

ALTERNATIVES TO THE TENURE TRACK AT SMALL LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGES:

Meaningful pathways when it's not about tenure

June 29, 2021



collaborative on academic
careers in higher education



Ursinus College

Overview



Introductions



**Findings from
COACHE Data**



**Observations from
Ursinus College**



Group Discussion

Today's Presenters



Meredith Goldsmith, PhD

Professor of English and Associate
Dean, Ursinus College



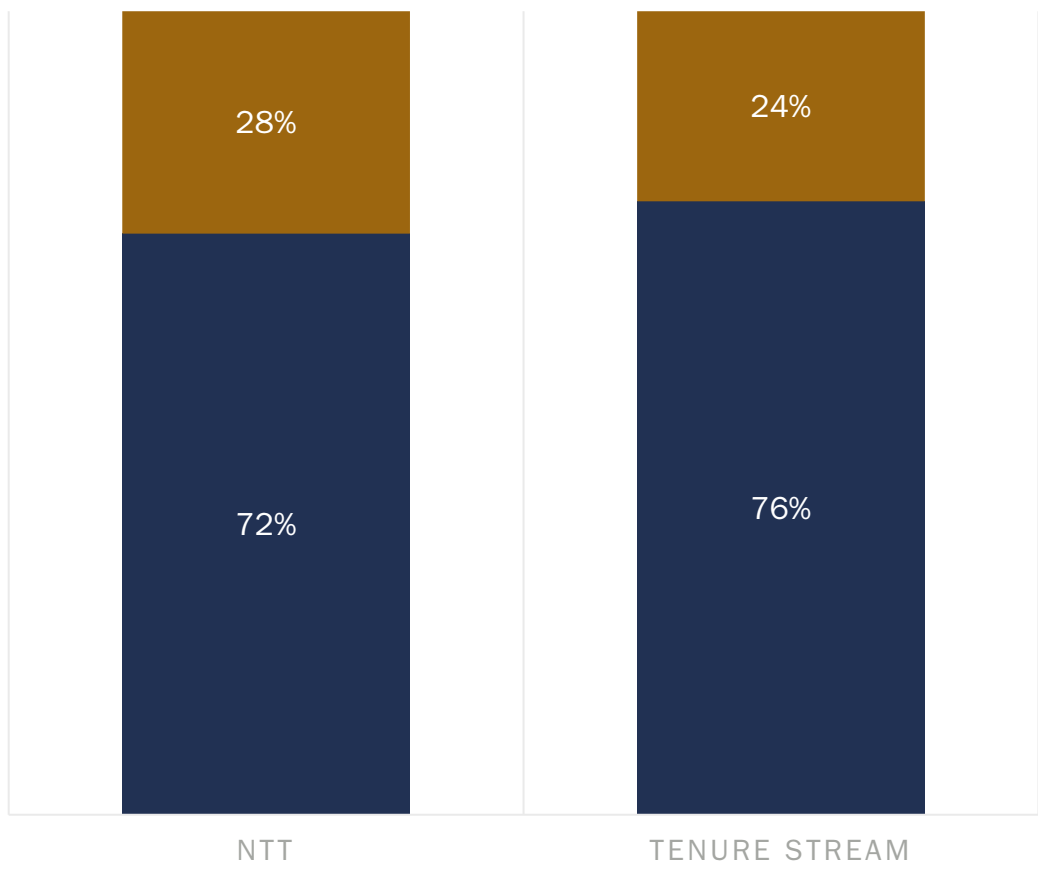
Todd Benson, PhD

Executive Director & Principal
Investigator, Collaborative on
Academic Careers in Higher
Education

Faculty Demographic Breakdown

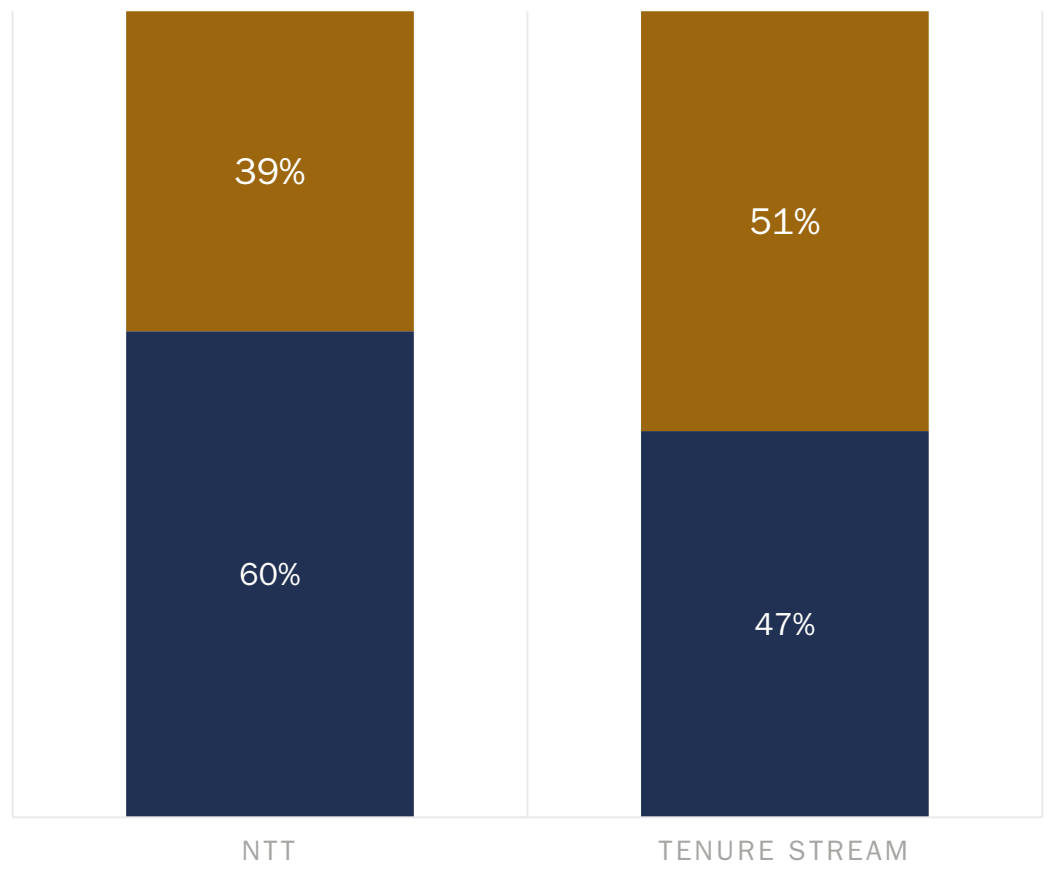
RACE/ETHNICITY BREAKDOWN

■ White ■ Faculty of Color

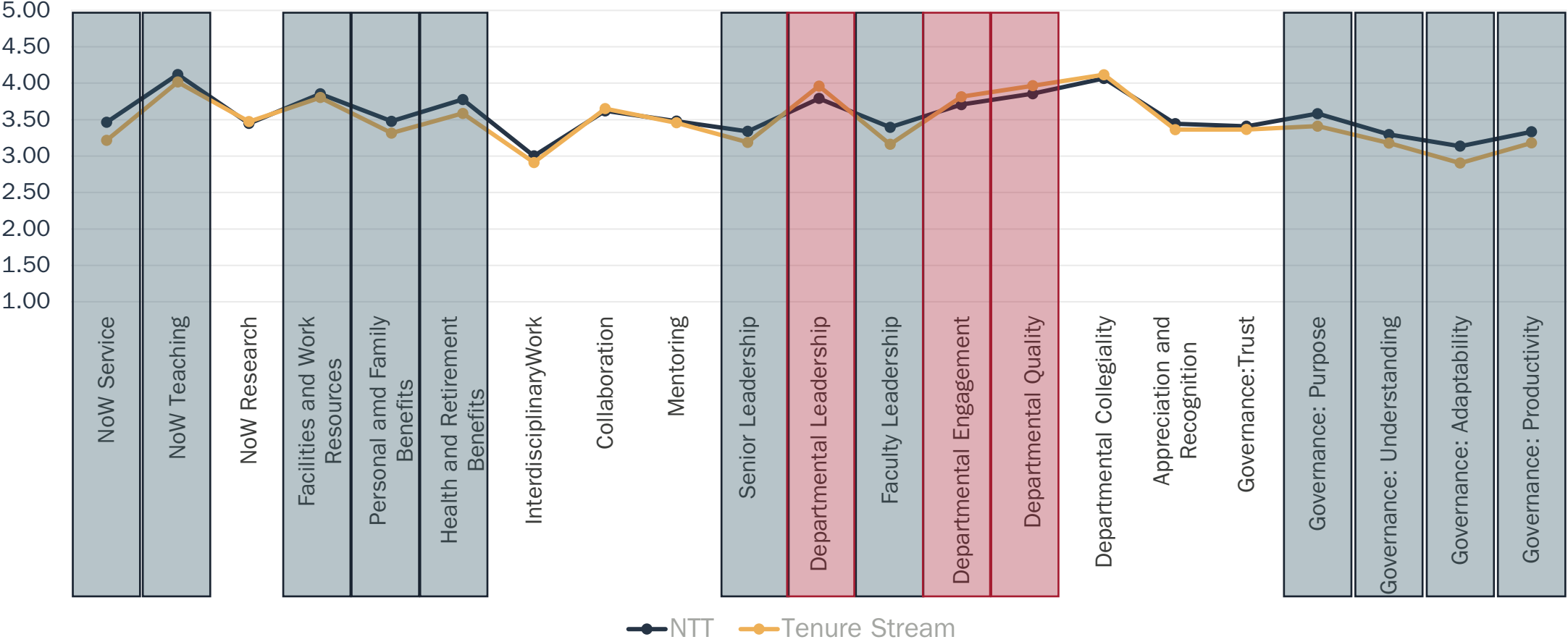


GENDER/GENDER IDENTITY

■ Women ■ Men

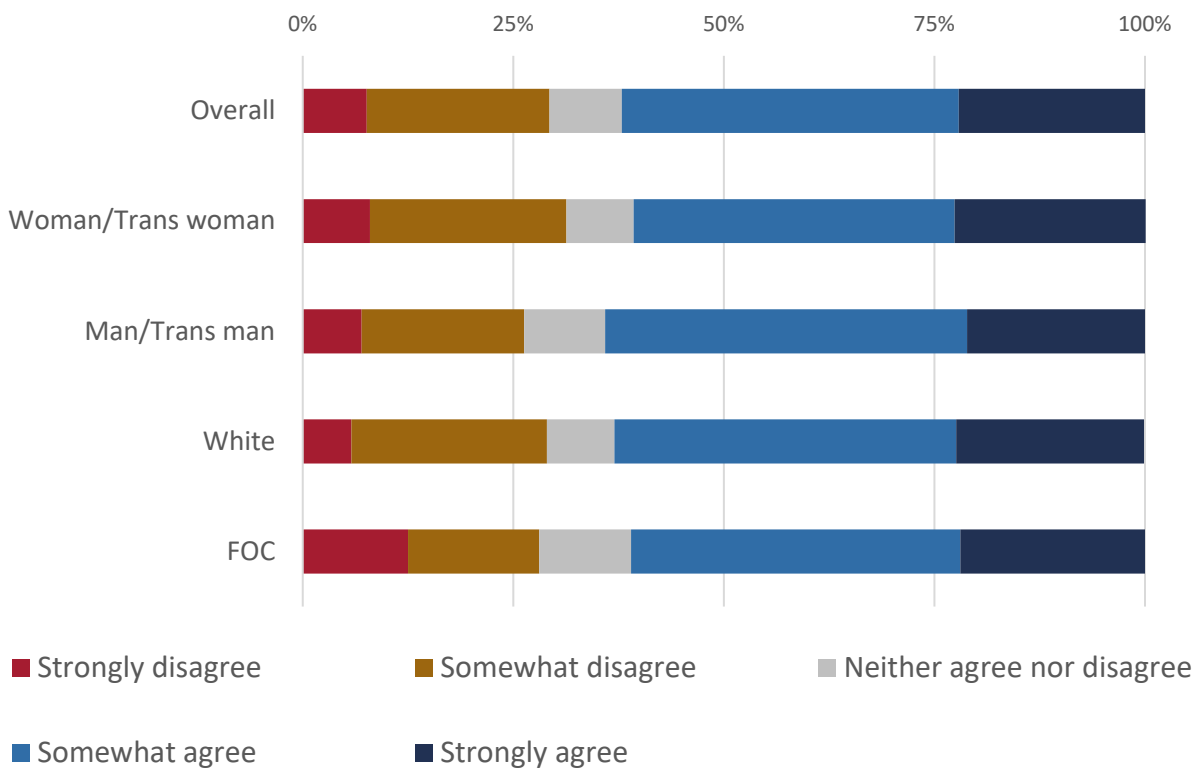


Benchmark Differences By Tenure Status At Small Liberal Arts Colleges

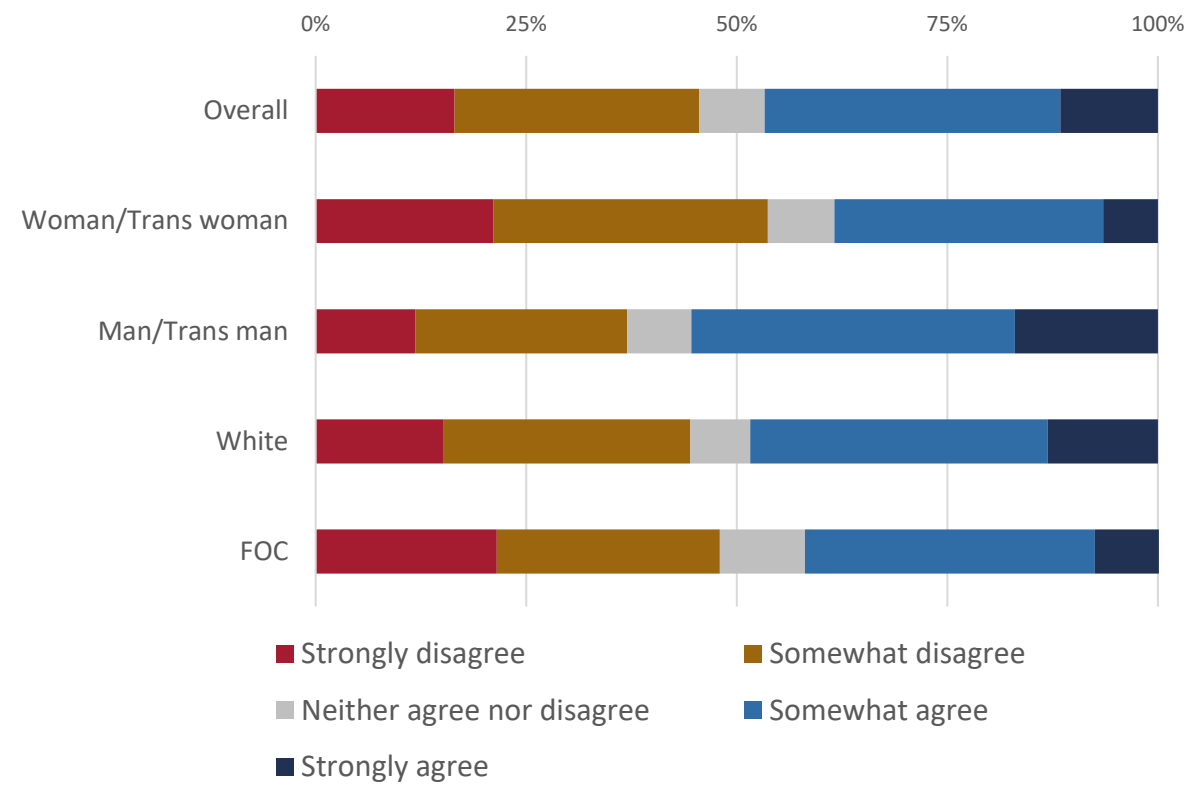


“I am able to balance the teaching, research, and service (and clinical, if applicable) activities expected of me”

NTT Faculty

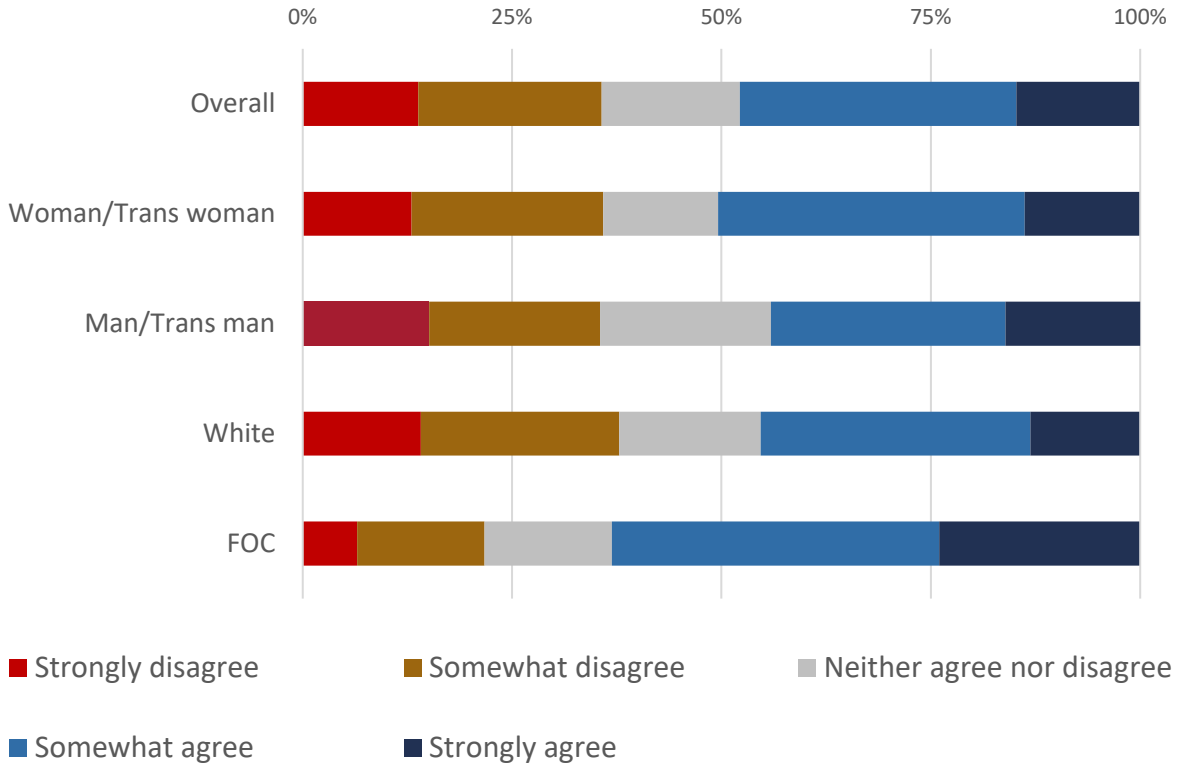


Tenure Stream Faculty

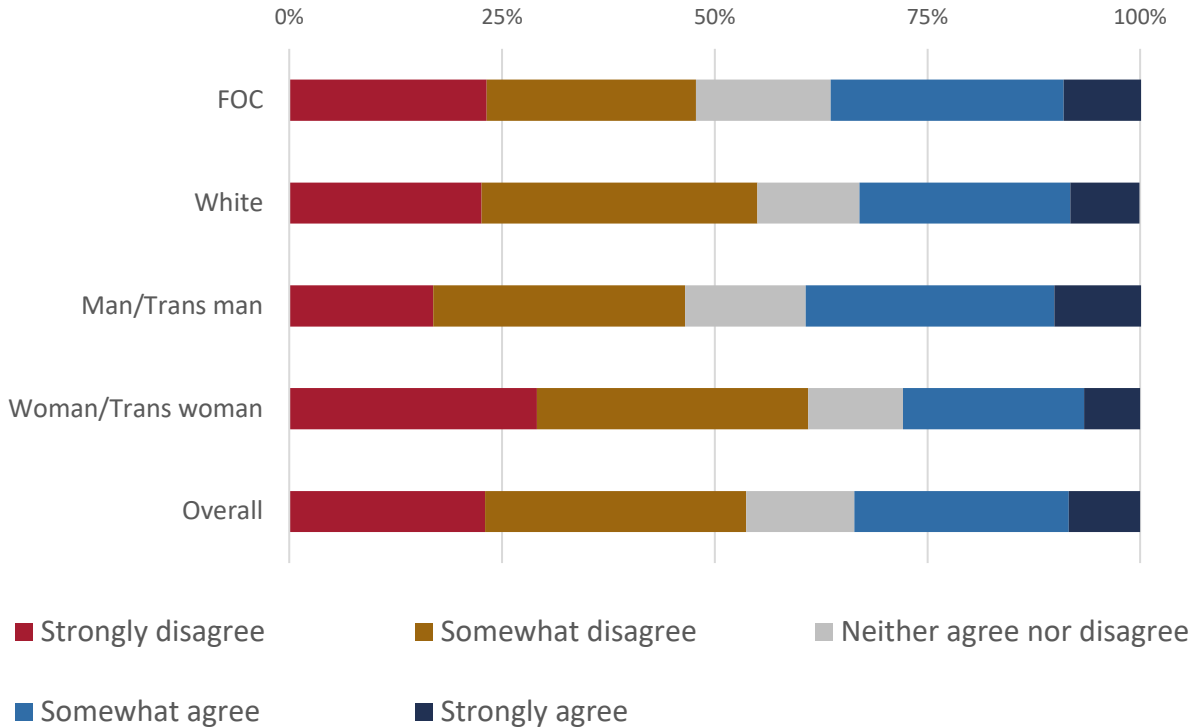


“My institution does what it can to help faculty who take on additional leadership roles, to sustain other aspects of their faculty work”

NTT Faculty



Tenure Stream Faculty

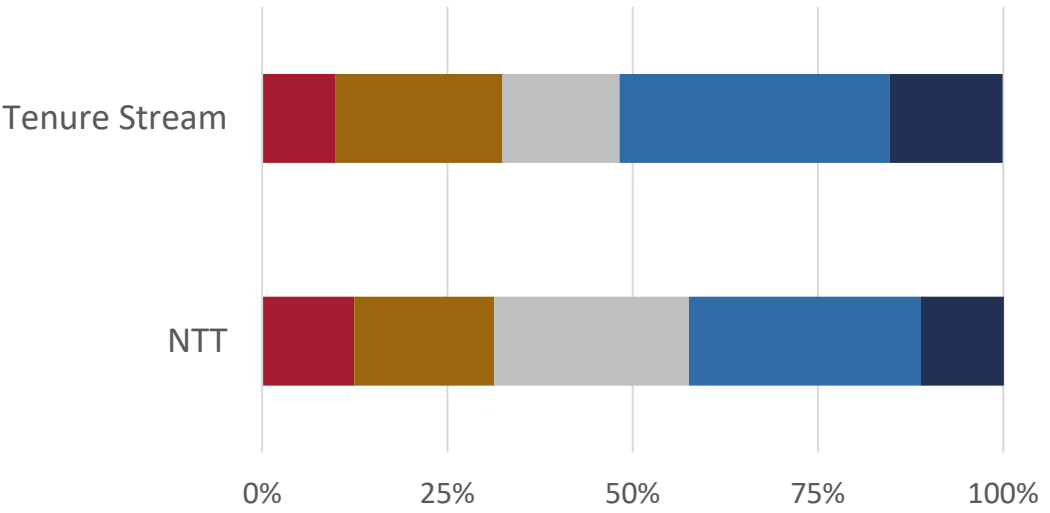


■ Strongly disagree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Neither agree nor disagree
■ Somewhat agree ■ Strongly agree

■ Strongly disagree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Neither agree nor disagree
■ Somewhat agree ■ Strongly agree

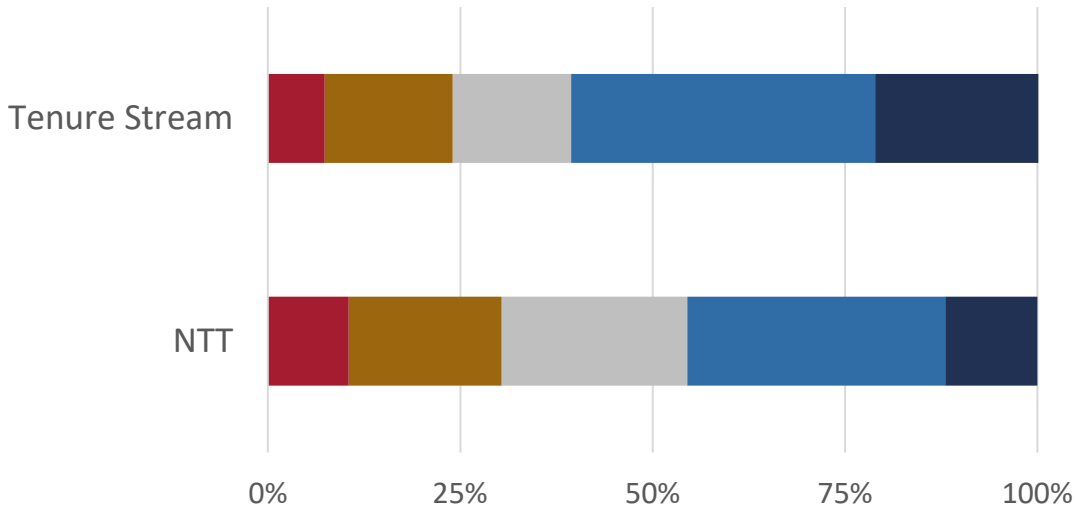
Engagement In Governance

The existing faculty governance structures offer sufficient opportunities for me to provide input on institution-wide policies



- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

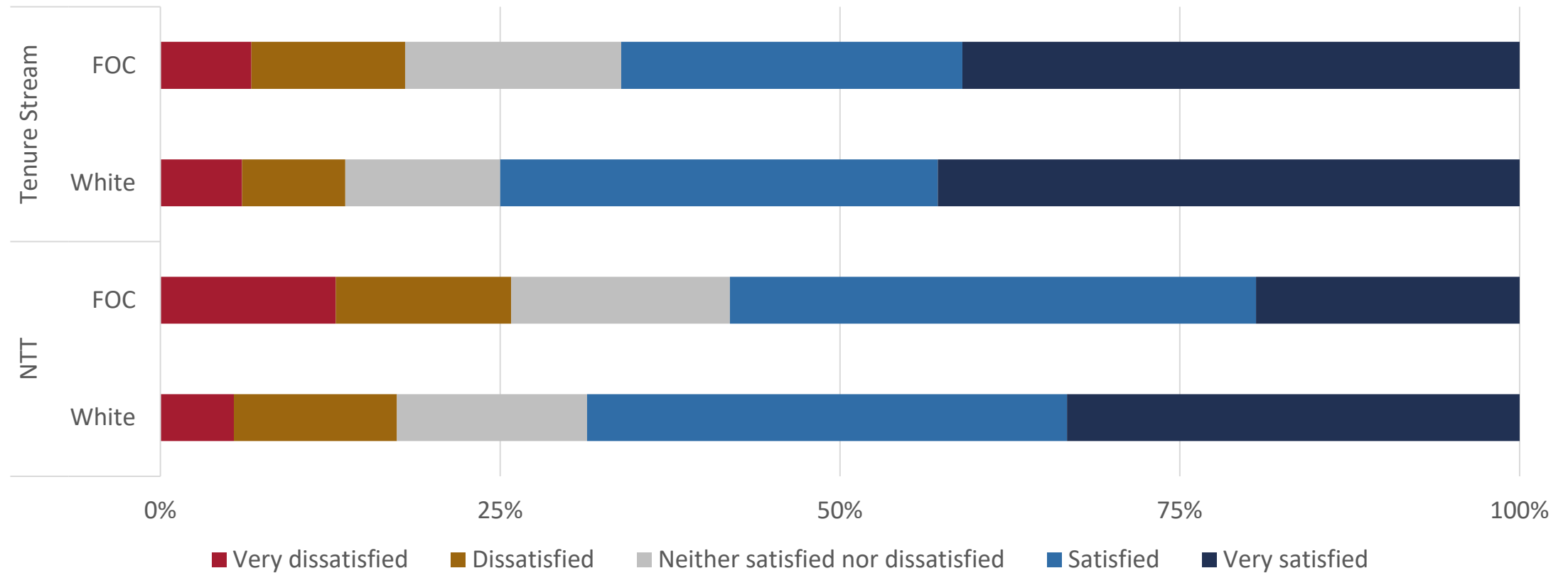
I understand the process by which I can express my opinions about institutional policies



- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

The Department

How well you fit in your department (e.g. your sense of belonging in your department)



Meredith Goldsmith, PhD

Context

- Ursinus - a small liberal arts college of ~1450 students
- 124 FT faculty, 25 non-tenure-track, ~50 adjuncts/semester
- Review of COACHE data - non-t-t concerns over rank, renewal, recognition



One-Minute Free Write

What does the word “non-tenure-track” bring up for you?



Think For A Moment

- Of a non-tenure-track person who strikes you as fulfilled. What is that person like? What do they do on campus?
- Of a non-tenure-track person who strikes you as *unfulfilled*. What is that person like? What do they do on campus?



Concerns We Discovered

- Distribution of service requirements, esp. advising
- Lack of recognition – awards go to tenure-track faculty, few opportunities to present work
- Amorphous roles – impermanence, little faculty development, etc.



Immediate Actions

- Improving messaging around funding eligibility
- Opening faculty awards to non-tenure-track faculty
- Opportunities to present scholarship and creative work
- All non-tenure-track faculty (including part-timers) part of new faculty programs



Meaningful Alternative Pathways: Case #1:

Assistant Professor of Religious Studies/Coordinator of Jewish Life

- teaches, advises Hillel, engages religious diversity on campus, supports admission and advancement work



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Case #2:

- Assistant Professor of Biology and Assistant Dean for Student Transitions—teaches, supports underrepresented students, leads inclusion initiatives



Case #3:

- Assistant Professor of Business and Economics--teaches, supervises Finance Scholars, chairs a committee, has own private equity firm, serves on Phi Beta Kappa Committee



Honoring Flexibility and Creativity

- Can we come up with a good descriptor that honors the way these faculty are defining their roles?
- Can we make flexibility and creativity *hallmarks* of these faculty roles?
- Could liberal arts colleges be leaders in this conversation?



Group Discussion

Who are the people on your campus who fit these descriptions?
What could you do to help such faculty on your campus feel more fulfilled?

What are the barriers to making constructive changes to support non-tenure-track faculty?



Four Frames Theory

- Structural
- Human Resources
- Political
- Symbolic



Teaser/Takeaway

If we re-think the balance of responsibilities and qualities of non-tenure-track roles, shouldn't we think about how we're defining the tenure-track roles?

Are there points of collaboration where we might be able to leverage our collective experiences?

