

UICUF Statement on NTT Job Security
April 21, 2021

As faculty committed to our university's teaching mission, we affirm the importance of non-tenure track faculty to that mission and the wellbeing of the UIC community as a whole. Retention of non-tenure track faculty must be a top priority in any budget decisions. NTT teaching faculty are frequently the first people incoming students come into contact with, and their hard work as teachers and mentors creates a crucial foundation for students' experiences at UIC.

We demand that the UIC administration, including the Chancellor, Provost, and deans, ensure the following as they create and implement budgets and planning for the coming academic year:

- 1. Maintain the current number of NTT teaching faculty positions*
- 2. Notify all faculty of reappointment by the initial contractual deadline on or before June 1*
- 3. Ensure transparency around budget and reappointment decisions*
- 4. For this year, suspend the 3-year limit for visiting faculty*

Maintaining current numbers: We know first-hand that UIC has long used a just-in-time hiring model to employ the minimum number of faculty needed to teach the maximum number of students. During the pandemic, this has led to extreme uncertainty for non-tenure track faculty and increased class sizes, despite clear guidelines that online instruction should include smaller classes. It is essential, both for the quality of education we are providing to our students and for the security of our faculty, that we at least maintain the current number of teaching faculty. By prioritizing faculty retention, we can ensure our students' needs are served with appropriately sized classes, while providing greater job security for faculty who are foundational to undergraduate education at UIC.

June 1 notification: The UICUF collective bargaining agreement requires units to notify non-tenure track faculty of reappointment by June 1, but allows exceptions based on budget uncertainty. We urge the administration to forego these exceptions, and provide notice to all NTT faculty on June 1. This is a time of increased uncertainty for everyone, and by postponing this decision, the university is pushing even more uncertainty onto both NTT faculty and the units that rely on them, including the faculty who will have to fill the gaps on short notice should they not be renewed. This practice is



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unacceptable and must be addressed. We must reappoint our faculty now to be prepared for fall enrollment and determine class sizes based on pedagogy and best practices instead of sacrificing our faculty for the sake of short-term cost savings.

Transparency: Over the past months, faculty have heard many contradicting rumors, constantly changing plans, or--too frequently-- nothing at all about what will happen to their jobs in the fall. We understand that there is currently a high level of general uncertainty, but it is still crucial to clearly communicate with faculty about what is happening around reappointment and to include non-tenure track faculty in the decisions that affect their employment. This is true at the campus level with decisions around budgets that affect hiring, as well as at the unit level.

3-year visiting faculty limit: Ordinarily, there is a 3-year limit to visiting faculty positions, with the requirement of a national search before they can be converted to long-term positions. Given the limits on searches and hiring during the pandemic and the extra challenges of the academic job market at this time, the 3-year limit should be lifted for the coming academic year. It is in our students' interest that UIC continue employing their teachers who have spent the past year honing their skills in COVID-era instruction, rather than hiring less experienced faculty to replace them solely because of a rule designed for non-pandemic conditions. The limit on visiting faculty appointments is not statutory or contractual; it is housed in the Faculty Handbook and the Faculty Affairs Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines and is therefore under the purview of the Provost's office. All policies related to visiting faculty are collected [here](#).

We urge the University administration to take the measures outlined above as a way of demonstrating their commitment to the faculty who make UIC run, the students those faculty teach, and the colleagues who rely on them.