

Proposition: 15-21/22

Proposal Type: Bill Resolution Memorial Joint Proposition
(If Joint proposition, also select type)

Title: Resolution Requesting to Establish Longer Work Contracts for Part-time Temporary Faculty

Date Submitted: 4/26/22

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Proposed Committee: We request that this be handled as emergency legislation.

Prior Approvals: N/A – this is a resolution.

Resolution

Whereas, temporary part-time faculty are responsible for teaching a large proportion of the NMSU system students;

Whereas, many temporary part-time faculty teach regularly and have often done so for many years but are still hired on a semester-by-semester basis;

Whereas, a large portion of the teaching needs are predictable and are funded by instructional and general (I&G) support;

Whereas, the NMSU system is moving towards year-long scheduling and having students register for the upcoming two semesters;

Whereas, students want to know who will be their instructor for a course and select courses based on previous experience with particular instructors;

Whereas, a well-designed course and quality instruction that is directly linked to students' success (Goal 1, LEADS 2025) requires that an instructor has the time to design and prepare quality courses.

Therefore, on May 5, 2022, the NMSU Faculty Senate is calling on NMSU's Administration to allow issuing longer work contracts of one to two years for part-time temporary faculty. These contracts would be issued at the discretion of each department chair/head and program director.

This system would create mutual benefits for the part-time temporary faculty member, the students they teach, the departments they serve, and NMSU as an institution:

Benefits to students

- Long-term contracts make it more likely that students are taught by quality faculty that are a consistent part of the NMSU community.
- Students will be able to see their choices for instructors by the time they enroll in courses.
- Longer contracts would help increase the part-time temporary faculty pool, allow recruiting of talented faculty from outside the region, and ensure that the best quality part-time faculty are hired and retained.
- Faculty engagement is increased by longer contracts and such engagement improves the student experience.
- Faculty engagement has a critical influence on student retention and future enrollment not only of the current students but also on whether they recommend the institution to their social network.

Benefits to departments and the institution

- Longer contracts will make scheduling easier for department chairs/heads and program directors, and ensure they have the expert instructors available they need to teach scheduled courses.
- Most importantly, hundreds of part-time temporary faculty members in the NMSU system would have more planning time to develop and improve their classes, seek mentors, and have timely access to our learning management system, class listings, or other tools needed for their teaching assignments. This would also benefit students, who will benefit from quality education.
- It would make hiring part-time faculty a much less stressful and time-consuming process.

Benefits to part-time temporary faculty

- Part-time temporary faculty members in the NMSU system would have better access to professional development for teaching or academic technology training.
- It will provide a morale boost to part-time temporary faculty who will know their contributions are valued by the institution.

There are additional benefits to NMSU as an institution, which support some of the important goals of LEADS 2025.

(source: <https://leads2025.nmsu.edu/>)

- **Goal 1:** Enhance Student Success and Social Mobility
Student Retention and Graduation Rate: Part-time faculty have very diverse backgrounds and serve as role models to our diverse student population. Student success has been linked to students feeling comfortable with one instructor and seeking them out for further classes, advising, or help finding valuable resources that they need to succeed in

college. A high proportion of general education instructors are part-time instructors, so the instructor a student feels comfortable enough with to reach out to in a moment of academic or even personal crisis might be a part-time instructor with whom they have taken multiple classes.

- **Goal 2:** Elevate Research and Creative Activity

The practice of hiring non-tenure-track faculty allows for tenured and tenure-track faculty to focus on their research by allowing for a reduced teaching load.

- **Goal 3:** Amplify Extension and Outreach

It takes time to cultivate connections with communities, and some part-time faculty bring considerable professional experience outside of academia with them that may foster new interactions. Having a more stable, 1 or 2-year contract makes it more likely that part-time faculty will engage in outreach.

- **Goal 4:** Build a Robust University System

To cultivate faculty excellence and productivity, part-time faculty need access to the resources needed to adequately prepare and teach a course including faculty development offerings, technology training, or mentorship, already before they start teaching or in between semesters. Including part-time temporary faculty in shared governance also advances equity, inclusion, and diversity and acknowledges the often-considerable experience in teaching and research of these colleagues, and the institutional memory to which they contribute. It would also help to raise low faculty morale caused by temporary faculty not having access to the basic resources afforded to full-time and part-time regular faculty.

Rationale:

At Dona Ana Community College, and the Alamogordo and Grants campuses, part-time faculty vastly outnumber full-time faculty. On the Las Cruces campus, about 30% of the faculty are part-time faculty. The majority of these faculty are considered "temporary" or "non-regular" faculty, hired on a semester-by-semester basis.

Definitions: (source: <https://arp.nmsu.edu/6-03/>)

- "**Regular** academic appointment is a status for individuals hired in a 9-month or 12-month academic position with no pre-determined appointment termination date, as well as faculty hired by contract subject to annual renewal during the pre-tenure period."
- "**Temporary** faculty appointment is a status for individuals hired for a predetermined length of time and may have a title rank of College Instructor, College Assistant Professor, College Associate Professor, or College Professor as specified at the time of employment."
- **Part-Time** faculty teach below .74 FTE every year.

Below are listed some of the ratios of full-time to part-time faculty at the various NMSU branch campuses as compared to the NMSU Las Cruces campus and UNM main campus (source: <https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/>).

Data from Fall 2020: Full-time: Part-Time

NMSU Main: 802: 244 (3.3 full-time:1 part-time)

NMSU Alamogordo: 31: 57 (0.5 full time: 1 part- time)

DACC: 125: 310 (0.4 full time: 1 part- time)

NMSU Grants: 13: 35 (0.4 full time: 1 part- time)

Entire NMSU System: 971:650 (1.5 full-time: 1 part-time)

UNM Main: 2046: 265 (7.7 full-time: 1 part-time)

The vast majority of part-time faculty are temporary (not regular). The ratio of “regular” to “temporary” part-time faculty is listed below (source: office of the provost).

Data from Spring 2022—regular: temporary

NMSU Main: 19: 288

NMSU Alamogordo: 0: 50

DACC: 0: 269

NMSU Grants: 0: 42

Discussion:

The information below was gathered by interviewing several department chairs/heads and or program directors who each hire on average **40-50 temporary part-time faculty each semester, about 80% which are hired continuously (for more than two semesters, and often for several years and even up to a decade or more).**

The current system of hiring the majority of temporary part-time faculty on a semester-by-semester basis creates several issues:

- It makes planning and preparing for classes difficult. Sometimes temporary instructors are hired close to the beginning of the semester, leaving only days to prepare for classes.
- It does not allow training for faculty teaching in the system for the first time or teaching a class new to them.
- Instructors only have access to their Canvas courses when they are formally hired. The practice of hiring at the beginning of the semester leaves little time to build a course in the Canvas LMS.
- If temporary faculty do service for the university, college, or department, it is not taken into consideration or compensated in any way.
- Students may require the consent of the instructor to enroll in courses, but as long as the course is listed TBD only the department head can make such overrides.
- Students want to plan their classes with certain instructors in mind and are more willing to sign up for classes with an instructor’s name already attached, especially if it’s an instructor’s name they recognize.
- Continuity of instructors and more choices can be especially important to first-year students in general education courses. Students who work best with their preferred instructors are more likely to stay in school, complete class, and graduate.

- Department chairs have to wait to add instructors' names to the schedule until after these faculty members are hired.
- Program outcomes assessment is often done after the semester, but part-time faculty's contracts have already ended and they do not know if they will continue to work at NMSU. This makes program assessments more difficult to schedule and program for the institution and takes valuable time away from department chairs/heads who must train any new faculty every semester on program assessment.
- Some departments at the community college level do not have any full-time faculty leading them. This is especially true in departments that teach General Education courses. Having part-time faculty who are hired for more than a semester at a time would be a helpful resource for department chairs needing the expertise of the faculty in that particular field in order to lead assessment or any other departmental initiatives related to that field.
- Part-time faculty who are treated as short-time employees are very often not part of department, college, or university-level decision-making that affects them and the students which they serve. This is despite some of them having taught in the NMSU system for years or even decades at a time.
- The years of teaching are not recognized and counted in Banner or anywhere else leading to part-time temporary faculty not being recognized for teaching awards or service awards. This can lead to low faculty morale, which directly contradicts Goal 4 of LEADS 2025.
- Colleges often do not record a list of who serves as temporary faculty making it more difficult to contact them when a student is looking for them or when there are other issues with the faculty member. This can cost the institution valuable time trying to communicate with part-time temporary faculty.
- Temporary part-time faculty often feel their contributions to the college are not valued.
- While temporary faculty have access to the NMSU Teaching Academy offerings during the semester, their names are dropped off the mailing lists for program announcements at the end of each semester. They need to actively request to get information for any summer faculty development.
- Due to the semester-by-semester contracts, many faculty development opportunities are not available to part-time faculty.
- Moreover, since their contracts are for one semester only, they cannot plan ahead for either financial or pedagogical reasons. There is little to no job stability. Temporary faculty positions are not widely advertised. Part-time temporary faculty don't go through as rigorous of an evaluation process as full-time faculty, and there are often too many part-time faculty members to be evaluated every year.
- New faculty might be more willing to move to a new place for a 1-to-2-year contract, but not for one that is for one semester only. This is especially true if there is a possibility of renewing those 1-to-2-year contracts based on good evaluations of their work. This could result in a widening of the part-time temporary faculty pool.

- The practice of hiring temporary part-time faculty for only one semester at a time leads to a significant administrative burden at the beginning of every semester (offer letters, EPAFs, communication). This costs the institution both time and money.

For all these reasons, the Faculty Senate believes that allowing for longer contracts for part-time temporary faculty is a best practice that furthers institutional excellence and student success.