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# CCCC Position Statement

A statement on an education issue approved by the CCCC Executive Committee

## Statement of Professional Guidance for New Faculty Members

*Conference on College Composition and Communication*  
(1987, Revised November 2015, Revised November 2022)

### Introduction

The purpose of this statement is to help you as a faculty member—adjunct, contingent, contracted, tenure-track—who are new to an institution be successful in a new position. It seeks to provide guidance in navigating your new institution's policies and practices so that you and your colleagues and administrators may create the "reasonable and equitable working conditions" that the CCCC's *Principles for the Postsecondary Teaching of Writing* (2015) states are necessary for "sound writing instruction." This statement offers insights into the kinds of questions you may wish to ask, covering areas such as the basic conditions of your employment; expectations and opportunities for administrative work; and conditions for promotion, reappointment, and/or rehiring. Depending on institutional context, you may ask these questions to individuals such as program director, department chair, dean, mentors, seasoned colleagues, etc.

This document works in conjunction with two other CCCC position statements: the *Statement of Best Practices in Faculty Hiring in Rhetoric and Composition Studies* (2016) as well as the *Principles for the Postsecondary Teaching of Writing* (2015), especially the information in principle number eleven, "Sound writing instruction is provided by instructors with reasonable and equitable working conditions."

### 1. Conditions of Employment

#### A. Employment Contracts (TT, NTT, Leaves, Consulting, Length, etc.)

An employment contract is a *nonbinding* document that outlines terms of employment for part- and full-time faculty. Human resources offices often provide employment contracts to part- and full-time employees in order to convey expectations to employees and state compensation for services rendered. Many faculty members receive a copy of a contract in writing upon obtaining a position and can request a copy of the contract at any time from a human resources representative.

Here are questions to ask about your employment contract:

- How is my employment contract used to evaluate my performance at work?
- How often will I receive a new contract?
- When should I expect to receive my contract?
- What happens if I don't receive it on time?
- Under what circumstances has the employer historically changed the terms of contracts or terminated contracts?
- What is my employment status between contracts?

- Do I have a reasonable expectation of continued employment for the following semester or year?

## **B. Union and Union Contracts**

A union is a group of workers who come together to build power in the workplace and a union contract is a negotiated and *binding* document that obligates the institution for which unionized employees work to establish standards for compensation and working conditions, as well as processes for evaluation, discipline, and reappointment. If you are part of a unionized group of part-time faculty, full-time faculty, or some combination, you have a union contract or you have a bargaining committee that is bargaining for a contract. You can typically view your union contract on your union's website. If it isn't on your union's website, you can ask your union steward or your union president for a copy of your union contract.

Different aspects of your employment are subject to negotiation in a union contract, so you should read your union contract and get involved with your union. You have a say about what contract items a bargaining committee might negotiate for or renegotiate. You could also serve as a member of your union's bargaining committee or support the bargaining committee in other ways. Union contracts may last for one or more years. When a union contract expires, a union (i.e., the faculty members who comprise the union) renegotiates the contract. Here are questions to ask the faculty leaders of your union about your union contract:

- Where can I find my union contract?
- What issues does my union contract address?
- What kinds of salary increases will I have as a result of the most recently negotiated contract?
- Does my union contract provide me with grievance rights and academic freedom protection?
- When does my union contract expire?
- What issues will we bargain for as a union in our next union contract?
- What can I do to strengthen our bargaining position?

## **C. Evaluation, Reappointment, Tenure, and Promotion**

Institutions often require or ask contingent and/or tenure-line faculty to engage in evaluation, reappointment, tenure, and/or promotion processes. It is essential for faculty to understand the stakes and nuances of these processes. Here are questions that new faculty might ask:

- How do I access policies about evaluation, tenure, and promotion?
- What processes are used for evaluation, reappointment, tenure, and promotion?
- Is there a single process or separate processes for annual evaluation and tenure?
- How am I evaluated?
- Are any aspects of my performance not evaluated or counted?
- When am I evaluated?
- Who evaluates my work?
- What aspects of my work are evaluated?
- How does teaching count in my progress toward tenure, promotion, and/or reappointment? What are the requirements for documenting my teaching as part of the tenure process?
- What processes will be used to evaluate my teaching? Where can I find guidelines or policies about those processes?
- What assessment activities for teaching (if any) will I be required to participate in?
- How does research count in my progress toward tenure, promotion, and/or reappointment?
- How does service count in my progress toward tenure, promotion, and/or reappointment?
- To whom can I turn for help with any materials required for evaluation, reappointment, tenure, and/or promotion?
- How are the different aspects of my performance weighed for reappointment, tenure, and promotion?

- How and when do I receive the results of my evaluation?
- How am I expected to respond to the results of my evaluation?
- How does my evaluation relate to reappointment, tenure, pay increases, and/or promotion?

## 2. Professional Responsibilities

### A. Teaching

Faculty who are new to an institution need to be prepared to adapt their teaching strategies to institutional requirements and material realities, the goals of a writing or literacy program, the curriculum, and the needs of the students who enroll in the program. The following questions can help faculty navigate teaching in a new context.

#### *Questions About Teaching at the Institution*

- What is the mission of the institution and its relationship to the community (or communities) in which it is located? How do the mission and local community shape curriculum and instruction at the institution?
- Where can I access institutional policies about teaching?
- When will I have a definite list of my course assignments? When is the latest date when my course assignments might change? What factors determine whether teaching assignments change?
- What learning management system (LMS) is used for course websites at the institution? When and how will I have access to my course sites?
- What training is available for learning how to use the LMS and other technology tools for teaching?
- What kinds of early alert reporting (if any) is required for monitoring the success of students in my courses?
- When are grades due? Are midterm grades required? How do I submit grades?
- What technologies are available in my classrooms? How do I access information that will help me learn how to use those technologies?
- What technology tools do students have access to? Where can I find information about those technology resources?
- What learning support resources are available on the campus? What do I need to do to help students access them?
- When and how will I receive information about accommodation plans for students with disabilities?
- Is there a teaching and learning center? What resources and training are available through the center?
- What library resources are available for my students? Where can I find information about library resources that students will need for my courses?
- What teaching materials (if any) am I required to submit to the institution to document my teaching? How do I submit them?
- Will I have my own office? If not, where can I meet with students?
- When will I receive my course assignments for the next semester or term?
- How are course assignments made for continuing instructors? What is the process for making course and scheduling requests?
- Can I propose new courses? If so, what's the process of new course approvals?

#### *Questions About Teaching in a Writing or Literacy Program*

- Who is my direct supervisor for teaching?
- Where can I access program policies and guidelines?
- What student communities does the program serve? How do those student communities shape teaching and learning in the program?
- How are students placed into writing or other literacy courses? How does placement influence curriculum and instruction within the program?
- What courses are offered in the writing or literacy program? What is the relationship between each course? What pathway(s) do students take through the program as they work toward receiving a college degree?

- What types of resources and mentoring for teaching are available to new instructors? How do I access those resources?
- How much choice do individual instructors have over textbook selection and use of open educational resource (OER) texts? What is the process for receiving copies of any required textbooks?
- What teaching modalities are available in the program (for example, face-to-face, hybrid, asynchronous online, synchronous online with scheduled meetings, high flex)? What training (if any) is available and/or required for teaching in each modality?
- Will my courses enroll dual credit high school students? If so, what do I need to know about teaching dual credit students? Do I need a background check in order to teach high school students?
- What was I approved (or credentialed) to teach when I was hired? What is the process for becoming approved to teach other courses or in other program areas?
- What shared governance processes are used for determining guidelines for teaching in the program? How might I participate in those processes?

#### *Questions About Individual Courses*

- How much autonomy will I have in making my own choices about readings, assignments, and course activities? If I have limited autonomy in my first semester, when (if ever) will I be able to have more autonomy in how I design my course?
- Where can I access learning outcomes, curriculum guides, sample syllabi, model assignments, and other teaching resources?
- Does the program use a common syllabus?
- Does the program provide a model course (predesigned course, template, or development shells)? If so, how can I access it? How much freedom will I have to adapt and change a model course?
- Who can I contact to learn about how to teach the course and how to support the students that the course serves?

### **B. Service**

Service refers to all duties and responsibilities to the institution and students of the college that are not directly related to teaching, professional development, or research. Some colleges recognize service to professional organizations and similar activities as well. Service is most commonly associated with committee work, mentoring, and administration of departments or programs. Service responsibilities are generally described in contracts or faculty handbooks, including how service is weighed in performance evaluations.

Questions to ask about service include the following:

- What types of service are required for faculty at different levels of employment?
- Where are service requirements articulated?
- How much is service weighed in performance reviews, for rehiring, and promotions?
- Is service to professional organizations recognized as part of workload?
- How should I document my service work?
- What types of service work are most valued by the institution and department?
- How are service opportunities and expectations distributed?
- How are different faculty affected by service expectations, e.g., are BIPOC faculty inordinately affected?
- If service work is compensated, e.g., reassignment for WPA work, is other service work required to meet workload expectations?
- Do administrative assignments count as service?

### **C. Professional Development**

Professional development refers to the activities faculty engage in to improve as teachers, researchers, mentors, and administrators. Professional development is usually required as a part of workload and is fulfilled through workshops, courses, and training either through the

college or through professional organizations; however, colleges have different requirements for types of professional development required, expected, and/or valued.

Questions to ask about professional development include the following:

- Are specific types of professional development required for faculty at different levels or points of employment?
- Where are professional development requirements articulated?
- How much is professional development weighed in performance reviews, for rehiring, and promotions?
- Is professional development conducted through professional organizations recognized?
- How is professional development work documented?
- What types of professional development work are most valued by the institution and department?

#### **D. Program Administration (see Appendix)**

### **3. Navigating Campus Culture**

#### **A. Finding Mentorship/Support and Building Support Network**

Mentorship is important for new faculty members to thrive in a new institution, especially when systemic structures might make it difficult for faculty to carry out their work in balanced ways, particularly for multiply-marginalized faculty members. Effective mentors should not only support the new faculty's professional development but also advocate for them in department, college, or other institutional contexts.

Some schools have formal systems of assigning mentors to new faculty members. If not assigned, new faculty may inquire of their department chair about any formal mentoring mechanisms on campus. A mentor may be assigned within a department and cross-department/college mentors may be assigned as well. The new faculty member might consider in which context they would like to have a mentor for their different needs, given different power dynamics and institutional policies and procedures on performance reviews such as contract renewals or tenure and promotion review processes. However, mentorship from outside your workplace can also be very important, especially as you start a new job and need time to build relationships in the institution or when you experience challenges at the job caused by institutional structures difficult to change.

Some questions to consider when finding mentors/mentorship:

- What do I need to thrive in this role?
- What challenges do I envision or have I already experienced when starting the new job?
- What do I expect my mentor to do for me?
- How would I like to interact with my mentor and how often should we interact?
- What can I do if I am unhappy with my formal mentoring assignment?

Depending on the faculty member's different needs, mentorship can be found in different places and for different needs. The National Center for Faculty Development & Diversity offers [a mentor map](#) that allows you "to map your current mentoring network, identify your unmet needs, and plan how to expand your existing network to meet your current needs." Adapted from this map, the following questions can help a faculty member in building a support network:

- Where can I seek substantive feedback on my scholarly or teaching activities? Who can provide feedback on my writing/research or observe my teaching to give suggestions for improvement?
- Who can I contact for guidance on interpreting institutional policies regarding expectations for research, teaching, or service?
- Who can provide emotional support for me as I transition into a new role, new institution, and/or new geographical location?
- Who do I go to for insider knowledge of the way the institution works?
- Who can be my role model in not only thriving professionally but also personally?

- Who can help provide accountability in my work and help me develop and manage boundaries?
- Where can I find a space to recover and recharge?
- Who can be my “sponsor” or advocate at my workplace?

Institutional mentorship and support may be offered in informal ways. A new faculty member can seek out informal mentors if no formal structure is offered. Tapping into extra institutional support can help the faculty member identify places where they may be able to seek out mentors on campus.

## **B. Addressing Challenging Workplace Situations**

Faculty should become aware of the formal and informal institutional systems of support for responding to challenging workplace situations such as bias, stereotyping, and abusive power dynamics.

Questions for consideration are as follows:

- How are issues of bias addressed at the institution? What is the process for my concerns to be formally addressed?
- If I am a contingent or part-time faculty member, how can I address my concerns about my position or working environment?
- What specific changes to my faculty position do I have autonomy over? If changes were requested, how would those changes be addressed?
- If I am a contingent or part-time faculty member, do I have a right to attend faculty meetings? Are there specific faculty meetings for part-time and contingent faculty available and/or held regularly?
- How does my department handle student-faculty concerns? Where do I go to address those concerns?
- How does my department handle faculty-staff concerns? Where do I go to address those concerns?
- As a faculty member, what part of my responsibilities will I be handling solely because of my race, gender, age, or other aspects of my social and cultural identity?
- Where may I report my concerns about another faculty member? May I report my concerns confidentially?

## **C. Accessing Resources (Grievances and Appeals, Ombuds, Accessibility, Accommodations)**

New faculty members, regardless of their employment status, should be aware of who has the power to advocate on their behalf. In difficult or even hostile working environments, faculty members should know where to turn for support, including how to file complaints and have them heard.

Questions for consideration are as follows:

- What ombuds services are available to me if I have concerns that I would like to address regarding my faculty position? How can an ombudsperson assist me in addressing those concerns?
- To whom do I address my concerns about accommodations for time off for religious observances that lie outside of the stipulations of my contract?
- To whom do I address my concerns regarding faculty disability accommodations? What is the process for these faculty accommodations to be received and approved?
- What are the requirements of filing a complaint against a supervisor or faculty member?
- How do I file a grievance against a supervisor or faculty member? What is the process for filing a grievance and obtaining a resolution?
- How can I appeal a decision that has been made about a grievance that I have made? What is the appeals process for faculty members?
- How do grievances and appeals affect the renewal of my contract as a permanent or contingent faculty member?
- How are students' grievances against faculty members handled by my institution or department?

- Do I have a right to record meetings with staff or faculty members for documentation purposes?
- How will my involvement in another faculty member's grievance affect my standing and position at my institution? How could grievances possibly affect my obtaining tenure?

## **Appendix:**

### **Professional Guidance for Literacy Program Coordinators**

Members of CCCC and NCTE serve in a variety of different literacy program administration roles. Higher education literacy programs coordinated by members include (but aren't limited to) writing, developmental education, reading, integrated reading and writing, adult basic education, corequisite support, ESL, and online literacy education. English studies experts can also serve in other administrative positions that draw from their disciplinary expertise, such as directing writing and learning centers or coordinating placement, assessment, or first-year experience programs. The purpose of the following information is to help literacy program coordinators understand their terms of employment and working conditions as they transition to new administrative responsibilities. It provides questions that new program coordinators can ask or reflect on as they learn about their new positions. Programs and institutions can also use these questions to assess whether they are providing literacy program coordinators with equitable working conditions, access to resources, and effective information about their responsibilities. Institutions should also follow the recommendations in two helpful statements from the Council of Writing Program Administrators: "The Portland Resolution: Guidelines for Writing Program Administrator Positions" (Hult et al., 1992) and *Evaluating the Intellectual Work of Writing Program Administration* (2019).

#### **Conditions of Employment**

- What are the responsibilities of the position? Where can I find those responsibilities in writing? If they aren't already available in writing, will the institution create a written position description so that I have a clear understanding of my administrative responsibilities?
- What percentage of my workload will be devoted to administrative responsibilities? What additional responsibilities will I have for teaching, service, and professional development?
- What is the expected length of appointment for my position?
- What types of compensation will I receive for my administrative work throughout the year (for example, reassigned time/course releases, academic year stipend, summer stipend, overload pay, etc.)?
- Does the position have summer responsibilities? If so, are the workload, employment percentage, and responsibilities different during the summer compared to the academic year? How will I be compensated for summer work?

#### **Conditions of Employment for Non-Tenure-Track Administrative Positions**

- What type of contract will I have for the administrative part of my position (for example, permanent contract, renewable contract, limited appointment, etc.)?
- What factors contribute to whether I will have an expectation of employment beyond the current academic year?
- If teaching is included with the administrative position, will I have guaranteed course assignments? Or is teaching offered as an adjunct position with the potential to have variable levels of employment based on funding and enrollment?
- Is my pay the same for administrative work and teaching? Or does the pay vary for different parts of my employment?

#### **Conditions of Employment for Tenure-Line Faculty in Administrative Positions**

- Is the administrative job classified as a tenure-line position for faculty? Or is the position funded and structured outside of a tenure line?
- If the administrative position isn't classified as a faculty position, what steps do I need to take to ensure that I will be able to return to a faculty position after

the administrative appointment ends?

- *If I don't have tenure*, will I be able to make progress toward tenure while in the position? How will my administrative responsibilities count toward tenure? Are there written policies or guidelines to outline the relationship between administrative responsibilities and progress toward tenure?
- *If I already have tenure*, will I be classified as a tenured faculty member during my time in the position? Will I retain the responsibilities and rights of a tenured faculty member? Or will my employment classification as an administrator change the terms of my faculty status within the institution? What actions do I need to take to ensure that I will retain my tenure status while serving as an administrator?
- How will administrative work count toward promotion to full professor?
- Will I be able to participate in shared governance processes for faculty while serving in the position?

### **Institutional Context**

- Where can I find written policies and guidelines that are relevant for my position? Are the institution's policies for the administrative position different from the policies for faculty?
- Where is the program housed within the institution?
- Who is my direct supervisor? Is the administrative supervisor different from my direct supervisor for teaching or other employment responsibilities?
- What other literacy programs are available on the campus? What is the role of each program within the institution? What is the relationship between those programs? How do program coordinators work together to create effective literacy support for students?

### **Evaluation**

- What are the institutional expectations for how I should document my administrative responsibilities for the purpose of evaluation and (if available) promotion?
- What is the process for evaluating my administrative work?
- Is the evaluation process part of the evaluation process for teaching? If so, how will my administrative work count toward my evaluation?
- If there is a separate process for evaluating administrative work, what are the differences between the administrative evaluation and the evaluation of my teaching?
- What policies or practices are in place to ensure that assessment of the program itself is separate from an evaluation of my administrative work?

### **Funding**

- How is the administrative part of my position funded? Is the funding stream a stable part of the base budget? Or does it depend on enrollment, tuition revenue, or other variable factors that influence institutional budgets?
- How might funding affect the stability of my position and the resources available for coordinating an effective program?
- What are the revenue streams that support the resources available to the program? Who is responsible for managing the program budget?

What responsibilities (if any) will I have for seeking funding for the program through annual budget requests, grants, or other processes? Which institutional offices can help me learn about how to complete parts of the position related to obtaining or renewing funding? What are the timelines for those processes?

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