

BFA Survey of Teaching/Clinical Faculty on Governance and Inclusion

Administered in February 2023

Key Take-Aways from Campus-wide Data and Comments

BFA General Assembly – April 6, 2023

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Ten Years Ago

In 2013 the BFA General Assembly approved unanimously (with one abstention) a resolution seeking a basic uniform floor for teaching/clinical faculty voting rights on campus.

Therefore be it resolved that the Boulder Faculty Assembly endorses the creation of consistent minimum voting rights in departments and programs on campus. Although any department or program can restrict these minimum voting rights and meeting attendance given the specific issue under discussion (e.g., personnel matters), such restrictions should be regarded as limited exceptions to the principles of broad participation by these faculty in department and program affairs and regular attendance at department and program meetings.

*Resolution **approved** by the full Boulder Faculty Assembly (with one abstention) on May 2, 2013.*

The 2023 survey seeks to understand the current situation. This year's survey had a response rate of approximately 50%.

GOVERNANCE AND VOTING RIGHTS

Broadly speaking, voting rights now appear to be more common, and represent an improvement from the conditions prompting the initial BFA resolution. Some pockets of concern remain.

- 94.7% are permitted to join faculty meetings
- 89.1% can participate on relevant committees
- 73.88% can vote on matters of undergrad curriculum and teaching

QUALITATIVE COMMENTS FROM THE SURVEY

- My experience in the Department of X has been uniformly positive over my 12 years as a rostered instructor and teaching professor. I have been treated as a full colleague in every respect.
- Overall, my departments have been great and fully supportive. While I am relatively new, I am less confident about how supportive the overall university is for teaching faculty.

Qualitative Comments on Governance and Voting Rights (Continued)

- As a Full Teaching Professor, I have many of the rights described in these questions. But many at the assistant/associate teaching professor level do not. We are reviewing our by-laws. Some more senior TT professors are giving pushback.
- I teach over 1200 students per year, lead a college-level committee on behalf of the entire department, am an active member of three additional departmental committees, and consistently work 80-90 hours for this job... And yet I do not have the right to vote. This is wrong and needs to change.

“NOT SURE”: LACK OF TRANSPARENCY & POOR COMMUNICATION

Worrisome is the large number of “Not sure” responses. Transparency and awareness of voting rights and governance structures need to be improved. Voting rights presume an awareness of those rights.

- 61.7% say vote counts fully, but 18.44% are not sure
- 54.74% can vote/review on director/chair, but 23.35% are not sure
- 49.06% have rep on executive committee, but 35.96% are not sure

Qualitative Comments: “Not Sure”

- As new teaching assistant professor very difficult to know what is expected and how to participate.
- I am included in a variety of ways and yet I also feel alone. I am new and not sure how to navigate this space.
- I've worked under three different Chairs in my department; one let instructors vote on everything, one let us vote on some things, and one didn't let us vote on anything.

INCLUSION

Inclusion at the unit level is better than expected.

- Included in intellectual/social life of unit.
 - 64.07% Yes 22.22% Somewhat
 - 10% Rarely 3.7% Not at all

- Voice in unit affairs affecting one's work.
 - 54.41% Yes 31.25% Somewhat
 - 9.19% Rarely 5.15% Not at all

Qualitative Comments on Inclusion

- I see instructors as some of the hardest-working, most-contributing, most-talented people in my building, but they are often paid and respected the least, have the least power and job security, receive far fewer "perks" or benefits, and are dis-incentivized from taking on new growth opportunities/challenges because they are constantly reminded that there's no pay increase/promotion path.
- I have no prospects of achieving my full potential.
- This has been a chronically demoralizing position.
- Our wages are low, our service and teaching loads are high, and we are not respected by regular faculty or the administration. I know my work is crucial to retention, but the university overlooks this.

Qualitative Comments on Inclusion (Continued)

- It is frustrating to be in an environment where the diversity and inclusivity of our student population is at the forefront (which it absolutely should be), but where we as teaching faculty are marginalized in every way compared to our tenured peers (pay, workload, service, rights).
- Inclusion starts with recognizing and compensating employees fairly for the work they do and the credentials they hold. It [starts with] appreciating that in one 3-year contract cycle, an instructor on this campus will teach more courses than a tenure-line colleague will in a decade. Inclusion is not inviting instructors to more meetings so we can be talked down to and dismissed by our tenure-line colleagues due to our status, lack of power, and lack of job security. Nor is it more offers of job coaching, mentorship or thriving. Plenty of universities offer real clinical and teaching professorships with competitive pay and contract protection. Why is this so difficult for CU Boulder to achieve?

RESPECT: UNIT LEVEL vs. COLLEGE/CAMPUS LEVELS

Respect for the contributions of Teaching Faculty seems stronger **within units**—where colleagues know each other and appreciate those contributions.

- Contributions respected within the unit?
 - 59.41% Yes 28.78% Somewhat
 - 6.27% Rarely 5.54% Not at all

Respect for the contributions of Teaching Faculty seems quite weak at the **school/college and campus levels**. Policies on compensation and workload originate from this level. Results suggest distrust and a huge disconnect between unit and campus levels—much work needs to be done here.

- Contributions respected at the school/college and campus levels?
 - 29.26% Yes 37.78% Somewhat
 - 21.11% Rarely 11.85% Not at all

Qualitative Comments on Respect

- I am highly valued, respected, and included within my unit. I do not feel so highly regarded, nor included, at the college/university level, as evidenced primarily (though not only) by salary.
- I am empowered within my unit. However, I do feel devalued and exploited at the school and college level. I will never trust CU again after the sneaky switch from 3-3 to 4-4 as full-time at my rank. A despicable move.
- I'm sick of "visions"; we need action. The "higher ups" have no clue what is going on with students, boots on the ground, as I do. But does anyone even consider asking me?

Qualitative Comments on Respect (Continued)

- CU is asking for assembly-line teaching methodologies, which do not serve the students well. This system will backfire and crumble before too long. CU risks losing some of its most qualified, caring professors - please return us to 3/3 teaching loads and reasonable class sizes.
- When is the university going to wake up and show teaching faculty an iota of respect? We are overworked and undercompensated. Anger is boiling in my unit. My sentiments are shared by all of us in the unit.
- The entire system is based on the exploitation of the many to benefit a very privileged few. The shamelessness of the hypocrisy, though, is impressive.

Next Steps?

- Although data have been anonymized and do not report on specific units, **do you see your unit reflected in these data and comments?**
Please use this survey to initiate discussions in your unit. If asked, the BFA Teaching Faculty Affairs Committee can help facilitate these discussions.
- Despite some progress on governance and voting rights, **anger and frustration regarding compensation and workload issues are real and pressing.** These issues reside at the school/college and campus levels.
 - Swift and tangible action is needed. We can ill afford to “tap the brakes” when change is so desperately required.