

Commonly raised comments and questions about the Program for Change

<p>1.</p>	<p>The <i>Program for Change</i> takes too long. Many who are currently teaching will be retired in 20 years. Why don't you make it a 5-year or a 10-year rather than a 20-year plan?</p> <p><i>A number of no-cost or low-cost items could be implemented immediately, such as a seniority system for non-tenured faculty, fair and transparent summative and formative evaluation systems, and a single hiring system for all faculty, though it may be necessary for these seemingly benign changes to be approached in steps. The challenge is for those groups who have some agency and are intent to work on such goals to actually start doing something. That may involve taking on some vested interests within their own groups.</i></p> <p><i>There is nothing about the plan that stipulates that these milestones must take place in 20 years; if they can take place soon rather than later, so much the better. Those measures that require costs, such as a single salary schedule for both full- and part-time faculty, will require considerable funds, and the most realistic way of prosecuting such a goal is incrementally. If equal pay can be achieved in 10 years or in 5 years, then it should be achieved and celebrated. What cannot be allowed to happen is for another 40 years to elapse without meaningful progress towards achieving equality. But since the status quo evolved over time, it may not be realistic to suppose that it can be reformed radically.</i></p>
<p>2.</p>	<p>During periods of dropping revenues, budget reductions, and deficits, is it reasonable for the Program for Change to suppose that there is any hope for change to come about?</p> <p><i>While some changes will require budgetary increases, a number of changes make either no fiscal impact or a minor initial fiscal impact. Such changes could be implemented promptly regardless of funding status. It is the authors' contention that starting to make such changes would substantially change the quality of life for contingents and part-timers now working. Momentum for further change would only increase.</i></p>
<p>3.</p>	<p>What evidence is there that the ideas proposed by the <i>Program for Change</i> are realistic?</p> <p><i>Most exist at Vancouver Community College, and other colleges in British Columbia, Canada. At VCC, part-time and full-time faculty are paid according to the same 11-step salary scale, both accrue seniority, once satisfying a probationary period (teaching for two years at 50 percent of a full-time load with satisfactory evaluations), probationary faculty are granted "regular" or normal status, and the primary factor in workload assignment is seniority, not full-time or part-time status. With its latest 2012-14 Collective Agreement having recently been ratified, all faculty enjoy equal</i></p>

	<p><i>protection of new academic freedom provisions from their first day of work.</i></p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Instead of introducing its Program for Change as a brand new idea, why doesn't it build on initiatives like the American Federation of Teacher's FACE initiative, which has already been proposed in a number of states and has funding and publicity behind it?</p> <p><i>It would seem FACE and other such programs are essentially focused on increasing the proportion of those who enjoy full-time tenure and tenure-track status. They do little to actually improve the working life of the majority who do not have that status. The authors' contention is that those programs are less realistic than the Program for Change. Given their fiscal restraints and their existing priorities, why would higher education administrators authorities agree to rapidly change the proportion of more expensive, tenured faculty at their institutions?</i></p> <p><i>The Program for Change is unique in that it focuses on the working conditions of the lower tier of the two-tiered faculty system--the non-tenured--transforming those working conditions to comply with professional standards. The goal of the Program for Change is to create a "normal" employment for the majority faculty in U.S. higher education. After a probationary period, a faculty member should be granted job security through reappointment rights and seniority.</i></p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Is the <i>Program for Change</i> proposing the elimination of tenure?</p> <p><i>The Program for Change is not proposing the elimination of tenure.</i></p> <p><i>The Program for Change's use of the word "tenure" is in its classic sense, where layoff is not possible without third party findings of fiscal exigency or redundancy.</i></p> <p><i>Tenure is the protection that ensures academic freedom and the integrity of higher education. However, we do urge that, over time, a disassociation of tenure and compensation. Tenure, ultimately, would be granted to those who are judged to warrant exceptional job security and job protection. When compensation is tied to tenure, those who are non-tenured will necessarily earn less, even if they are teaching the same numbers of classes for the same number of years.</i></p> <p><i>It seems clear that while the "super-security" of tenure is a worthy protector of academic freedom, but having tenure with its ties to full-time job status, reduced teaching loads, and relatively higher pay as the only way to improve the conditions of part-time and contingent faculty has created a massive barrier to such change. It is possible to have academic freedom protection, normal job security and protection from layoff, and decent conditions and salary without tenure. Having all of that and classic tenure for a peer-selected group is the model that FPSE unions in British Columbia pursue.</i></p>

6.	<p>Isn't it presumptuous to lay out 5 years for this or 10 years for that, like an old-fashioned Soviet 5-year plan, when there's no way to actually implement any of those goals?</p> <p><i>The Program for Change is intended to be neither prescriptive nor proscriptive. The milestones are offered to guide strategic thinking about change in the higher education workplace and also to help measure progress. A set of goals formulated without respect to a timeline or a means to measure progress is not strategic thinking.</i></p>
7.	<p>Some Americans are reluctant to accept a Canadian plan. Rather than basing the Program for Change on a Canadian institution, wouldn't it be better to use a U.S. institution as a model?</p> <p><i>The system of Canada's Vancouver Community College was selected as the model, not because it is Canadian, but because it offers equality for all instructors.</i></p>
8.	<p>There are over 1,000 community colleges in the United States, and hundreds of universities. Does the Program for Change presume that it is the one and only plan that should be adopted by all U.S. colleges and universities?</p> <p><i>Change can start wherever the will and conditions for change exist. It is long past time for real comprehensive change to start.</i></p> <p><i>Contingency is a problem across U.S. higher education. The Program for Change offers a way to solve the problem of contingency.</i></p> <p><i>Coming from similar community college environments which happen to be separated by an international border, the authors find it ironic that the great American democratic invention of community colleges find themselves burdened with the inequitable employment model of the classic research universities. Perhaps community colleges will find it possible to initiate comprehensive change before their university counterparts.</i></p>
9.	<p>How does the Program for Change propose to distinguish between part-time faculty who are professionals and part-time faculty who are teaching part-time even though they don't need the money because they have a spouse whose income pays the bills?</p> <p><i>The Program for Change is silent on this distinction. Whether a non-tenured educator relies upon the his/her teaching as the primary source of household income or is endowed with personal circumstances that render the income from teaching incidental, all faculty should be compensated based on a common salary scale for the faculty work that they are doing. Faculty should be honored as professional workers—lawyers or doctors are not paid based on their financial need.</i></p>
10.	<p>What connections does the Program for Change have to control accreditation agencies, post-secondary educational oversight agencies, and the U.S. Department of Education?</p>

	<p><i>The Program for Change does not have formal linkages with public or private educational agencies. It is hoping that stakeholders will embrace the Program for Change, recognizing, as the Program for Change does, that “the current situation cannot go unchallenged. It is not acceptable for the majority of those who deliver U.S. higher education to be without job security and academic freedom, to receive pay that is not commensurate with their academic and professional training nor the effective set of responsibilities they execute, and to be denied the professional dignity that is warranted by their station as educators.”</i></p>
<p>11.</p>	<p>Wouldn't it be better if a union if a mainstream U.S. entity, like the AFT or the NEA or the AAUP, were proposing the Program for Change?</p> <p><i>Where they exists, unions are the proper agent for change. It is the hoped that faculty unions will adopt the vision of the Program for Change in their collective bargaining and legislative efforts.</i></p>
<p>12.</p>	<p>Is there any reason to believe that the higher education establishment, including administrations and boards of regents/trustees will support the <i>Program for Change</i>?</p> <p><i>It would be naïve to suppose that the educational establishment would willingly embrace the provisions of the Program for Change. Pushback is inevitable. Change of one's personal habits takes great effort and determination. The Program for Change proposes change for a well entrenched higher education system. Change is particularly challenging when it entails a transfer of power and control from one group to another.</i></p> <p><i>While we expect pushback, we are hopeful that individuals and associations and unions of goodwill will see the value in moving away from a dual-tier employment system to one where there is true equal pay for equal work. We do not exclude enlightened administrators from our call for change, as it is in the interests of defenders of post-secondary education to move in this direction. To quote Martin Luther King, “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”</i></p>
<p>13.</p>	<p>You use the term “workplace discrimination” to describe the treatment received by part-time or adjunct faculty. Isn't that wording excessively harsh?</p> <p><i>If women or Hispanics or Blacks or other minority were paid a fraction of what the dominant group were paid for performing the same work, or if such groups were not granted job security, professional development, offices and paid office hours, and generally excluded from participation in campus governance, the term “discrimination” would be clear. Now, because the discounted pay and second class treatment of non-tenured faculty is an established pattern in the culture of U.S. higher education, it is taken by many to be natural, normal way things are.</i></p>

14.	<p>Some tenured instructors report that there is nothing that they would like better than to be liberated from committee work, holding office hours, meeting with administrators, advising students, overseeing part-time faculty, meetings with the dean, etc., so they could focus exclusively on their teaching or research. They often claim that these extra duties constitute a burden and point out that they are the basis for the higher pay rate that they receive. Often such instructors do not believe that part-time or adjunct instructors, because they simply teach, do not deserve equal pay because they don't perform equal work.</p> <p><i>The Program for Change opposes the fragmentation of teaching that has become commonplace in U.S. higher education, where contingent faculty are often presumed to “just teach” with no additional duties.</i></p> <p><i>The Program for Change proposes that the fabric of contingent faculty workload assignments be expanded to match those of tenured faculty, as it is at Vancouver Community College where workload is pro-rated and is assigned at the division level. Non-tenured instructors should not “just teach” but should be involved in and compensated for the full range of teaching duties. In addition to teaching, the Program for Change proposes that all faculty, whether full-time or part-time, should be involved with service, and scholarly activity such as research, which should entail campus governance, meeting with students, and other functions that are now generally the exclusive domain of tenured faculty.</i></p>
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