

The Engaged (and Supported) Professor



An *Inside Higher Ed* webcast
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Presenters



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Key Takeaways

- Many faculty members are struggling with increased expectations from students and their institutions while feeling undersupported and lacking job security.
- Some of it is about pay, and more money can surely help. But making instructors feel supported requires more.
- Student success and well-being is closely linked to the job satisfaction of professors (and staff).
- Colleges and universities have a range of options for addressing these issues – some will require money (at a time of constrained resources for most institutions) but also culture change and significant commitment.



How Did We Get Here?

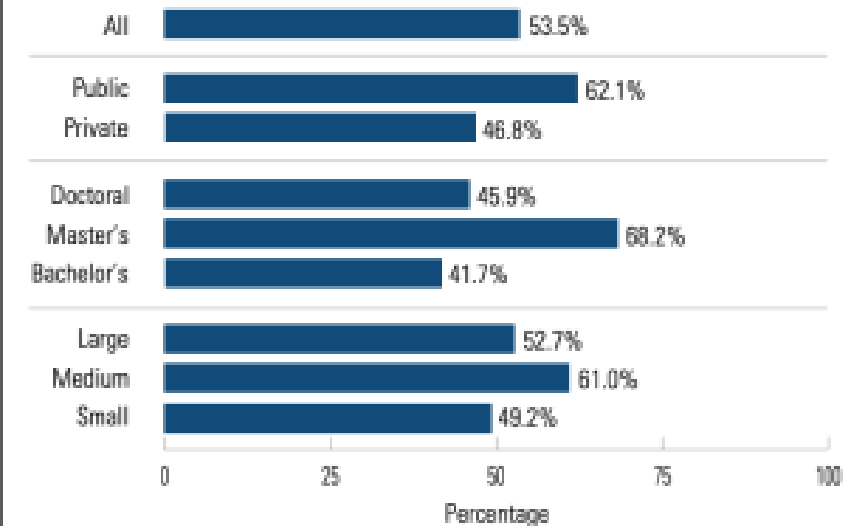


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The Erosion of Tenure

- In 1975, 30% of instructors were contingent; in 2020, 30% were tenured or tenure-track.
- Significant portions of the instructional load is carried by people with low pay, without benefits, and given less institutional support and training than their peers.
- Those who are tenured/tenure-track carry heavy loads of committee/service work, mentoring and other responsibilities.

FIGURE 7
Institutions that have replaced tenure lines with contingent appointments in the last five years



Source: 2022 AAUP Tenure Survey.


Note: Findings are from four-year institutions with a tenure system.

A Productivity 'Arms Race'

- As institutions chase prestige, expectations for research output increase, leaving less time/energy for fulfilling teaching and service requirements.
- Teaching matters, rhetorically – but institutions typically don't reward professors for pedagogical impact or count research on impactful teaching toward scholarly goals.
- Service takes significant time but gets short shrift in tenure and promotion decisions.



Drazen Zigic/iStock/Getty Images



“There has been a general squeezing of personnel. We are asking folks to do more in terms of what they produce, time that they spend on their jobs, without resources or compensation to keep up with those expectations.”

--Kevin R. McClure

*Associate professor of higher education
University of North Carolina Wilmington*

Burnout and Demoralization

- The “multiple pandemics” of the last 30 months accelerated many of the trends we’ve been discussing.
- It heightened demands from students, with professors as “face of the institution.”
- Instructors were dealing with their own trauma, ill health, hopelessness.
- Dealing with new modes of teaching (with technology) was a significant stressor.
- Improved job market/constrained institutional finances put more pressure on those who remained.



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'Academic Chapter 11'

Academe, Hear Me. I Am Crying Uncle.

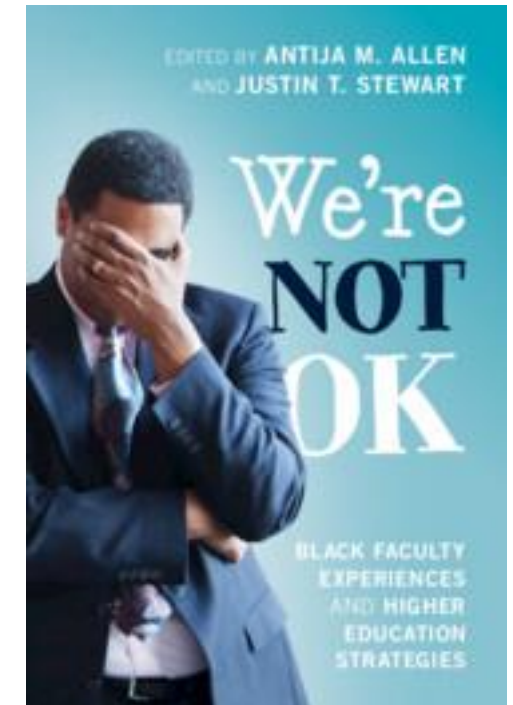
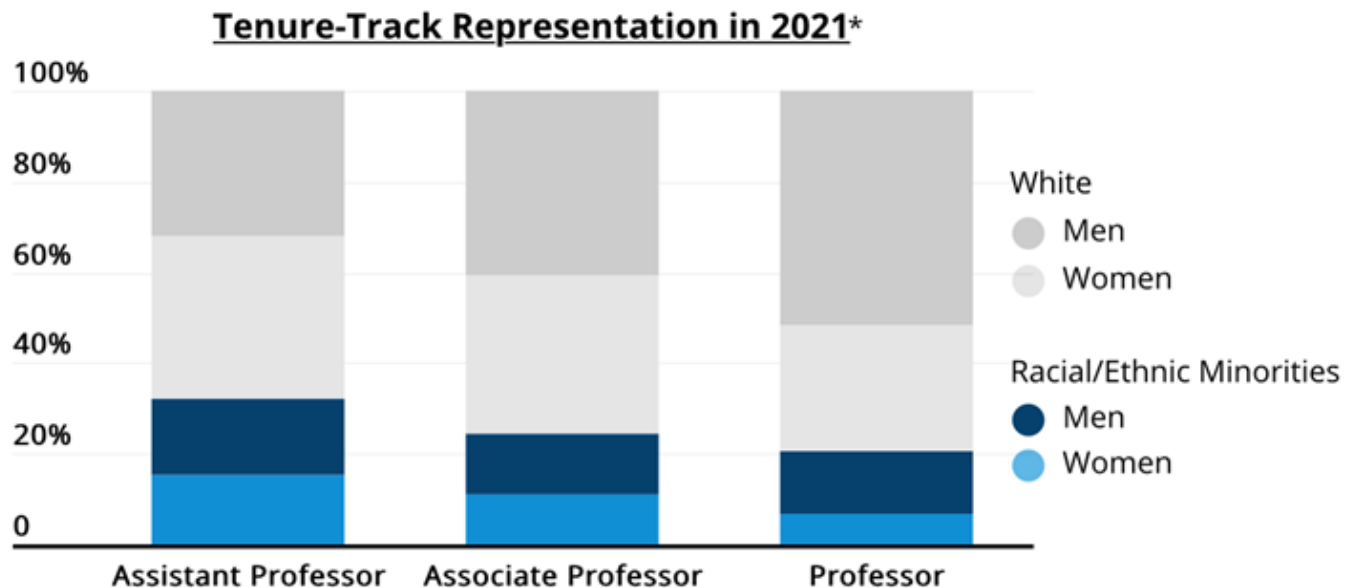
My workload crisis has not only personal but also systemic causes, writes an anonymous professor, and I've come to see that the only way to survive in my job is to declare academic Chapter 11.

By Anonymous • Published April 22, 2022

The Acute Problem for Underrepresented Faculty

2017-2021 FACULTY IN HIGHER EDUCATION SURVEYS

Representation of Tenure-Track Faculty by Rank, Minority Status, and Gender



Possible Solutions and Strategies



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The Key Role of Department Chairs

First, be human. Increase frequency of *substantive* interactions. Not the brief “Hi, how are you?” chat passing in hallways, says Kevin McClure, but a 1:1 discussion to gain deeper insight into instructors’ work lives.



George Washington U.

Understand what work professors are doing. Among the questions:

- Is this labor responding to expectations within the department?
- Is it responding to policies around promotion that may need to be refined in some way?
- In what ways is this labor being inequitably distributed?

Workload Audits and Reform

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

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NEWS

MAKE A GIFT

THE FACULTY WORKLOAD AND REWARDS PROJECT

Home About the Project ▾ Research on Workload and Rewards Resources Project Leaders

The Faculty Workload and Rewards Project



The Faculty Workload and Rewards Project is an NSF ADVANCE funded, collaborative, action research project. Academic department teams study their own workload data, consider and then adopt policies and practices to ensure equity in how teaching and service is taken up, assigned, and rewarded. Drawing on research and theory from social psychology and organizational management, this project provides an evidence-based structure for learning how equity issues arise, using data

- Relevant links:

- <https://advance.umd.edu/fwrp/home>

- <https://www.acenet.edu/Documents/Equity-Minded-Faculty-Workloads.pdf>

Preparing Professors to Succeed With Technology

Instructor Support and Resources

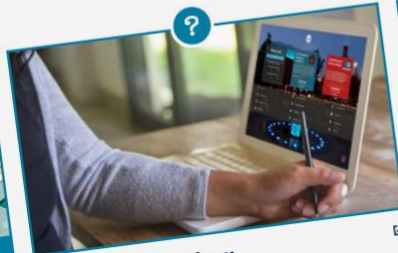
UIC faculty and instructors have access to education technology tools, teaching and learning support, and instructional design and consultation services.

“ The Center for the Advancement of Teaching Excellence (CATE) provides instructors with the resources and support to develop a culture of effective teaching practices and inclusive education supporting the success of all students. ”



Center for the Advancement of Teaching Excellence

The Center for the Advancement of Teaching Excellence (CATE) provides instructors with teaching and learning resources.



Education Technology

The systems and tools that support teaching & learning including Blackboard, Panopto, Echo360, Gradescope & more.



LTS Support Office

Learning Technology Solutions (LTS) Support Office provides instructors with teaching with technology support.



Instructional Design Consultation

Schedule an appointment for Blackboard and



In-classroom Tech Support

New tech support for classrooms with ungraded



Multimedia Lab and Lightboard Studio



Supporting Faculty Well-Being

- Most institutional mental-health efforts focus foremost on students, less on faculty (and often even less on staff). Faculty-specific mental health programs should be considered, and they should extend to adjuncts as well as the tenured.
- Lots of programs cropped up during the pandemic – will they continue now that it has “peaked”?
- Will the pending demographic decline, on top of enrollment drops already endured, compel colleges to invest in faculty and staff to improve student success?

Thanks

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