

The Delphi Project Database of

## **Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Example Practices**

Updated 03/02/2014

### **Collaborative Efforts by Human Resources and Academic Affairs to Improve Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Support at Villanova University**

Website: <http://villanova.edu>

- ✓ Hiring Process
- ✓ Promotion Opportunities
- ✓ Participation in Decision Making
- ✓ Orientation and Handbooks
- ✓ Job Security
- ✓ Contracts
- ✓ Compensation

At some institutions human resources professionals have had a role in helping to improve conditions facing non-tenure-track faculty and streamline the hiring process. At Villanova University a strong partnership between the Human Resources and Academic Affairs staff has helped to improve the hiring process for all faculty, as well as the support provided to non-tenure-track faculty.

On February 20, 2014, Bev Das, Director of HRIS, Compensation & Employment, and Craig Wheeland, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, from Villanova University joined the Delphi Project for a PeopleAdmin *Hear it from a Peer* webinar to discuss their partnership and some of the benefits that have derived from the Human Resources office's involvement in working to improve non-tenure-track faculty policies and practices.<sup>1</sup>

Other earlier improvements, many that were initiated by non-tenure-track faculty leaders on campus, are detailed in *The Path to Change* case on Villanova University.<sup>2</sup>

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### **Mitigating the Risks of Last-Minute Hiring and Maintaining a Pool of Diverse Candidates**

Villanova used to utilize a paper-intensive process for hiring all new faculty. The institution decided to try something new and decided to move to a digital platform, which would be used for tenure-track, as well as full-time and part-time non-tenure-track positions. The movement to a new system allowed for greater opportunities for Human Resources and Academic Affairs to work together; these groups focused their collective efforts on streamlining what had been a complicated and onerous hiring process to create a new process that would be better not only for existing faculty and staff managing hiring, but also the newly hired faculty members joining the institution.

As a result of the changes in the hiring process, most departments now maintain an open job

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<sup>1</sup> A recording of the complete PeopleAdmin *Hear it from a Peer* webinar is available online at the PeopleAdmin website, <http://www.peopleadmin.com/>.

<sup>2</sup> The Villanova *Path to Change* case can be accessed at <http://path.thechangingfaculty.org>.

posting for adjunct faculty, which allows them to collect and maintain a pool of qualified applicants for positions as they become available. This has helped to eliminate last minute hiring of adjunct faculty and has allowed Human Resources to capture demographic information about adjunct faculty. Human Resources has also helped to ensure the diversity of these applicant pools by extending the reach of advertising for open faculty positions to a wide variety of online job listing boards and listservs targeting diverse populations.

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### **Information and orientation provided to adjunct faculty**

Human Resources and Academic Affairs also worked together to improve the quality of information provided to newly hired adjunct faculty. All new hires receive a welcome letter from the institution with their contract, a copy of the adjunct faculty handbook, a manual listing pertinent information about campus services available for faculty and students, and a copy of the academic calendar and pay schedule. Hard copies of all of these materials are sent, but the same information is made available online for convenient retrieval. Department chairs are still the primary contacts for newly hired adjunct faculty, but they receive greater support from the campus Human Resources and Academic Affairs offices.

Five years ago, Academic Affairs worked with the Adjunct Faculty Committee to create an orientation program for newly hired adjunct faculty. Topics covered in the orientation include an introduction to the Blackboard course management system, information on grading and how to submit student grades, how to effectively design a course, the format and process for collecting student teaching evaluations, as well as information about how department chairs use student evaluations to assess teaching effectiveness and how faculty use the student evaluations to improve their teaching. The adjunct faculty orientation is a three-hour evening program and is held about a week before the start of the semester, but remains optional due to their part-time status and the potential for schedule conflicts. For those who are not able to attend the program in person, there is an option to receive all the same information either by mail or online, ensuring that all adjunct faculty have access to these materials.

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### **Improved contracts and promotion opportunities for non-tenure-track faculty**

For full-time non-tenure-track faculty, there is currently an option for long-term contracts. Full-time non-tenure-track faculty are initially hired on one-year contracts, but after their second successful year of teaching, can be offered a three- or five-year contract by the dean. These faculty receive annual teaching evaluations, but also a more in-depth evaluation of teaching effectiveness in their third year. They are also available for promotion opportunities, although they are required to meet all the same requirements for scholarly research and publications. To help them to pursue these opportunities, the institution provides access to funding at the department level to support travel to and participation in professional conferences and other development opportunities.

### **Greater stability and increased compensation for effective adjunct faculty**

The majority of the adjunct instructors at Villanova teach only one course, often continuing each semester or year. The two offices have worked together to minimize turnover among adjunct faculty who are performing well. As these individuals continue to teach at the institution, they also receive increasing levels of compensation. Academic Affairs in consultation with the Adjunct Faculty Committee created a tiered schedule for adjunct faculty compensation, which increases the rate of pay on the basis of the cumulative number of credit hours the individual instructor has taught at the institution. Additionally, any time there is a base adjustment in faculty salaries, similar adjustments are made to the adjunct pay schedule, so pay increases are not just the tenured or tenure-track.

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### **Inclusion in Faculty Governance and Decision Making**

Villanova policy allows full-time non-tenure track faculty to attend their academic department meetings and vote on most matters with a few exceptions, such as rank and tenure decisions. Adjunct faculty are also permitted to attend their academic department meetings, but are not required to attend. Adjunct faculty usually do not always attend the meetings, but are invited and encouraged to participate. They do regularly attend special events such as lectures and social events that take place in their departments or on campus. Finally, full-time non-tenure track faculty and adjunct faculty have representatives serving on the Faculty Congress.

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