Executive Summary

On June 20, 2014, the TIAA-CREF Institute assembled higher education researchers, provosts and other senior administrators, and subject matter experts for its 2014 Fellows Symposium: Exploring Emerging New Workforce Models. A combination of long-term trends and more recent financial pressure is changing the composition of the faculty workforce at colleges and universities of all types. Today, approximately 70 percent of faculty are nontenure track, up from about 20 percent in the late 1960s—a dramatic shift that has occurred with little acknowledgement and even less “intentionality” on the part of institutions. While the breakdown in higher education’s long-established financial models has been a prime driver in accelerating this shift in recent years, research indicates that resulting savings from most new workforce models appear to come at the price of reduced student learning and outcomes. That needn’t be the case, though, as indicated by the institutional practices described and ideas discussed by symposium attendees. As pressures intensify to increase student access, affordability and successful completion, it is critical that the nation’s colleges and universities design and implement new faculty workforce models in ways that best support long-term institutional goals and the interests of students, faculty and other stakeholders. The workforce model adopted by medical schools, which has been intentionally designed to incorporate nontenure-track faculty, was recommended for study. This paper is based on remarks made during the symposium’s presentations and discussions.

Key Take-Aways

- The shift to nontenure-track faculty, including full-time teachers and part-time adjuncts, is happening for both fiscal reasons and because the shift allows institutions greater flexibility in responding to student demand and staffing needs.

- Reliance on part-time faculty generates concern regarding student outcomes. Negative effects stem from a number of factors—including a poor support system for adjuncts and their lack of time to interact with students outside the classroom—not because they are poor teachers in the classroom.

- Higher education can be more systematic and comprehensive in implementing policies and practices to support nontenure-track faculty by, for example, offering them orientation programs and professional development and, more fundamentally, by improving their interaction with students outside the classroom.

- Colleges and universities must thoughtfully design future faculty workforce models, including the strategic utilization of nontenure-track faculty, because it is highly unlikely that higher education will return to a mostly tenure-track faculty model.

- To recruit and retain the best faculty, including nontenure-track faculty, institutions need to be clear about the expected contributions of every faculty member; human resources has an important role to play in this regard.
The faculty workforce is changing. Twenty-two percent of faculty were nontenure track in 1969. By 2012, that proportion had risen to 71 percent. While the trend has been underway for decades, certain drivers of change are accelerating the shift today and upending the “traditional” workforce model in higher education. These drivers include:

- Growing challenges around student access, affordability and completion rates;
- Public frustration over the increasing cost of higher education;
- Threats to financial sustainability such as rising costs and declining government aid;
- Changing demographics, with students becoming older, more diverse, and more likely to attend part-time;
- Changing demographics among faculty and administration—with members of multiple generations working side-by-side (a trend with deep roots in the end of mandatory retirement in 1993);
- New technologies and delivery models for instruction;
- The globalization of higher education; and
- Increased public focus on student outcomes, particularly post-graduate labor market experience.

Until relatively recently, limited attention has been focused on evolving faculty employment patterns. As a result, little is known about the short- and long-term implications of these new workforce models. Today, however, a consensus is emerging that colleges and universities need to intentionally design and implement their faculty workforce models in order to best support institutional goals and the interests of students, faculty and other stakeholders.

On June 20, 2014, the TIAA-CREF Institute assembled higher education researchers, provosts and other senior administrators, and subject matter experts for its 2014 Fellows Symposium: Exploring Emerging New Workforce Models. The symposium’s morning sessions explored why higher education’s traditional financial models are breaking down and the implications of new financial realities for faculty workforce composition, and included a roundtable with several administrators who offered their unique institutional perspectives on the issues at hand. In the afternoon, the same panelists discussed the implications of workforce trends on institutional costs, student learning, faculty recruitment and retention, and unionization.

The symposium featured presentations by:

- Stephanie Bell-Rose, TIAA-CREF Senior Managing Director and Head of the TIAA-CREF Institute;
- Herman Berliner, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Lawrence Herbert Distinguished Professor, Hofstra University, and TIAA-CREF Institute Fellow;
- Ronald G. Ehrenberg, Irving M. Ives Professor of Industrial and Labor Relations and Economics and Director of the Cornell Higher Education Research Institute (CHERI), Cornell University, and TIAA-CREF Institute Lead Higher Education Fellow;
- Jeffrey Frumkin, Associate Vice Provost for Academic and Faculty Affairs and Director of Academic Human Resources, University of Michigan;
- Adrianna Kezar, Professor of Education and Co-Director of the Pullias Center for Higher Education at the University of Southern California and TIAA-CREF Institute Lead Higher Education Fellow;
- Gregg Kvistad, Provost, University of Denver;
- Curtis Lloyd, Vice Chancellor for Human Resources, The State University of New York; and
- Paul Yakoboski, Senior Economist, TIAA-CREF Institute.

See Appendix A for the complete June 2014 Fellows Symposium agenda.

The Breakdown of Higher Education’s Financial Models

Ron Ehrenberg, Cornell University, provided an institutional framework for discussing faculty workforce issues by examining the breakdown of long-established financial models in higher education. He noted that tuition for private nonprofit four-year institutions grew annually at 3 to 3.5 percent above the rate of inflation over the last 30 years, far exceeding the growth of family income. That growth rate is unsustainable. A combination of stagnant family incomes, growing public and political concern over the cost of higher education, growing student debt levels, and forthcoming Obama administration proposals to rate colleges by affordability and the returns they offer, will limit the ability of these institutions to raise tuition in the future.

The financial challenges are somewhat different for public four-year institutions, Ehrenberg explained. On average, state appropriations have declined substantially in real
terms since fiscal year 1987, and are markedly lower than they were before the 2008-09 recession. Tuition increases at public four-year institutions, which over the last 30 years have averaged 1.5 percentage points a year more than their private sector counterparts’ increases, have been part of the institutional response to reductions in state support. However, economic and political pressures will also limit the ability of public institutions to raise tuition substantially in the future.

Public two-year colleges also have received less state support in recent years. While tuition increases have been more modest at these schools, the trade-off is that expenditures per student have declined in real terms. In addition, these institutions face increasing pressures from state governments to reduce costs and increase productivity.

The fiscal outlook for research universities is also challenging. Ehrenberg noted that institutions have had to self-fund more of their research over time, such that today they fund about 20 percent of it—some of which comes from undergraduate tuition revenue. Continuing cutbacks in federal research funding will increase the need for institutions to seek more funding elsewhere, as it will be difficult to fund research with tuition increases moving forward.

While administrative costs and student service expenditures have increased substantially relative to instructional costs at all types of institutions, since the recession there’s been a concerted effort to reduce the administrative cost structure. Small private institutions are at a disadvantage in this regard as they lack the potential economies of scale to do so. Savings through scale will require cooperation with their competitors and greater use of technology.

In pursuit of revenue without increasing tuition, Ehrenberg predicted that institutions will look to boost annual giving and work harder to commercialize research findings. They will also try to expand tuition discount programs and seek to enroll more full-tuition paying students, including those in professional or master’s programs, and make increased use of online and hybrid instruction.

Another potential source of revenue are campus facilities. Ehrenberg noted that facilities must be maintained 24 hours a day, seven days a week, but are lightly used during much of those times. Institutions need to think creatively about putting these facilities to better use by, for instance, offering more summer and evening programs, and perhaps adjusting tuition to expand enrollments at underutilized times.

Faculty Workforce Trends and Emerging New Models

Adrianna Kezar, University of Southern California, next focused specifically on how the faculty workforce model is changing. She began with the observation that a collective delusion seems to exist in higher education that the shift to nontenure-track faculty is not happening or, if it is acknowledged, that it’s happening someplace else. She recalled dozens of meetings where a president or administrator would state that the institution has no nontenure-track faculty, only to have a department chair explain that 50 or 60 percent of its faculty are nontenure track. Another misconception Kezar noted is that the move to nontenure-track faculty is a recent and temporary phenomenon, when in fact, it’s been occurring for decades.

As a result, Kezar explained, higher education has not established the policies and practices necessary to support nontenure-track faculty, such as orientation programs and professional development. For the good of these faculty, their students, and the institutions themselves, change is a must. Kezar maintained that colleges and universities need to more thoughtfully and “intentionally” design their faculty workforce models because higher education will not return to a mostly tenure-track model.

Changes to the faculty model can be traced to the post-World War II period and the GI Bill. As many more students enrolled, community colleges and urban colleges emerged. These primarily teaching institutions inherited the traditional faculty model from institutions with a greater focus on research. The mission and purpose of these new teaching institutions were somewhat different from older research institutions, and so the role of faculty began to evolve, paving the way for more nontenure-track faculty, including adjuncts, to assume teaching responsibilities.

Subsequent economic shifts, such as declining state support, favored the use of nontenure-track faculty. Administrators also valued how the use of adjuncts provided greater flexibility in responding to changes in student enrollment patterns.

Kezar also argued that another driver in the increased use of nontenure-track faculty over time has been the general “corporatization” of higher education since the 1980s. She noted that board members are drawn from corporate America, and as these business leaders adopted more contingent labor force policies for their own companies, they began introducing such policies to colleges and universities as well.

At some institutions, Kezar said, the adjunct model has become the norm, perhaps too much so. While it may make
sense for an adjunct to teach a given class, it does not make sense to have entire programs taught by adjuncts, as sometimes happens, with no full-time person designing the curriculum to ensure that student learning goals are met.

Aside from adjuncts, there’s been significant growth in the use of full-time, nontenure-track faculty, who are typically in either research-only or teaching-only positions. They account for 20 percent of faculty, and because they are full-time, typically with multi-year contracts, they are much closer in terms of mindset and campus involvement to tenure-track faculty than to adjuncts.

Still another faculty workforce model explained by Kezar involves “unbundled roles” in which various instructional functions are separated and delegated. For instance, a faculty member focused on instruction might have no role in curriculum development, course design, or course assessment. Rather, a small set of full-time faculty might develop a curriculum that’s delivered by a large group of part-time faculty.

As colleges and universities look to implement new workforce models, Kezar suggests studying medical schools because this one corner of higher education has purposefully designed workforce models that incorporate nontenure-track faculty. In order to resolve conflicts between clinical practice and teaching, medical schools developed a model that is mostly nontenure track, with a very small portion of tenure-track faculty who tend to be in research-only positions. The nontenure-track faculty have multiple career pathways: clinical, teaching, research or some combination thereof. To establish prestige parity among tenure- and nontenure-track faculty, medical schools give nontenure-track faculty equal pay and benefits, and a voice in faculty governance.

Campus Perspectives

In the final morning panel, four administrators shared how their faculty workforce models were developed at their schools, how they are evolving, and expectations for the future.

Hofstra University

Herman Berliner, provost at Hofstra, described the need to cope with economic challenges—such as a discount rate in the 40 percent-plus range and intense competition—as Hofstra works to preserve its priorities and to enhance and differentiate the institution’s brand. This includes maintaining small class sizes and 140 majors.

He noted that 30 to 40 percent of faculty at Hofstra are adjunct, which provides flexibility to scale up and down based on student course demand. He discussed other ways that Hofstra manages personnel costs besides using adjuncts.

For example, Hofstra has adopted a heightened focus on long-term needs in tenure decisions, which can mean not awarding tenure to qualified candidates when a long-term need for their area of expertise does not exist.

Hofstra also has reduced budgets in nonacademic and administrative areas. On the nonacademic side, Hofstra dropped its football program in 2009. On the administrative side, it continues to struggle with the cost of post-retirement healthcare benefits. Hofstra discontinued these benefits for new employees arriving after 2003, but there still are very substantial costs; Hofstra recently announced that any administrator who remains after December 31, 2014 will no longer receive that benefit.

To more proactively manage its faculty workforce, Hofstra has introduced various retirement incentives. For example, Hofstra will pay full salary for a 50 percent teaching load for up to two and a half years to a tenured faculty member who is willing to retire. This also allows the near-retiree to transition more smoothly into retirement.

Berliner advocated for “term tenure,” while acknowledging that the idea is controversial. Tenure would be effective for a specified length of time, say 35 years. If the tenured faculty member would like to stay after that period, he or she could do so on a contractual basis.

University of Michigan

Jeffrey Frumkin, associate vice provost and director of academic human resources at Michigan, explained that the University of Michigan’s Ann Arbor campus has close to 3,000 tenured or tenure-track faculty. Approximately 150 to 200 new tenure-track faculty join the university annually, which is more than retire in a typical year. Most are pre-tenure hires, but some are senior faculty. In addition, the campus has 100 to 200 “professors of practice” who bring professional experience into the classroom. They are nontenure track, often with appointments of three or four years. There are also research-track faculty, with “up or out” decisions made during the first four years. If the research-track faculty also teach, they are given an adjunct title.

The Ann Arbor campus also employs 1,500 full-time and part-time lecturers. There are two tracks for lecturers: one involves teaching responsibilities only; the other involves administrative responsibilities, such as program coordination, in addition to teaching. The vast majority of lecturers are in the English department, one of the language departments, or the math department. Frumkin maintained that tenure-track faculty are not necessarily the best individuals to teach some courses in these subjects, particularly language instruction.
Lecturers at Michigan have been unionized since 2004, which has led to specific policies covering their employment. Lecturers are subject to a “major review” with the expectation that their teaching performance should be similar to that of a mid-career assistant professor. Looking forward, Frumkin said the university plans to start using data analytics to assess student outcomes and support teaching and learning decisions.

**University of Denver**

Gregg Kvistad, provost at the University of Denver, began by noting that his institution is teaching 23 percent more credit hours today than 10 years ago. During that time, the university has increased tenured faculty by 21 percent and tenure-track faculty by 19 percent, while increasing nontenure-track faculty even faster. Nontenure-track faculty account for one-third of the university’s faculty today compared with one-quarter ten years ago. Nontenure-track faculty have contracts and receive benefits. In fact, the number of nontenure-track faculty with benefits is up 89 percent over the last 10 years. By growing the faculty, the university now has a student-to-faculty ratio of 9:1.

Eighty-five percent of Denver’s adjuncts are employed in the professional graduate programs and in the two non-traditional extension programs. Very few are used in the undergraduate arts and sciences and traditional academic areas. Kvistad maintained that there are good reasons for using adjuncts in the professional programs. Judges, school principals, social workers, clinical psychologists, and the like, bring extraordinary professional skill and resources to the classroom. The disadvantage is that they are not as available for advising and mentoring as are full-time staff.

Kvistad shared data on the comparative teaching costs per quarter credit hour: $307 for a tenured faculty member and $226 for a tenure-track faculty versus $100 for a nontenure-track lecturer and $35 to $40 for an adjunct. Given such differentials, Kvistad noted that it is tempting for an institution to go the adjunct route when facing financial pressures.

**The State University of New York**

Curtis Lloyd, vice chancellor for human resources at SUNY, remarked that the ratio of tenure-track faculty to nontenure track is about 60:40 among four-year institutions in the SUNY system, and has been stable at that ratio for some time; among SUNY community colleges, the ratio is 30:70.

He explained that the fiscal climate is a major factor in workforce decisions, noting that in recent years SUNY has experienced state budget reductions of approximately $1 billion dollars. Replacing a retired, tenured professor with an adjunct has provided SUNY with a great deal of flexibility in the face of such fiscal constraints and an aging workforce.

He noted that nontenure-track faculty at SUNY are part of the broader labor union representing tenure-track faculty and other professional employees at state-operated campuses. The union, with membership of approximately 36,000, has negotiated full benefits for nontenure-track faculty who teach at least two courses at the same institution.

Lloyd explained that, historically, the union has not negotiated a minimum wage for nontenure-track faculty, who are paid an average of $3,000 per course. That may change. In the most recent contract, the union negotiated a longevity payment for contingent faculty who are employed for at least eight semesters.

Contingent faculty who have taught four consecutive semesters qualify to join the SUNY optional retirement program. Under that defined contribution plan, the employee contributes 3 percent of salary, while the state contributes 8 percent on behalf of the employee.

**Critical Considerations**

Paul Yakoboski set the stage for the symposium’s afternoon session by reflecting on the morning’s discussion around faculty workforce models. He said that the implications of several key dynamics must be better understood and internalized at institutions in order to improve the planning for and management of the faculty workforce.

Among these dynamics is the tough financial environment, which necessitates creative thinking on the part of higher education leaders in order to continue serving the core missions of teaching, research and service. The use of adjuncts and other contingent faculty is one response to financial pressures, but too often it has been done on an *ad hoc* basis. Colleges and universities need to become more intentional in the deployment of workforce resources.

Yakoboski observed that greater intentionality requires answering questions at two levels. At the macro level, institutional leaders must decide what faculty configuration best suits the institution’s mission given its financial constraints. At the micro level, they must determine what constitutes best practices with regards to the individuals hired. What are the dos and don’ts to ensure the right student experience, positive learning outcomes, student retention and, ultimately, graduation?

The use of adjuncts and other contingent faculty is one response to financial pressures, but too often it has been done on an *ad hoc* basis.
He suggested thinking of the workforce along a continuum, as opposed to simply tenure track versus nontenure track. For example, a significant share of nontenure-track faculty has five-year contracts. These individuals may have more in common with the tenure-track faculty than with their “contingent” peers. They are a hybrid, who lie somewhere along this continuum. What’s the best way to use those individuals, and do we need more or less of them? An institution needs a range of skills to fulfill its mission, and not every instructor needs to be a tenure-track “star.” Analogous to a championship sports team, a college or university needs a few stars and a lot role players who understand what they’re there to do, and mutual respect among all players is key to success.

The morning’s panelists then shared further insights about faculty workforce trends, with a special focus on four topics: Institutional Costs, Student Learning, Recruiting and Retaining Faculty, and Unionization.

Institutional Costs

Gregg Kvistad began the discussion on institutional costs by stating that while it’s easy to quantify the costs of different kinds of faculty, cost considerations cannot be the primary basis upon which to structure a faculty workforce. Each college and university, and higher education in general, needs to set goals for the 21st century and consider which workforce models are appropriate in light of those goals.

Kvistad said that it’s helpful for each institution to frame the conversation in terms of what the institution aspires to be and then consider the cost of its value proposition. The University of Denver’s value proposition is high-touch, personal attention. This involves connecting first-year students with service learning partnerships in the city and putting sophomores into research labs. The university knows these are expensive aspirations, and to the extent possible the administration aligns the workforce to achieve them.

James McGill, retired CFO of The Johns Hopkins University, noted that the higher education sector is now facing the same challenge that has confronted the health care sector—controlling costs without sacrificing outcomes. He maintained that many of the nation’s colleges and universities may not exist in 15 years unless they adopt disruptive technologies, such as real-time student assessment, to lower their cost structure.

Student Learning

Adrianna Kezar discussed several studies that have examined student outcomes in classes taught by part-time faculty. Findings indicate that an overreliance on part-time faculty has a negative impact on graduation rates, successful transfers from two-year to four-year institutions, student persistence, and performance in subsequent courses. Kezar cautioned, however, that such outcomes have more to do with adjuncts’ typical working conditions than with the quality of adjunct instruction. In particular, time constraints don’t allow adjuncts to support students to the same degree as full-time faculty. The vast majority of adjuncts don’t have time to meet with students, answer questions outside the classroom, and provide mentoring.

Another symposium participant added that faculty-student interactions influence a student’s ability to choose a major, identify careers of interest, and generally become engaged in their studies. Research also links faculty-student interactions to leadership development and improved critical thinking. Thus a lack of adjunct time for such interactions is worrisome.

Kezar explained that finding time to engage in professional development and update teaching skills is another challenge for adjuncts. This affects student outcomes as well. She reiterated that institutions relying on adjuncts need to think carefully about the kind of supports that can be offered to maximize student outcomes in adjunct-taught classes.

Curtis Lloyd weighed in by noting that faculty preparation programs vary widely across the SUNY system. Some SUNY campuses have very good faculty preparation programs, while others use something closer to a community college model, wherein adjuncts essentially teach courses on their own. Another participant explained that her college recently formed a program where all faculty—tenure track, tenured, and nontenure track—are invited to share best practices. The result has been an active, creative group that has facilitated interdisciplinary collaboration and experiments with digital learning.

Jeffrey Frumkin discussed Michigan’s process for evaluating adjuncts. The university has annual activity reports for adjuncts akin to those for tenure-track faculty, and adjuncts meet with their department chair at least once annually. After five semesters adjuncts receive a formal evaluation, and after eight semesters a major review is undertaken. Passing that review results in a “presumption of reappointment,” which can lead to a three-, four-, or five-year contract. In addition to ongoing evaluations and feedback, Michigan also makes department and campus resources, such as the Center for Research on Learning and Teaching, available to adjuncts.

Anne Ollen, senior director at the TIAA-CREF Institute, raised the issue of using student ratings to evaluate adjuncts given that some students may reward faculty for grading easily. In response, one panelist said he has seen little, if any, correlation between grades and faculty ratings.

Ollen also asked whether institutions need to worry about negative reactions by parents to a reliance on adjuncts given tuition levels at many institutions. In response it was
noted that most parents and students don’t realize when a course is taught by an adjunct. That said, Lloyd argued that institutions must be proactive in monitoring student outcomes. If administrators find a negative correlation between adjunct teaching and student outcomes, they should take action long before it becomes a parental issue. He asserted that maintaining a sufficient core of full-time individuals to oversee and monitor the curriculum is critical. At some community colleges, where 70 to 80 percent of faculty can be adjuncts, that core might not exist in all programs.

Frumkin opined that the best indicator of poor faculty performance, whether it’s an adjunct or a tenure-track faculty member, is the number of students who drop the course or visit the department chair’s office. It should not take long for the administration to realize there is something amiss in a particular classroom.

Paul Yakoboski raised the question of which courses are best taught by what types of faculty? For example, given that freshmen tend to have a greater need for outside the classroom interactions, does it make sense for tenure-track faculty to teach introductory-level courses since they have greater availability to meet with students? Gregg Kvistad responded that his institution has tried to make greater use of full-time faculty for freshman courses. Denver has instituted a large number of freshman seminars and lowered class sizes in the process. But he also noted that this does not mean the institution can simply use adjuncts in upper-level courses. That decision is based on who has the qualifications to teach particular upper-level courses. Some upper-level courses may be particularly well taught by “professors of practice.” Extrapolating from this experience, Kvistad said that such a workforce model will generally mean a smaller percentage of adjuncts relative to models that use adjuncts extensively in introductory level courses.

Recruiting and Retaining Faculty

Judith Singer, Senior Vice Provost for Faculty Development and Diversity and James Bryant Conant Professor of Education at Harvard University, began the discussion on recruiting and retaining talent by explaining that Harvard describes nontenure-track faculty as “core non-ladder faculty” to emphasize their importance to the university’s mission. She noted that Harvard has done several things to improve the experience for nontenure-track faculty, for example, by increasing the use of multi-year contracts. This both helps retain talent and provides a degree of job security.

Singer noted that core non-ladder faculty sometimes have more allegiance to the university than tenured faculty, who tend to have stronger allegiances to their disciplines. As a result, nontenure-track faculty are increasingly assuming leadership roles, especially in the teaching domain, and are participating in many of Harvard’s teaching programs. In fact, they can help the tenured faculty and tenure-track faculty innovate in their teaching.

Kvistad noted that the University of Denver had considered adding non-teaching duties to the responsibilities of some nontenure-track faculty, but there was a strong negative reaction among tenured faculty. They argued that paying nontenure-track faculty for teaching, research and service would call into question the need for tenure-track positions.

Harvard describes nontenure-track faculty as “core non-ladder faculty” to emphasize their importance to the university’s mission.

Frumkin commented that morale among different segments of the faculty workforce depends on circumstances. He observed that lecturers in the English Department and Romance Languages at Michigan are not well-integrated into their departments and thus tend to have lower morale. Another example is in the medical school, where there are status issues between clinical faculty and tenure-track faculty that can cause tensions as well.

Another symposium participant referenced data indicating that overall job satisfaction among part-time nontenure-track faculty is equal to that of tenure-track faculty. Their satisfaction regarding particular issues related to working conditions and compensation, however, is lower. She also referenced studies examining departmental culture that found a negative climate and sense of disrespect significantly diminish satisfaction.

Kvistad reiterated the importance of culture, including issues related to income stratification. Cases emerge where some individuals are paid more than others for doing very similar things at the same institution. For instance, relatively few tenured faculty can sustain a high level of research over a 45-year career, even as it remains one of their job responsibilities. Kvistad observed that it can be disconcerting for other faculty to watch a tenured professor’s interests deteriorate over time to the point where he or she is performing the job of an adjunct faculty member. For academic communities to thrive, Kvistad argued that institutions need to be clear regarding the expected contributions of each faculty member. Human Resources has a role to play here, a more strategic role than is often supposed. The administration at the University of Denver is studying how best to address such issues.

Unionization

Curtis Lloyd explained how the shifting faculty composition is impacting the faculty union at SUNY. Historically, the union’s focus has been tenured and tenure-track faculty. But in
negotiations two years ago, part-time faculty interests were emphasized. The union decided that part-time faculty should receive a proportionate share of the available discretionary funding pool. This position created a significant rift within the union that the union is still addressing.

Another symposium participant observed that adjuncts have historically fared better with separate unions as opposed to belonging to the same union as full-time faculty. With one union representing both, it was common for the union’s bargaining team to consist solely of full-time faculty who would articulate that constituency’s priorities. As a result, full-time faculty got the major share of available resources. The participant noted what seems to be a shift in this dynamic, however, as adjunct numbers increase and they become more pro-active in unions.

Lloyd added that part-time faculty benefit from union representation in terms of retirement benefits at SUNY. In fact, SUNY uses retirement benefits as a recruitment tool for adjuncts. A faculty member teaching two courses earns the same benefits as a full-time faculty member. SUNY benefits from this arrangement since the state, which negotiates these benefits for all state employees, does not charge benefits back to SUNY.

Frumkin noted that the eligibility threshold for both health care and retirement benefits at the University of Michigan is working 50 percent of full-time, which typically means teaching two classes. Adjuncts able to take advantage of these benefits are usually long-term employees. They also have access to the same level of counseling services from the benefits office as full-time employees—something the union has helped raise awareness of among part-timers.

Conclusion

Most colleges and universities have yet to carefully consider the implications of a faculty workforce whose relative composition has shifted dramatically toward the employment of adjuncts and other nontenure-track faculty. There are many reasons for using nontenure-track faculty, such as:

- Increasing institutional flexibility;
- Generating cost savings; and
- Incorporating professional experience and expertise into the curriculum.

But drawbacks can arise as well, particularly regarding student outcomes in adjunct-taught classes. Higher education leaders are beginning to address how best to ensure good student outcomes and, more fundamentally, how to strategically plan for the use of nontenure-track faculty within programs and departments and across the campus to help meet the institution’s mission. Higher education must continue to become more intentional in this regard.

About the Author

Paul Yakoboski is a senior economist with the TIAA-CREF Institute. He conducts and manages research on issues related to defined contribution plan design, retirement planning and saving behavior, income and asset management in retirement, managing retirement patterns, and topics relevant to strategic management in the higher education and non-profit sectors. Yakoboski serves as director of the Institute’s Fellows Program and editor of the Institute’s Trends and Issues publication series. Prior to joining the TIAA-CREF Institute, Yakoboski held positions as Director of Research for the American Council of Life Insurers, Senior Research Associate with the Employee Benefit Research Institute, and Senior Economist with the U.S. Government Accountability Office. Yakoboski is a member of the American Economic Association and the National Academy of Social Insurance. He also serves on the board of the Journal of Retirement, the editorial advisory board of Benefits Quarterly, the research committee of the Insured Retirement Institute, and the Society of Actuaries’ Committee on Post-Retirement Needs and Risks. Yakoboski earned his Ph.D. and M.A. in economics from the University of Rochester and his B.S. in economics from Virginia Tech.
Appendix A

TIAA-CREF Institute Fellows Symposium:
Exploring Emerging New Faculty Workforce Models

Agenda
June 20, 2014

Morning Session: Drivers and Evidence of Change
Moderator: Jana Brown, Vice President, Human Resource Chief of Staff, TIAA-CREF

A Broad View
Ronald G. Ehrenberg, Irving M. Ives Professor of Industrial and Labor Relations and Economics, Cornell University, and TIAA-CREF Institute Lead Higher Education Fellow

The Big Picture: Why Financial Models are Breaking Down
Adrianna Kezar, Professor of Education and Co-Director of the Pullias Center for Higher Education at the University of Southern California, and TIAA-CREF Institute Lead Higher Education Fellow

Faculty Workforce Trends and Emerging New Models

Administrators’ Campus-Based Perspectives
Herman Berliner, Provost, Hofstra University

Jeffrey Frumkin, Associate Vice Provost for Academic and Faculty Affairs and Director of Academic Human Resources, University of Michigan

Gregg Kvistad, Provost, University of Denver

Curtis Lloyd, Vice Chancellor for Human Resources, The State University of New York

Afternoon Session: Digging In—Critical Considerations and Potential Implications for Higher Education, for Institutions, for Students, and for Faculty
Moderator: Ed Moslander, Senior Managing Director, Institutional Relationship Management, TIAA-CREF

The morning’s presenters will motivate discussion on faculty workforce trends with specific consideration of the following:

Institutional Costs – What do we know about implications of the trends and emerging models for an institution's bottom line?

Student Learning – What impact does the use of NTTF have on students’ learning outcomes and overall experience?

Recruiting and Retaining Quality Faculty – What actions might institutions take to meet the needs and interests of different types of faculty?

Unionization – How might increased unionization of adjuncts influence emerging models and institutions’ responses?