

Supporting the Development and Success of Academic Staff and Fixed-Term Faculty : Strategies for Change and Success

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October 30, 2017

Why Attention to Faculty Work is a Timely and Strategically Important Issue

- Faculty members:
 - the “heart” of universities and colleges
 - the most critical resource
 - the intellectual capital
- The work of the faculty enables universities to fulfill their missions.
- The quality of the faculty relates directly to institutional effectiveness.
- Attracting excellent and diverse faculty members contributes to institutional excellence.

Issues We will Consider

- Changes occurring among appointment patterns for faculty and academic staff
- A framework for considering strategic approaches to nurturing organizational environments supportive of a diverse faculty
- Roles of deans and department chairs in fostering productive academic work environments

A Time of Change

- The changes underway surpass “business as usual.”
- “Colleges and universities now live in a sea of changed expectations...” (Newman, Couturier, & Scurry, 2004)
- “We are entering a period in which the capacity to nourish and manage change will be one of the most important abilities of all.” (Duderstadt, 2000)

A Major Change in Higher Education Shifts in Academic Appointment Patterns

- Increasing number of full or part-time non-tenure-track or fixed term appointments
- Professional unbundling
 - Separating parts of faculty work
 - Some faculty focus primarily on teaching or on research
- Institutional excellence requires that we tap into the full range of talent in our faculty and academic staff

Why this Shift in Appointment Patterns in the National Landscape?

- Increasing enrollments
- Economic pressures
- Market fluctuations
- Increased “corporatization”

- Implications:
 - Emphasis on productivity, accountability
 - Institutional need for flexibility

Who are the Academic Staff and Fixed-Term Faculty?

- Faculty and Academic Staff not eligible for tenure but doing important institutional work
 - Terms: NTTF, contingent, adjuncts
- Full-time
 - Teacher, researchers, administrators, advisors, academic professionals
- Part-Time
 - Specialists, experts, professionals, freelancers, aspiring academics, career enders

Issues pertaining to the Increase in Academic Staff and Fixed-Term Faculty

- Sometimes fixed-term colleagues (and adjuncts) have limited office space, resources, mentoring, and evaluative feedback, and less attendance at faculty meetings

- Implications:
 - These conditions may contribute to a negative impact on student success
 - Fixed-term and adjuncts often use less active learning and student-centered approaches, but if supported, they teach equally well as compared to tenure-track faculty.

Fostering Supportive and Productive Workplaces requires...

- Awareness of the diversity of faculty situations, interests, and needs
- Creative attention to diverse faculty needs
- Understanding of key elements of importance in academic work
- Commitment to the excellence that can be gained by providing support for all faculty and staff

The Strategic Challenge for Institutions and Their Leaders

- Supporting and investing in the full range of faculty and academic staff makes strategic sense for universities and colleges.
- What are strategically effective ways to support the workplace experience and development of fixed term faculty and academic staff?

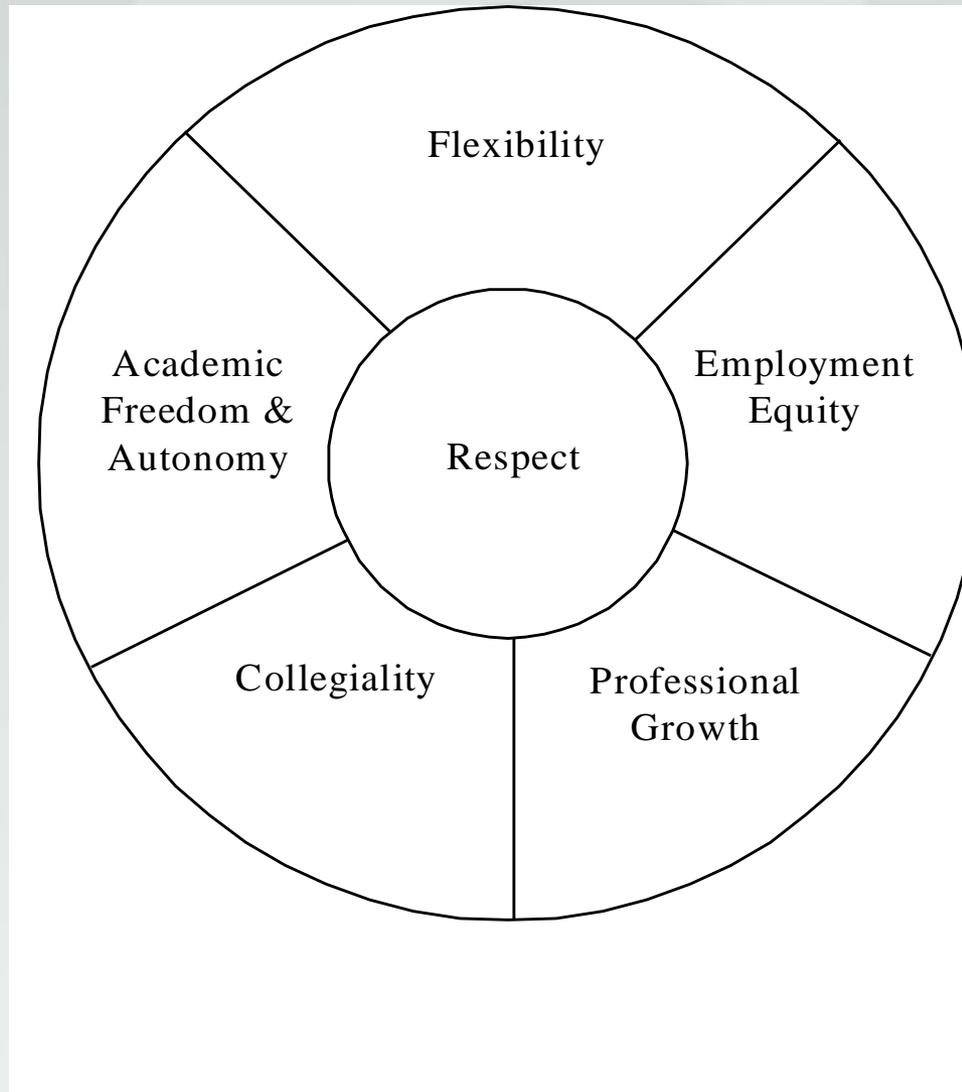
Important Aspects of Supporting Academic Staff and Fixed Term Faculty

- Recognize a reciprocal, two-way relationship between faculty members/academic staff and the university
- Recognize the importance of Essential Elements in all faculty/academic staff appointments
- Cultivate a respectful, collaborative community

Essential Elements of Faculty Work

- Respect
 - Balance and Flexibility
 - Professional Growth
 - Collegiality and Community
 - Employment Equity
 - Academic Freedom
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- -From: Gappa, J. M., Austin, A. E., Trice, A. G. (2007). *Rethinking Faculty Work and Workplaces: Higher Education's Strategic Imperative*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Essential Elements of Academic Work



Respect

- *The basic human valuing of academic staff for who they are and what they each uniquely contribute to their university.*
- Implications:
 - Foundational to commitment, creativity, and satisfaction
 - Embedded deeply within values of academe
 - Recognition that academic appointments vary by type and by the balance of teaching and research responsibilities
 - Importance of regular communication from institutional leaders about valuing all faculty members' contributions
 - Note how policies, titles, awards, interactions convey respect.

Equity

- *The right of all academic staff to receive equitable and respectful treatment according to established standards and practices, and to have access to the tools they need to do their jobs well*
- Implications:
 - Focus on search processes—developing diverse applicant pools, details of visits
 - Create an environment where information, opportunities, and options are made known to all
 - Ask faculty what they need to succeed
 - Encourage fairness, respect, transparency

Academic Freedom

- *The right of all academic staff to freedom of expression and inquiry in teaching, research, and public service*
- Implications
 - Commit to long-established values of academic freedom coupled with respect
 - Ensure faculty in all appointment types have protection for freedom of academic expression in their areas of expertise

Balance and Flexibility

- *The ability of academic staff members to construct work arrangements to maximize their contributions to their institutions as well as the meaningfulness of their work and personal lives.*
- Implications:
 - Know personnel policies regarding flexibility and options (leaves, time clock adjustments, dual career possibilities, family resources, health resources) and consider how to optimize flexibility for all colleagues
 - Provide information routinely to all faculty
 - Normalize the use of relevant policies

Professional Growth

- *Opportunities for academic staff to broaden their knowledge, abilities, and skills; experience interesting challenges and opportunities for creativity; and find greater satisfaction in work.*
- Implications:
 - Know and recommend the resources available
 - Encourage Individualized Growth Plans related to career stage
 - Encourage mentoring relationships

Collegiality and Community

- *Opportunity to be part of a mutually respectful community of colleagues who value one's contributions to the institution and feel concern for one's well-being*
- Implications:
 - Regular communication about valuing the contributions of all faculty members
 - Creating occasions and spaces for faculty interactions (across appointment types)
 - Opportunities for academics to learn together

Ideas for Deans and Chairs

- View the faculty as a critically important institutional resource.
- Ensure a culture of respect and support for all faculty members
- Preserve and adapt the essential elements that historically have defined the academic profession
- Collect/ use data about recruitment, retention, perceptions
- Initiate and facilitate conversations about supportive workplaces
- Think strategically about attracting, retaining, and supporting a diverse and creative faculty, committed to the institution's missions
- Frame institutional conversations about the nature of the profession and the meaning of academic work

The Strategic Challenge

- The faculty of American universities and colleges have always been the heart of the institutions where they work—and the intellectual capital that ensures their excellence.
- The quality of the faculty contributes directly to the effectiveness of universities and colleges in fulfilling their missions.
- Attracting, retaining, and supporting a diverse faculty and supporting faculty and academic staff in all appointment types relates directly to institutional excellence.

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