and fair process for Plan of Work and Performance Review
- Meaningful Participation in the design and assignment of courses that are taught regularly by non-tenure track faculty.
- Recognition of the intellectual property developed for such courses (syllabi, handouts, etc.)
- Appropriate resources for non-tenure track faculty to fulfill their roles as faculty of the Institute.

A. Employment and Position related:

- **Promotion and Rank policies that are clearly stated and fairly implemented.**

Adjunct:

Rank: Although RIT's Policies Manual indicates several possible ranks for adjuncts (E.6.0.6 a. "instructor, assistant professor, associate professor or professor"), there seem to be almost no adjuncts given such rank or offered the opportunity for such rank. There is similarly no Institute-wide policy that encourages rank based on degree, experience, expertise, or length of service at RIT. Some adjuncts teach higher-level courses, have taught for many years, and/or have special expertise or experience in their fields. It seems reasonable to assume that some of these people could be distinguished by rank, and therefore by compensation and/or by extended term contracts.

Promotion: Adjunct faculty should be given equal consideration with all other candidates for elevation to lecturer and tenure track positions for which they meet the stated requirements. There should be no restriction or bias against Lecturers (or adjuncts) applying for any open position at RIT based solely upon their current rank or status.

Lecturer:

Rank: Although the recent policy on promotion of Lecturers to Senior or Principal Lecturer has been included in the Policy Manual, many report that individual colleges and departments have not communicated this opportunity to their faculty and/or have not notified their faculty of the opportunity or the process. There is a need to make this process as ordinary and transparent as any other promotion policy is at RIT.

Promotion: Lecturers should be given equal consideration with all other candidates for elevation to tenure track positions for which they meet the stated requirements. There should be no restriction or bias against Lecturers (or adjuncts) applying for any open position at RIT based solely upon their current rank or status.

Staff:

RIT needs a fair policy for any staff member that also teaches as an adjunct.

- **Compensation policies that are equitable throughout the Institute and take into consideration merit, rank, promotion, seniority, teaching load, and service.**

Adjuncts:

1. There should be an immediate review of all adjuncts with regard to assignment to appropriate academic ranks. Rank should be based on degree, years of professional experience, expertise, and performance review. Pay scale should be consistent throughout the Institute based on rank.
2. Adjunct rank and pay should recognize instructors with Master's degrees that are terminal degrees in their field.
3. Adjunct faculty should receive increases on the same basis as other faculty and staff. The inequity that exists has resulted over the years in adjunct pay falling far behind inflation. In addition, there are significant discrepancies in non-tenure track faculty pay practices among the colleges. *All adjunct faculty and lecturers should be included at the same rate in any general pay increases that are granted to tenure-track faculty.*
4. Conversion Concerns: Changes in hours and commuting required for increased class meetings during the term should result in consideration of increased compensation. For example, the pay per course for adjuncts will need to be increased since the term itself increases. Considering that adjuncts receive few or no benefits, we suggest that pay per course be based on the percentage of the standard full time salary (1 course = $\frac{1}{4}$ of a semester full time pay if full time = 4 courses per semester).
5. Merit and time of service pay increases should be considered for adjuncts who have served continually for more than 2 years.

Lecturers:

Merit and time of service pay increases for lecturers are reasonable. There should be provision for pay increases for promotions within the new ranks of lecturer. Lecturers have increased duties to their college and the Institute, but are not universally compensated for that increase in service. More work for the same pay is not a fair labor practice.

Staff:

The professional staff member who teaches academic courses should be compensated at the same rate as any other adjunct (recommended as a percentage of the full time teaching pay). Institute policy needs to be clarified about such teaching. Some staff can only be compensated if the course is taught after normal

working hours, while others are compensated even if the courses are during normal working hours. Any extra responsibility (outside the work plan for the staff position) should be fairly compensated.

- **Contracts that detail in writing the terms of employment: time period, responsibilities, evaluation process, resources, and supervisory contact.**

Adjuncts:

1. The pay period for adjuncts needs standardization and transparency: academic year vs. calendar year?
2. Contracts for all non-tenure track faculty (adjunct, lecturer and staff/adjunct) need to be reviewed for equity across the Institute and for clarity.

- **Consideration of benefits for adjunct faculty based on half-time or part-time employment.**

Half Time positions:

In more and more higher education institutions, adjuncts teaching half of a full time load per term receive benefits. If one is officially designated as half-time (“Extended Part Time”), then RIT offers benefits. What is typically more often the case, however, is that this half- or part-time “rank” is not linked to any specific number of courses nor is there consistency across campus, and a number of adjuncts (if in different divisions) teach half the number of courses or more in any given quarter without official “half-time” employment status. There needs to be an Institute-wide policy on what number of hours and/or credit hours counts as “less than half time” for adjuncts so that the confusion over how much an individual may work Institute-wide is tracked the same in all colleges and departments on campus as well as details regarding when the count begins on an annual basis. This employment status (hours) should be tracked by Human Resources directly and not left to individual supervisors to determine.

Part Time positions:

We urge that part-time faculty who otherwise have no access to health care be allowed to participate in RIT group health insurance. Some institutions allow part time faculty to buy into health care with the institution contributing a percentage of the premiums based on the percentage of employment.

B. Academic Policies:

- **Shared Governance at all levels of the Institute and inclusion in decisions that impact non-tenure track faculty and their contribution to RIT academic goals.**

Adjuncts:

We ask for representation for adjunct faculty on Academic Senate. Adjuncts should be aware of policies that the Academic Senate institutes that might directly or indirectly affect adjunct faculty.

Lecturers:

We ask for full voting rights for all full-time teaching faculty. This point addresses an item that is currently on the agenda of the Academic Senate. Presently, there is no representation of or for non-tenure track faculty in the Senate. The question of governance is also important on the college and departmental levels as well. Per the current Institute Policy and Procedures Manual, the only faculty who have voting privileges are tenure-track faculty. We understand that B2 the Charter of Academic Governance is under review and intends to include non-tenure track faculty.

- **Participation in Professional Development.**

Presently, there is no consistent policy about whether or not non-tenure faculty can qualify for funds that would enable them to travel to conferences and/or conduct research in order to allow them to grow as teaching members of the RIT community.

 1. Grants need to be available to all teaching faculty to provide support for academic development.
 2. There is a need for a policy on departmental, college and Institute level for travel funds for research related to teaching.
 3. Although research is not the primary focus for adjuncts and lecturers, there should be support for those who do pursue research. These faculty members should be recognized for their research by their respective academic communities as well as by the Institute.
 4. During Plan of Work discussions, faculty should be able to discuss openly such opportunities in relation to teaching duties and responsibilities.
- **Meaningful Participation in the process of a transparent and fair process for Plan of Work and Performance Review**
 1. There should be fair assessment procedures and policies for the evaluation of lecturers, adjuncts, and other non-tenure track faculty. These policies should include observation, inclusion at orientation

and professional development sessions, access to resources, and written letters of review. The hiring practices for all non-tenure track faculty should be consistent and based on actual performance rather than at the will or whim of the department. Presently, the evaluation of teaching and consideration for employment is not consistent throughout the Institute.

2. Though research is not expected or required for non-tenure track faculty, lecturers and adjuncts are permitted to do research and such research should be recognized in announcements and in annual merit review. Such official recognition can positively impact faculty development and student experience in the courses taught by non-tenure track faculty.

- **Meaningful Participation in the design and assignment of courses that are taught regularly by non-tenure track faculty.**

Adjuncts:

As essential members of the teaching faculty, adjuncts should be invited to all departmental meetings and functions. Departments, colleges, and the Institute should seek to include adjuncts in educational activities and provide opportunities for adjuncts to be included in educational discussion.

Adjuncts and Lecturers:

The quality of the educational experience for students requires that those who teach are fully involved in decisions about the courses they teach. To ensure this quality, non-tenure track faculty should be allowed inclusion in curriculum design and assessment, as well as consideration in scheduling of the courses with sufficient notice of teaching schedules (to allow for planning and research).

Recognition of the intellectual property developed for academic courses (syllabi, handouts, etc.)

The intellectual property of lecturers and adjuncts is protected by current RIT policy, so work by lecturers and adjuncts should be respected at the department level. Any faculty member who develops course materials or new course syllabi should be acknowledged as the owner of that material. There have been instances where adjuncts have developed a new course and course materials, then that course and the materials (syllabi, handouts, etc.) have been given to another faculty member without compensation or acknowledgement of the source. Unfortunately, adjunct faculty are particularly vulnerable to such situations since they are easily subject to non-continuing contracts.

- **Appropriate resources for non-tenure track faculty to fulfill their roles as faculty of the Institute.**

All teaching faculty require access to sufficient and generous resources needed to teach the courses (computer equipment, office space, professional development, clerical support). The need for private student/faculty conferences would elevate the quality of teacher/student interaction on campus.