

Tenured/Tenure-Track and Contingent Faculty Employment Trends U. T. System Academic Institutions and National Comparisons

According to a recent study by the U. S. Department of Education (2005)¹, there has been a dramatic shift in the employment of college and university faculty. Between 1975 and 2003, the proportion of full-time, tenured and tenure-track faculty declined, while the proportion of **full-time, non-tenure track and part-time faculty, called ‘contingent faculty’**, increased dramatically. Across all degree-granting institutions (including two- and four-year public, private and proprietary institutions), the proportion of contingent faculty rose from 43 percent in 1975 to 65 percent in 2003.

Particularly when operating under budgetary constraints, institutions employ more contingent faculty, at substantially lower levels of salary, benefits, and academic support, in order to hold down instructional costs and to provide flexibility in meeting teaching demands due to student enrollment growth and program fluctuations. However, a report by the American Association of University Professors (Curtis & Jacob, 2006)² asserts that this practice may negatively affect student learning because contingent faculty “are not in a position to develop a relationship with students as advisors and mentors, and their lack of academic freedom constrains their ability to challenge students to excel.” In addition, some accrediting bodies, particularly those for specialized programs within institutions, impose limits on the use of contingent faculty in instruction.

For this analysis, the methodology used in the U. S. Department of Education study was replicated for public four-year universities and compares more recent data from the IPEDS Fall Staff Survey (fall 2005) with similar data from fall 1995. Faculty employment shifts for U. T. System academic institutions are compared with national benchmarks which are separated into two Carnegie Classification categories; one for research universities (doctoral and research universities) and one for master’s universities. Table 1 contains detailed information for each U.T. System academic institution.

**Contingent Faculty as Percent of Total Faculty Employed
U. T. System Academic Institutions**

	Fall 1995			Fall 2005		
	UT System	UT System (excluding Austin)	National	UT System	UT System (excluding Austin)	National
Research Universities	38.9%	47.6%	39.9%	41.5%	50.7%	47.9%
Master's Universities	48.6%		38.0%	50.0%		51.6%

Trends:

- Nationally, the proportion of contingent faculty employed at research universities increased from 39.9 percent in 1995 to 47.9 percent in 2005 (an increase of 8 percentage points).
- At U. T. System research universities, the proportion of contingent faculty increased from 38.9% (47.6% excluding Austin) to 41.5% (50.7% excluding Austin), about a 3 percentage point increase.
- Nationally, the proportion of contingent faculty at master's universities increased from 38.0 percent to 51.6 percent, an increase of almost 14 percentage points.
- At U. T. System master's institutions, the proportion of contingent faculty increased from 48.6% to 50.0%, an increase of less than 2 percentage points.

¹ U. S. Department of Education National Center for Education Statistics, *Staff in Postsecondary Institutions, Fall 2003, and Salaries of Full-Time Instructional Faculty, 2003-04*

² American Association of University Professors, *AAUP Contingent Faculty Index*

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- U. T. Austin's proportion of contingent faculty remained around 32% over this time period, substantially lower than national research average and the averages for the other System research institutions.
- Contingent faculty percentages at U.T. Arlington, U.T. Dallas and U.T. El Paso were between 5 and 9 percentage points higher than the national research average in 1995, but were only about 1 to 4 percentage points higher than the national research average in 2005.
- U. T. Pan American decreased the proportion of contingent faculty from 46.2 percent (8 percentage points higher than the national master's average) in 1995 to 42.3 percent (9 points lower) in 2005.
- U. T. Permian Basin also decreased the proportion of contingent faculty from 72.8 percent in 1995 (35 percentage points higher than the national master's average) to 53.8 percent (2 percentage points higher) in 2005.
- U. T. Brownsville increased the proportion of contingent faculty slightly from 52.9 percent (15 percentage points higher than the national master's average) in 1995 to 54.9 percent (3 percentage points higher) in 2005.
- U. T. San Antonio also increased the proportion of contingent faculty slightly from 48.7 percent (11 percentage points higher than the national master's average) in 1995 to 50.6 percent (1 percentage point below) in 2005.
- U. T. Tyler, as a new and fast-growing institution, increased the proportion of contingent faculty from 26.8 percent (11 percentage points lower than the national master's average) in 1995 to 52.7 percent (1 percentage point higher) in 2005.

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Table 1

	Percent of Contingent Faculty¹ National and U. T. System Academic Institutions					
	Fall 1995			Fall 2005		
	Total Faculty	% Tenured/ Tenure Track	Percent Contingent	Total Faculty	% Tenured/ Tenure Track	Percent Contingent
National Research	216,664	60.1%	39.9%	266,445	52.1%	47.9%
Arlington	883	50.8	49.2	1,118	47.9	52.1
Austin	2,485	68.2	31.8	2,693	68.0	32.0
Dallas	386	54.9	45.1	665	51.4	48.6
El Paso	770	52.9	47.1	970	49.4	50.6
U. T. Research	4,524	61.1	38.9	5,446	58.5	41.5
UT. Research (excluding Austin)	2,039	52.4	47.6	2,753	49.3	50.7
National Master's	117,784	62.0%	38.0%	142,943	48.4%	51.6%
Brownsville	374	47.1	52.9	596	45.1	54.9
Pan American	522	53.8	46.2	679	57.7	42.3
Permian Basin	125	27.2	72.8	184	46.2	53.8
San Antonio	676	51.3	48.7	1,039	49.4	50.6
Tyler	157	73.2	26.8	338	47.3	52.7
U. T. Master's	1,854	51.4	48.6	2,836	50.0	50.0

¹ The term 'contingent' includes full-time non-tenure-track and all part-time faculty. Teaching assistants were excluded from these data.
The number of institutions included in the national samples:

	Research	Masters
1995	151	275
2005	166	270

Source: IPEDS Fall Staff Survey, 1995 and 2005