

ALL FACULTY MATTER!

**A STUDY OF NONTENURE-TRACK FACULTY
AT ILLINOIS PUBLIC COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES**

Submitted for: Action.

Summary: Study Charge. In November 2000, the Illinois General Assembly passed House Joint Resolution 19 that directed the Board of Higher Education, in cooperation with public colleges and universities, to study and report to the legislature on issues affecting part-time and full-time nontenure-track faculty. The legislature directed the Board to consider the compensation and “growing dependence” on nontenure-track faculty and whether there is an “overreliance” on this staff. The Board also was asked to develop policies that would ensure “fair employment and consistent emphasis on quality instruction at all levels.”

Major Findings: 1) Illinois public universities have a similar proportion of nontenure-track faculty and part-time faculty as public universities across the United States (48 percent). Nontenure-track faculty comprise a lower percentage of teaching faculty (36 percent) and constitute 28 percent of all instructional FTEs. 2) At community colleges, part-time faculty comprise three quarters of all faculty and one-half of all faculty FTEs. 3) At public universities, nontenure-track faculty grew from 41 percent of all faculty in 1991 to 49 percent of all faculty in 1999; at community colleges, the proportion of part-time faculty remained the same during these years. 4) Nontenure-track faculty are as satisfied with their jobs overall as the tenured/tenure track. 5) Few nontenure-track faculty are “freeway flyers” who make a living by combining part-time teaching jobs at more than two institutions.

While there is little evidence that nontenure-track faculty are mistreated, their talents and abilities are not being as effectively used by public colleges and universities as they might be. Too often, institutions adopt a laissez-faire attitude towards nontenure-track faculty leaving all matters concerning their use and development to a small group and, not infrequently, solely to the disposition of a department chair.

Recommendations. Institutions should formulate plans and policies to ensure that nontenure-track faculty have a more secure and productive place within the institution and that their instructional abilities are fully developed to contribute to student learning.

Nontenure-track plans and policies should address: 1) identification of criteria used in pay decisions; 2) recognition and reward of teaching merit; 3) effective use of multi-year contracts; 4) involvement in departmental and campus wide decision-making bodies; 5) access to faculty development opportunities; 6) appropriate access to instructional resources and means for interacting with students; and 7) written performance evaluations.

Institutions should also monitor hiring and seek to ensure that the balance between tenured/tenure-track and nontenure-track faculty is educationally appropriate, and monitor and limit the hours of part-time faculty, or ensure that faculty who work at or about a full-time workload receive higher rates of pay.

Study Process. The Committee gathered extensive information from multiple sources. Public institutions supplied data on the number, workload, and salaries of all nontenure-track and tenured/tenure-track faculty, as well as information on policies affecting the nontenure track. In Fall 2001, the Committee held public hearings on this topic in Springfield and Chicago. To gather information on the characteristics, attitudes, and use of faculty at public institutions, the Center for Governmental Studies at Northern Illinois University conducted telephone surveys of tenured/tenure-track and nontenure-track faculty and mail surveys of key academic administrators. Appendix I contains the Center's report on the survey results, and information from the surveys is found throughout this report.

Action Requested: That the Board of Higher Education receives the Study Committee's report on nontenure-track faculty and directs the Committee to solicit comments and reactions to the report. A final report and recommendations will be presented for the Board's approval at the April 2001 meeting.

STATE OF ILLINOIS
BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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This item is provided as a separate attachment in the Board materials. The Committee's report and recommendations are submitted for the comment/reaction of members of Illinois' higher education community and other interested persons. Included as an appendix to the Committee's study is a report commissioned by the Board from the Center for Governmental Studies at Northern Illinois University. The Center's report summarizes the results of surveys conducted on the characteristics, attitudes, and use of nontenure-track faculty. The Center also surveyed tenured/tenure-track faculty for comparison purposes, and solicited information from key administrators on this topic.

The staff recommends adoption of the following resolution:

The Board of Higher Education hereby accepts the report of the Committee to Study Nontenure-track Faculty. The Board directs the Committee to solicit comments and reactions to the report from members of the Illinois higher education community and other interested persons and to report back to the Board at the April 2002 meeting with a final report and recommendations.

