The New Professoriate

Characteristics, Contributions, and Compensation

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Introduction

The presence of part-time and full-time non–tenure-track faculty on college campuses in the United States has grown significantly during the past 20 years. To meet the needs of a burgeoning student population, colleges and universities increased the number of instructional faculty by 46 percent between 1981 and 1999, bringing the total to more than 1 million. Much of this change occurred at the part-time level: Between 1981 and 1999, the number of part-time faculty grew by 79 percent, to more than 400,000. Meanwhile, the share of faculty hired on the traditional tenure track increased at a much lower rate.

The growing number of nontraditional faculty has gained national media attention. In recent years, stories in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* have highlighted the efforts of nontraditional faculty to unionize and secure better pay and benefits (Smallwood, 2002; Leatherman, 2001; Schneider, 2000; Lords, 1999). While such stories typically include anecdotes about the plight of nontraditional faculty, higher education leaders require empirical data to draw firmer conclusions about the dilemmas that these individuals face.

This report analyzes the most complete data available on all types of higher education faculty. It takes a closer look at the growth in part-time faculty and full-time non–tenure-track faculty. In this monograph, those faculty outside the traditional full-time tenure track are referred to as nontraditional faculty. This report also discusses the characteristics of nontraditional faculty, comparing nontraditional to traditional faculty in such key areas as academic productivity, workload, compensation, and satisfaction.

The results of this analysis suggest that in 1998, nontraditional faculty consisted mainly of higher education professionals with master's degrees. They were younger than traditional faculty and were likely to be female. Despite other income sources, the total income of nontraditional faculty was considerably lower than that of traditional faculty. Nontraditional faculty also received significantly less in nonmonetary compensation, such as health benefits and support for academic travel. Despite differences in pay and benefits, nontraditional and traditional faculty indicated similar levels of overall job satisfaction.

THE DEBATE ABOUT NONTRADITIONAL FACULTY

The increasing use of part-time faculty and full-time non–tenure-track faculty raises concerns about whether colleges and universities treat these individuals fairly. Higher education leaders who support the use of faculty with nontraditional status see these professionals as necessary for the continued growth and success of higher education. In addition, they recognize that by hiring nontraditional faculty, colleges and universities can reap significant financial benefits. A college can offer a course taught by a part-time faculty member for a fraction of what the same course would cost if taught by a full-time faculty member. While many administrators see this cost savings as positive given increased student demand and declining governmental support, critics view the growing use of faculty with nontraditional status as a means of institutional control and exploitation of faculty (Cox, 2000).

In addition to increasing student demand, other factors have influenced the move toward hiring faculty with nontraditional status. Research by Judith Gappa and David Leslie points to educational factors as another reason for the use of part-time faculty (1993). Gappa and Leslie conclude that institutions hiring part-time faculty can keep lower-level undergraduate classes at a reasonable size, especially courses that are general education requirements. They also can employ local professionals in such fields as urban planning, law, or business, in which students benefit from the perspective of a practitioner.

Jay Chronister and Roger Baldwin cite the need for institutional flexibility as a major reason for the trend of hiring more full-time non–tenure-track faculty (2001). Institutions with a large share of nontraditional faculty can more easily increase or decrease course offerings as enrollments fluctuate than can those with a large share of traditional faculty. By hiring nontraditional faculty, institutions also can offer courses in the latest technology or skills—areas that may be unfamiliar to tenured or tenure-track faculty.

DATA AND COMMON DEFINITIONS

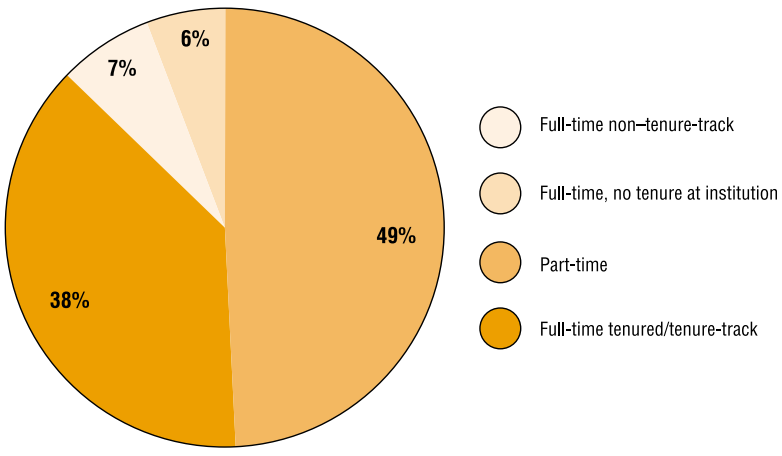
The Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) collects data on all faculty members in higher education. NCES annually compiles data on the number of faculty by ethnicity, institution type, rank, and full- or part-time status through the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). NCES also conducted the National Study of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF) in 1987, 1992, and 1998 to collect more detailed information on a nationally representative sample of postsecondary faculty. Because of data inconsistencies, this report

will not include information from the 1987 NSOPF study. The 1992 (NSOPF:93) study was based on a sample of more than 30,000 faculty at 974 not-for-profit, degree-granting institutions. The 1998 (NSOPF:99) study collected information from a sample of more than 28,000 faculty at 960 not-for-profit, degree-granting institutions. The study also included an institution survey to collect information on faculty policies and benefits.

Both the 1992 and 1998 samples included all persons designated as faculty regardless of whether they taught, such as administrators and research faculty with no teaching responsibilities. This analysis excludes faculty who did not teach courses for credit and those whose primary institutional activity was not teaching. This report uses IPEDS data to describe changes in the number of part-time instructional faculty, and NSOPF data to describe the characteristics, workload, productivity, and support and benefits of all instructional faculty with nontraditional status.

Figure 1 shows the distribution of instructional faculty by employment status in 1998. Although it is possible to examine part-time faculty by tenure status as well, this study does not discuss these distinctions among part-timers because so few part-time faculty were tenured in 1998 (2.4 percent). According to Figure 1, nearly half of all faculty were part time in 1998.

Figure 1
Instructional Faculty by Employment Status: 1998



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Study of Postsecondary Faculty, 1999.

This study will examine as two separate categories the full-time tenured/tenure-track faculty (about 38 percent of all faculty in 1998) and full-time non–tenure-track faculty at institutions with a tenure system (7 percent). Although the latter group made up only a small percentage of all faculty, it is important to discuss their growth in the context of an increasingly nontraditional faculty. Both part-time and full-time non–tenure-track faculty represented a departure from the traditional full-time tenured/tenure-track model.[1]

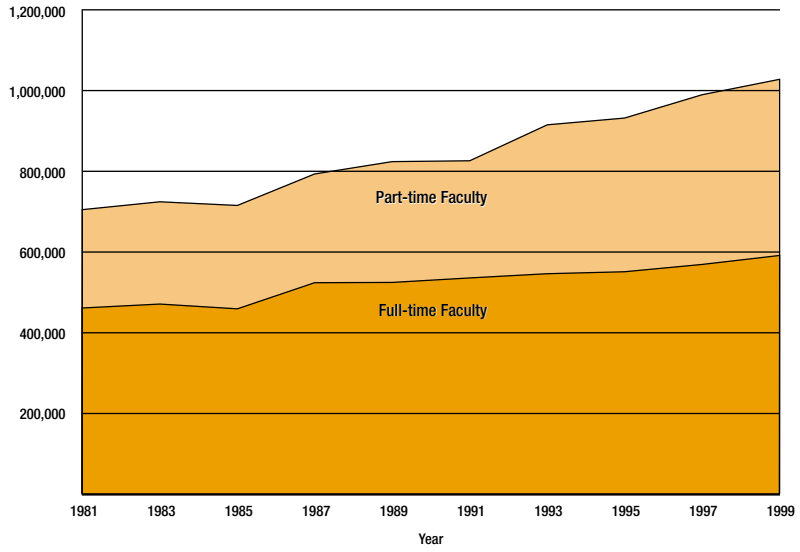
1 This study does not discuss full-time faculty at institutions without a tenure system (6 percent of all faculty in 1999) but includes that category in many of the tables that follow, to ensure that all percentages add to 100 percent of instructional faculty.

Growth Among Nontraditional Faculty

During the past two decades, the number of higher education faculty has risen from more than 700,000 in 1981 to more than 1 million in 1999. The most significant growth during this period occurred among part-time faculty, whose number grew by 79 percent. This is a recent trend; institutions hired more part-time faculty to meet the demands of expanding enrollments during the late 1980s and early 1990s (see **Figure 2**). From 1981 to 1987, the number of

Figure 2

Instructional Faculty, by Employment Status: 1981–1999



Source: U.S. Department of Education, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System.

instructional faculty increased by almost 90,000 to address an enrollment increase during the same period of nearly 400,000. More than 70 percent of these new faculty worked full time. During the next six years, the economic recession of the late 1980s and early 1990s, and the boom in the college-age population, pushed college enrollments up by more than 1.5 million students. Colleges and universities responded by hiring more than 120,000 additional instructional faculty between 1987 and 1993, the majority of whom worked part time (82 percent). This rapid growth in part-time faculty, coupled with limited growth in full-time faculty, caused a significant increase in the percentage of all faculty with part-time status from 1981 to 1999.

The magnitude of growth among part-time faculty varied by institution type. All types of institutions except private research universities experienced some growth in the percentage of part-timers among their faculty. At private research universities, the percentage of part-timers among the faculty decreased by 6 percentage points, from 46 percent in 1992 to 40 percent in 1998 (see **Table 1**). The growth in the percentage of part-timers among college faculty ranged from 11 percentage points at private doctoral universities to less than 1 percentage point at public doctoral institutions. Public two-year institutions recorded the largest percentage of part-time faculty in 1998 (64 percent). Public research universities employed the smallest percentage of part-time faculty in 1998 (30 percent).

Table 1
Faculty Status, by Institution Type: 1992 and 1998

	Percentage Part-time		Percentage Full-time					
			Tenured/tenure-track		Non–tenure-track		No Tenure System at Institution	
	1992	1998	1992	1998	1992	1998	1992	1998
Public Research	25.9	29.7	63.5	57.6	7.9	12.5	2.6	0.3
Public Doctoral*	34.6	35.3	53.9	49.6	9.2	14.7	2.3	0.5
Public Comprehensive	34.8	39.4	56.1	51.8	7.0	8.1	2.1	0.6
Public Two-year	62.4	64.3	26.3	24.3	1.7	1.9	9.7	9.5
Private Research	46.3	39.8	40.5	45.6	8.8	12.5	4.5	2.1
Private Doctoral*	44.5	56.1	42.9	31.9	7.6	7.9	5.0	4.1
Private Comprehensive	51.4	54.5	39.8	33.9	5.3	6.7	3.4	4.9
Private Liberal Arts	36.9	43.9	46.8	37.8	6.7	9.7	9.6	8.6
Other**	52.2	54.2	21.9	27.9	2.9	4.1	22.9	13.7
All Institutions	**47.0**	**49.0**	**41.0**	**38.0**	**5.0**	**7.0**	**7.0**	**6.0**

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Study of Postsecondary Faculty, 1993 and 1999.
Note: NCES used these nine institutional categories based on the 1994 Carnegie classification.
* Includes medical schools.
**Includes institutions that do not fit into the listed categories, e.g., public liberal arts schools, private two-year schools, and religious and other specialized institutions.

As Table 1 illustrates, from 1993 to 1999 the percentage of full-time non–tenure-track faculty increased from 5 percent to 7 percent of all faculty. Public doctoral institutions recorded the largest increase—6 percentage points—in the percentage of full-time non–tenure-track faculty (from 9 percent to 15 percent). At both public and private research universities, the percentage of full-time non–tenure-track faculty increased by about 4 percentage points, to 13 percent of instructional faculty.

Table 2 shows that the growth among nontraditional faculty varied by academic discipline, as well. The largest increases among part-time faculty occurred in the fine arts, social sciences, and health sciences, while there was no significant change in education, engineering, humanities, or the natural sciences. By 1998, 57 percent of fine arts faculty, 51 percent of social sciences faculty, and 47 percent of health sciences faculty worked part time—an increase of about 4 percentage points each

Table 2
Faculty Status, by Principal Field: 1992 and 1998

	Percentage Part-time		Percentage Full-time					
			Tenured/tenure-track		Non–tenure-track		No Tenure System at Institution	
	1992	1998	1992	1998	1992	1998	1992	1998
Business	50.5	48.4	37.4	35.5	4.4	7.8	7.8	8.2
Education	49.4	50.2	41.3	37.1	5.3	7.6	4.1	5.1
Engineering	36.4	36.1	54.6	54.9	3.4	4.6	5.6	4.4
Fine Arts	52.9	56.9	35.2	33.9	4.2	4.4	7.7	4.8
Health Sciences	42.8	46.6	36.0	32.7	10.6	12.2	10.6	8.5
Humanities	50.4	52.3	38.1	36.1	4.9	7.6	6.7	3.9
Natural Sciences	33.0	32.2	58.0	55.3	3.7	7.3	5.3	5.2
Social Sciences	47.0	51.2	43.1	39.0	4.4	5.0	5.5	4.8
All Other Programs	48.4	50.3	38.6	34.9	4.5	6.8	8.5	8.0

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Study of Postsecondary Faculty, 1993 and 1999.

since 1992. Business was the only discipline that recorded a significant decrease in the percentage of part-time faculty (2 percentage points). The most significant increase in the percentage of full-time non–tenure-track faculty occurred in the areas of business and the natural sciences. The percentage of full-time non–tenure-track faculty in business grew from 4 percent in 1992 to almost 8 percent in 1998. The percentage of full-time non–tenure-track faculty in the natural sciences also nearly doubled, from less than 4 percent in 1992 to 7 percent in 1998.

Many academics contributed to the growth among nontraditional faculty because they chose to teach part time. Almost 40 percent of part-timers in 1998 attributed their employment status to personal preference. Furthermore, 63 percent of part-time faculty said they would not relocate in order to accept a full-time position at another institution. One in four part-timers said that he or she accepted a part-time job because a full-time position was not available.

RECENTLY HIRED FACULTY

Hiring rates in recent years reveal that the rising number of nontraditional faculty is indeed a new trend. Analysis of employment status among faculty hired fewer than five years prior to 1998 showed a more dramatic trend toward nontraditional status. (Note: Consistent with that analysis, this paper defines "recently hired faculty" as faculty hired fewer than five years prior to 1998.) Researchers selected this time frame because it was short enough to include only those faculty affected by recent changes in hiring and long enough to include a sufficient number in the sample population. In 1998, part-timers made up the majority of recently hired faculty (65 percent of recent hires versus 49 percent of all faculty). As **Table 3** shows, 80 percent of recently hired faculty at public two-year institutions were part-timers in 1998.[2] Public four-year institutions recorded the lowest percentage of recently hired faculty in part-time positions (53 percent). However, public four-year institutions reported the largest percentage of recently hired faculty in full-time non–tenure-track positions (16 percent). The largest increase in part-time status among recently hired faculty occurred at private four-year institutions (8 percentage points).

Table 3

Status of Recently Hired Faculty, by Sector: 1992 and 1998

	Percentage Part-time		Percentage Full-time					
			Tenured/tenure-track		Non–tenure-track		No Tenure System at Institution	
	1992	1998	1992	1998	1992	1998	1992	1998
Public Four-year	46.9	52.6	38.4	30.7	11.5	16.4	3.2	0.4
Private Four-year	55.9	63.8	27.7	19.0	8.5	10.2	7.9	7.0
Public Two-year	76.2	80.1	14.2	12.5	2.1	2.3	7.4	5.1
All Institutions	**61.2**	**65.4**	**25.5**	**20.7**	**6.9**	**9.5**	**6.3**	**4.3**

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Study of Postsecondary Faculty, 1993 and 1999.

2 Because examining only faculty hired fewer than five years prior to the study year reduces the number of respondents, it was necessary to combine institution categories into three higher education sectors (public four-year, private four-year, and public two-year), instead of the nine institution types used thus far.

Characteristics of Nontraditional Faculty

As the previous section explains, many types of institutions are increasing their use of nontraditional faculty. Higher education administrators need to understand the characteristics of nontraditional faculty—many institutions are developing policies for nontraditional faculty, but these institutions may not know exactly how, or if, nontraditional faculty differ from traditional faculty.

NSOPF data reveal that faculty with nontraditional status were a diverse group of mostly academics and other higher education professionals. Probably the most distinctive characteristic of nontraditional faculty was their level of education: Unlike traditional faculty, most part-time faculty did not have a doctorate (82 percent). This is not surprising—a doctorate is a common prerequisite for teaching at a four-year institution, and 78 percent of full-timers in 1998 taught at four-year schools, compared with 56 percent of part-timers.

GENDER

Males made up the majority of both part-time and full-time faculty in 1998; however, women made up a larger share of part-time faculty than full-time faculty. Only 37 percent of full-time faculty were female, compared with 45 percent of part-timers. The larger representation of women among part-timers may reflect either a greater willingness among institutions to hire females for part-time positions rather than full-time positions, or a preference among women for part-time faculty positions. The data suggest that this pattern was especially prevalent in the humanities, social sciences, education, and vocational fields. Almost half of part-time faculty in these fields were female, compared with 40 percent of full-time faculty.

Table 4 shows the demographic breakdown of various types of faculty by gender and ethnicity. Specifically, it indicates that a larger share of female faculty than male faculty worked part time (55 percent compared with 45 percent). Full-time status revealed a smaller gender gap: Nine percent of female faculty were on a full-time non–tenure track, compared with 6 percent of male faculty.

Table 4
Demographics of Faculty: 1998

	Percentage Part-time	Percentage Full-time		
		Tenured/tenure-track	Non–tenure-track	No Tenure System at Institution
Total	**49.0**	**38.0**	**7.0**	**6.0**
Gender				
Male	45.1	43.8	5.9	5.3
Female	55.1	30.1	8.6	6.3
Race/Ethnicity				
American Indian	50.2	32.1	11.8	6.2
Asian American	37.6	52.9	6.6	2.9
African American	45.1	41.6	8.2	5.1
Hispanic	53.5	35.1	7.8	3.6
White	50.0	37.2	6.9	5.9

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Study of Postsecondary Faculty, 1999.

RACE/ETHNICITY

The racial/ethnic composition of part-timers mirrored that of full-time faculty. Whites made up the overwhelming majority of both types of faculty (almost 85 percent of full-time faculty and 88 percent of part-timers). None of the institution types revealed a significantly larger proportion of people of color among the ranks of part-time faculty. Public comprehensive, private research, private doctoral, and private comprehensive institutions reported less racial diversity among part-timers than among full-timers.

Institutions could use part-timers to increase the ethnic diversity of their faculty without any long-term commitment; however, the data suggest that academic

departments were not using part-timers to enhance racial and ethnic diversity. Only vocational fields, natural sciences, and engineering demonstrated more racial diversity among part-time faculty than among full-time faculty. In vocational fields, people of color made up 8 percent of full-time faculty and 17 percent of part-time faculty. In natural sciences and engineering, people of color constituted 17 percent of full-timers and 23 percent of part-timers.

Some racial/ethnic groups were more likely to hold nontraditional faculty positions than others. More than 60 percent of American Indian and Hispanic faculty held nontraditional positions. Asian Americans were the least likely to hold nontraditional positions (see Table 4). About 44 percent of Asian-American faculty worked in nontraditional positions in 1998.

AGE, YEARS SINCE HIGHEST DEGREE, AND TIME AT CURRENT INSTITUTION

NSOPF data reveal that traditional faculty generally were slightly older than nontraditional faculty. The average age of full-time tenured/tenure-track faculty was 50, compared with 48 and 46 for part-time and full-time non–tenure-track faculty, respectively. Consistent with their age, traditional faculty earned their highest degree before their nontraditional peers. Full-time tenured/tenure-track faculty earned their highest degree an average of 18 years before 1998. The youngest group of faculty, non–tenure-track full-timers, earned their highest degree an average of 13 years before 1998.

Full-time tenured/tenure-track faculty had worked in their current positions an average of 14 years—twice as long as both part-time faculty and full-time non–tenure-track faculty. It is not surprising, given the nature of the tenure system, that faculty in traditional positions recorded a longer tenure at their institutions than their nontraditional colleagues.

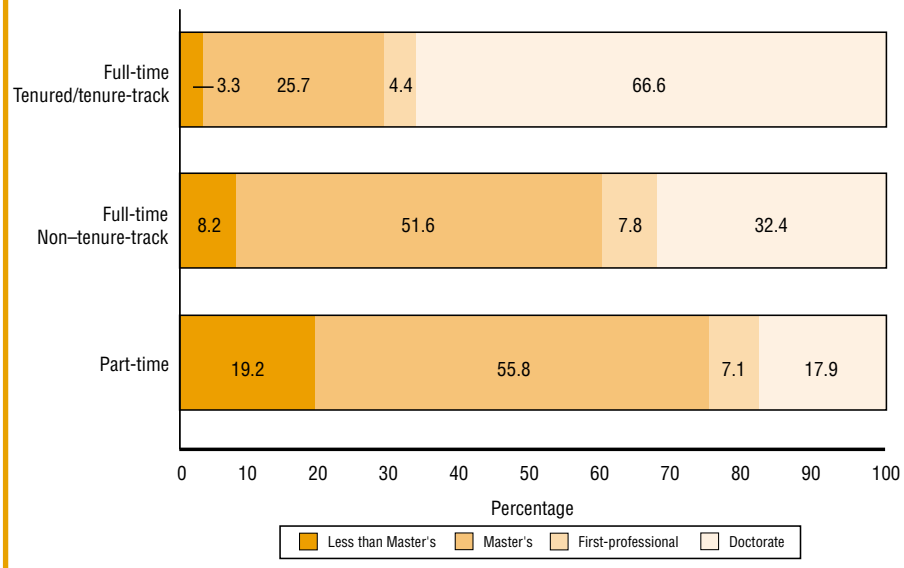
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Traditional and nontraditional faculty differed significantly in terms of highest degree earned. Most nontraditional faculty had a master's degree, while the majority of traditional faculty had a doctorate. The highest degree for 56 percent of part-time

faculty and 52 percent of full-time non–tenure-track faculty was a master's degree (see **Figure 3**). Almost 70 percent of full-time tenured/tenure-track faculty had a doctorate, compared with only 32 percent of full-time, non–tenure-track faculty and 18 percent of part-timers. The majority of faculty with doctorates held traditional positions; however, 23 percent of faculty with doctorates worked part time. Nearly one-third of part-time faculty who did have doctorates attributed their part-time status to lack of available full-time positions.

Figure 3

Employment Status, by Highest Degree Attained: 1998



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Study of Postsecondary Faculty, 1999.

Workload, Income, and Productivity

Previous research has found that the shift to more nontraditional faculty is due in part to institutions' attempts to reduce the cost of providing instruction (Chronister & Baldwin, 2001). Full-time faculty are paid to teach, advise students, conduct research, and serve the institution by participating in committees and campus activities. Part-time instructional faculty are paid primarily to teach; however, many also engage in a significant amount of research, advising, and service. Full-time tenured/tenure-track faculty earned an average salary of $59,000 from their institutions in 1998 (see **Table 5**). Full-time non–tenure-track faculty earned an average salary of $41,500, compared with $11,500 for part-timers. These data suggest that institutions can yield substantial cost savings by hiring nontraditional faculty.

Table 5

Workload, Income, and Productivity, by Employment Status: 1998

	Part-time Faculty	Full-time Faculty		
		Tenured/tenure-track	Non–tenure-track	No Tenure System at Institution
	Average	*Average*	*Average*	*Average*
Workload, Fall 1998				
Classes and sections taught per term	2.6	3.8	3.9	5.2
Total regular scheduled office hrs/week	3.6	6.6	7.2	7.5
Total hrs/week advising students	3.9	3.7	4.9	4.9
Total administrative committees served on	2.9	4.8	3.3	3.7
Income, 1998				
Total income from the institution	$11,533	$59,141	$41,499	$42,982
Total income not from the institution	41,536	11,945	17,689	12,217
Total income of respondent from all sources	44,968	65,565	51,069	49,499
Total household income	123,577	147,501	139,408	130,361
Productivity				
Total career publications	23.9	34.9	18.1	17.4
Total recent publications	10.0	11.5	8.1	7.0

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Study of Postsecondary Faculty, 1999.

The instructional services of part-time faculty cost institutions an average of $2,200 per course. Full-time non–tenure-track faculty members earned significantly more per course—about $5,300. Full-time tenured/tenure-track faculty cost the most per course—about $7,800. These estimates of earnings per course do not reflect benefits such as health care.

Despite the significant salary differences, data revealed little variation in the average workload of all types of full-time faculty (see Table 5, page 13). During fall 1998, both types of full-time faculty taught four classes and scheduled seven office hours per week, on average. While full-time tenure-track/tenured faculty served on more administrative committees, full-time non–tenure-track faculty averaged an additional hour advising students.

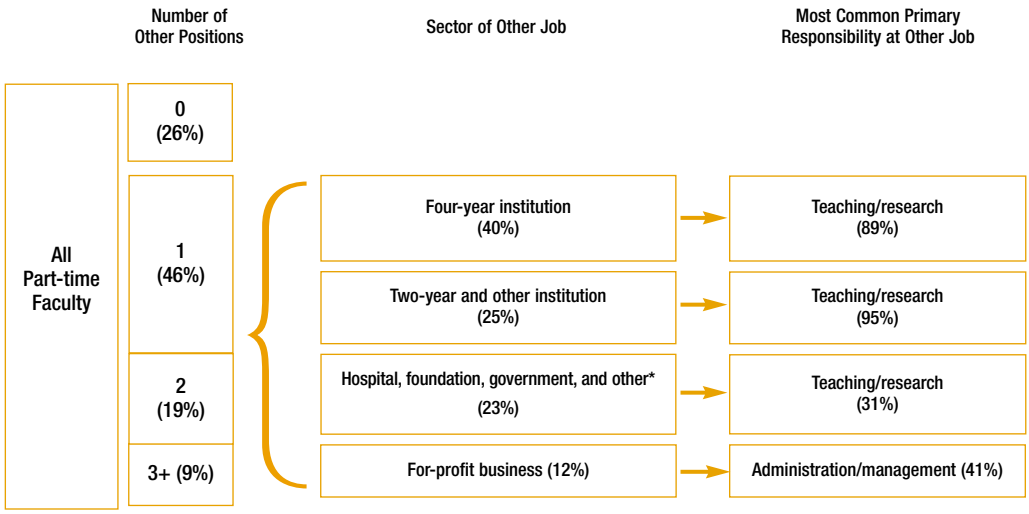
The NSOPF study revealed that part-timers earned significantly less than full-time faculty (see Table 5); nonetheless, many offered a significant amount of service to their institution outside of the classroom. Part-time faculty taught an average of nearly three classes in fall 1998, just one fewer than full-time faculty. Part-timers reported spending an average of almost four hours per week advising students, the same amount of time as traditional faculty. Part-timers even served on an average of three administrative committees.

OTHER INCOME

Seventy-four percent of part-time faculty reported having another job; however, less than 40 percent of part-timers with another job classified their other employment as a full-time position. Three out of four part-time faculty without another job were married. Most of these individuals were married with dependents, suggesting that they devoted a significant portion of their time to child rearing.

Most part-timers supplemented their income by teaching or conducting research part time at another postsecondary institution. For 65 percent of part-timers who reported having another job, their second position was in higher education. The primary responsibility of nearly all part-timers with another job at a postsecondary institution was teaching or research. Only 12 percent of part-timers with another job worked at a for-profit business (see **Figure 4**). As described in Table 5, part-time faculty earned a combined average of $41,500 from other employment. After combining the income from all sources, the average total personal income of part-time faculty came to about $20,600 less than the average total personal income of full-time tenured/tenure-track faculty.

Figure 4
Distribution of Part-time Faculty, by Other Job: 1998



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Study of Postsecondary Faculty, 1999.
*"Other" includes sectors that do not fit into the listed categories.

PRODUCTIVITY

Despite the challenges of working multiple jobs, part-timers managed to publish an average of 10 publications during the two years prior to the study date (see Table 5, page 13). Full-time tenured/tenure-track faculty published an average of only two more items during the same period. Full-time non–tenure-track faculty published the least (an average of eight items) during the two years preceding the study date.[3]

During the course of their careers, traditional faculty published significantly more than nontraditional faculty. Full-time tenured/tenure-track faculty published an average of 35 items, compared with 24 publications by part-timers and 18 publications by full-time non–tenure-track faculty. However, the difference in scholarly productivity among faculty should not be viewed as a sign of lesser ability or commitment. The advantage in productivity among traditional faculty is likely due at least in part to age and available time. Nontraditional faculty generally are younger than traditional faculty. While full-time faculty are paid to conduct research in addition to teaching, part-time instructional faculty typically are not paid to conduct such research, and many spend a significant amount of time working at another job.

3 Publications include books, articles published in refereed journals and nonrefereed journals, book reviews, chapters, textbooks, and reports.

BENEFITS AND SUPPORT

Relatively few institutions provided part-time faculty with medical or retirement benefits. Not only did institutions pay lower salaries to nontraditional faculty, but they also provided less financial support for certain activities. **Table 6** highlights the significant disparities that exist in the benefits provided to full-time and part-time faculty. While 99 percent of institutions provided medical insurance or care to full-time faculty, only 36 percent provided similar benefits to part-time faculty. Public research universities were far more likely to provide medical insurance or care to part-time faculty than any other type of institution; 80 percent of these institutions offered such benefits.

Almost all institutions surveyed offered some form of retirement plan to full-time faculty, but only 54 percent of institutions offered this benefit to part-time faculty. The disparity between full- and part-time faculty in this area was smaller at both public and private research and doctoral institutions. About 81 percent of public and private research and doctoral institutions offered retirement benefits to part-timers. Private comprehensive institutions were the least likely to offer retirement benefits (38 percent) or medical benefits (25 percent) to part-time faculty.

Figure 5 describes the percentage of faculty, broken down by all three categories (full-time tenured/tenure track; full-time non–tenure track; and part-time) who received institutional support for various activities in 1998. Based on these data,

Table 6

Percentage of Institutions Offering Medical and Retirement Benefits to Faculty, by Faculty Status: 1998

	Medical Insurance or Medical Care		Retirement Plans	
	Full-time Faculty	Part-time Faculty	Full-time Faculty	Part-time Faculty
Public Research	100	80	99	81
Public Doctoral*	96	68	100	82
Public Comprehensive	100	50	100	66
Public Two-year	100	29	100	55
Private Research	100	56	99	81
Private Doctoral*	100	56	100	82
Private Comprehensive	91	25	94	38
Private Liberal Arts	100	28	100	47
Other**	99	39	100	51
All Institutions	99	36	99	54

Source: U.S. Department of Education, *Institutional Policies and Practices: Results from the 1999 National Study of Postsecondary Faculty, Institutional Survey.* September 1999.

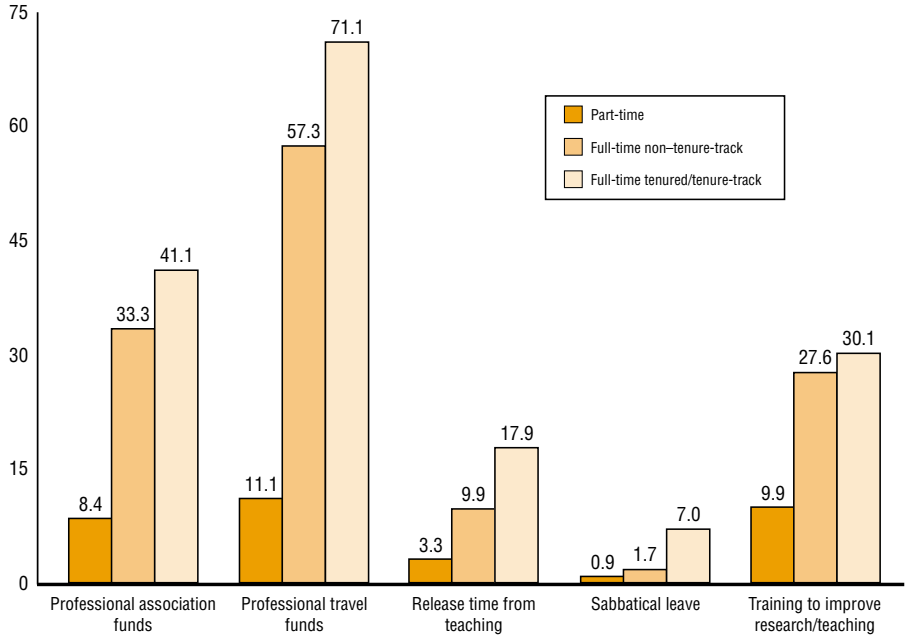
* Includes medical schools.

**Includes institutions that do not fit into the listed categories, e.g., public liberal arts schools, private two-year schools, and religious and other specialized institutions.

full-time faculty were far more likely to receive most of these benefits than their part-time peers. For example, 41 percent of full-time tenured/tenure-track faculty and 33 percent of full-time non–tenure-track faculty received support for professional/association dues, compared with only 8 percent of part-time faculty. Seventy-one percent of full-time tenured/tenure-track faculty and 57 percent of full-time non–tenure-track faculty received funding for professional travel, while only 11 percent of part-time faculty received the same type of support.

Figure 5

Support for Professional Activities, by Employment Status: 1998



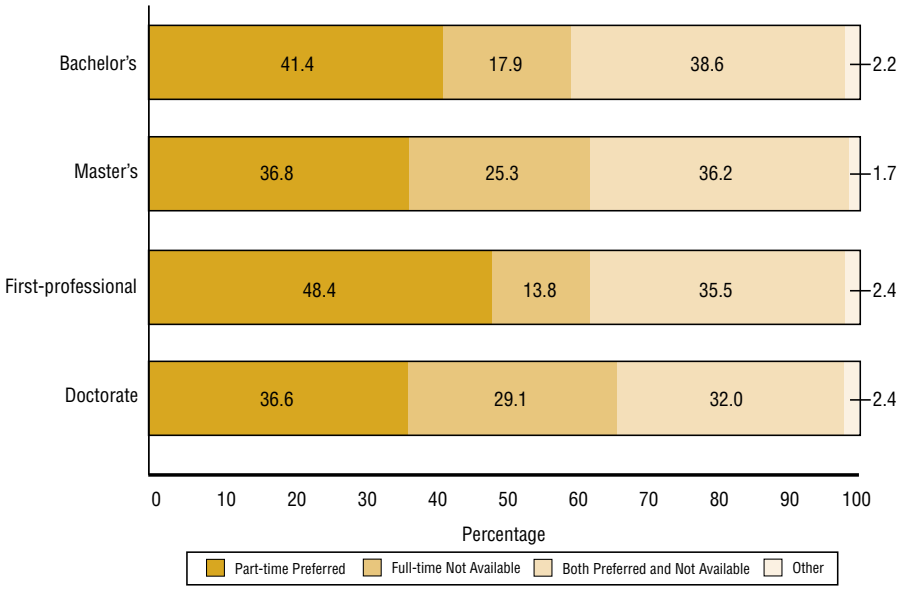
Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Study of Postsecondary Faculty, 1999.

Employment Preference and Satisfaction

The reasons part-time faculty provided for their employment status differed depending on their highest degree. Almost 30 percent of part-time faculty with a doctorate and 25 percent of those with a master's degree attributed their part-time status to a lack of available full-time positions (see **Figure 6**). Almost half of part-time faculty with a first-professional degree cited personal preference as

Figure 6

Part-time Faculty, by Highest Degree and Reason for Part-time Status: 1998



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Study of Postsecondary Faculty, 1999.

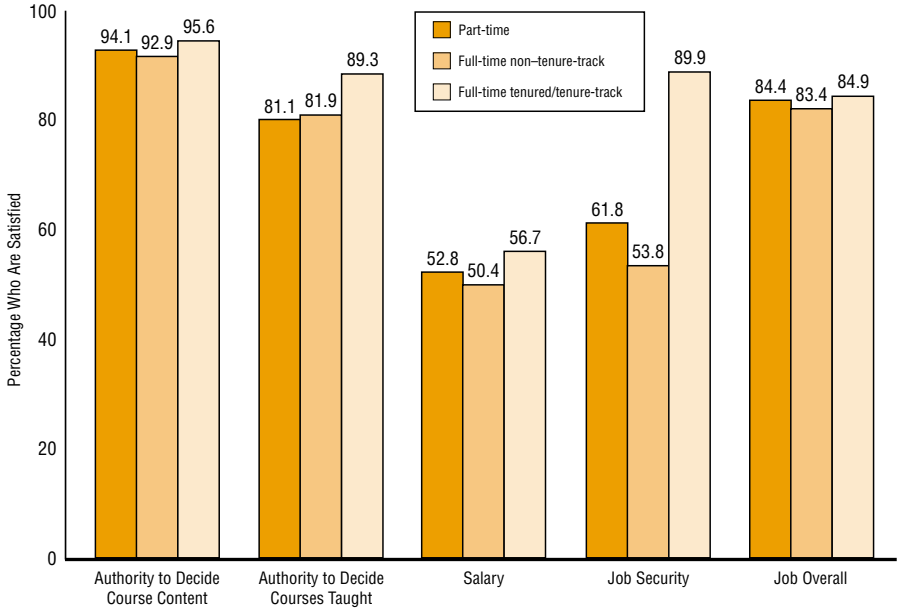
the reason for their part-time status. Only 14 percent of part-time faculty with a first-professional degree attributed their part-time status to a lack of available full-time positions.

Older part-time faculty also were more likely to have this employment status because of preference. About 42 percent of part-time faculty between ages 55 and 64, and 48 percent of part-time faculty older than 65, attributed their part-time status to personal preference, compared with only 35 percent of faculty under age 45.

The presence of a spouse and dependents also contributed to a higher rate of preference for part-time status among men, but not among women. Forty-three percent of male part-time faculty with a spouse and dependents attributed their part-time status to personal preference, compared with only 32 percent of single male faculty with no dependents. The percentage of female faculty who preferred part-time status did not differ much by marital status or the presence of children.

Figure 7

Job Satisfaction, by Employment Status: 1998



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Study of Postsecondary Faculty, 1999.

Although many part-timers attributed their status at least partially to preference, the question remains as to whether they were as satisfied with their job as traditional faculty. As **Figure 7** shows, full-time non–tenure-track and part-time faculty generally were as satisfied with their job as full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty. More than 80 percent of both traditional and nontraditional faculty reported being satisfied with their job in general. More than 90 percent of all faculty were satisfied with their authority to determine course content. Surprisingly, the data also reveal little difference in satisfaction with salary among the three groups. Fifty-seven percent of full-time tenured/tenure-track faculty reported being satisfied with their salary, compared with 50 percent of full-time non–tenure-track faculty and 53 percent of part-timers. The most significant difference emerged with respect to job security. Ninety percent of full-time tenured/tenure-track faculty reported being satisfied with their job security, compared with only 54 percent of full-time non–tenure-track faculty and 62 percent of part-time faculty.

Summary

The latest NSOPF data draw a composite of faculty with nontraditional status. While the majority of nontraditional faculty were male, women were more likely than men to work in both types of nontraditional positions. American Indians and Hispanics were more likely than other faculty to hold nontraditional positions. Younger faculty were more likely to serve in nontraditional positions than older faculty. Based on this study, faculty with doctorates face a much better chance of gaining a faculty position with traditional status. Additionally, a woman of any race who is younger than 35 and who has not earned a doctorate is the most likely person to fill a nontraditional faculty position.

From solely a salary and benefits perspective, institutions saved a significant amount of money when they employed part-time faculty instead of full-time faculty. The NSOPF study reveal that even the practice of hiring full-time non–tenure-track faculty saves money. This finding supports earlier research, which concluded that financial concerns were one of the main reasons that institutions hire nontraditional faculty.

The traditional system of faculty job status appears to be significantly more expensive; however, one cannot ignore the hidden costs that accrue over time when departments shift to significant numbers of part-time faculty. According to Gappa and Leslie (1993), one of the more immediate hidden costs is the lack of full-time faculty available to participate in important non-teaching activities, such as curriculum development and program coordination. These researchers also found that a less noticeable but important cost associated with part-time faculty was the resulting lack of faculty available to participate in governance activities (1993). Part-time faculty served on an average of three administrative committees in fall 1998, compared with five for full-time tenured/tenure-track faculty. While the difference appears small based on these data, an institution would need 10 part-timers to cover the administrative committee responsibilities of six full-timers.

The question of exploitation of part-time faculty is a major issue in higher education today. There is a movement among part-time academics to unionize in order to

improve their pay and working conditions (Leatherman, 2001). The 1999 NSOPF study suggests, however, that part-time faculty are no different from full-time faculty in terms of satisfaction with their jobs and salaries. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, as well as other media outlets, have circulated horror stories about faculty with nontraditional status. The 1999 NSOPF study does not examine the issue of exploitation, but it does provide responses to a job satisfaction question. Based on these responses, it appears that nontraditional faculty have similar levels of job satisfaction as their traditional peers.

Despite some faculty members' preference for part-time work, the majority of part-timers cited the unavailability of full-time positions as at least a partial explanation for their employment status. Three out of four part-timers reported having another job. The majority of these part-timers worked in a faculty capacity at more than one postsecondary institution. Such part-timers tended to string together a number of positions, but the 1998 data still reveal an average income that fell $20,600 short of traditional faculty incomes. Despite the need to work at more than one job, many part-timers cited the same high level of satisfaction with various aspects of their faculty job as full-time tenured/tenure-track faculty.

The picture painted by the data in this report is complex and, at times, contradictory: Nontraditional faculty earn lower salaries and receive fewer benefits than their traditional colleagues, but they are almost as productive and equally satisfied with their jobs. Are they a barrier to institutional effectiveness, or an efficient, high-quality alternative? Nontraditional faculty now make up the majority in academe. Given this fact, researchers must conduct further analysis to learn more about these apparent contradictions and to tease out the true value—and costs—of a nontraditional professoriate. For higher education leaders, two important questions remain: To what extent should institutions rely on nontraditional faculty? How can colleges and universities employ these individuals in a way that is fair to all faculty and that strengthens institutional capacity to serve students and advance knowledge?

Questions for Institutional Self-Study

- How does the growth in nontraditional faculty at your institution vary by discipline? Is this variation among disciplines related to increased demand or fiscal constraints?

- In the past five years, what has been the ratio of new hires for traditional positions to new hires for nontraditional positions at your institution?

- What are the background characteristics of your nontraditional faculty? In what ways are they similar to or different from the traditional faculty on your campus?

- For what reasons do your part-time faculty teach part time? How do the numbers of those who have full-time jobs compare with those who have multiple part-time positions?

- How successful are your part-time faculty when competing for full-time positions at your institution?

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