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Invisible Labor, Visible Change: Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Agency in a Research University

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Abstract: Applying O’Meara, Campbell, and Terosky’s (2011) faculty agency framework, this qualitative case study examined full-time, non-tenure-track

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faculty (FTNTTF) members' perceptions of their agency at an elite public research university. Participants experienced greater agency over time and in the classroom, but felt their agency was constrained by departmental and college leadership's inconsistent interpretation of university policies regarding FTNTTF. Participants experienced feelings of invisibility and exclusion, unclear perceptions and undervaluation by their colleagues, and felt vulnerable to leadership transitions that might affect their roles. This study suggests that overarching power structures—administration, tenured faculty, formal and informal policies—may contribute to experiences of constrained agency and invisibility for key members of the organization. These complex dynamics undermine FTNTTF's capacity to actualize their skills, experience, and expertise to the full extent of their abilities.

Keywords: non-tenure-track faculty, agency, leadership, engagement

Full-time, non-tenure-track faculty (FTNTTF) increased by 50% from 1993-2003, while full-time tenure-track faculty increased less than 5% (Dobbie & Robinson, 2008). FTNTTF provide important teaching, service, research, and administrative services, and their positions appeal to institutions seeking to optimize limited resources and organizational flexibility (Ehrenberg & Zhang, 2005; Jaeger & Eagan, 2011; Kezar & Sam, 2014; Levin & Shaker, 2011). Despite front-line teaching responsibilities, FTNTTF receive less protection and job security than tenured colleagues and are traditionally excluded from academic governance structures (Kezar & Sam, 2014). These limitations have the potential to produce a power differential between FTNTTF and tenured/tenure-track faculty (T/TTF) that may inhibit FTNTTF's campus engagement, underutilize their skills, and undermine campus inclusiveness (Ehrenberg & Zhang, 2005; Schell, 2001; Thompson, 2003).

Because of their unique roles, FTNTTF can provide valuable insight into the agency of faculty with limited formal authority. While other scholars have examined faculty agency (see Campbell & O'Meara, 2014; Gonzales, 2014), few have focused on how non-tenure-track faculty perceive and enact their agency (Kezar & Lester, 2011; Levin & Shaker, 2011). Without the protection of tenure, FTNTTF may moderate their behavior and focus on incremental change to maintain their roles. This study examined FTNTTF perceptions of their agency and ability to engage as change agents on campus, specifically within the context of a research university that prioritizes the scholarship and productivity of tenured faculty (Presley & Engelbride, 1998). For the purpose of this study, *change* refers to tangible acts or ideologies that "challenge dominant ways of thinking" (Kezar, Gallant, & Lester, 2011, p. 130); *change agents* are those who initiate or foster change. O'Meara and colleagues' work on agency (Niehaus & O'Meara, 2015; O'Meara & Campbell, 2011; O'Meara & Stromquist, 2015) provided the conceptual framework to guide our examination of FTNTTF agency. We addressed the following research questions:

1. How do FTNTTF perceive their agency within a research university context?
2. How do FTNTTF operationalize their agency in response to those perceptions?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Two bodies of literature provided the foundation for this study of change agency among full-time, non-tenure-track faculty: research on non-tenured or contingent faculty in higher education, and research on faculty agency in university settings.

Non-Tenure-Track Faculty

In their major study of academic faculty throughout the 20th century, Schuster and Finkelstein (2006) argued that hiring faculty off the tenure track has become the norm across higher education at large. This is especially true at public institutions. A report by the American Federation of Teachers (2009) found that between 1997 and 2007, the number of faculty employed in part-time or full-time non-tenure-track positions grew by approximately 37%, while the number of faculty employed in tenure-track positions grew only 6.5%. At public doctoral institutions, the share of full-time, non-tenure-track faculty grew over 10% between 1995 and 2007 (Ehrenberg, 2012). Higher education scholars expect increased reliance on faculty in non-tenure track positions as financial constraints challenge public institutions (Baldwin & Chronister, 2001; Ehrenberg, 2012; Gappa & Leslie, 1993; Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006).

Despite the increasing role FTNTTF play in higher education, Levin and Shaker (2011) argued that non-tenure-track faculty members' position within the professoriate limits their self-determination and self-esteem. Their roles combine elements of a "profession" and elements of a "job," placing them in a tenuous position between professionals and tenured faculty and thus producing hybrid and dualistic identities. Gonzales (2014) argued that faculty "must work between institutionalized scripts of legitimacy" as they negotiate their roles—balancing formal and informal policies and expectations with their own needs and goals (p. 199).

Research also suggests different resources and outcomes for non-tenure track and tenure-track faculty. For instance, Umbach (2007) found FTNTTF spend more time than T/TTF preparing for class, even though their teaching practices closely mirror those of tenured and tenure-track peers (Baldwin & Wawrzynski, 2011). Scholars have also found that without adequate support for this growing sector of the professoriate, broader use of part-time and full-time NTTF may contribute to lower student outcomes, such as lower transfer rates from two- to four-year institutions (Jaeger & Eager, 2009), first-year persistence rates (Bettinger & Long, 2006; Ehrenberg &

Zhang, 2005), and degree completion (Ehrenberg & Zhang, 2005). These challenges underscore the importance of ensuring the growing number of non-tenure-track faculty are supported, developed, and engaged within their departments and institutions.

Institutional policies, or the lack thereof, can have a significant effect on FTNTTF performance (Baldwin & Chronister, 2011; Gappa, Austin, & Trice, 2007). FTNTTF are unsupported by traditional university policies: they lack academic freedom, are often excluded from faculty governance, and have limited socialization, professional, and curriculum development opportunities (Kezar & Sam, 2013). Policies that limit input into the curriculum, feedback or formal evaluation, and infrastructure for teaching can undermine FTNTTF performance (Kezar, 2013b). Alternatively, policies that promote autonomy and experimentation in teaching, facilitate social networks with colleagues, or provide advocacy for FTNTTF can enhance faculty performance. Multi-year contracts, mentoring, and inclusion in shared governance are instrumental in shifting campus and departmental culture to support growing FTNTTF ranks (Kezar & Sam, 2010; Kezar & Sam, 2014).

Given the influence of both positive and negative policies on FTNTTF performance, Kezar (2013b) suggested that “the question may not be whether departments or institutions have moved to put policies in place, but whether they are the right policies that support learning” (p. 591). Kezar (2013a) studied 25 departments with positive and negative policies for NTTF and examined whether those policies shaped willingness, capacity, and opportunity to perform. Findings revealed the existence of four departmental cultures related to differential outcomes for NTTF: destructive, neutral, inclusive, and learning. In each of these cultures, leadership played a pivotal role in shaping department culture and policies affecting NTTF. Other scholars also have highlighted the importance of leadership, specifically deans and department chairs, in shaping values, norms around practices, and policies supporting NTTF (see for example Gappa et al., 2007; Gerhke & Kezar, 2015; Kezar, 2013b). These studies demonstrate how norms and values around NTTF vary not only by institution, but also more locally by college or department.

Kezar and Lester (2011) conducted an instrumental case study of campus grassroots leadership at five institutions. Kezar and Lester’s analysis of faculty (tenured and non-tenured) and staff change agents examined change strategies of individuals in positions of limited authority - including, but not limited to, FTNTTF. They applied Meyerson and Scully’s (1995) tempered radicals framework, which defines tempered radicals as “individuals who identify with and are committed to their organizations and also to a cause, community, or ideology ... fundamentally different from, and possibly at odds with, the dominant culture of their organization” (p. 586). Meyerson (2001) has argued these dichotomous identities produce ambivalence and

cause tempered radicals to operate as “outsiders within,” balancing between the status quo and radical change. Meyerson and Scully identify several key tempered radical tactics: incremental, small wins; local, spontaneous, authentic action; language, and alliances.

Kezar and Lester (2011) argued that these grassroots leaders, by necessity, create their own strategies for navigating power; adopting a tempered approach moderates the risks of agitating for change from positions without formal authority. The authors identified three distinct approaches to change from positions with limited power: confrontational (viewing power as hierarchical and oppressive), tempered radical, and viewing power as contextual and invisible (not acknowledging power or power conditions). Kezar and Lester found tempered radicals demonstrated a continuum of strategies, ranging from “most tempered” to “least tempered;” more tempered participants believed in moderate, quiet change to protect their positions, while less tempered participants displayed a more overt approach to change.

Kezar and Lester’s (2011) work expanded Meyerson’s (2001) framework from corporate settings to higher education. While Meyerson applied a psychological perspective, Kezar and Lester used an organizational lens to highlight the role of broader power dynamics in shaping change strategies for grassroots leaders within the higher education context. They call for further research on contingent or NTTTF leaders due to the power differential between faculty on and off the tenure track: “Non-tenure-track faculty, while large in number, lack formal and informal power in the organization” (p. 130). The present study offers a response to their call for research on the agency of non-tenure-track faculty.

Faculty Agency in Higher Education

This study drew on research by O’Meara and colleagues on faculty perceptions of their agency and the factors influencing agentic action. Although O’Meara and colleagues studied traditional tenured and tenure-track faculty, their work provided an important foundation for this paper given the limited research on FTNTTF agency. O’Meara and Campbell (2011) investigated factors influencing faculty members’ sense of agency in decisions about taking family leave and found a “continuum of support ranging from ‘very supportive’ to ‘outright hostile’” (p. 460). The authors noted that departmental chairs, departmental norms, and faculty colleagues influenced professors’ sense of agency in deciding whether to exercise their ability to take leave for a child or medical situation. O’Meara and Campbell (2011) also argued that faculty members’ agency may be constrained by tenure status, gender identity, ethnic status, sexuality, and discipline.

Studying faculty agency in career advancement, O’Meara and Stromquist (2015) found peer networks helped facilitate agency for women, encouraging them to take action and feel more confident about earning tenure, promotion,

and leadership roles. Relatedly, Niehaus and O'Meara (2015) found higher faculty career stage corresponded with a greater sense of agency. Professional networks, especially those external to the institution, also contributed to agency in career advancement. Niehaus and O'Meara concluded, "higher education scholars are only just beginning to understand the individual, organizational, and societal factors that influence agency perspectives and behaviors" (p. 160). Indeed, Niehaus and O'Meara's statement encapsulates the motivations guiding this study's examination of agency among non-tenured faculty with more limited resources and security in the context of an elite research university.

Theoretical Perspective

This study applied O'Meara, Campbell, and Terosky's (2011) faculty agency framework. O'Meara, Campbell, and Terosky (2011) defined agency as a faculty member "assuming strategic perspectives and/or taking strategic actions towards goals that matter to him/her" (p. 1). O'Meara et al. identified two forms of agency: perspective (making meaning of situations and context) and behaviors or actions taken to pursue one's goals. Their framework for faculty agency posits that faculty agency can be shaped by individual, organizational, and societal forces and is associated with three levels of outcomes: individual (growth, satisfaction), organizational change, and societal change. Their framework highlights the role of context—at multiple levels—in shaping faculty agentic perspectives and behavior. The framework's emphasis on context aligns with this study's interest in how FTNNTTF balance their identities and desire for change within the constraints of an elite research university that prioritizes the productivity and leadership of T/TTF (Presley & Engelbride, 1998).

The concept of agency is rooted in social psychology. Bandura (1989) argued that the most central mechanism of personal agency lies in "people's beliefs about their capabilities to exercise control over events that affect their lives" (p. 1175). In his study of faculty decisions balancing work and family matters, Elder (1997) defined agency as "having a sense of power, will, and desire to create work contexts that meet the individual's goals over time" (p. 964). Informed by Bandura and Elder, this study defines agency as FTNNTTF's perceptions of their ability to enact change within their campus environments. Campbell and O'Meara (2014) found that faculty perceptions of agency influenced whether and how they operationalized their agency. O'Meara and Campbell (2011) noted that faculty members' agency may be constrained by factors such as tenure status, gender identity, ethnic status, sexuality, and discipline. We posit that FTNNTTF in a research university may experience limitations to their agency due to their contract status and nontraditional roles in relation to the university's tenured research faculty.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed an instrumental case study design (Stake, 2005). Case study methods enable researchers to ask descriptive “how” and “why” questions, as this study does (Yin, 2014). Instrumental case studies allow researchers to study a phenomenon in depth as a way to understand a certain issue exterior to a specific case; the case becomes the “instrument” through which to examine a larger phenomenon (Stake, 2005). Since we sought to understand how FTNTTF within the context of a single research-intensive university perceive their agency, the researchers used a single-site instrumental case study design (Stake, 1995).

Case Study Site

Case study involves in-depth analysis within a bounded system or context (Merriam, 2009). This case study is bounded within Southwest University (SU), pseudonym for an elite, research intensive, doctoral-granting public institution located in the southern region of the United States. Currently, there are approximately 1,200 FTNTTF members and approximately 1,800 T/TTF members at SU. The schools and colleges with the most number of faculty members, both tenure-track and non-tenure track, include Liberal Arts, Natural Sciences, and Engineering. Proportionately, the College of Nursing, Schools of Law, Social Work, and Pharmacy include more non-tenure track faculty than all other colleges and schools at the university (72%, 63%, 62%, and 55%, respectively).

The university enrolls over 50,000 students in almost 20 colleges and schools. The racial and ethnic composition of the university is almost 50% White; Hispanic and Asian students represent 20%, respectively; almost 5% are Black; and less than 10% are mixed-race/other categories. The university is renowned for its research activity, including the number of externally-sponsored projects (almost 6,000) and the licensing revenues generated over the past 10 years (over \$150 million). SU is consistently categorized among the most elite and competitive public research universities in the country, both for student admissions and for its research productivity. The site was chosen because it provided an opportunity to study the phenomena of interest—FTNTTF at an elite research institution—and because the institution has engaged in a self-study of NTTF via two provost-convened taskforces in 2009 and 2012, indicating SU recognizes the growing importance of NTTF to its core operations and mission.

Other studies regarding non-tenure-track faculty experiences have included multiple institutions in their focus (Haviland, Alleman, & Cliburn Allen, 2017; Kezar, 2013a; Levin & Shaker, 2011; Umbach, 2007). This study investigated FTNTTF at a single institution to understand their contextualized experience. The study contributes to the literature base by focusing on

faculty agency as a theoretical avenue for understanding FTNTTF experiences at an elite research institution. Existing studies have focused on NTTF experiences at two-year college campuses (Kezar, 2013b; Kezar & Sam 2010; Levin & Shaker, 2001).

Participant Selection

While SU provided the bounded system and context for this case study, the experiences of FTNTTF themselves comprised the units of analysis. The study included 20 participants, selected using a purposive and snowball sampling approach to maximize representation for gender, race and ethnicity, discipline, and years at the university (Hays & Singh, 2011). The sample of 20 included 11 women, 9 men, and 4 persons of color. Participants represented 8 different colleges or schools and 13 different departments or units. Four participants were FTNTTF in one of the professional schools; four departments had two participants each and the remaining eight departments had one participant each. Recognizing that departmental contexts vary and that other studies might focus solely on the nuance of individual departmental dynamics, the aim of this study was to consider faculty experiences in the context of their institution. Therefore, we sought the broadest representation possible from across campus rather than greater depth within a few departments. Of our 20 participants, 12 held Ph.D.s, 2 held J.D.s, and 6 held Master's degrees. Their ages ranged from 33 to 75 years. All were categorized as Clinical Assistant, Associate, or Full Professor or Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, or Distinguished Senior Lecturer – titles SU's system regents have officially classified as "other titles." Those "other titles" are explicitly distinguished from the "tenure titles" category, which includes Professor, Associate Professor, and Assistant Professor. "Other title" positions may be terminated at the end of their period of appointment without notification for nonrenewal.

The regents' rules stipulate that those in the Clinical Professor tracks and Lecturer tracks may be appointed for three academic years at a time and may be provided with renewable two- and three-year appointments. Lecturer and Clinical Professor tracks differ only in relation to teaching qualifications; Lecturer titles are used for those whose teaching experience and qualifications are similar to those in tenure-track positions. A Senior Lecturer title may be used for those whose teaching experience and qualifications are comparable to a tenured professor. Clinical Professor titles do not refer expressly to teaching experience, but Clinical Professors and Lecturers are subject to similar contract renewals and standing at the university. Refer to Table A1 in the Appendix for detailed participant characteristics.

To identify participants, the research team reviewed the online faculty directories of each college and school to find faculty with the aforementioned titles and accessed multiple faculty listservs to promote the study across campus. Participants received an email inviting them to complete a brief

background survey and, if responses confirmed they met the participant criteria of 100% full-time equivalent non-tenure-track faculty status, they were invited to participate in an individual, 60-minute, semi-structured interview. The research team also utilized snowball sampling, encouraging participants to refer colleagues (Patton, 1990). After three rounds of invitations and persistent snowball sampling, recruitment yielded 20 participants. This study sought to explore theory rather than provide generalizable or transferable findings, and scholars conducting related work (e.g., O'Meara & Campbell, 2011) also interviewed 20 participants. Thus, the researchers concluded 20 participants provided adequate data.

Data Collection and Analysis

Interviews followed a semi-structured protocol that (1) explored how participants conceptualized their own agency within their department, college, and university and (2) solicited examples of experiences exercising agency within those contexts. Sample questions included: "Can you think of an example of a time that you wanted to change a policy, rule, or understanding in your department? If so, please describe the situation and to what extent were you able to active your agency," and "What resources do you use to make change?" All interviews were conducted by at least one, and often two, members of the research team. All sessions were recorded and transcribed verbatim, and researchers compiled detailed field notes.

The researchers used constant comparison (Merriam, 2009) and pattern matching (Yin, 2014) data analysis methods in Dedoose to analyze interview data. To establish reliability and consistency, all members of the research team first individually coded a singular transcript, then met to debrief and define key concepts together. Researchers applied etic codes based on the conceptual framework and emic codes to identify themes emerging directly from the participants (Hays & Singh, 2011). Codes applied from the conceptual framework included "agentic perspective," "agentic behaviors/actions," "individual context," "departmental/college context," and "institutional context." Codes that emerged from the participant interviews included "curriculum involvement," "independence," and "invisibility." This iterative and collaborative process reduced data into categorically rich themes related to participant perceptions of agency (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The team then met again to debrief the coding process as well as discuss potential themes for data presentation and alternative interpretations.

Document analysis strengthened the researchers' knowledge of university rules and regulations pertaining to FTNTTF and provided a more comprehensive perspective on FTNTTF roles on campus. For instance, reviewing the system-wide faculty rules and regulations clarified the official descriptions of all faculty titles. Other documents utilized in the analysis included the university's handbook of operating procedures, documents

on the Provost's website with guidelines for non-tenure-track advancement and promotion, and reports from several taskforces convened in the last 15 years that focused entirely or partially on NTTF. The researchers reviewed and coded these documents in Dedoose to triangulate participants' personal experiences with official university regulations and organizational change efforts. The researchers also utilized memo writing to categorize these codes into themes such as "promotion," "teaching," and "service." Additionally, researchers cross-checked participants' curriculum vitae to confirm number of years they held their positions in their departments, service activities, and promotion information.

The researchers applied several measures to increase trustworthiness. The incorporation of documents allowed us to triangulate data through the use of multiple sources (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The research team referenced relevant documents when reviewing individual participant interviews in order to clarify and corroborate participants' experiences. The research team used member checking measures, asking participants to review transcripts and memos, in order to ensure data analysis adequately represented their experiences. Regular peer debriefing throughout data collection and analysis allowed the researchers to challenge and develop each other's ideas, assumptions, and discoveries (Hays & Singh, 2011).

Limitations

The researchers acknowledge several limitations to this study. First, although FTNTTF from each college and school were contacted to participate in this study, representation from each college/school was not achieved. Thus, this study's conclusions regarding the complexity of FTNTTF roles in cross-department and college contexts are based solely on the departments and colleges represented by those who participated. Second, participants self-selected to participate in this study. Some of their motivations for participation may be skewed, especially in relation to perceptions of their agency. FTNTTF with more neutral perceptions of their agency or with a more acute sense of fear may have been unintentionally excluded via self-selection. Third, although researchers conducted member checks with participants, the authors were unable to facilitate formal follow-up interviews. Given the use of documents and other triangulation methods, the authors felt confident in their ability to corroborate data among interviews and official documentation. As this is a qualitative case study design, it is not intended to generalize across all FTNTTF experiences or institutions of higher education. Despite the localized nature of this study, its findings and implications are valuable for higher education leaders to consider as they develop policies and procedures concerning FTNTTF.

FINDINGS

Participants' perceptions of their agency varied based on individual experiences and departmental contexts. Those with greater institutional longevity felt more empowered and included, and FTNTTF generally enjoyed agency and autonomy within their own courses. Nearly all felt their ability to enact agency in their departments and across campus was limited by their role parameters, fear of negative repercussions, and limitations to their voting rights.

While university-level policies communicated by the president and provost invited and included participation from FTNTTF in curriculum and governance matters, interpretation and implementation of these policies was inconsistent across campus. Participants also described feeling invisible, misunderstood, undervalued, and particularly vulnerable to changes in leadership. These experiences contributed to the ways in which they understood their agency at the departmental and broader campus level.

Perceptions of Agency

Participants' perceptions of their agency centered on three themes: institutional longevity, agency in the classroom, and inconsistent interpretations of SU policies regarding FTNTTF.

Institutional longevity. Participants stated that feeling more established in their roles contributed to a greater sense of agency. Longevity generated respect from colleagues and helped FTNTTF earn a place in decision-making spaces. Data did not reveal a fixed, universal period of time that constituted institutional longevity; however, those who had enjoyed longer appointments described feeling a greater sense of agency. Three participants had been in their FTNTTF position for three years; five had been in their position between five and eight years. Over half had worked in their current department for more than ten years. Nearly all of these established faculty members noted that their agency and comfort proposing and participating in change efforts had increased over time. Olivia, who has held her position for seven years, said,

My agency, my confidence in my agency, has increased 300% over the time I've been here...If there is something I really, really want to talk about [with the tenured faculty], I could go there and say, 'Hey, I want to talk about this'... And, I feel that there is a broad respect...such that they would take an idea that I had seriously.

Olivia's comfort level in voicing her opinions increased with her longevity but, more importantly, it took time for her to feel respected and valued by her colleagues—suggesting that respect from colleagues in traditional T/TT roles is critical to FTNTTF agency. Similarly, Michaela also observed a difference between newer FTNTTF's comfort level voicing opinions in com-

parison to tenured colleagues and more established FTNTTF. She explained how newer FTNTTF looked to her, a senior colleague, to gauge the extent to which they could voice their opinions without negative repercussions. This finding highlights the influence of longevity and seniority on campus, both for more advanced tenured faculty and for FTNTTF:

They're just timid at first when they come on staff...the new people always have to kind of look around and see, I wonder how much I can say, who's loudmouth here. Okay, it's Michaela, I'll sit next to Michaela, people can blame her, I'll get in my two cents.

Michaela had served in various teaching capacities in her department for 10 years, and she offered a personal example of how her approach to change had shifted over time. Michaela noticed an admissions practice discriminatory to students of color, but in her previous roles as a teaching assistant and adjunct professor, she could not see a way to intervene and raise the issue to those in charge of admissions. When she later earned full-time status, she felt able to advocate for a change to the policy: "Now that I'm actually on that [admissions] committee, I've talked to the chair, I've talked to the dean, I've done the math, I've made it very clear that this is unacceptable and I would really like to see it changed." Subsequently, department leadership began to investigate how these practices obstructed access for students of color. After serving first as teaching assistant and then as adjunct professor, Michaela's history with the department and transition to FTNTTF earned her a more established reputation and access to an inner circle of decision-making that enabled her to participate in policy change.

As a final example, Amy, a clinical professor in a professional school, explained that NTTF in her department had not previously been permitted to attend parts of faculty meetings. After becoming more established in the department and demonstrating consistent interest in departmental matters, she was invited to stay and participate. Amy elaborated,

It has reached the stage where there is very little distinction between me and other faculty members. When I want there to be a distinction, there is and that's nice. No one has an expectation I'm working or doing anything over the summers...I like this—it gives me more freedom, more flexibility.

Amy echoes the sentiments of Oliva and Michaela; her ability to participate emerged after she invested time on campus to cultivate the respect and trust of her tenured colleagues.

Amy, Michaela, and Olivia illustrate how FTNTTF agency at SU is dynamic, not static. Over time, they earned the respect and trust of tenured and administrative colleagues who served as gatekeepers to decision-making spaces and conversations. The longer employed and the deeper the connec-

tions with colleagues, the more loyal and invested in the institution FTNTTF may feel and, importantly, the more they may be seen as insiders who are loyal and trustworthy. Colleagues' perceptions of FTNTTF influenced participants' views of their own agency, and earning others' respect empowered FTNTTF to activate their agency. As Michaela's narrative demonstrates, even subtle changes in status and/or positional authority can influence the extent to which FTNTTF are able to advocate for change. FTNTTF first needed to accumulate influence by establishing themselves within their departments and programs, a process that allowed them to earn positional and/or relational authority.

Agency in the classroom. Although participants were not formally protected with academic freedom through tenure, most described high levels of agency within the classroom. All enjoyed wide latitude in the delivery of their courses; some even designed, proposed, and taught their own unique courses. Noah, a lecturer in the humanities, proposed several courses his departmental curriculum committee accepted. As a result, Noah described a sense of freedom and ownership over the material he taught. He experienced "a lot of agency," especially in one course: "The course description we have says 'take your students to a play and teach at least one Shakespeare course.' The rest? It's up to you. That's given me an immense amount of freedom, and I've enjoyed that." For this participant, agency meant autonomy—something he experienced and appreciated, even on a scale the size of his classroom.

Eduardo, a lecturer in the liberal arts, explained how he adapted standardized courses when he disagreed with the syllabus generally used by the department. He shared: "I would have a different opinion and I [would] tell the students that I personally do not believe in this, and that I don't believe it [was] the proper thing to do." Consequently, he would deliver only the tests he was required to give and would integrate activities and homework he felt were better suited to the course. Like Noah, Eduardo taught the course the way he believed to be most effective and beneficial, exercising his own agency and autonomy within the classroom. By bringing a critical voice to the mandated material, he questioned the status quo and offered a different perspective than his T/TTF peers—exercising agency within the space of his classroom.

Dave, a participant in the sciences with 20 years of experience in his department, felt free to employ what he described as potentially "perplexing" or "bothersome" teaching methods because his departmental colleagues would not notice. He explained:

I know that no one's going to bother to investigate. This bears on agency. It's not the case that I feel like I have a blank check, that I can do what I judge best... [instead] I have kind of a de facto impunity because, in practice, there's no way I can imagine that anyone's going to bother, much less succeed, to disturb what I have decided.

While Dave felt he possessed agency in his course delivery, that agency resulted from his invisibility within the department. Dave felt he could do what he liked in the classroom because others were not paying attention, and his actions took place literally behind closed doors. Beyond his own courses, however, Dave described a very different level of agency. He explained that he “gave up” trying to influence the course schedule because “it was not in my interest to appear to have ideas other than serving the department, since my only real concern was to keep getting appointed.” Dave’s agency was confined to teaching; the department made it clear that any further engagement overstepped his role and could jeopardize his position. His perspective highlights how institutional structures, leadership, and departmental culture can impede the potential of FTNTTF to contribute meaningful and divergent perspectives.

Donald, a lecturer in a professional field, explained his unsuccessful experience seeking involvement in program development. Shortly after his arrival to SU, Donald was told he was unqualified to propose a new course. Frustrated, Donald felt this limitation contradicted recent comments from SU’s president in a state of the university address:

[The president said] ‘non-tenure track people are the teaching experts and should be on departmental committees,’ like curriculum committees and things, and I was told that I wasn’t even able to attend the curriculum committee to discuss a course that I wanted to propose; I was told that I didn’t know all kinds of things.

Furthermore, Donald noted he conducted research and published about pedagogy; for him, this was his area of expertise. Noah could propose and teach his own courses, but Donald was excluded from shaping his program through new courses and content. Despite university-level support for Donald’s involvement, T/TTF felt they, not NTTF, owned the curriculum.

FTNTTF agency in curriculum matters varied by participant and departmental context. While some spaces allowed FTNTTF to teach freely and influence the curriculum, others revealed T/TTF faculty dominance and resistance to FTNTTF curriculum contributions. Noah, Eduardo, and Dave responded to their perceptions of agency in the classroom by activating their creativity and autonomy. In their cases, a combination of role invisibility and agency in the classroom provided the freedom to define what and how they taught. Alternatively, Donald’s frustrating experience led him to avoid expressing his opinions on curricular change. These diverging perceptions underscore the power of departmental context to shape FTNTTF perceptions of, and responses to, agency in their local environments.

Inconsistent interpretation of university policies. The above findings regarding curriculum engagement reveal how deans and department chairs

may interpret and implement university policies differently across campus. This variation was especially notable in faculty governance. Nearly all participants felt voting policies, role definition, and job insecurity limited their engagement and influence at the departmental level. Participants explained they avoided engaging with leadership or policies simply because they did not want to attract negative attention or jeopardize their employment. Susan described her approach: “With the Dean, I just take care of it, handle things, just do my job and try to contain the fires and forward the positives. Don’t piss him off. [Laughs.] Don’t get on his bad side.” Eduardo and Malcolm described avoiding their Deans as well, whom they were confident had no idea of their names or roles.

Departments varied in their interpretation of the FTNTTF roles in policy and program matters. The actual experiences FTNTTF shared often contradicted university policies: the official university handbook allows those in lecturer and instructor positions to vote as part of the General Faculty once they held their position for at least four long semesters and were employed at least 50% at the university. The General Faculty elects the Faculty Council to represent all faculty in university matters, and, if they meet requirements, FTNTTF are also eligible for these Faculty Council positions. Newer and part-time non-tenured faculty could still attend and participate but not vote. Despite campus-wide policies, this study’s data revealed voting privileges at the departmental level varied dramatically and were determined by college or departmental leadership. Formal or informal departmental policies often prevented participants from exercising their agency through votes on policies, recommendations, and faculty hires.

Even when participants were permitted or expected to contribute to meetings, discussion, or reports, they were generally excluded from the final vote or official recommendation. Amber explained how she contributed to the decision process but never the final decision:

I’ve done maybe five to six big reports/studies, and I’m there for the discussion of that and then when it comes time to vote on it, I just don’t have a vote... So if you’re good enough to teach, you’re good enough to do research, why are you not good enough to be counted as a faculty person who is making decisions for the school?

Amber did note she could influence decisions by making sure the voting faculty members were fully informed and by facilitating discussion—but her exclusion from final outcomes felt demeaning. Relatedly, Judy referred to the exclusion of FTNTTF from hiring new faculty members as a “wall, or a line between the decisions that are related to hiring new faculty and promoting people... versus, you know, all the other business.” Judy felt excluded, inequitably, from critical decisions shaping her departmental community and program.

Amber and Judy were not alone in these sentiments. Dan and Kirk also recognized the paradox of being included in discussions and meetings prior to a vote, and then literally stepping out of the room during voting. On one hand, Dan felt more resigned, saying, “That’s just the nature of the beast. It may change. Tenure may go away. Who knows.” On the other hand, Kirk was frustrated and held a clear vision for the role of FTNTTF regarding decision-making and voting, particularly at the departmental level:

One of the biggest weaknesses in the academic system right now is who you pick to be the leaders. Who leads the departments? Tenure-track people. How much experience do they have managing and leading organizations? None. Non-tenure track [faculty] can contribute in positions of management and leadership. Give us equal voice in management and consider us for leadership positions. You’ll find a lot more creative and forward-looking management and leadership.

Echoing Kirk’s argument, Noah explained that he was interested in streamlining degree pathways within his department: “If that were part of my actual job description, or if I were on a tenure-track faculty position where I was asked to serve on internal committees, I think that would be a project that I’d be interested in taking on.” Kirk and Noah highlight how FTNTTF expertise, resources, and interests can be underutilized on campus due to formal and informal policies that impede their engagement in program development. It is important to note, however, that not all participants sought greater participation; for example, Andrew found the status quo acceptable, saying, “If I was in a situation where things were constantly happening and I didn’t like what was happening, I might seek more participation.” He expressed disinterest because he found departmental actions and culture adequate. Nonetheless, Andrew included an option for “more participation” if the situation changed—his agency could become salient if the status quo were disrupted. Andrew’s remarks suggest the importance of consistency in policy application, so that when FTNTTF need to activate their agency they have an avenue to do so.

Broadly, FTNTTF in this study felt excluded from governance, and that sense of ostracism from decision-making bodies led them to sit by the sidelines rather than engage in departmental or wider policy efforts. Judy, Dan, and Kirk felt disillusioned and ostracized; Noah wished his role included an opportunity to engage in curricular planning. Amber used her relationships to advocate to those in power prior to a vote, but shared others’ frustration about exclusion from the full process. While FTNTTF expressed frustration confidentially as part of this study, agitating for a change to their role in departmental governance could jeopardize their unprotected positions, and it meant taking time away from their contracted teaching obligations.

Participants' experiences of agency were highly relational and contextual. Longer term ties with the organization, respectful relationships between FTNTTF and T/TTF, and inconsistent localized interpretations of university policies all influenced how FTNTTF perceived their own agency. These contexts, collegial relationships, and leaders have the potential to communicate value and grow loyalty among FTNTTF, increasing their sense of agency. Alternatively, these forces also can contribute to a caste system that devalues FTNTTF work and marginalizes their voices, limiting loyalty and contributions to campus.

Invisibility and Ambiguity

Participants described their sense of agency as constrained by feelings of invisibility and exclusion, unclear perceptions and undervaluation by their colleagues, and the effects of leadership and leadership transitions on FTNTTF roles in their colleges and departments.

Invisibility. Participants expressed feeling dismissed and discounted by tenured faculty and leadership. Judy, a professor in an applied field, explained that tenured faculty were often skeptical and standoffish to her. She commented: "There is this kind of strong sort of snobbishness about the intellectual background that you have." Judy felt her tenured colleagues were "really not recognizing or caring to recognize, you know, the contributions of not just me, but all of our non-tenured faculty." Her tenured colleagues made as much as double her salary, and this difference in pay widened the hierarchical divide. Judy found that older tenured faculty men, in particular, tended to be unfriendly and "sort of a little clique," behaving in a dismissive and superior manner toward non-tenured colleagues.

Judy's comments paralleled Amber's, a participant in a different college with an impressive resume of national leadership in her area. Amber said, "You have to do this incredible justification...every time you have a decision you have to establish legitimacy in the academic universe. And I find that very offensive." Judy and Amber's experiences reveal the status challenge these and other professional leaders encountered after transitioning to an academic environment, despite their professional accomplishments and management experience.

Other participants went to great lengths to prove legitimacy and earn recognition. For example, Kirk shared: "I went in and did a lot more than I needed to...I ended up doing more and made the job harder on myself... That got recognized." Similarly, Dan explained how he worked tirelessly to advise doctoral dissertations: "That was one of the clearest instances where the title, or appointment, precluded me from being able to do something that I wanted to do. It actually didn't preclude me from doing it, just getting credit for doing it." Other participants sought to reframe this invisibility to their advantage; for instance, Donald explained that "In a way I'm so marginalized that I can kind of do whatever I want."

Perceptions and value. Participants indicated that other faculty and staff did not always understand the role of a non-tenure-track faculty member. This lack of awareness contributed to a sense among FTNTTF that the university did not value their roles and contributions to the institution. Olivia, who worked in a unique clinical role, explained: “One drawback...is that people don’t understand my job that well.” Dave, a social scientist, felt his presence and participation were unvalued; any input he offered regarding the undergraduate curriculum he delivered was generally dismissed. Indeed, almost every participant discussed their frustration with colleagues who did not understand or value their role on campus.

FTNTTF in this study also expressed frustration with the lack of fiscal value the university placed on non-tenured faculty. Noah, in the liberal arts, felt the university neglected to compensate non-tenure-track faculty equitably for the service they provided. He said:

The fact that I get paid less for teaching more...it seems, at least, unequal... maybe fairness isn’t really an issue here, but it seems like the university is not valuing the teaching that it provides...[not] valuing the faculty that are providing the opportunity for the research faculty to have course release[s].

Noah enjoyed his work and felt his teaching served an important role for the university, but felt underappreciated and undercompensated. Kirk, the recipient of multiple teaching awards from students and the state, also felt frustrated that he could not earn a promotion:

[Tenure-track and tenured faculty] never listened, never paid attention and they never—in fact I never got congratulated from them either in the bulletins or papers. I think one time they noted that I did win one [award] and that’s about it...so I felt like I never had a strong position because they weren’t going to listen to what I had to say anyway.

Nearing retirement, Kirk was less concerned about compensation than younger Noah, but felt his contributions warranted a more advanced title than the school was interested in granting.

FTNTTF felt their expertise was not always sought or considered. Donald stated that “I’ve just been shut down many, many times, and basically it also comes with a heavy hand in condescension.” According to Kirk, even though his expertise was acknowledged, “it got as far as the upstairs office and never made it any further, so it could not make an impact on the curriculum even though they considered me the expert.” Radical or not, FTNTTF’s ideas were often tempered by a structure and environment that prioritized tenured faculty voices.

Participants who shared positive experiences of feeling valued were generally former professional leaders in their fields and/or longer-established at

the university. For example, Ann said that her many years at SU had allowed her to develop authority and influence: "I do feel valued, and sometimes I'm really surprised at how much; I don't see myself low on the rung, but I'm treated like a faculty member." Others, like Michaela, relied on professional credibility and spoke out even when others were skeptical of their authority: "I do a pretty good job of holding my own, regardless of what my job title is." Even if they felt misunderstood or undervalued, participants sought ways to engage and excel in their areas.

The idiosyncratic impact of leadership. As discussed, implementation of university policies affecting FTNTTF varied across colleges and departments. Because these policies varied across campus, FTNTTF felt particularly vulnerable to dean and chair transitions that affected their professional advancement, departmental engagement, and voting.

Transitions. Changes in leadership were particularly significant and potentially volatile for FTNTTF. As discussed, college- and departmental-level leadership interpret the dynamic, ambiguous role of FTNTTF in different ways. As a result, changes in leadership—such as when one dean or department chair replaced another—often resulted in redefinition or renegotiation of these roles. Amy explained: "I feel like I have enough support around here, and people are enough aware of the good work that I do, but I'll have to start all over again with a new dean. So, there's that anxiety." Ann shared Amy's sense of starting afresh with a new dean, but explained how this change could also be positive:

At least to me and to my colleagues and to the administrative people who run the show, [the change in dean] has been such a positive thing; I mean there's been so much more kind of peace and ability to get along.

Ann felt lucky that her college's new leadership created a more positive environment for her work. Alternatively, Michaela discussed how she felt a new dean had misunderstood her role:

I had said, okay, here's what the [past] dean told me, and here's how I see it, and here's how this has worked.... But he really had a clear sense that I was just there to plug in holes, fill in the gaps when he was having trouble filling out the schedule, or whatever. And I was like, dude, no *mas*. That's gotta stop.

Negotiating her role required Michaela to feel empowered enough to speak openly to new leadership about the real purpose and value of her role, which she felt extended well beyond "plugging holes." Fortunately, her long employment at the university and full career prior to academia helped her feel confident enough to address this issue directly.

As these participants' testimonies indicate, FTNTTF must cope with significant ambiguity because leaders' interpretations of contracts and policies

may vary and change. Some participants, like Michaela, were established enough in their units that they felt more comfortable asserting themselves if changes threatened their roles. Newer and less-established FTNTTF, like Amy, felt a greater sense of vulnerability in the face of leadership transitions.

Professional advancement. Participants experienced varying support for their growth and development. Elise described how her dean not only nominated but also committed funds for her to complete a leadership program through her field's national organization. This participation helped Elise network and advance. Indeed, at the time of our study, Elise held a leadership role in her college and was recognized at the university level for her teaching. Even small symbols of support from leadership were important to participants' relationship with their chairs and deans—such as when the department chair approved for Amelia to teach in a study abroad program and for her flights to be paid by the department. Susan praised her supervisor for “providing the grace the system doesn't. So in some ways the institution does foster that, it just doesn't formalize it.” Other participants offered examples of how positive leadership enabled their growth and job satisfaction. For example, Kimberly was promoted to a position no FTNTTF had ever held before specifically because a dean advocated on her behalf and approved “an exception of the policy request.” Another dean unfamiliar with her work might not have approved such a request and facilitated her promotion. Sonya discussed how her work began as a dean's special initiative, and how the money brought in by the program enhanced the profile of the college. Ann, Kimberly, Sonya, Elise, Amelia, and Susan demonstrate how support for FTNTTF professional advancement varied by individual FTNTTF based on their department context.

While advocacy and support from leadership benefited some participants, others felt a lack of communication from leadership left them confused about their contracts, evaluation, and promotion processes. Half of our participants held three-year renewable contracts, the longest contract the university offered for FTNTTF. Many of these participants previously held year-to-year renewable contracts and earned three-year renewable contracts after they received a title promotion. The other half held year-to-year renewable contracts. The rationale for their length of contract was generally unclear to participants, and the evaluation and promotion process for each participant varied widely. Approximately one quarter of the participants stated they had standard annual evaluations; Elise and Susan stated their annual reviews with departmental leadership were almost identical to their TTF colleagues. Another quarter of the participants stated they had “informal” evaluations, receiving an evaluation if they requested it. One participant, Noah, had been in his department for five years and received only one evaluation since his arrival. One fifth of participants stated they had never received an evaluation; each had been in their current positions for fewer than five years.

The remaining participants (one quarter) did not speak to their evaluation policies. Donald summarized these issues in comments that criticized the university for unclear FTNTTF promotion guidelines:

The process is pretty chaotic, and it has never really been articulated to me very clearly. I had to do a lot of searching around on my own to find out even that there was the possibility of promotion. Nobody in my department ever talked to me about that possibility. There hasn't been any guidance from anyone in my department, and my department doesn't have a very extensive history in promoting non-tenure track people, so there's a lack of knowledge in the department.

Regarding her contract, Michaela similarly explained that: "I have gotten zero information from them about anything other than three years." When she expressed concern to her department over the lack of a clear contract, her tenured colleagues laughed off her concerns:

They were just like, "Oh, pshaw. We adore you, you'll be here forever, please do not worry your pretty little head about this, just move on." I take that to mean they don't know, but that's just me guessing...that they have no idea what to do about me.

This disregard for Michaela's concern over her job security highlights the way some FTNTTF are dismissed and devalued by colleagues and leaders on campus—even when chairs or deans may believe their neglect or lack of concern should be interpreted as support and security.

Taken together, these findings surrounding the complex, varied influence of leadership reveal how FTNTTF must navigate an ambiguous and dynamic environment. Department chairs and school deans influence FTNTTF perceptions of their own agency and opportunities—from voices in policies and decisions, to professional advancement and job security. FTNTTF respond to their individual contexts and perceptions by navigating unclear (or non-existent) advancement and evaluation policies and focusing on their work. Operating in this ambiguous, invisible space requires constant sense-making that undermines FTNTTF's time and ability to engage as change agents outside the confines of their classrooms or roles.

DISCUSSION

This study examined how FTNTTF at an elite research university experience and activate their agency within departments and across campus. Data revealed that participants' agency varied widely based on how well established they were—a function of longevity and collegial respect. Most participants maintained considerable agency within their courses, but many felt invisible in their roles. Though many FTNTTF felt they had opportunities

(or sometimes were expected) to contribute to their departments, informal policies and inconsistent responses from leadership constrained their ability to participate meaningfully in policy, curriculum, and governance. FTNTTF were largely unable to activate their agency as full members of the campus community because of a culture that reinforced their invisibility and structural inequities and inconsistencies that undermined their inclusion in governance and decision-making.

O'Meara et al. (2011) argued that faculty agency is shaped by forces at the individual, organizational, and societal levels. FTNTTF participants at SU invoked these three contextual layers in both perceptions and enactment of their own agency. Dan alluded to the overarching influence of the tenure system ("perhaps tenure will go away—who knows") as a societal force shaping his experience. Kirk called for institutional changes that would allow NTTF to serve as departmental leaders ("give us equal voice in management and consider us for leadership positions"). Susan described her individual efforts to please her dean ("contain the fires and forward the positives"). This study highlights how collegial relationships can enhance FTNTTF agency, while institutional structures and inconsistency can constrain it. In some cases, proactive, progressive leadership may, as Susan described "provide the grace the system doesn't." In other cases, FTNTTF may receive no support or guidance at all; recall Michaela's comments that "I have gotten zero information from [the department] about anything."

Longevity and establishment in their positions afforded FTNTTF greater autonomy and agency, similarly to Niehaus and O'Meara's (2015) findings regarding T/TTF. Niehaus and O'Meara found professional networks were valuable to tenured faculty agency, but took time to develop. Similarly, we find that participants had to earn the respect and trust of their colleagues over time; when they did, they felt a greater sense of agency. While both T/TTF and FTNTTF must build relationships, relationships are particularly critical for FTNTTF since most can be non-renewed at the end of the current academic year. TTF have a guaranteed three to four years to build relationships, and tenured faculty a lifetime. FTNTTF, therefore, work within a double-bind: they are constantly under pressure to perform while navigating the politics of an organization that devalues and renders their work invisible. Because FTNTTF must establish their reputation before activating their agency, they are, in a sense, performing without a safety net. Most do not enjoy the protection of a contract beyond one year, yet many do not gain the respect of their colleagues until they have proven themselves repetitively over time. Indeed, many of their colleagues do not know what they do and do not invite their opinions, even on matters where they are subject matter experts. This contractual tactic may maximize organizational flexibility, but it treats FTNTTF as disposable commodities.

Kezar (2013b) argued that limited support for non-tenure-track faculty can be unintentional, by way of nonexistent policies advancing their work—but also that well-intentioned efforts to create policies and practices might produce unintended, counterproductive results. This study goes further to identify specific policies and practices like exclusion from committee membership and curriculum involvement as well as lack of voting privileges impede FTNTTF agency. This study also reveals that even an institution actively seeking to address inequitable policies concerning FTNTTF can fall short in execution, as inconsistent policy implementation across campus limited the ability of FTNTTF to enact change.

While other scholars (Alston, 2005; Goldfien & Badway, 2015; Kezar et al., 2011; Kezar & Sam, 2013; Meyerson & Tompkins, 2007) have examined faculty agency within higher education, this study offers a unique application of O'Meara et al.'s (2011) faculty agency framework to FTNTTF experiences. This study's findings suggest that overarching power structures—administration, tenured faculty, formal and informal policies—may contribute to experiences of constrained agency and invisibility for key members of the organization (FTNTTF). These complex dynamics undermine FTNTTF's capacity to actualize their skills, experience, and expertise to the full extent of their abilities. Indeed, these findings highlight the way SU has failed to adequately address FTNTTF issues and to leverage FTNTTF potential.

Kezar (2012) examined grassroots and senior leadership could converge toward shared goals. She argued that small, incremental change efforts led from the bottom-up can be successful if they receive support from leadership. In our study, participants who felt unable to activate their agency often described lack of departmental support and, thus, a lack of top-down and bottom-up convergence. Kezar identified tactics such as membership on committees, building coalitions with other initiatives, timing of opportunities, and managing up. While understanding that such strategies may be useful in cases where FTNTTF have the support of senior leadership, we question how FTNTTF who lack support and visibility can apply these strategies and enact their agency. This lack of top-down and bottom-up convergence may be due in part to lack of understanding among T/TTF and campus leadership about what NTTF actually do. Similar to Maxey and Kezar's (2015) finding that T/TTF thought NTTF only taught, several participants noted that T/TTF “just don't know what I do” and were oblivious to the research and service activities they performed in addition to their teaching loads. Their change efforts, however significant, remained invisible. Feeling invisible may contribute to experiences as a “second class citizen” (Gappa et al., 2007; Kezar, 2012), as well as to NTTF's significantly lower levels of satisfaction with the collegiality of their workplaces (Ott & Cesneros; 2015).

As Campbell and O'Meara (2014) have noted, agentic perceptions influence agentic behaviors and action. FTNTTF at SU too often felt constrained

by invisibility, exclusion from governance and decision-making, and unclear and inconsistent interpretations of their roles. Because they perceived their agency as limited, they were less likely—and less able—to act as agents of change on behalf of their programs and students. University leadership, policies, and culture must clearly and consistently embrace and engage FTNTTF if these faculty are to operationalize their agency and serve as full members of their academic community.

SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPLICATIONS

This study's findings suggest opportunities for institutional leadership to systematize FTNTTF engagement in governance and policy decisions at the departmental, college, and campus level. Moreover, findings from this study should compel those in leadership roles to recognize how the NTTF/TTF binary structure obfuscates the weight FTNTTF carry in department-level contributions. Despite constraints of structure and power dynamics, FTNTTF make valuable contributions to the university, often invisibly.

Higher education institutional systems should support and incentivize FTNTTF engagement and provide an adequate "policy floor" for establishing common guidelines and procedures for involvement of FTNTTF. While colleges, schools, and departments will exercise a degree of autonomy based on discipline, program, and faculty composition, allowing too much discretion to individual units jeopardizes the inclusion of FTNTTF across campus. This lack of a policy floor also has potential negative repercussions for FTNTTF seeking promotion. FTNTTF are expected to excel in two of the three traditional faculty areas: teaching, research, and service. If FTNTTF do not have time or pathways for participation in service beyond their role, promotion is unlikely. In addition, more work is needed to understand how institutions, schools, and departments are working towards culture and organizational change regarding NTTF.

More established FTNTTF possess historical knowledge of departmental processes and practices to support newer faculty who do not have this frame of reference. This study's findings suggest that just as tenured faculty mentor and socialize tenure-track colleagues (Tierney & Bensimon, 1996), senior FTNTTF can serve as advocates and guides for newer NTTF to encourage and enable their engagement in departmental life. Senior FTNTTF are also critical to the socialization of TTF as they navigate department processes and issues. Departments, colleges, and institutions should recognize and leverage the institutional memory and expertise of senior FTNTTF to support and develop their more junior colleagues, both on and off the tenure track. Mentorship is relatively un-studied among NTTF ranks and it is unclear from this study whether and to what extent FTNTTF are being mentored or mentoring others.

Most obviously, FTNTTF should be involved in curriculum; the university hires NTTTF most frequently for teaching skill and expertise, particularly at a research-intensive university where T/TTF carry high research responsibilities. This presents a disconnect between the alleged areas of expertise of NTTTF—teaching and pedagogy—and how their talents are utilized. Some departments intentionally exclude FTNTTF from broader conversations about curriculum and teaching, relegating their expertise to the classroom and silencing their contributions. This approach neglects opportunities to leverage FTNTTF knowledge and skills.

To mitigate the disconnect between FTNTTF and T/TTF and promote collaboration among all faculty, departments should encourage opportunities for faculty to share curriculum development, best practices, and current research. These might be informal, such as inclusion in and recognition at departmental meetings, departmental brown-bag lunches, or included in strategic planning or departmental retreats. FTNTTF can serve as “boundary spanners” by connecting non-tenured and T/TTF (Meyerson & Scully, 1995, p. 595). These boundary-spanning alliances play an important role in educating departments and institutions about the role of FTNTTF on campus, and institutions can foster a more unified campus culture by facilitating greater connections across these boundaries.

The connection between agency and longevity can be problematic. While it is normative to expect respect, trust, and loyalty to grow over time, the process by which FTNTTF have to establish themselves, feel they cannot say “no,” and are both overburdened by teaching and programmatic responsibilities yet excluded from broader service sends a clear message from the institution about the disposability of FTNTTF. Hiring faculty off the tenure track has become the norm (Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006), with NTTTF faculty rank growth outpacing T/TTF growth (American Federation of Teachers, 2009; Ehrenberg, 2012). These positions provide critical gap-filling functions and allow flexibility to the institution (Ehrenberg & Zhang, 2005; Jaeger & Eagan, 2011; Kezar & Sam, 2014; Levin & Shaker, 2011); therefore, institutions must find ways to implement consistent, fair, and equitable policies that show how they value NTTTF, not merely perform lip-service while they exploit NTTTF labor.

Institutions can seek to ensure the longevity and loyalty of FTNTTF in their departments by considering a probationary period of two-years, to be followed by rolling three-year contracts. This requires more planning on the part of the department but, more importantly, provides symbolic and actual value for the role and work of FTNTTF. For senior FTNTTF, institutions may consider implementing five-year contracts, which could foster greater commitment to from FTNTTF and reward FTNTTF for their excellence and loyalty. Given the potential for inconsistency in the articulation of policies affecting FTNTTF, such a change would require support and communica-

tion from campus leadership, as well as the engagement of college deans and department chairs. At minimum, colleges and departments should provide clear communication to NTTTF about their contracts, pathways for promotion, and role expectations.

FTNTTF can serve their departments more effectively if governance policies are updated to permit their participation in committee membership and voting. On many campuses, this change calls for an organizational culture shift and requires intentional action from leadership. If T/TTF and administrators do not wish to adapt their policies and include FTNTTF in decision-making, perhaps they should consider how well their organizations would function without FTNTTF labor. Failure to institutionalize the support, inclusion, and fulfillment of FTNTTF as part of campus life only serves to weaken universities that increasingly rely on their professional and teaching expertise (see Baldwin & Chronister, 2001; Ehrenberg, 2012).

This study reveals that FTNTTF seek greater agency and opportunities to engage in their departments, programs, and campus, despite the constraints of their unprotected and often devalued status. While this study focused on the perspectives of FTNTTF themselves, further studies might also examine how T/TTF, departmental, and college leadership perceive FTNTTF agency, roles, and contributions. Additional work should also consider the change strategies FTNTTF employ when seeking to operationalize their agency. Lastly, these findings suggest the need for more research exploring NTTTF experiences at different institutional types and with perspectives that can further unveil the power at play, such as critical discourse analysis and post-structural approaches. This case study offers an important step toward recognizing the variety of ways FTNTTF perceive and activate their agency, the barriers they may encounter, and opportunities for future research in this area—particularly as faculty off the tenure track continue to increase in numbers and relevance.

APPENDIX
TABLE A1
PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS

<i>Name</i>	<i>Field</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Type of Contract</i>	<i>Race/ethnicity</i>
Samantha	Professional	Lecturer	Three-year rolling	Anglo
Kirk	Professional	Senior Lecturer	Year-to-year	Anglo
Donald	Liberal Arts	Lecturer	Year-to-year	Anglo
Andrew	Liberal Arts	Senior Lecturer	3 Year Rolling	Anglo
Michaela Black	Professional	Lecturer	Year-to-year	African American/
Dan	Education	Clinical Assistant Professor	Year-to-year	Anglo
Judy	Professional	Senior Lecturer	Three-year rolling	Anglo
Elise	Natural Sciences	Clinical Associate Professor	Three-year rolling	Anglo
Ann	Liberal Arts	Lecturer	Year-to-year	Anglo
Susan	Sciences	Lecturer	Year-to-year	Anglo
Amy	Professional	Clinical Associate Professor	Year-to-year	Anglo
Noah	Liberal Arts	Senior Lecturer	Year-to-year	Anglo
Paul	Professional	Clinical Professor	Year-to-year	Anglo
Eduardo	Liberal Arts	Lecturer	Three-year rolling	Anglo
Amelia	Liberal Arts	Lecturer	Three-year rolling	Anglo
Amber	Professional	Clinical Professor	Three-year rolling	Anglo
Malcolm	Professional	Lecturer	Three-year rolling	Anglo
Sonya Black	Natural Sciences	Clinical Associate Professor	Year-to-year	African American/
Olivia	Natural Sciences	Clinical Associate Professor	Three-year rolling	Latina
Dave	Liberal Arts	Lecturer	Year-to-year	Anglo

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