

Division of Humanities
Statement of Principles and Best Practices
Relating to Contingent Faculty
Adopted March 8, 2013

Preamble: Contingent faculty (as defined in Section II of the *Faculty Handbook*) are essential to Pacific Lutheran University's ability to function and thrive. They teach students across the academic sector, and they help maintain our curriculum and faculty governance system by filling vacancies created by sabbaticals and course releases. They broaden the University's pool of scholarly expertise beyond the borders of current tenure-track lines, and enable periods of curricular growth and change. Directly and indirectly, contingent faculty staff a substantial amount of our interdisciplinary program needs. In short, contingent faculty allow the University to maintain stability and respond effectively in the face of change and opportunity. Their roles are neither ancillary nor isolated: they are, in fact, essential and systemic.

Integrating contingent faculty into the University community in ways that support their academic freedom, professional standing, and ethical treatment strengthens our academic program and hence benefits us all--students, faculty, and the University. Further, it is mandated by P.L.U.'s mission, particularly its charge to combine thoughtful inquiry, leadership, and service with the care for others and our communities. It is with this goal in mind that the Division of Humanities, through this document, seeks to clarify the professional relationships, rights, and responsibilities of contingent faculty within the Division and its Departments, and to set recommendations for best practices by Departments, Chairs, and the Dean in addressing issues of rights; remuneration; faculty culture; hiring and staffing; and evaluation. The recommendations offered herein are subject to the governing principles, policies, and regulations of the *Faculty Handbook*, which take precedence in all matters.

I. Rights, Status, and Process:

- a. Contingent faculty should be accorded academic freedom and due-process rights, as stipulated in the *Faculty Handbook*.
- b. Contingent faculty enjoy voice and voting privileges as specified in the *Faculty Handbook*. In accord with the stipulation that a division "may confer voting privileges within its own academic unit on some or all of its contingent faculty, except that contingent faculty shall not vote on matters of personnel," the Division of Humanities extends voting privileges to contingent faculty during the academic year in which they hold an appointment. Contingent faculty shall not vote on matters of personnel (such as hiring decisions or Dean elections).

- c. The Division should advocate for effective and direct means by which Contingent Faculty may be represented in our faculty governance system. (See also III.a.2).
- d. Contingent faculty need to be provided with orientation, mentoring, and professional development opportunities. They are entitled to substantive review of their professional performance, as provided for in the processes of annual, 3-year, and 5-year reviews stipulated by the *Faculty Handbook*.
- e. In order to guarantee effective orientation and communication at the time of hire, the Division should generate a list of responsibilities and rights for all contingent faculty that would be distributed along with their contracts, and would form the basis for a meeting between Chair and contingent faculty member upon hire.
- f. Contingent faculty deserve clear, transparent, and frank information concerning the likelihood of a tenure-line opening for which they might apply, and concerning how they might make themselves competitive for any such opportunities.
- g. Contingent faculty should be given due consideration along with tenure-line faculty with regard to scheduling, difficulty of teaching loads, office space, etc.
- h. Contingent faculty deserve work-loads and responsibilities that are consistent with their level of compensation and job security. For example, they deserve clear, fair, and transparent expectations of service responsibilities, consistent with the *Faculty Handbook*.

II. Remuneration:

- a. Contingent faculty should be accorded fair remuneration. The Faculty Affairs Committee should work with the Administration to establish a salary and wage schedule for contingent faculty. The schedule should take into account teaching load and appointment seniority.
- b. In cases where a Resident Faculty line or status is appropriate, Resident Faculty should be afforded opportunities for substantial review, seniority in pay, promotion in rank, and job security (e.g., multi-year appointments). Where the *Faculty Handbook* does not allow for such measures, the Division should advocate for appropriate changes through the Faculty Governance system.
- c. When possible, the Division should advocate for Visiting or Resident positions that are benefits-eligible.

d. Contingent faculty should be eligible for professional support and development opportunities, including campus grants and fellowships, and professional travel allowances.

III. Other Best Practices for Departments, Chairs and Deans:

a. Faculty Culture. In order to integrate contingent faculty into the culture of our academic community, Departments, Chairs, and Deans should:

1. Understand, affirm, and treat contingent faculty as valuable teachers and scholars within the University community.
2. Give contingent faculty opportunities to participate in Departmental and Divisional meetings, initiatives, and events. Contingent faculty deserve opportunities for service and involvement that will afford them opportunities for professional development and meaningful participation; however, they should be shielded from service expectations that are inappropriate to their level of compensation and job security.
3. Acknowledge the scholarly accomplishments of contingent faculty and invite them to participate in the forums, working groups, and lecture series in which tenure-line faculty present their scholarship and research.
4. Be sensitive to the particular challenges to academic freedom facing colleagues in contingent positions, and accordingly should vigorously defend their academic freedom and due-process rights.

b. Participation in Departmental meetings and discussions: Contingent faculty should be included in Departmental meetings and discussions, with the exception of staffing and personnel matters.

c. Hiring and Staffing:

1. The Division acknowledges the University's ongoing needs that require contingent faculty positions: for sabbatical replacements, to replace administrative course releases, to accommodate medical leaves, provide expertise in a specific area, to facilitate efforts of curricular growth and change, etc. However, an over-reliance on contingent positions to fill long-term structural needs both damages our academic program and exploits contingent faculty. Thus the Division should strive to keep our contingent faculty hiring consistent with legitimate, short-term needs. While the A.A.U.P.'s recommendations in this regard (teaching F.T.E. or total

sections staffed by contingent faculty should not exceed 15% for an institution overall, or 25% in any one unit) may be unattainable in some cases, the Division nonetheless affirms these as worthy goals.

2. Deans and Chairs should carefully analyze Divisional staffing patterns to identify when our hiring practices are using long-term visiting positions to meet ongoing, structural staffing needs. Inter-Disciplinary Program and General Education staffing needs and commitments should be factored into structural staffing needs that could justify tenure-track lines. When ongoing structural needs are identified, Departments and the Dean should advocate strongly to create a tenure-track line to fill them. The *Faculty Handbook* stipulates that Visiting Faculty are “appointed to meet the temporary needs of the university” and “usually” appointed for a “maximum of two full-time equivalent (FTE) academic years” (Section II, “Definition of Faculty,” 2.b.iii). As a general rule, when a contingent faculty member is hired for a third consecutive year in a Visiting appointment, the Division and Department should be advocating with the Administration for a tenure-track search or a Resident Faculty appointment, or clearly ascertaining why a more permanent hire is not appropriate. During the third-year review for a Visiting faculty member, the question of the creation of a more permanent line should be explicitly addressed by the Department Chair.

3. The configuration of any tenure-track line is determined by curricular and administrative needs: the creation of a tenure-track line to fill a structural need previously staffed by a contingent line does *not* imply an obligation on the part of a Department or the University to hire into that position a Visiting Faculty member who has been filling that need; nor will a tenure-track line necessarily replicate the same scholarly specialization or course-load that a Visiting faculty member has been providing. The Division affirms the right and responsibility of Departments to seek and hire the most qualified candidates for tenure-track positions. However, the service and performance of a multi-year Visitor, while not giving that Visitor any entitlement to a tenure-track hire, nonetheless should be given due weight in a Departmental search process.

4. In cases when the Division and Department advocate for a tenure-track search or Resident Faculty appointment, but these requests are not approved by the Administration, the Department Chair should discuss in a transparent and frank manner with the current contingent faculty member whether continuing to work in a Visiting position at P.L.U. is in his or her best professional interest. Moreover, in the event that requests for a tenure-track line are repeatedly denied, the Division should review its curriculum and staffing to ascertain the long-term viability of its various curricular commitments (including to pan-University and inter-disciplinary programs) and consider implementing limits.

5. When multi-year Visiting positions are appropriate (e.g., until a tenure-track line can be secured, or in cases where a short-term need exceeds two years), the Division should

advocate for multi-year appointments that provide stability for both faculty and programs (as recommended in II.b).

6. Departments should, within budgetary constraints, conduct rigorous searches for Visiting faculty that will help ensure that Visiting faculty have the qualifications to make them competitive candidates for tenure-track consideration. Departments should, within curricular/programmatic constraints, offer Visiting faculty a range of teaching opportunities that will help prepare them as candidates for a possible tenure-track search.

7. Upon the hire of a contingent faculty member, the Department Chair should hold a meeting with that faculty member to discuss job responsibilities and expectations, the terms and length of employment, processes of evaluation and review, and prospects for more permanent employment. As specified in I.e. above, the Division should draft a list of rights and responsibilities for all contingent faculty that would be distributed and discussed during this meeting.

d. Evaluation and Peer Review:

1. Department Chairs are responsible for completing the annual, 3-year, and 5-year reviews for Contingent Faculty stipulated by the *Faculty Handbook*. Annual reviews for multi-year visiting positions should include substantive feedback on scholarship and other areas of professional development that would make a Contingent Faculty member a strong candidate for an eventual tenure-track position.