

**Report on Survey Exploring Part-time Faculty Evaluations**  
**Personnel Planning and Review Committee (PP&R)**  
**Magnhild Lien, Chair of PP&R**  
**Sheila K. Grant and Carrie Rothstein-Fisch, Subcommittee Members**  
**March 16, 2013**

**Full Report**

The department chairs and program directors were sent an email on Monday February 4, 2013, inviting them to participate in a survey on how the current policy on reviewing part-time faculty was working for their respective department/program. A reminder email was sent out on Thursday, February 14, 2013. As of Tuesday, February 20, 2013, there were 47 surveys completed out of 59 possible, resulting in a response rate of 79.66%.

Respondents reported that 61.7% reviewed between 1 and 10 part-time faculty annually in their departments/programs.

The majority of reviews were conducted by the department chair (89.4%), the department personnel committee (53.20%), or other tenured faculty (36.2%). Overlapping percentages result from non-discrete categories. It appears that some departments may use a variety of people who conduct the reviews. See comments under table 2.

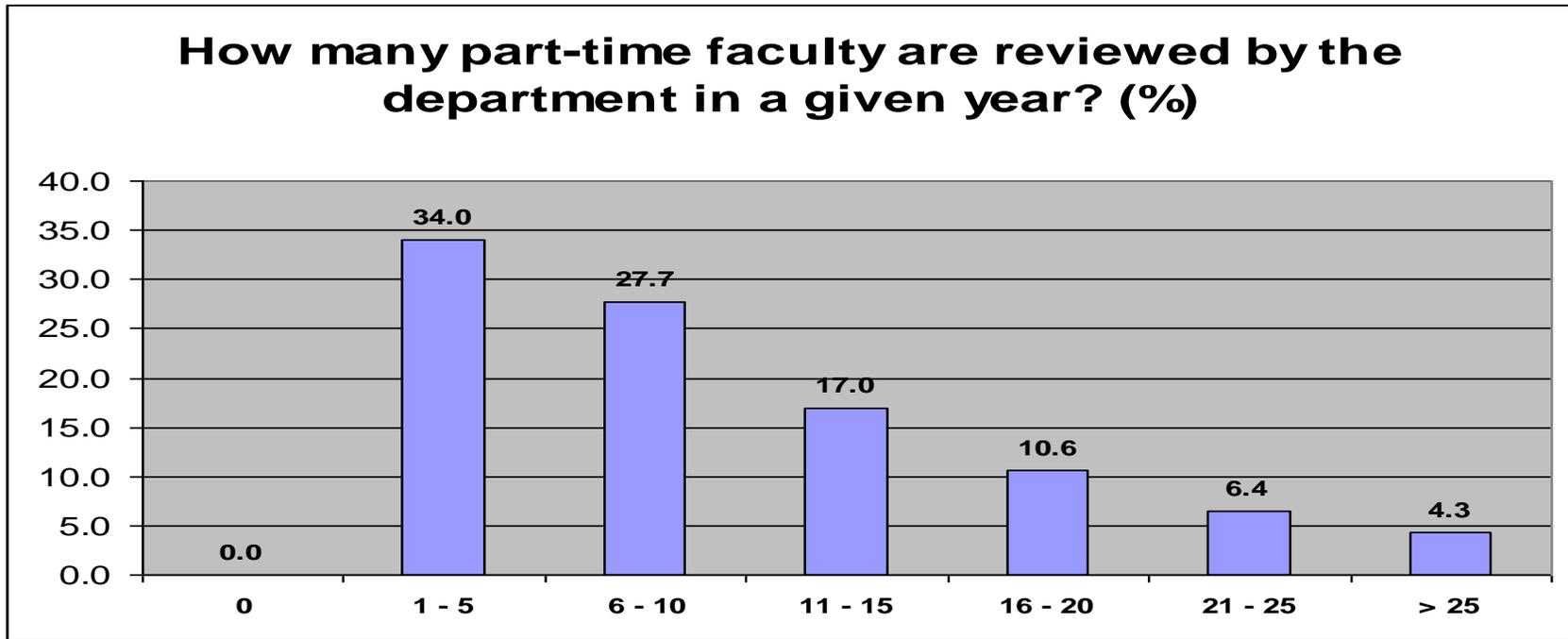
Respondents indicated that their review of PT faculty 'always' involved: 95.7% class observations; 78.7% review of course materials; and 70.5% student evaluations.

The majority of respondents (63.8%) indicated that the review of each part-time faculty took well over 2 hours to complete. There were comments provided by only one respondent indicating that each review of PT faculty to from 6 to 8 hours to complete.

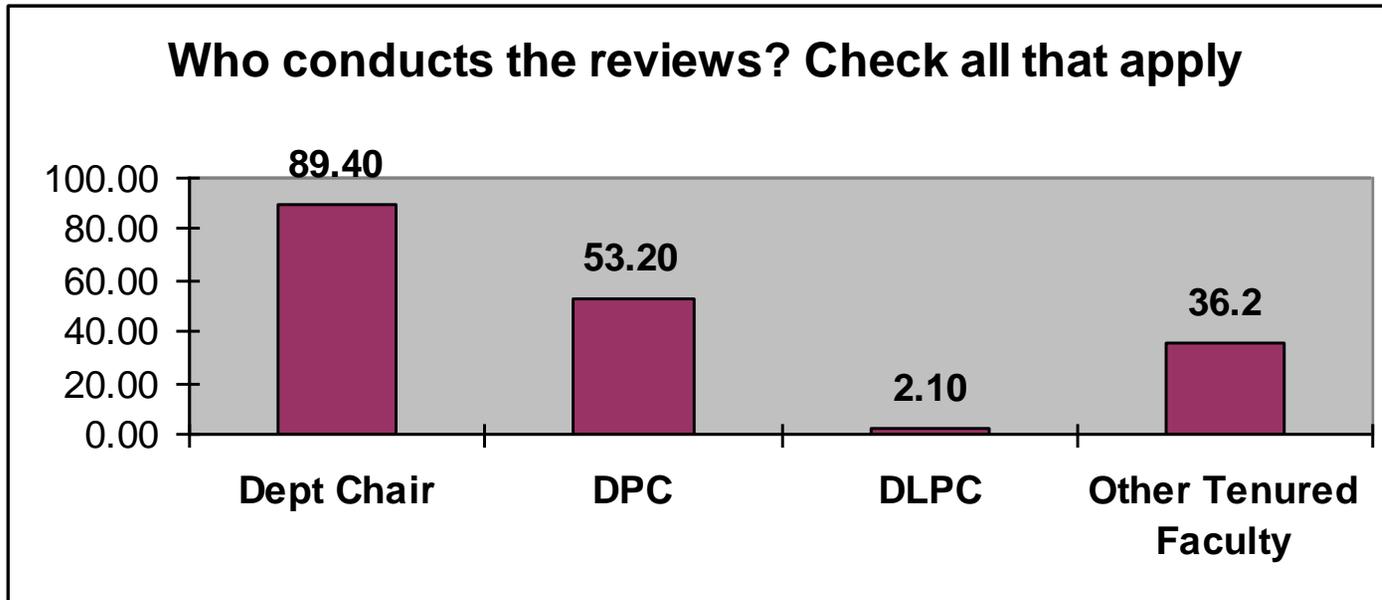
The majority of respondents (59.6%) believe that the current policy is working for their department/program. However, in contrast, 40.4% felt that the current policy was no longer a viable solution for their department/program.

There were numerous suggestions from respondents for alternative best practices and general comments/feedback.

1. How many part-time faculty are reviewed by the department in a given year?



2. Who conducts the reviews? Check all that apply



**Other Responses (6)**

Mostly, the chair b/c we have a small department

Faculty are assigned by Chair

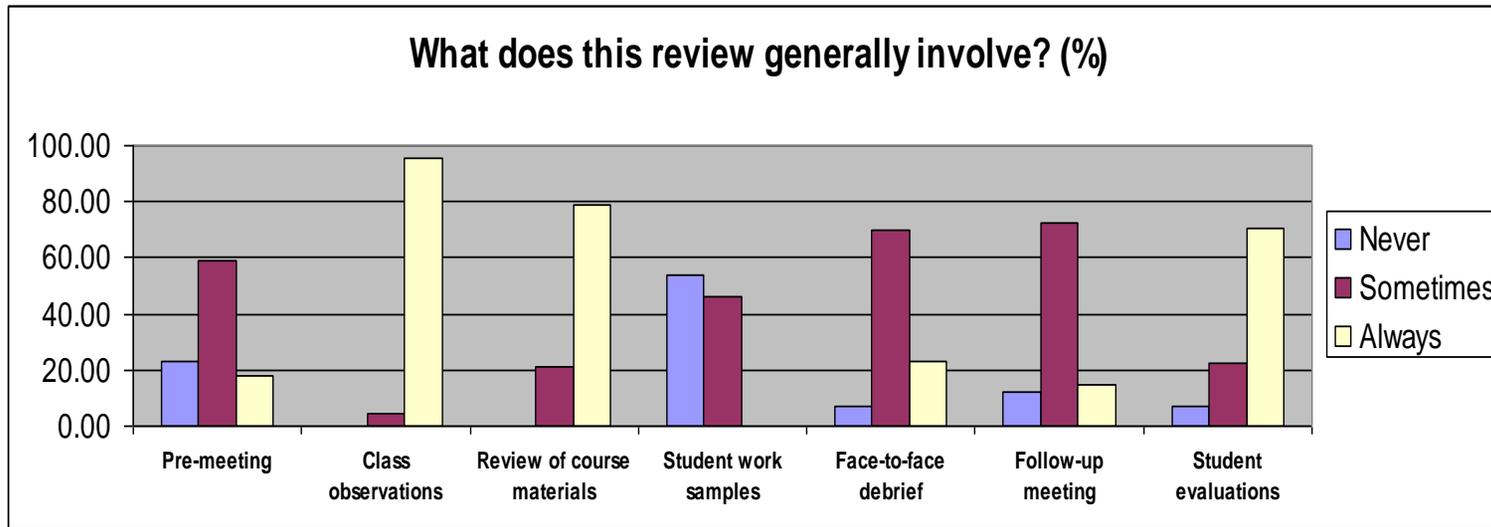
Director of Composition with help from colleagues--sometimes

Associate Chair & others designated by the chair

Only have 5 tenured faculty. so it is shared

It's split among all tenured faculty, including the chair.

### 3. What does this review generally involve?

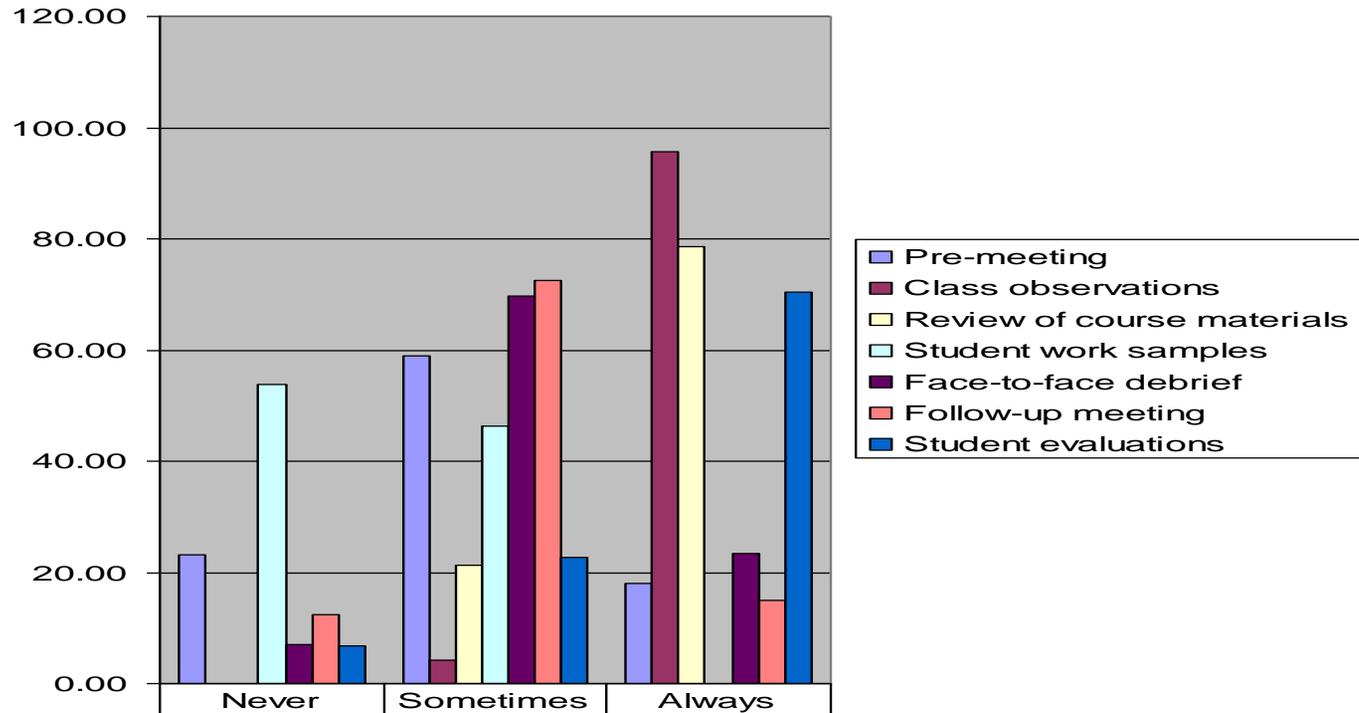


#### Other Responses (2)

If some issues are discovered during class visit, I will sit and discuss the issues with the faculty member

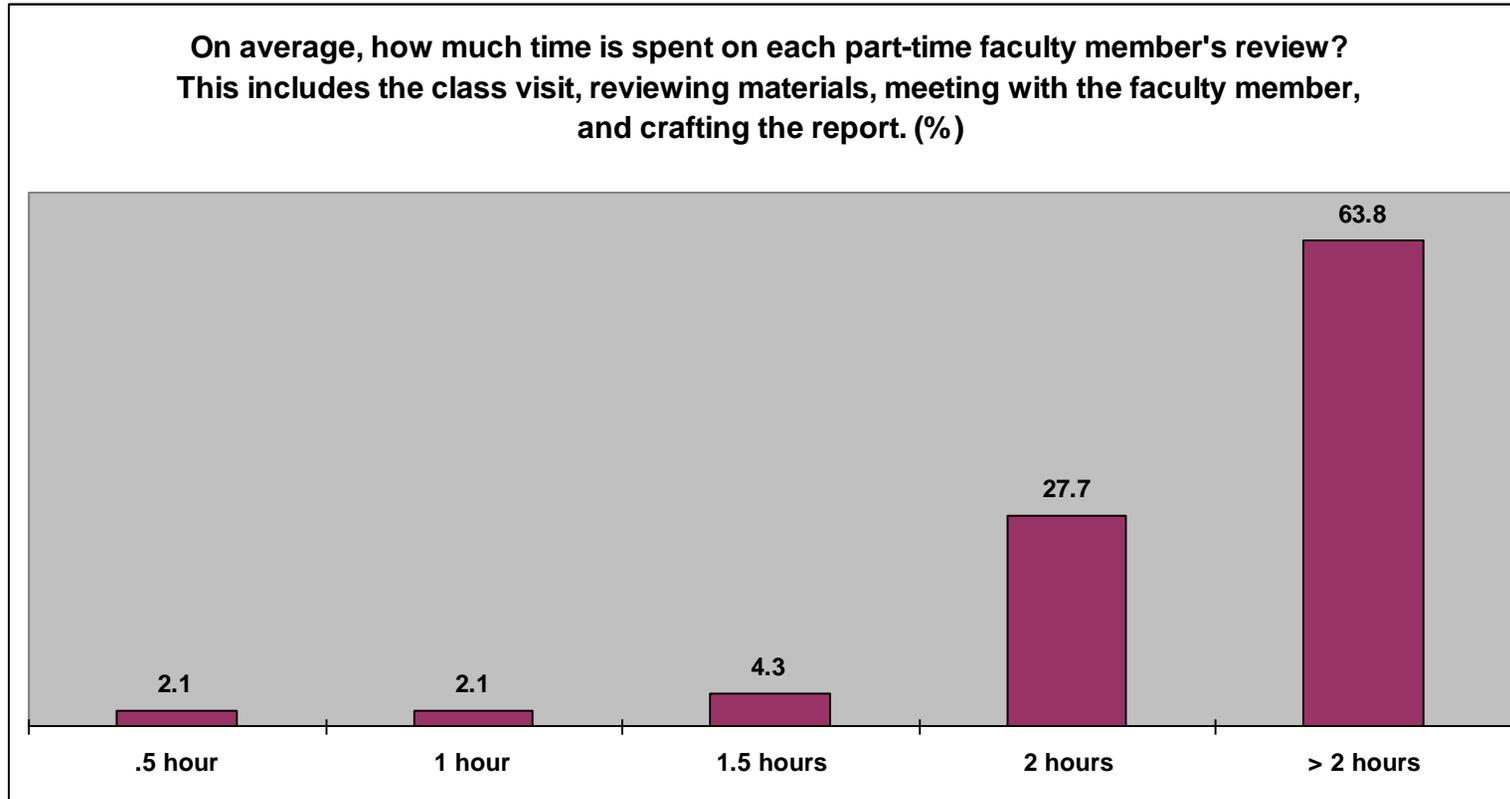
At least a one week notification

### What does this review generally involve? (%)



	Never	Sometimes	Always
Pre-meeting	23.10	59.00	17.90
Class observations	0.00	4.30	95.70
Review of course materials	0.00	21.30	78.70
Student work samples	53.70	46.30	0.00
Face-to-face debrief	7.00	69.80	23.30
Follow-up meeting	12.50	72.50	15.00
Student evaluations	6.80	22.70	70.50

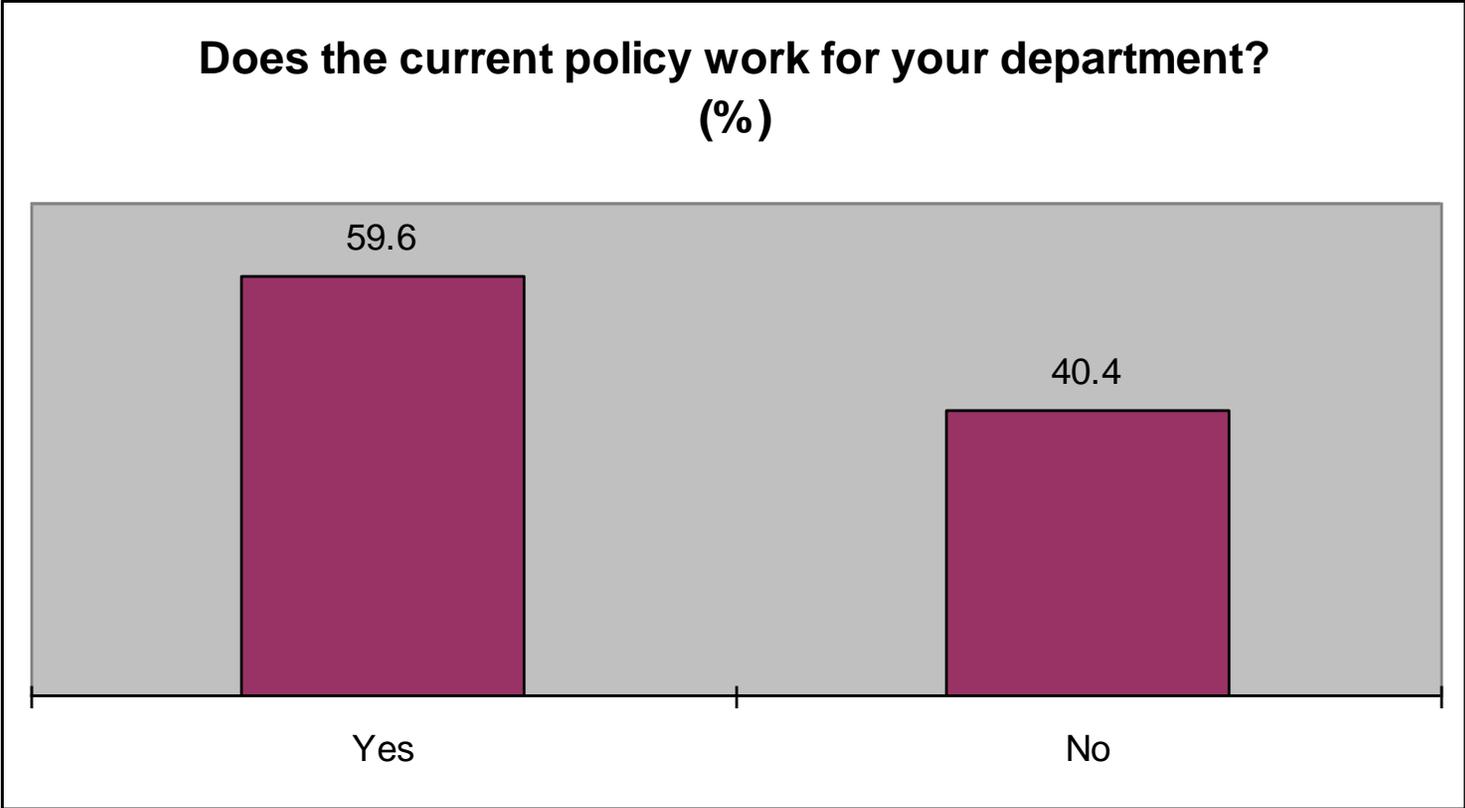
**4. On average, how much time is spent on each part-time faculty member's review? This includes the class visit, reviewing materials, meeting with the faculty member, and crafting the report.**



**Other Responses (1)**

On average a faculty review takes 6-8 hours of work on the part of the reviewer -- including setting up, reviewing course materials, sitting in a 75 minute class, writing up a review document

5. Does the current policy work for your department?



**6. If you answered 'No' to Question 5, what process for review of part-time faculty would you use as an alternative if the University did not mandate the peer visits every 24 units or 3 years?**

Peer review every 24 units or three years is ridiculous ... peer review of part time lecturers needs to occur at least once a year ... better if it were once a semester. The current policy (24 units or three years) is really sloppy and sadly reflects a laziness about evaluating and understanding our central mission here at CSUN --- TEACHING. It also shortchanges our students.

My department adopted its own PP&P for Temporary Faculty that require annual visits for lecturers in each separate course they teach by both the Chair and member of the Dept Personnel Cmte. Lecturers w/3-entitlements are visited annually by the Department Chair only. The Chair and Personnel Committee each make independent recommendations on reappointment (i.e., whether they are qualified to remain in the course pool(s)) each year.

It is very tiring when 70% of our faculty are PT and 65% have entitlement. Student Evaluation and will only do class visits when we see from the student evaluation or from student complaints that there is a problem.

Although this review seems to work, one class observation does not always address any teaching issues that need to be improved. It's often hit and miss.

I have some folks teaching 3-4 classes with us. That means we have to review them almost every year. I would make the policy 24 units or every 2 years, at the discretion of the Dept. Chair.

We are in the process of altering the policy in part to conform with the new contract, but also to incorporate more syllabus and assignment review.

Peer visit, review the PAF and write a narrative-based letter. It would be much better to have pre-meetings, debriefings and include student work samples. This doesn't routinely happen with the majority of part-time faculty peer visits. Doing so would require significantly more of a time investment on top of the full-time tenure-track faculty peer visits and reviews – especially in small departments with few tenured faculty. A more useful alternative might involve having part-time faculty members do "mini-PIFs," such as those completed by full-time lecturers, as the foundation of reviews, and including the peer visits and discussions pre- and post. Also, using a streamlined method for peer visits, such as a combination checklist and narrative, might save time and be more effective in improving teaching.

Classroom review of new instructors and additional reviews as warranted by student evaluations or other concerns that may arise. As is the case in all other CSU campuses, part time lecturers can submit materials for review, such as syllabi, statements of teaching philosophy, assignments, or samples of student work.

It would be better to have less frequent reviews for those PT faculty that have been teaching for a long time and typically teach more than about 10 units per semester

A review should take place during the first semester a lecturer is employed and once in the last year of a contract period. Colleges and departments may mandate more visits

I don't think it's the most effective. I think for it to truly have an impact it needs to be more frequent and, somehow, engaging. My department depends heavily on the PT faculty and I sometimes worry that they are not as engaged in developing or refining skills. This policy is hard with MANY part time faculty, and less and less full time faculty. I'd prefer a peer visit once in the first semester of hire, then once every three years after that, unless concerns lead to a need to visit sooner.

Drop "at least once for every 24 units," visiting once every 3 or 4 years should be good enough.

The review does not need to be so frequent, unless a problem is suspected based on student evaluations, faculty absences etc. A review every 5 years makes more sense.

It works fairly fine, but I would really appreciate the opportunity to visit the classrooms of only those whose performance is in question (based on student or peer comments)

I would recommend the unit requirement be eliminated and a time based requirement (say, all new lecturers and once every 2 years replace it)

We are considering reviewing part-time faculty MORE frequently. We do not think the 24 unit/3 year policy is adequate or appropriate. We believe part-time faculty should be reviewed annually, Full-time faculty believe they are held to much greater scrutiny and much higher standards than are part-time faculty.

We would do student evals on all classes and we would peer review once a year

The policy works but making so many visits (and mostly in the fall because that's how it happens) is often very difficult.

Yearly reviews would be productive and make the bookkeeping easier. Currently, the system takes some maintenance and department resources to track.

### **7. Any additional comments or suggestions on this issue?**

#### **Showing 14 text responses**

Evaluating part-time faculty is incredibly time-consuming and it is frustrating that only tenured faculty can participate in peer class visits or serve on Lecturer Review/Personnel Committees. It seems reasonable for assistant professors to be able to review lecturers given this asst. profs are in a completely different classification and different career trajectory (i.e., temporary faculty vs. full-time permanent-track faculty)

The evaluations add to the work of all the faculty, but evaluations are needed so what alternative do we have?

None

The current policy has resulted in having the most qualified and experienced lecturers evaluated far too frequently. In the case of lecturers who teach writing in the English department, these instructors are far more qualified to teach their subject than are most of the tenured faculty who assist the director in observing them. The policy does not make sense.

It is very labor-intensive, but it helps with quality control.

Great job trying to help with this situation. Go Carrie!!!

Flexibility in when to evaluate based on each faculty member would be appreciated!

The enormous amount of time reviews take needs to be recognized, and appropriate support for chairs and personnel committees be provided.

It would be great if PP&R could help us track this somehow. With changes in committees and chairs, it is hard to keep track of last evaluations, etc.

We thin student evals should be done on ALL classes every semester.. These can be a good indicator that there is an issue arising.. additionally, do not limit us to once every 3 years or 24 units..

Student evals typically come out AFTER the class visits....so they are never mentioned (or very rarely mentioned) in the formal class visit report. Clearly our process needs to find a way to combine the 2 other than by simply placing them in the file together in each case. Thanks for addressing this important issue.

I think it's both arduous and necessary, so I understand the concerns. Still, the part-time faculty are simply less integrated into the department and its standards, so it's necessary.

The classroom visits and evaluations are essential to maintaining a clear line of communication with faculty and a responsible level of oversight.

### **Summary of Comments.**

#### Alternatives

1. There were 19 comments in the section of “if the current policy does not work for your department...” This results in 40% of those surveyed and we might speculate this is 100% of those who responded the policy wasn’t working.
2. Themes emerged:
  - a. Less frequent observations (n = 8, 17%)
  - b. More frequent observations (n = 6, 13%)
3. Other issues that were highlighted included workload (n = 2, 4%) along with the themes of letting departments be somewhat autonomous, and reviewing instructors only when problems emerge.

#### Additional comments:

1. Issues of quality control - need to insure high levels of teaching
2. Reconsider the sequence of observing and then obtaining teaching ratings – ineffective for comprehensive review
3. Chairs and DPC may need more help from PP & R to track p-t faculty in need of review

4. Issues of seniority and proven practice. Do well-seasoned p-t faculty really need the same frequency of observations as others who are less experienced?

There was one response to the email offer to add more information:

Lecturers can earn de facto tenure pretty easily here at CSUN and CSU generally. But there were few revision steps in that process ... until now. With the requirement that folks be reviewed seriously (now with the new contract) prior to getting a three year entitlement and with each renewal ... it is critical that regular teaching reviews are conducted. This is the only factor that matters with lecturers ... so we should have robust data, e.g. more than one classroom visitation.