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# **The Career-Track Faculty Model: Best Practices in Appointment, Advancement and Retention of NTTF at University of Arizona**

## *2023 Winner of the Delphi Award*

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From the Delphi Project database of

### **Example Best Practices to Support Non-Tenure-Track Faculty**

- ✓ Career-Track Faculty Model
- ✓ Appointment: Clarity and Consistency in Titles, Responsibilities and Promotion Review Criteria
- ✓ Advancement: Promotion Guidelines, Salary Increases and Professional Development
- ✓ Retention: Equitable Salary, Awards and Multi-Year Contracts
- ✓ Inclusion in Shared Governance

### **Example Best Practices in Process to Support Non-Tenure-Track Faculty**

- ✓ Institutional Values in Community Building and Student Success
- ✓ Shared Governance and Collaboration
- ✓ Reviewing Policies/Practices
- ✓ Data Collection and Organizational Learning

The University of Arizona (UARizona), a public land-grant research one institution located in Tucson, Arizona, has made considerable efforts to enhance working conditions of career-track faculty (CT faculty) over the past decade. Their initiatives are guided by the Career-Track Faculty Model, targeting three key policy and practice areas: appointment, advancement and retention. With the CT Faculty Model grounded on firm guiding principles and institutional values, UARizona has successfully introduced new policies and practices. These changes have established an equitable review and promotion process, expanded the opportunities for their career advancement, and acknowledged CT faculty contributions. The transformative changes were made possible through shared governance with CT faculty and extensive collaboration among various units and departments across campus.

## Example Best Practices

### Career-Track Faculty Model

UArizona has developed and implemented the Career-Track Faculty Model over the past decade. The model serves as the foundation that guides the development of equitable policies, programs, and practices regarding CT faculty. CT faculty is defined as benefit-eligible faculty that have instructor, lecturer, clinical professor, research professor, or professor of practice in their titles and have opportunities for promotion in ranks UArizona differentiates CT faculty from adjunct faculty who have less-than-one-year appointments at 0.75 FTE or less without promotion opportunity. The model targets CT faculty<sup>1</sup> and addresses three important aspects of their employment: appointment, advancement and retention. The following sections describe the key practices of each aspect that UArizona successfully implemented to improve working conditions of CT faculty.



### Appointment: Clarity and Consistency in Titles, Roles and Compensation

UArizona significantly increased clarity and consistency in CT faculty titles, roles, and responsibilities across campus. As of 2019, there were more than 200 different titles for CT faculty, which was creating confusion around role definitions and compensation rates. To address this, the ad-hoc Career-Track Faculty Committee and university administration embarked on an 18-month process to streamline CT faculty titles, ultimately reducing them to 13 titles, which also include ranks. The revised CT faculty titles are as follows:

- Instructor
- Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, and Principal Lecturer
- Assistant, Associate, and Full Clinical Professor
- Assistant, Associate, and Full Research Professor
- Assistant, Associate, and Full Professor of Practice

By simplifying CT faculty titles, the university has efficiently established fair compensation rates and job expectations that correspond with their associated responsibilities.

### Advancement: Promotion Criteria, Salary Increases and Professional Development

Following the Career-Track Faculty Model and the harmonization of CT faculty titles, UArizona successfully established unit-level localized promotion criteria for each CT faculty title within each college by 2019. The harmonization of CT faculty titles helped align job expectations, titles, and promotion criteria, creating a transparent and equitable pathway for CT faculty career advancement. Under the new policies, the opportunity to seek promotion was made available. Since the implementation of these changes in 2019, a total of 193 CT faculty have undergone the promotion process, with 93% receiving approval. CT faculty who achieve promotion receive a 10% salary increase, which is commensurate with the raises for tenure-track faculty.

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<sup>1</sup> UArizona has developed a clearer track transfer process to move faculty from adjunct status to career-track status if they are hired for more than one year. In this way, the university has expanded the support for adjunct faculty as well, although the initiatives within the CT Faculty Model target only CT faculty.



To further support the career advancement of CT faculty, UArizona offers multiple professional development opportunities. For example, CT faculty are invited to attend workshops specifically designed for CT faculty to learn about the promotion process and guidelines. The university has also created peer mentoring communities where CT faculty can receive support and guidance from peers and senior mentors to develop and implement their promotion plans.

### **Retention: Salary Adjustment, Recognition/Awards and Multi-Year Contracts**

As part of its retention initiatives, the Office of the Provost, in collaboration with the university's analytics team, has conducted a salary equity study<sup>2</sup> to ensure that CT faculty receive fair and equitable compensation aligned with their ranks and responsibilities, years since terminal degrees, and years in service. They examined whether the base salary of 954 CT faculty were consistent across various gender and race/ethnicity groups and did not identify any racial or gender differences. They also compared the base salary between CT faculty whose ranks and job-related experiences were similar and found some salary differences that could not be explained by those job-related factors. This result prompted the university to make adjustments that increased the overall faculty salary pool by more than half a million dollars, or 0.9%. Salaries for more than 10% of faculty members were adjusted upward to ensure equity in compensation.

UArizona also expanded opportunities for CT faculty to gain recognition for their outstanding contributions to the campus community by creating nine new university faculty awards. Additionally, CT faculty are now eligible for existing awards in the areas of teaching, research and service. Since the initiative began in 2020, sixteen CT faculty members have received such honors. This initiative helps CT faculty feel more valued and integrated into the campus community, which is expected to positively impact their retention rate.

In addition, UArizona introduced a new policy that increased flexibility in offering multi-year contracts for CT faculty, addressing their concerns about employment stability. The multi-year contracts allow CT faculty to receive up to three years of appointments, and the contracts can be renewed an indefinite number of times. The university also made efforts to raise awareness of this new policy and procedures by encouraging department heads to offer multi-year contracts for CT faculty.

### **Inclusion in Shared Governance**

Along with the improvement of these three areas of policies and practices concerning CT faculty, UArizona expanded the inclusion of CT faculty into its shared governance. Initially, only multi-year contract non-tenure track faculty had voting rights and eligibility to be part of the Faculty Senate. Recognizing the importance of equal rights for CT faculty to participate in shared governance, UArizona granted all CT faculty voting rights as part of the CT Faculty Model initiatives. Since then, CT faculty have been more widely involved in shared governance and participated in various committees and task forces to implement new CT faculty policies and practices.

<sup>2</sup> See the Report on 2022 Salary Equity Evaluation and Outcomes for Career Track Faculty for more information. <https://provost.arizona.edu/report-2022-salary-equity-evaluation-and-outcomes-career-track-faculty>

## **Institutional Values and Guiding Principles**

The Career-Track Faculty Model that has guided the development and implementation of new equitable policies and practices for CT faculty is grounded on a set of guiding principles. CT faculty identified two basic principles as follows:

1. Non-tenure-track faculty are mission critical, contributing in a variety of significant ways to the teaching, research innovation and outreach/impact goals of the institution.
2. Both the institution and non-tenure-track faculty benefit when goals and expectations are clearly defined.

UArizona's five core values, including Integrity, Compassion, Exploration, Adaptation and Inclusion, are well-aligned with these basic principles and are applied to the CT faculty initiatives as follows:

- *Integrity*: honoring the valuable contributions of career-track faculty members, recognizing their dedication and commitment to supporting student success;
- *Compassion*: demonstrating care and concern for career-track faculty members, providing them with the necessary resources and opportunities for personal and professional growth;
- *Exploration*: implementing innovation and adaptability, continuously exploring diverse types of faculty appointments to meet the evolving needs of our diverse student body, faculty and humanity challenges;
- *Adaptation*: evolving alongside the institution, adapting to the changing landscape of higher education and in alignment with the strategic priorities of UArizona that enhances the learning mission of higher education;
- *Inclusion*: through shared governance, leadership commitment, and integrated in the university's strategic plan, the support system has been institutionalized and is committed to long-term sustainability through policy implementation, thus promoting an inclusive environment where career-track faculty members have equal opportunities for success

This alignment of principles and values underlie the CT Faculty Model and ensures the sustainability and institutionalization of the initiatives to create equitable policies and practices for CT faculty.

## **Shared Governance and Collaboration**

The further development and implementation of the CT Faculty Model were carried out through the shared governance and collaboration of a wide range of stakeholders, including Faculty Senate, faculty representatives from all tracks, department heads, college deans, university administrators, human resources professionals and business administrative personnel. For example, in the stage of harmonizing CT faculty titles, Faculty Senate and university administrators met with college deans and department heads to explain the policy changes and the procedures in moving faculty into new ranks and titles. Human resource and business office personnel were involved in the title harmonization process to assure at the same time appropriate compensation rates for CT faculty.

## **Auditing and Reviewing Policies/Practices**

The process of the CT Faculty Model began with a comprehensive review of existing policies and practices to identify areas for improvement. Based on the review, Faculty Senate committees prepared a report on the challenges facing CT faculty and recommendations of policy changes, which led to the development of the CT Faculty Model and implementation of

new policies and practices. This effort of reviewing and reporting are ongoing, and UArizona recently is preparing a report on the current state of CT faculty and a climate survey that will be distributed to all faculty, including CT Faculty.

### **Data Collection and Benchmarking**

UArizona had undertaken extensive research and benchmarking against peer institutions to gain insights in the process of developing new policies and practices regarding CT faculty. For example, the university has investigated what instructional and professional titles are used for professors whose primary responsibility is teaching at 25 other institutions. This investigation served as a critical guide for the university in determining appropriate titles for teaching faculty.

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