

## ***Contract Faculty, Tenure-Line Faculty, and the Changing University Executive Summary***

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During the 2008-2009 year, the Joint Administration-Massachusetts Society of Professors (MSP) Work-Life Committee carried out a study focused on work-life issues for faculty at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. In this report, we provide a summary of our central findings regarding contract faculty (also known as “contingent” faculty) and how they compare to tenure-line faculty. UMass is one of a handful of unionized universities that includes (both full-time and part-time) contract faculty in the faculty union. Contract faculty are therefore better protected at UMass than at the vast majority of universities and colleges in the United States, yet these positions remain, by definition, less stable than tenure-system positions.

### ***Key findings from this report include:***

- A combination of increasing student enrollment, decreasing numbers of total faculty, and increasing numbers of contract faculty, has led to significant pressures on UMass faculty – both contract and tenure-line.
- UMass contract faculty report working slightly less than sixty hours each week, with significant time spent on teaching, advising, service, and research. Many contract faculty voice that they are generally only recognized for certain elements of their work, though they engage in a wide range of activities.
- Both contract and tenure-line faculty have faced an increased burden of service; some of this is connected to the decrease in tenure-line faculty, and particularly, tenured faculty at the university. In addition, the challenge for contract faculty to engage in governance while also having serious responsibilities elsewhere has substantial impacts on all faculty.
- UMass contract faculty spend somewhat more time than tenure-line faculty on housework and care for children, elders, and others needing long-term care. At the same time, contract faculty are more likely to have young children, while they have less access to work-life benefits, such as paid parental leave.
- UMass contract faculty, due to their short contract periods, feel very vulnerable, despite union protection.

### ***Recommendations include:***

1. It is not sustainable for a university to increase enrollment, without also increasing faculty. In such a context, the quality of instruction, governance, and the quantity and quality of research will suffer. Enrollments need to be more closely connected to faculty numbers; to increase enrollment must require increasing faculty.
2. For contract faculty to provide a high quality education, they cannot simply be viewed as ever-expandable teaching machines. Instead, they should be able to play a role in governance and should be given opportunities for professional development. This suggests that workload limits be instituted to ensure that contract faculty are not being asked to work more than 40 hours per week, and are being given opportunities within those 40 hours for service and research activities.
3. The university should help develop “on ramps” – opportunities and support for contingent faculty to be considered for tenure-line positions, since many are in contingent positions due to the shrinking market rather than any reasons of inferior qualifications or merit, while also ensuring that any faculty recruited for tenure-line jobs have good prospects for eventually achieving tenure.
4. The distribution of service across faculty more generally needs to be reconsidered. Each unit should consider the service activities being carried out, and identify which service and governance activities are most important. New technologies, such as service wikis, should be instituted to create lasting historical documents, which keep faculty from “re-inventing the wheel” anew each academic year.
5. Full-time contract faculty should be able to access work-life benefits such as parental leave and sabbaticals, in order to allow their pursuit of work-life balance, as well as the continuation of their research careers.