

**May 14, 2019**

**To: Melanie Hetzel-Riggin**

**From: Luciana Aronne. Chair of Non Tenure Track Committee**

**Re: Annual Report**

**Members:** Aronne, Luciana; (Science) Dieteman, David (Business); Dudas, George (Engineering); Gallagher, Sharon (H&SS); Urraro, Laurie (H&SS), Viebranz, Gary (H&SS) and Tia Young (Science)

**NOTE:** The Non-Tenure Track Committee is disbanding after five years due to the fact that the standing committee Faculty Affairs now has equal representation of tenured/tenure-track and fixed term faculty (FTM's).

In the past five years the committee has been instrumental in bringing up issues and concerns for fixed term faculty. This has taken the form of working on suggested revisions to policies based on a survey that was sent out to the Behrend faculty, to looking at finding equity in workload which included student count, contact hours, advising responsibilities as well as the type of class taught. The committee also looked at other percentage distributions (teaching, scholarship/research and service) across the Penn State campuses and found them to be drastically different from Behrend. All the data for this work has been given to the appropriate chair of faculty council at the time, Dr. Ralph Ford, Dr. Pamela Silver and the Chair of Faculty Affairs (Dr. Matthew Swinarski). If anyone should want to have access to any of the materials stated, please feel free to contact Luciana Aronne ([lxa9@psu.edu](mailto:lxa9@psu.edu)) and she will gladly send it to you.

For our last year, the committee was going to work on a scholarship bank where fixed term faculty across the campus could see what other fixed term faculty were doing for research/scholarly activity and find possible ideas or ways to collaborate across disciplines or schools. However, this was put aside when contract lengths for first and second promotions were changed in the policy (BCF 19) in December without any consultation from the NTT committee or faculty council.

After the open forum on March 27 to discuss the changes in the contract lengths for fixed term faculty, the NTT subcommittee met and wanted to respond to the concerns addressed by both tenured and fixed term faculty. The committee put together a letter, (see directly below), in the hopes that our suggestions could find some middle ground between the Behrend administration and the concerns of the faculty.

Tuesday April 9, 2019

Dr. Ralph Ford, Chancellor  
Glenhill Farmhouse  
Penn State Behrend

Dear Chancellor Ford,

We are writing to follow up the open forum from Wednesday, March 27 concerning proposed revisions to Behrend's administrative procedure BCF19, Appointment and Renewal Lengths for Fixed-Term Multiyear Faculty.

First, we appreciated your statement at the open forum that Behrend will honor three and five year contracts that existed before June 30, 2018.

We hope that the same commitment will be made to those current faculty who expected to be eligible for such contracts as part of their ongoing promotion process.

We understand your intention that only incoming faculty will have two year contracts under the proposed revisions to BCF19.

Second, in response to the feedback provided by both non-tenured and tenure faculty at the open forum meeting, we would like to suggest the contract lengths for promotion to be revised as follows:

- First level of promotion: a minimum of a three-year contract; and
- Second level of promotion: a minimum of a five-year contract.

We would also like to note the concerns voiced at Wednesday's meeting about the current policy (effective Dec. 21, 2018) and the proposed revisions, namely, that the policy and revisions are counterproductive to the stated purpose of the policy, which is: "To provide a reasonable balance between the ability to attract and retain fixed-term faculty members and the College's ability to maintain academic excellence, flexibility, and equity."

In addition, the current policy and proposed revisions are incompatible with BCF10 (the Behrend policy for promotion of fixed-term and standing non-tenure line faculty), and the various School policies implemented consistent with BCF10.

Under the example given in BCF10, at the start of a non-tenured faculty member's fourth year (semester seven), the faculty member may apply for promotion, which, if granted, would not take effect until the start of the fifth year.

Such a faculty member would be starting a third two-year contract in year five. If they were promoted, under the current and proposed revisions to BCF19, they "would be considered for a multi-year contracts [sic] of length beyond two years," which means they might also end up with another two year contract.

In short, the promotion process may not produce any additional job stability.

Similarly, if the faculty member demonstrates performance beyond the first level of promotion, and possibly two years after the initial promotion gets a three-year contract, they might seek promotion to the second level (with one year left on the three year contract).

If that promotion were granted, under the proposed revisions, faculty “at the third level will be given consideration for the maximum available contract length, subject to the needs of the institution, continued high-level performance, and the approval of the Chancellor's Office.”

The policy draft, however, fails to define “the maximum available contract length.” This introduces more uncertainty, which is not desirable.

Also, the inclusion of the phrase “continued high-level performance” is demotivating and redundant, given that performance is already measured in annual reviews, extended reviews, and for promotion.

Third, if Behrend intends not to award five year contracts any longer, then BCF10 and the related School policies on promotion should be revised, in order to provide equitable opportunities for promotion.

In particular, the percentage weights for annual evaluations should be changed to provide non-tenured faculty with evaluation tracks that match the lesser job stability. We propose the following breakdowns of teaching, research, and service to be available for non-tenured faculty to elect:

- 60-30-10
- 70-0-30
- 60-10-30

If evaluation is to be equitable, faculty who choose evaluation tracks with a research component should also be given institutional support for such research.

In closing, the proposed revisions to BCF19 are demotivating because they do not provide stability of employment to the non-tenured faculty who make up close to half of Behrend’s faculty. They represent a step backward from what was given to faculty as recently as January 2017, and this feeling was clearly expressed at Wednesday’s open forum meeting.

We appreciate the opportunity to present our recommendations for the revision of BCF 19 and look forward to future collaborations which will result in a final document that is clear and equitable for all of us.

Sincerely,

Non-Tenure Track Subcommittee

Luciana Aronne, Chairperson

Sharon Gallagher

Laurie Urraro

Gary Viebranz

George Dudas

Tia Young

David Dieteman

The committee strongly encourages Faculty Affairs to investigate the possibility of different tracks for fixed term faculty (different percentage weightings) and to insure that when workload is being investigated by the Faculty Affairs committee; that they take our letter to the Chancellor as well as past data that was given to the Chair of Faculty Affairs into account.

Respectfully Submitted,

Luciana Aronne