

**Executive Summary**  
**Report of the Survey of NTTF**  
**Colorado State University**  
**2014-15**

**Prepared for the Center for the Study of Academic Labor**

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**Introduction**

The Center for the Study of Academic Labor, in cooperation with the Committee on Non Tenure-Track Faculty (CoNTTF) undertook a survey of non tenure-track faculty (henceforth NTTF) on the Colorado State University campus in Fort Collins in May of 2014. The purpose of the survey was to better understand the concerns and issues of this group of faculty on the Fort Collins campus. The survey, which was undertaken almost exactly five years after the first survey of its kind on the CSU campus, asked largely the same questions as the 2009 survey in order to facilitate comparisons. Over this period, however, the university significantly expanded the attention paid to issues of NTTF, and so additional or difference questions were needed in some locations. A central question for the second survey was whether this enhanced attention accorded NTTF since 2009 had meaningfully changed perceptions of the work environment.

For purposes of this survey, NTTF were defined as those belonging to any of the following categories of employees, consistent with Sections D and E of the CSU *Faculty Manual*: 1) Temporary faculty 2) Special Appointment faculty and 3) Senior Teaching Appointments and 4) Joint Academic and Administrative Professionals. The survey, which was distributed to the 1,273 CSU employees falling into one of these four categories, had a return rate of 38%. Of the respondents, 80% indicated that their positions were primarily instructional, while 20% reported holding joint academic-administrative appointments. A small group of 4% described their responsibilities as clinical. Relative to gender and length of service, 60.5% of respondents were women and 41% of respondents had been employed by CSU for a decade or more.

According to the CSU Fact Book, approximately 60% of teaching, defined as undergraduate credit hours at both the lower and upper division level, is being done by several categories of employees other than tenure-track faculty. It should be noted that this survey did not include some of the people doing this teaching, such as a category of employee called “other” which has consistently accounted for approximately 7% of the instruction over the course of several years graduate teaching assistants and (GTAs) who account for 12% of the undergraduate credit hour instructional coverage. We speculate that the instruction being done by “others” is largely accounted for by administrative professionals who do not hold joint appointments; for instance, a department chair drawn from the faculty ranks moves from a faculty category to an administrative professional category but may be teaching courses. The absence of clear affiliations among this “other” group of college teachers is problematic since it underrepresents the amount of teaching done off the tenure-track and associates that teaching with no one in particular. Moreover, the “invisible teaching” associated with this group of unspecified

employees works to under-represent the amount of teaching that is currently directed away from faculty. Additionally, GTAs should be either included in future iterations of this survey or should be surveyed separately since they are shouldering a significant percentage of the undergraduate course load. Finding a way to include instructional employees who do not fall outside the categories included in our survey would help to better represent the teaching being done off the tenure-track.

Workload descriptions varied and offer a complicated, and to some extent conflicting, picture. While 90% of respondents indicated that teaching formed some portion of their workload, 8% cited no teaching among their responsibilities. While 57% reported no research responsibilities, 16% reported that research comprised more than half of their workload distribution. While 36% reported having no service responsibilities, 26% of respondents reported that service comprised less than 10% of their workload. At the very least, it can be said that NTTF at CSU carry a range of workload responsibilities that vary greatly, but traditional faculty workload distributions encompassing the full triad of teaching, research, and service do not appear to be a consistent feature of their roles. Non tenure-track faculty appear to be assuming specialized roles, which is consistent with national trends that report the “unbundling” of faculty roles.

## **Background**

Since 2004, the number of NTTF on the CSU-Fort Collins campus has grown by roughly 115%. Most of that growth seems to have occurred between 2004 and 2009 since in 2009 NTTF represented 34% of the faculty at Colorado State while in 2014, NTTF had grown to 39% of the total faculty. Between 2009 and 2014, the undergraduate credit hours associated with instruction by NTTF rose modestly from 40% to 41%, suggesting that the growing number of NTTF were undertaking roles beyond teaching and perhaps associated with clinical, research, and service responsibilities.

## **Key Findings**

We report here on key aggregate responses of all NTTF who participated in the study, rather than the disaggregated results of individual colleges. As such, our findings are general and partial, requiring additional analysis at the college/unit level.

**Section 1 Demographic Information.** Here we obtained the demographic information contained in the preceding paragraphs of this summary.

## **Section 2: Job Satisfaction Indicators**

First we report descriptive information about each factor relating to NTTF satisfaction, identifying those areas of position or job satisfaction factors that NTTF indicate are most important to them. Next we provide summary of NTTF self-report of the level of satisfaction with these factors in the spring of 2014. Finally, we report on “item clusters” relative to key features of the many measures of job satisfaction included in this survey.

- salary
- mentoring
- professional development

- student contact
- collegiality
- autonomy
- collaborative opportunities
- flexibility in scheduling
- exercise of academic freedom in teaching and research
- conducting research
- research facilities and opportunities
- participation in departmental activities and governance
- intellectual stimulation
- feeling valued as a professional member of the organization
- feeling fairly treated

### **Top 5 Factors Affecting Job Satisfaction**

Survey respondents reported the following as their top five factors contributing to job satisfaction:

- #1: Feeling valued as a professional
- #2: Having secure/stable employment
- #3 Having academic freedom
- #4 Having student contact
- #5 Having a flexible schedule

Following closely behind these top five were also salary at #6 and both autonomy and collegiality which tied at #7.

### **Where NTTF Report High Satisfaction on the CSU Campus**

Reporting on current levels of job satisfaction within the local context, survey results indicated the following sources of satisfaction:

- 84% are satisfied with student contact
- 83% are satisfied with flexible scheduling
- 80% are satisfied with autonomy
- 72% are satisfied with intellectual stimulation
- 64% are satisfied with academic freedom
- 60% are satisfied with collegiality

### **Where NTTF Report Lower Satisfaction on the CSU Campus**

- 47% reported feeling valued as a professional
- 42% reported satisfaction with secure/stable employment
- 10% reported extreme satisfaction with salary and another 36% reported being somewhat satisfied—scores that we break out for purposes of clarity since salary equity has received

considerable attention on the CSU campus in recent years.

### **Where NTTF Report Low Relevance of the Factors**

On questions relating to research support, including satisfaction with research facilities, between 40 and 45% of respondents indicated that the questions were not applicable to them.

### **New Questions**

Three new questions about job satisfaction were posed to NTTF in the 2014 survey. Findings showed that a majority of respondents:

- are satisfied with their positions
- are glad to be members of the CSU faculty
- do not see their current work at CSU as a stepping stone to another position

### **Factor Analysis**

We also conducted factor analysis in order to simplify and group similar criteria, first in terms of the importance of the attributes themselves to NTTF and second in terms of NTTF satisfaction with their experience of these criteria. Professional teaching values were represented by one cluster of items. Salary, feeling valued as a professional, and being treated fairly separated into fairly unique clusters on both factor analyses. Salary, in particular, factored by itself on the importance dimension. In fact, salary appears to be a complex factor, perhaps representing a separate concept from the other job satisfaction attributes. There is also some suggestion that the faculty responding to this survey have internalized the notion that salary isn't as important as other criteria in job satisfaction, and that they should not expect to be satisfied with their salaries. This might be somewhat normative with the population of NTTF faculty, given the history of low wages and high volumes of labor.

The largest gaps between items measuring the importance of the criteria to job satisfaction and actual, reported job satisfaction were as follows and ranked in this order:

1. being valued as a professional
2. salary
3. being fairly treated

These findings signal important areas where attention should be paid with regard to job satisfaction of NTTF. They also represent similar findings to those from the survey of 2009.

## **Section 3 Hiring and Evaluation**

Despite the 2012 passage of HB1144 by the Colorado General Assembly, the bill's signing into law by Governor John Hickenlooper, and the consent of the the CSU Board of Governors which approved the use of binding teaching contracts of 1-3 years in length, just under 19% of NTTF reported having a contract as of the 2014 survey. Prior to passage of HB1144, all NTTF appointments were "at will"

although sometimes functioning on appointments described as “without term,” which meant that annual re-application was presumably not necessary although renewal was. In 2009, however, 38% of respondents reported having to reapply for their positions, and 32% reported still needing to do so in 2014. Moreover, as of the 2014 survey, two years after passage of HB1144, 38.9% of NTTF reported that they were still functioning on one-semester or one-year terms, 21.2% reported having a without-term appointment, and 21.2% reported not knowing their type of employment. Comparisons to 2009 are difficult to make since contracts were not available at that time. However, roughly the same percentage of NTTF respondents in 2009, 20%, reported that they were unsure of how their own reappointment would occur.

It appears that there remains little commitment to the use of contractual language in forming even relatively short-term commitments to teaching faculty. For many NTTF, in other words, little has changed in regard to job stability/security. This point is driven home by the survey finding that 43% of respondents reported having “rolling appointments” in 2014 compared to 42% in 2014. And despite claims prior to 2012 that legal restrictions formed the main barrier for forging binding commitments to NTTF, the elimination of the legal obstacle to contractual arrangement appears to have resulted in little change to either understanding or practice. This outcome is consistent with the similar non- use of contracts for research faculty, which similarly became legal in Colorado in 2007 with passage of Senate Bill 07-4 but were seldom, if ever, used. Additionally, confusion among NTTF in regard to rehire rights and processes continues unabated, or has even increased. In 2009, 54% of NTTF reported understanding the rehire processes of their units, while in 2014, that number dropped to 38.5%. It appears to be important that significant additional attention be paid to educating NTTF and perhaps also their supervisors about hiring options.

#### **Section 4 Material Conditions and Access to Rewards and Recognitions**

Survey results suggest that pay practices vary widely across campus and that a lack of regularized salary approach generates great variety in the experiences and overall satisfaction of NTTF. Where particular issues were noted, we offer recommendations for additional work and attention by university leadership:

While 43% of respondents reported that they are paid on a per-section basis, 10% reported their salary is negotiated as part of a research contract or award.

While 37% indicated they are eligible for promotion and/or merit pay increases, 24% reported they are not eligible for promotion and/or merit pay increase, and 27% indicated they were unsure whether they qualified for either. **Additional work is needed here to clarify how compensation is tied to merit.**

While 36% reported that they believe non tenure-track faculty pay fails to keep pace with tenure-line faculty pay increases, 17% moderately or strongly agreed that their salaries keep pace with tenure-line faculty salaries. **Please see explanations elsewhere for what might account for salary “satisfaction” among NTTF. In particular, see the factor analysis section of the Section 2 discussion.**

While 21% reported that their department pays non tenure-track faculty who hold a Ph.D. more than other non tenure-track faculty, 10% said this was not the case in their unit and more than half of the respondents, 54%, reported they were unsure.

Of the respondents, 74% noted they have received clear information about benefits they are eligible for and 76% reported their benefits are equitable to those of other employees. Although 50% agreed that they are eligible for leave for childbirth, illness or other exigencies, 30% reported they were unsure of their benefits in this regard. **Additional information about applicable benefits should be provided to NTTF.**

Responding to questions about the adequacy of office space and resources, 61% indicated they have adequate office space and 75% agreed they had access to adequate resources to support teaching or research. **These findings suggest that material improvements to NTTF workspace has occurred since the 2009 survey.**

Responding to questions about rewards, recognitions, and the valuing of NTTF contributions, 55% of respondents moderately or strongly agreed with the statement that their departments value their professional expertise and contributions while 25% moderately or strongly disagreed. While 44% of respondents stated their belief that tenure-line colleagues respect the contributions of NTTF, fully 30% moderately or strongly disagreed. In addition, nearly equal numbers, 27% and 26%, respectively, reported that research and teaching awards are/are not available to them while 27% reported they are unsure about the availability of rewards. While 48% said that their titles (instructor, assistant professor on special appointment, etc.) offer meaningful recognition for the work they do, 31% strongly do not believe this to be the case. Over a quarter (27%) reported that their college and/or department newsletters do not acknowledge their accomplishments while 44% reported that their department or college demonstrates, in one way or another, a belief in their value as members of the community. **The area of rewards and recognitions, including the use of appropriate titles and respect shown by tenure-line colleagues and departmental communication, is important and appears to vary significantly across campus. Non-tangible indicators, such as including NTTF as part of “faculty news” in department newsletters, is important to overall morale and creating a supportive culture.**

## **Section 5 Participation in Governance and Perceptions of Institutional Support**

As a whole, NTTF responses to this part of the survey suggest NTTF disengagement with and/or inadequate understanding of the role of shared governance to the workings of the university as a whole and their units in particular. For instance, respondents were evenly divided (19% v. 25%) about whether they are adequately represented on Faculty Council, while a large percentage (over 36%) said they were unsure. Only one-third (33%) indicated they know who their Faculty Council representative is. Respondents were also unsure about their level of welcome and their opportunities for involvement at the departmental level of governance, and when asked if their opinion matters at department committee meetings, respondents were evenly divided: 1/3 believe their opinions matter, 1/3 believe their opinion does not matter, and 1/3 believe their opinion is either not applicable or they are unsure of whether it matters.

Regarding departmental decision making:

- 44% indicated they do not feel included in decision-making that directly relates to their work.
- 53% indicated they are not rewarded for service or that reward for service is inapplicable to them
- 40% indicated they would become more involved in service if given the opportunity and if recognized for that effort.

Regarding care and concern for their well-being:

- At the department level, 67%, indicated comfort in talking to their department chair about problems or concerns
- At the university level, 31% indicated a belief that the administration cares, 33% believe administration does not care, and 22% were neutral on the question.

## Section 6 Open-Ended Questions

Selecting key points from the extensive responses generated by our final three open-ended questions is difficult indeed. We urge a more fine-grained analysis of these responses in the near future. For now, early analysis suggests the following as some of the key findings.

- **Job security and career ladders:** NTTF are deeply concerned about their futures at CSU and have a strong interest in the development of mechanisms for increasing job security and career ladders/trajectories.
- **Compensation and evaluation:** New floors have been set at \$4750 for 2015-16, which is a \$1600 (or 4%) raise for those teaching 8 courses a year at the base. Nonetheless, NTTF respondents overwhelmingly stated that they would like to participate in more transparent evaluation processes and in conversations related to fair pay.
- **Negotiation of Appointment Features:** NTTF respondents indicated a desire to be fuller participants in decisions relating to the work that they do.

## Index of Accompanying Report Materials

This report offers an explanation of the aggregate results of the survey. Follow on efforts may examine disaggregated data and CSAL invites analysis of college-level results which will be posted to the CSAL web site after review. The report as a whole, which follows, mirrors the structure of the survey and is organized as follows:

- Section 1 Description of the respondents
- Section 2 Job satisfaction indicators
- Section 3 Hiring and Evaluation Insights
- Section 4 Material conditions of employment and access to rewards and recognitions
- Section 5 Representation in shared governance and perceived administrative support
- Section 6 Open-ended questions about major employment issues and respondents ideas for

improving circumstances and responding to concerns

The report also includes four appendices:

Appendix A: The Survey Questions

Appendix B: The Survey in Aggregate Form, Narrative Responses Removed

Appendix C: The Disaggregated Survey Results, by College

Appendix D: Excerpted Responses to Open-Ended Questions 117, 118, and 119