

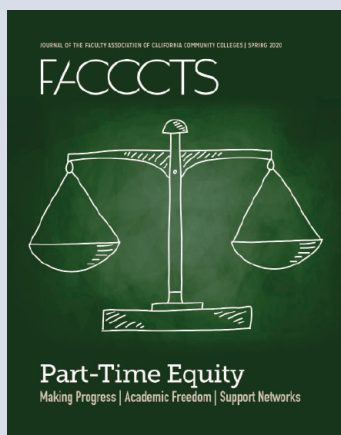
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FACCCCTS



Part-Time Equity

Making Progress | Academic Freedom | Support Networks



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VISION

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- We value the expertise, experience, and professionalism of all faculty, full-time and part-time, as the primary force for advancing the mission of California Community Colleges.
- We value students and the significance of the student-faculty relationship and the opportunity to foster mutual growth and success.
- We value diverse voices, perspectives, and cultures of both students and faculty in the quest for social justice and equity.
- We value community colleges as a driving force for economic growth, social cohesion, and opportunities for personal advancement for all Californians.
- We value collegiality and a working environment that recognizes the importance of all organizational and personal voices in serving students.
- We value the growth and development of all faculty members as professionals in service of their communities, their institutions, and their students.

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by Deirdre Frontczak

“There is no doubt we are in one of the most turbulent and challenging times in American, and world, history,” Paul N. Friga recently wrote in the Chronicle of Higher Education, “The coronavirus is dramatically changing everything: Our personal lives, economic markets, and, of course, higher-education institutions are being transformed before our eyes.”

All of us working in the community college system, whether full- or part-time, are experiencing these unprecedented challenges, and we know the most painful are yet to come. As faculty, we are deeply concerned about the future for our students, our colleagues and their families, and California’s higher education systems. Although everything is uncertain at the moment, the budgetary impact of this crisis on the California Community College system is likely to be much greater than the 2008 recession. Difficult decisions will be made that affect every one of us and, as in 2008, the impacts of those decisions will be felt first and most devastatingly by part-time faculty.

Even in the best of times, the positions of part-time faculty are precarious. That is what it means when the work we do is contingent. What the coronavirus epidemic is revealing is just how dependent many workers in the United States are on temporary, contract, or gig work for their livelihoods and how dependent the country is on them. Unions and advocacy groups have worked to mitigate some of the rough edges of contingent employment in good times, but being a part-timer is fundamentally founded on uncertainty. The problem is not located at any particular college or district. It is a structural issue that demands attention on the state and national level.

Now is the time for part-time faculty to mobilize and to communicate with each other and with decision-makers, administrators, board members, and legislators.

DEPARTMENTS

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It is true that we are living in unprecedented times. But the epidemic of contingent labor and the instability of the system long preceded the coronavirus.

When the Los Rios Community College District where I teach closed its doors three weeks ago in response to the COVID-19 crisis and went into “remote operations,” part-time faculty started to mobilize. Organized by the Los Rios College Federation of Teachers’ Part-time Faculty Caucus, we began by opening up the conversation through Zoom. These gatherings, which often meet twice a week and may last up to three hours, give part-timers a much-needed forum to share information about the constantly changing situation, to strategize, and express our anxieties about the future. In this uncertain time, they provide a space to organize as a group and a conduit to our union representatives.

Reflecting the structural nature of contingent employment, the concerns expressed by part-time faculty are exacerbated issues that predate the current crisis. Chief among them has always been job security. Some departments have already announced the cancellation of summer classes which are most often taught by part-time faculty. With an anticipated drop in funding for next year, the fall semester schedules are being reevaluated to prepare for class cuts. This will impact part-time faculty through reductions in FTE and the necessity of full-time faculty to make load. Presumably, this is happening all across the state, affecting the immediate futures of instructors, counselors, librarians, and nurses in every district. Staying mobilized and informed about these changes is necessary to ensure that whatever contract provisions exist for part-timer rehire rights (e.g. preference system, seniority) are honored by administrators.

Not surprisingly, unemployment is a major theme of our discussions. Some of the gatherings have become virtual workshops on filing for unemployment. Again, this has long been an aspect of life as a part-timer. Our local union, the Los Rios College Federation of Teachers, has long held regular sessions on unemployment insurance and published a “Guide to Unemployment Benefits” at the end of each semester. The crisis has not introduced unemployment into the lives of part-

time faculty, but accentuated the impact of a condition that we experience normally at least twice a year. Of course, there has been a dramatic expansion of unemployment in response to the coronavirus, and with it a number of changes in the process for filing. As a group, the Part-time Faculty Caucus shares information about these changes and works together to revise our own internal documentation on the process for filing.

In the spirit of our mission to build community, regular meetings of the Caucus are dedicated to pedagogical workshops on strategies for teaching online. The emergency transition from on-ground to distance teaching in mid-semester has been a turbulent experiment for everyone in higher education, one that will continue through the summer and likely in some form through the fall. The training often required for online work, whether classes, library work, or counseling was already a source of inequity for contingent faculty. Full-time faculty may be compensated for such professional development through their salaries, while part-time faculty need to make time such training unpaid. Even if work is available, many fear they will be denied due to the inequity in opportunities for professional development that have long been a feature of contingent employment.

It is true that we are living in unprecedented times. But the epidemic of contingent labor and the instability of the system long preceded the coronavirus. The problems of job security, unemployment, and professional development are just a few of the issues that part-time faculty have faced every semester for many decades. There is a very real danger that this crisis and social distancing will increase the atomization that was already endemic to the part-time faculty experience. That is why it is critical to increase our sense of community and our communication with each other, our union representatives and advocates, and our districts. ■

2020 Policy Forum

FACCC hosted its annual Policy Forum on Friday, January 24 at American River College in Sacramento. This year's theme was AB 705 Conversations: Addressing Student Preparation, Equity, and Real Student Success. The panelists and moderator engaged the audience in a lively and robust conversation.



Making Progress Toward Part-Time Faculty Equity

by Debbie Klein

The California Community College system's over-reliance upon part-time faculty is the most chronic and systemic inequity of teaching in the California community colleges. Although the Education Code deems part-time faculty temporary, part-time faculty are not only permanent but have comprised 70 percent of all California community college faculty for over two decades (figure 1). Furthermore, California law does not require part-time faculty be paid for anything beyond the classroom hour, and current law limits a part-time workload to 67 percent of an equivalent full-time load in a single district.



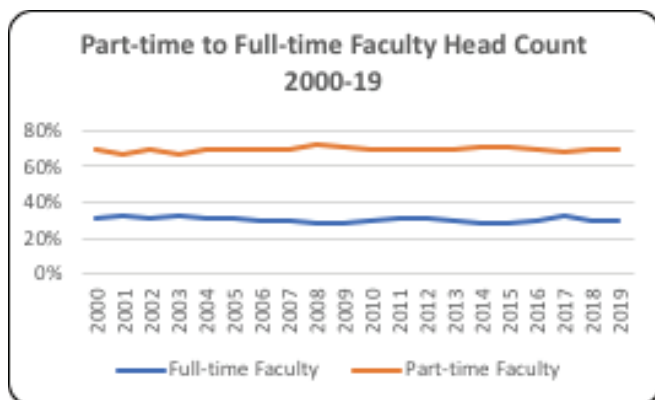


Figure 1: Data retrieved from the Chancellor's Office

Making progress toward part-time faculty equity will allow colleges to better serve students, achieve success goals, and transform into equitable workplaces for the majority of their employees. In order to make progress, the California Community College system will need to invest in the following changes:

- » Make measurable and incremental progress toward part-time faculty workplace equity—compensation parity, paid health benefits, paid office hours, personal leave, and access to full workload.
- » Fully integrate part-time faculty within community college policy and programs, including Guided Pathways, Student Equity and Achievement (SEA), Strong Workforce, Student Success initiatives, and the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity Task Force Recommendations.
- » Meaningfully address the two-tiered system in which the majority of faculty must function under unjust and physically exhausting conditions.
- » Support the elimination of practices that marginalize part-time faculty so that student outcomes improve and colleges become more equitable learning environments.

How Did We Get Here?

While the origins of the current two-tier system between full- and part-time faculty date back to the

1960s, it was not too long afterward that the system began proposing partial solutions. Dating back to the 1970s, the system recognized that this two-tier structure had a corrosive effect on students but never exercised leadership to eliminate it altogether.

In 1978, the California Community Colleges Board of Governors (CCCCOG) approved the principle of limiting part-time faculty for credit instruction to 25 percent. A decade later, the state enshrined the system's goal of 75 percent credit instruction taught by full-time faculty into the Education Code. Over the subsequent 10 years, the Legislature approved measures establishing state funds to incentivize districts to offer paid office hours and health benefits to part-timers, which was followed in the early 2000s by a line-item in the state budget (meant to be the first of five) to achieve pay equity between full- and part-timers.

These efforts continued in more recent history, including a 2012 legislative affirmation in the Student Success Act linking student success to access to faculty, along with a call for more full-time faculty and increased support of part-time faculty. In 2016, AB 1690 (Medina) and SB 1379 (Mendoza) successfully connected negotiation for part-time faculty seniority to student success. In 2017, FACCC-sponsored ACR 32 (Medina) called upon the community college system to prioritize achievement of both 75/25 and part-time equity.

Despite these legislative efforts, the basic inequities between the two classes of faculty have intensified with the system claiming powerlessness under the guides of the Legislature's failing to direct specific money for this purpose. Over the past 10 years, there has been no real progress in the percent of instruction taught by full-time faculty, which today hovers just over 56.

Part-time faculty, with identical academic qualifications as their full-time colleagues, are hired to prepare, teach, and assess their classes. Most part-time faculty offer office hours

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even though many colleges do not provide compensation or appropriate office space.

FACCC and the faculty unions have a long history of advocating for part-time faculty rights and continue to push for compensation parity (equal pay for equal work), job security, and medical and other benefits. Faculty groups are also leading conversations about creating a statewide system and culture that fosters respect, inclusion, collegiality, and equity among all faculty.

Making Progress: Lifting the Part-time Workload Limit

AB 897 (Medina), a bill currently before the Legislature, would raise the part-time workload cap from 67 percent to 80 to 85 percent. This is something our faculty, students, other stakeholders, and community members can advocate for right now.

The long-standing practice of limiting the load taught by individual part-time faculty, currently set at 67 percent of a full-time load, is a sacred cow for many. It's universally recognized that we need more full-time faculty to serve our students. In 1988, the system's vision that full-time faculty teach at least 75 percent credit classroom instruction was memorialized as a goal in the California Education Code. However, over 30 years since, the funding required to make progress has been sporadic at best. Over the past 20 years, the percentage of credit instruction by part-time faculty has increased rather than decreased, currently around 44 percent. It is significant that over the same period, the faculty head count has stayed remarkably steady at around 70 percent part-time to around 30 percent full-time (figure 1).

In addition to the 30-year failure to reach the 75 percent full-time faculty goal, the system has also failed to make progress on part-time faculty workplace equity, an issue the Legislature embraced when it initiated, nearly 20 years ago, three community college budget line items funding


office hours, health benefits, and compensation parity (equal pay for equal work). These funding sources have been subject to severe reductions whenever state revenues falter and have only rarely been restored when the overall revenue picture improved.

Why would a state so concerned about student success and so reliant on a part-time workforce be so reluctant to provide essential budgetary support for its faculty? It is surprising that system leaders have been willing partners in the state's exploitation of part-time faculty and unwilling to do all they can to address the needs of our students.

The literature concludes that student access to and contact with faculty is the most significant factor in determining student success. For a compilation of research on the importance of faculty to student success, please see FACCC's literature review, *Why Faculty Matter: The Role of Faculty in the Success of Community College Students*. Full-time faculty are under contract and compensated for maintaining such contact, but part-time faculty, who teach almost half of the courses are not required by state law to be compensated for student access outside the classroom. When part-time faculty do make themselves accessible, they rarely have office space in which to meet with students. In this era of attention to student success, it should be shocking to see that many colleges have turned their backs on the state funding, however meager, provided for part-time faculty office hours.

Limited to 67 percent of a full-time load, frequently paid at a rate much less than the full-time equivalent, and with little or no support in terms of health care, professional development activities, and personal leave allowances, many part-time faculty are forced into a frenetic work life of constantly traveling from one college to another. This leaves only a minimal amount of time and energy for consultation with students, which is so important to their success.

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...many part-time faculty are forced into a frenetic work life traveling from one college to another, often hundreds of miles each week, leaving minimal time and energy for consultation with students, which is critical to their success.

Support Networks:

An Active Life for Part-Time Faculty in California Community Colleges

By Ryan Tripp

Any resolution to debates over the hiring and presence of “part-time faculty” or “contingent faculty” on California community college campuses seems almost ephemeral.

Yet part-timers continue to propose new policies, revise existing ones, and agitate for change. Transformation, however, does not happen solely by legislative fiat or legal petition.

Throughout the past two decades, part-time faculty have dedicated themselves to a politically active life. By association, organization, committee, protest, demonstration, and even civil disobedience, part-time faculty persistently restructured dynamics of empowerment in community college learning communities. By engaging in a sociopolitical sphere, they advanced ideas which mutually reshaped and reinvigorated an active life for themselves and the California community college system.

Since 1998, part-time faculty activism has resulted in a slew of part-time friendly policy proposals. Several such proposals confirmed reappointment practices, staffing preferences, paid office hours, disability insurance, limited retirement, and healthcare benefits. This activism even generated AB 2705 (Williams), a bill that died in the Senate Appropriations Committee in 2014, but would have revised “part-time faculty” and “temporary

faculty” to “contingent faculty” thereby better describing how integral these faculty are to the system.

One of the most active associations spurring these proposals is the California Part-Time Faculty Association (CPFA). In fall 1998, over 60 part-time faculty convened at El Chorro Regional Park in San Luis Obispo, declaring goals that included paid office hours, retirement, healthcare, and equal pay for equal work. Unions and Academic Senates at both the local and statewide levels offered support for CPFA, but funding concerns often blocked communication channels over policy proposals. The idea of a statewide part-time faculty association subsequently faced the specter of dissolution.

Throughout its first decade, CPFA proponents instead participated in both faculty and student marches, from the March in March to pickets at the California Community Colleges Board of Governors' meetings. In 2000, a CPFA member drove a car onto the north lawn of the State Capitol to demonstrate for paid office hours and introduced an “adjunct listserv” to San Diego community colleges. This listserv became a precursor to the San Diego Adjunct Faculty Association.

Divisions soon stalled such activism. Most CPFA members were part-time faculty with part-time employment

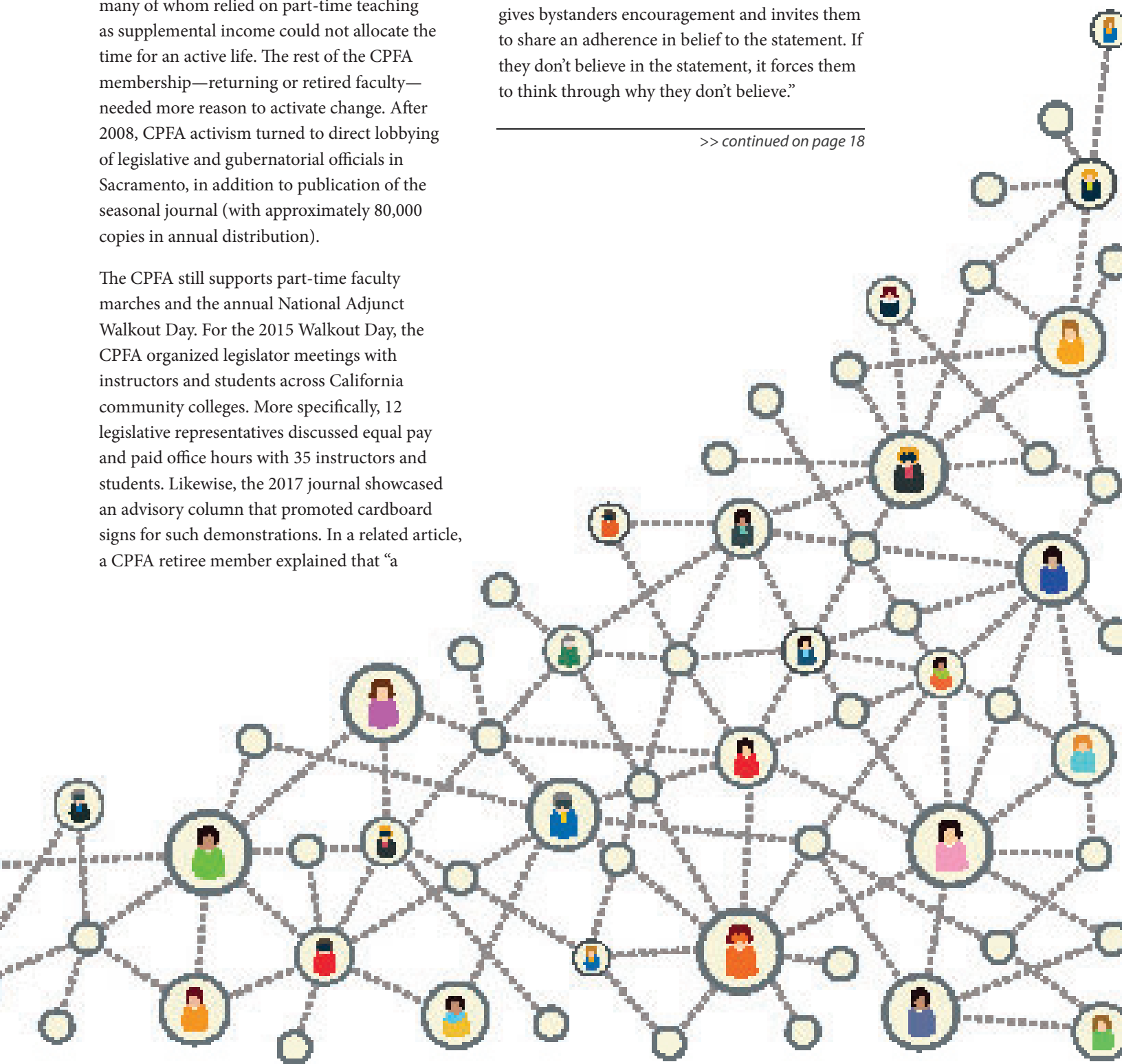


as their chief source of income. Certain members expressed fear that activism, particularly in public spaces, would diminish full-time employment opportunities. Additional CPFA members, many of whom relied on part-time teaching as supplemental income could not allocate the time for an active life. The rest of the CPFA membership—returning or retired faculty—needed more reason to activate change. After 2008, CPFA activism turned to direct lobbying of legislative and gubernatorial officials in Sacramento, in addition to publication of the seasonal journal (with approximately 80,000 copies in annual distribution).

The CPFA still supports part-time faculty marches and the annual National Adjunct Walkout Day. For the 2015 Walkout Day, the CPFA organized legislator meetings with instructors and students across California community colleges. More specifically, 12 legislative representatives discussed equal pay and paid office hours with 35 instructors and students. Likewise, the 2017 journal showcased an advisory column that promoted cardboard signs for such demonstrations. In a related article, a CPFA retiree member explained that “a

street march...shows that all the people marching are saying the same thing and really mean what they are saying. The show of commitment asks others to consider the statement and relate it to themselves. If they agree with the statement, it gives bystanders encouragement and invites them to share an adherence in belief to the statement. If they don't believe in the statement, it forces them to think through why they don't believe.”

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2020 Advocacy & Policy Conference

This year's A&P Conference, featuring keynote speaker, Jeff Duncan-Andrade, sold out. FACCC PAC Honors went to Assemblywoman Lorena Gonzalez, Senator Toni Atkins was named Legislator of the Year and Gustavo Arroyo, chief of staff for Senator Susan Rubio, received the Lifetime Staff Achievement Award. Join us for next year's conference on March 7 and 8, 2021.



Do Adjuncts Have Academic Freedom?

By Deidre Frontczak



One session at a recent conference on collective bargaining in higher education posed this very question. As a session panelist, I found myself exploring the matter from a number of angles I had not fully considered before. And – no surprise – I found that despite resounding affirmations from our districts, and perhaps even reassurance from our senates and unions, the real-world experience of part-time faculty in community colleges may fall far short of those aspirational goals.

What is “academic freedom”?

The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) states that the principle of academic freedom “is based on the idea that the free exchange of ideas on campus is essential to good education.” In its foundational documents, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) defines three basic rights to which all college faculty should be entitled: “freedom in research and in the publication of results, freedom in the classroom in discussions of their subjects, and freedom to speak or write freely ‘as citizens, members of a profession, and officers of an educational institution’ on matters of public or institutional concern.”

These statements were designed to preserve the freedoms of a faculty formed in the full-time tenure-track model; of course, the college landscape of today looks quite different from that of 50 or 100 years ago. At most community colleges, contingent faculty are no longer an “adjunct” — connected or added to something, in an auxiliary way—but a majority of those teaching at any institution are (we are told) integral to serving our students’ needs of our students and fulfilling the mission of the college. We are critically important, they say, and valued as professionals, colleagues and equals in the shared governance of the institution. Yet, to test this collegiality, let’s pose a hypothetical scene:

Suppose next week your college president were to announce that budgetary constraints oblige her to take drastic action affecting the entire faculty, tenured and contingent alike. Effective now, she says, we are suspending all tenure, sabbaticals, and funding for professional development. And of course, no dedicated funds for scholarly research.

Suppose that in addition, healthcare and leave benefits can no longer be offered, but you are encouraged to apply for the excellent policies offered under Affordable Care Act rules in our state.

Suppose that teaching observations and evaluations by discipline peers are ended and replaced by more efficient, quantitative Student Evaluations of Teaching (SETs), conducted on a regular cycle.

Suppose mentoring programs are dissolved; departmental meetings are by invitation only; governance open to a chosen few; and from now on, Deans, Chairs, and Coordinators have sole and total discretion in assigning courses—how many, when, and which to offer—and in assigning office space for student support.

Oh, and suppose your salary is now factored on a piecework basis (service will be expected, but most often not paid). Typical class rates run between \$4,000–\$8,000 in California, but you are welcome to seek courses or consulting opportunities beyond the walls of our campus community, time and resources permitting.

What might you imagine is the impact of these changes on your academic freedom? Are you now empowered to develop innovative approaches to familiar material? To take controversial stands in the classroom, which some students might protest? To assess work honestly, knowing that – despite legislative incentives some students might fail? To speak out against abuses on campus or beyond, potentially alienating a current or future Chair? To join a political action group consistent with your professional research and expertise, possibly bringing adverse publicity to the department or campus? To fly cross-country or overseas to attend a top conference or seminar in your field?

To contingent faculty, this scenario will not seem far-fetched; for most, it is already the norm. Yet even hinting at such changes campus-wide would evoke universal outrage from

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Apart from fostering internal competition, an underclass of “just in time” faculty discourages such workers from knowing, much less exercising, their full freedoms and rights.

every one of our full-time colleagues, not to mention our unions and Senate advocates, rendering such repressive changes literally unthinkable. Absurd.

Moreover, even if it were possible, from an institutional standpoint such an action would be fiscal suicide. Our professional standing would plummet. Our leverage to attract and retain good faculty would crumble. The perceived value of our degrees would tank. Students would find other options – not only because of the obvious disregard for student-faculty connections, but for the sheer injustice of subjecting an entire community of learners whose lives are devoted to exploring and sharing a treasured discipline, to the stark and simplistic rules of a market economy.

But, if that is the case—and if these are precisely the conditions under which three-fourths of our faculty are now employed—where are the voices of outrage? Where is the solidarity behind colleagues whose degrees, publications and experience are in many, perhaps most, cases equivalent to those of their full-time peers? Where are the demands for job security, professional growth, benefits and pay parity for contingent faculty who have often spent years or decades within the same campus walls? Why are all of us faculty—contingent instructors, as well as those who occupy more privileged ranks— not raising the alarm about the drastic impact that a two-tiered faculty system must have on the life and future of the college as a whole?

Perhaps perceptions about contingent faculty, and the conditions in which they labor, have not yet caught up to the facts. So, let’s look at a few statistics:

» Currently, between 60–75 percent of college faculty members are part-time. A congressional report, *The Just In Time Professor*, estimated in 2014 that there were over 1 million contingent faculty in the U.S.; five years later, that number has only grown. In almost all cases, contingent faculty labor largely funds the salaries of both administrators and tenured/tenure track colleagues; yet they receive significantly lower comparative pay for

similar work, limited or no access to benefits, and apathy or worse from many of their colleagues.

- » Colleges point to tightening budgets and competing demands as constraints on full-time hiring. But between 1976–2011 *Inside Higher Ed* (Flaherty, 2014) reported that the ranks of senior administrators grew by 141 percent, and of full-time tenure-track faculty by just 23 percent. In that same period, part-time positions increased by 286 percent and full-time faculty by 259 percent. Current data from community colleges suggests that those gaps have only widened since then.
- » Contingent, part-time faculty are often viewed either as young scholars beginning a rising career—or non-academic professionals employed in another field, teaching occasional classes. But Kerry Danner of Georgetown University reports that 70 percent of contingent faculty are over 40, with 30 percent aged 55–69. About half teach one or two courses at a single institution, but 22 percent teach three or more classes at multiple institutions. About 50 percent say they would strongly prefer full-time, permanent work. Another 10 percent say they would prefer full-time but non-permanent assignments.

And when full-time faculty positions do open these are rarely offered to an adjunct with a proven track record in that department. In fact, Hank Reichman of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) reports that the longer an adjunct serves in that role, the less likely he or she is to be perceived as a serious colleague and hired into a tenure-track position, with women significantly less likely than men to transition into tenure-track roles.

So once again, with a majority of our faculty holding little or no job security, with “success” often defined in questionable, market-based terms...can these working conditions possibly foster collegiality, openness, and professional dignity and advancement for all faculty? And without such assurance, can we possibly affirm that our contingent colleagues enjoy true academic freedom?

Commodification of Higher Education

We all understand that the economic forces affecting higher education present a complex challenge with rising demands on limited fiscal reserves. In response, it is tempting for colleges to shift to a business model, where the gig economy and just-in-time hiring (and firing) are a practical way to maximize resources and minimize costs. But how well does this model really function in the wider economic world?

Yes, gig workers are cheaper. They do not get paid vacations and they cover their own healthcare. They do not share in advancement incentives and when budgets contract they are the first to go. We lament the resulting wage gap observed in business nationwide, but fail to recognize the impact of this inequality in our own lives, for tenured and contingent faculty alike.

Apart from fostering internal competition, an underclass of “just in time” faculty discourages such workers from knowing, much less exercising, their full freedoms and rights. Meanwhile, a growing pool of at-will workers encourages legislators and districts to chip away at the freedoms tenured faculty have long taken for granted. In essence, faculty in this market economy have transformed gone from a community of self-governing, collegial scholars to a collection of rival entrepreneurs.

So, if “academic freedom” implies freedom of teaching and research, freedom for outside speech and action, plus economic security to guarantee those rights, it seems clear that adjunct employment threatens that entire academic model. But perhaps we are starting with the wrong question. Perhaps the question we must now ask is whether higher education is indeed just one more industry in service of the wider economy, with courses as our business product, and students employed in “good-paying” jobs as the primary strategic goal? The business model prizes efficiency and outputs. If this is indeed our purpose then perhaps we should rethink the value of academic freedom, as a free and authentic exchange of ideas may in fact be just an encumbrance to that economic end.

Every community college, by virtue of its public status and mission, aims to strengthen knowledge and shared values and to serve as a force for positive societal change. In an article entitled *Saying No to an Economy that Kills* (2019), Professor Kerry Danner of Georgetown argues that by buying into this model – by outsourcing staff, creating a two-tiered

system, offering low-paying and unstable work for the many to sustain relative comforts (but greater pressures) for a fortunate few, our colleges undermine not only their own mission but their credibility as a force for social justice and moral standards within the wider community. If so, we cannot be surprised when public support for faculty erodes, and the demand for sustainable budgets for higher education fades away. Perhaps, if this trend continues, will we have no one but ourselves to blame. ■



Committees, such as the part-time committee for the California Federation of Teachers (CFT), similarly collaborate with activist organizations. The CFT part-time committee “advances through political action and collective bargaining, the interests of part-time faculty in both public and private higher education.” The committee encourages the involvement of local unions, the AFL-CIO, and the wider American Federation of Teachers in contract negotiations. The committee additionally strives to educate all in “the benefits of changing the two-tiered system.” In 2011, the committee endorsed the Occupy Movement, lauding solidarity between union and student activism. The committee also publishes the seasonal Part-Timer and periodically organizes panels for CFT conventions.

The CFT part-time committee frequently advocates for the wider American Federation of Teachers, particularly during National Adjunct Walkout Day. During the 2015 Walkout Day at three San Diego community colleges, the CFT reported on AFT Guild distribution of buttons with “A is for ADJUNCT” scarlet impressions. The AFT also collected 800 signatures to demand funds from the gubernatorial budget for equal pay and paid office hours. Retiree Joe Berry, a member of the San Francisco Community College Federation of Teachers and author of “Reclaiming the Ivory Tower,” attended the rallies. He commented that “change will only come if we get organized and speak for ourselves.”

In 2019, the CFT website posted the American Federation of Teachers’ “toolkit” for fall Equity Week. The “toolkit” provided rally signs such as “Campus Equity Now,” “Fair Pay and a Union,” “Free College for All,” and “Student Debt Cancellation Now,” as well as fliers on the 52-question Part-time Faculty Quality of Life Survey, completed by 3,076 part-time faculty between May and June of 2019. Each flier assessed a separate category of survey results, from “basic needs and food security” to “healthcare,” “low pay,” “job security,” and “retirement.” Such posts serve as a testament to continuing CFT endorsement of an active life for part-time faculty.

Task Forces play a crucial role in the active life of part-time faculty for California community colleges as well. In 2014, for example, the statewide Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (ASCCC) commissioned a Part-Time Task Force. This Task Force aimed to ratify an ASCCC Position Paper on part-time faculty. According to current ASCCC Vice President Dolores Davison, “While the task force ultimately determined that the paper did not need to be updated (and that updating the paper would result in potentially changing previously stated positions), the task force did recommend the creation of a permanent part time committee, which was constituted in 2015.” Davison further explains that executive committee members “are assigned as the chair and second of the part-time committee; these appointments are made on an annual basis.” The part-time committee includes four or five faculty volunteers who serve for a year with the possibility of second-year extensions. The executive committee periodically assigns rostrum articles and resolutions to the part-time committee—which meet almost monthly via Zoom—for deliberation and ratification. The committee convenes face-to-face meetings at least once a year.

Since 2017, the ASCCC part-time committee has been chiefly responsible for organizing, scheduling, and planning the annual Part-Time Institute. The committee established this Institute to “support new and experienced part-time faculty” across California community colleges. This “support” encompassed multifarious information and advisory sessions at the annual Part-Time Institute. For instance, the 2020 Institute encompassed break-out sessions such as “It’s All a Game: Navigating the Ins and Outs of Academia Beyond the Classroom,” “Creating Opportunities for Collective Bargaining,” and “The Passive Majority: A Qualitative Inquiry of Part-Time Community College Faculty.”

The Faculty Association of California Community Colleges, the umbrella organization that publishes FACCCTS, similarly maintains a part-time committee for part-time faculty mobilization. The chair of the committee rotates on an annual basis, shifting between

the Part-Time FACCC Board Member from northern California and the Part-Time FACCC Board Member from southern California. Members meet monthly, frequently by phone, and annually on All-Committee Day and another date of their choosing. The chair drafts the meeting agenda in conjunction with FACCC staff and in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order as well as the 1953 Brown Act.

The FACCC part-time committee principally organizes and supervises the annual Part-Time Faculty Symposium. According to part-time committee member and FACCC Board member, Deirdre Frontczak, the Symposium "is an opportunity for both professional development/education on relevant issues, and for discussion of actions that can be taken at state and local levels (for example, organizing local meetings with state representatives or their staff)."

For instance, the committee scheduled a previous symposium at Glendale Community College and requested a session on "Organizing Contingent Labor: Thinking Outside the Box." During this session, part-time faculty at the Symposium learned "how groups outside of academia have pushed past organizational boundaries to more effectively mobilize contingent labor." This session also explored the "latest trends in social media and other communications, which are easy and effective methods to improve part-time advocacy at the local and state levels." Additional sessions focused on alterations to the CalSTRS retirement system and assistance in navigating unemployment insurance. The latter session prepared part-time faculty for "solving common issues that arise during the unemployment insurance process and how to successfully appeal a denial at a hearing with an administrative law judge."

The active life of the FACCC part-time committee is a multifaceted endeavor. Committee members may commute to Sacramento to testify before the California Legislature on legislative bills that pertain to part-time faculty. They may also schedule campus visits by state representatives or their staff, where delegates "speak to both part-time and regular faculty on whatever

concerns them." Committee members periodically host professional development events for part-time faculty on certain campuses, explaining current proposals and debates over retirement, unemployment, and healthcare. Santa Rosa Junior College, for example, participated in FACCC-sponsored campus activities for part-time faculty.

FACCC part-time committee members emphasize the significance of policy implementation at the district and campus levels. Deirdre Frontczak averred that "districts have considerable discretion in how they negotiate and implement regulations, within the very basic parameters defined by the state (e.g., the 67 percent load cap). So, many issues such as reassignment rights, health benefits, and retirement options are largely a function of local budgets and local negotiation—a process of which many adjuncts are unaware." FACCC and part-time faculty leaders lobbied to "protect the rights of part-time faculty across institutions; the recent bill on transferring accrued sick leave comes to mind, and of course raising the maximum load to 80-85 percent." She reiterated that state policy impacted "different regions and campuses in quite different ways, and a higher load cap that benefits one school, or one program in that school, could have pretty serious impacts for a school with a very different budget or demographic profile." District and campus execution of state policy centrifuged the active life of part-time faculty on their own districts and campuses.

Recent protests and demonstrations, organized by local part-time faculty leaders, substantiate her claims. In 2017, members of the San Diego Adjunct Faculty Association (founded in 2015) and CPFA took to city streets near community college campuses. They sought to demonstrate for the "right to live free, happy productive lives in full equality and free from exploitation and persecution." Likewise, part-time faculty from Ohlone College attempted to organize a distinct part-time faculty union. More recently, in March 2019, the College of the Desert Adjunct Association sponsored protests at dual entrances for

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the Palm Desert campus, presaging an annual address by the College President. Dozens of part-time faculty members held signs that read “Equal Pay for Equal Work” and “It’s a Matter of Fairness.” The protest ended on a note of disappointment for district associations and the efficacy of an active life. One part-time faculty member admitted that the “demonstration isn’t likely to offset the power imbalance between the college and part-time instructors.”

The formation of the Part-Time Faculty Caucus of the Los Rios College Federation of Teachers (LRCFT) offered compelling insights into the hope and hopelessness of a fledgling organization within a community college district.



In 2015, LRCFT at Folsom Lake College hosted a conference for part-time instructors, convening workshops on classroom instruction, policy implementation, and campus activism. The following year, LRCFT sponsored a districtwide conference for all part-time faculty, spearheaded by “adjunct representatives.”

Folsom Lake College again hosted the conference. Beginning in 2017, this part-time conference, arranged by Paul Baltimore and Linda Sneed, has rotated among Los Rios campuses.

Part-time faculty leaders subsequently met twice a month to schedule the conference as well as to plan events and coordinate activism as an LRCFT part-time “caucus.” According to Paul Baltimore, many part-time faculty members were “interested in getting together...some [were] more politically motivated.” The caucus initially operated as a consultation body to the LRCFT Board, and a Board member actually first described the group as a caucus.

This consultation role shifted with the Caucus publication of the 2017-18 Part-Timer’s Almanac. The Almanac served as a guide for

part-time faculty in the Los Rios Community College District, covering such topics as staffing preference, office hours, faculty grievance procedures, and academic freedom. The caucus aimed the publication principally at part-time faculty rather than the LRCFT Board. The Almanac also featured the caucus statement of purpose: “to build community, collaboration, knowledge, and power” among part-time faculty in the Los Rios District.

The statement of purpose in the Almanac posited four distinct caucus goals. First, the Caucus planned on “holding regular open meetings, professional workshops and social events using democratic processes that respect all participants in order to connect with each other, discuss matters of importance to part-time faculty, and celebrate the contributions of part-time faculty.” Second, the Caucus pledged to collectively decide on and pursue “meaningful projects that support the interests and address the needs of part-time faculty in the Los Rios District.” Third, the Caucus would expand “knowledge of part-time faculty issues and concerns within both the part-time community and the district through the development of informational resources and education forums.” Finally, the Caucus announced its intent to act as a mechanism for “empowering part-time faculty by advocating for greater inclusion in academic department matters, and communicating with part-time faculty leadership within the campus Academic Senates and Faculty Union (LRCFT) to advance the interests of part-time faculty in the district.”

The LRCFT Part-Time Faculty Caucus tries to hold their conference on an annual basis. Most years, the conference begins with keynote speakers and preliminary meetings in a main conference room. In adjoining rooms, breakout workshop sessions on media support, survey questions, and contract policies followed this meeting. Attendees move from session to session and join ongoing activities.

Invitations to the 2019 conference, hosted by Sacramento City College, encouraged part-time faculty to stay informed about major policy changes and “to learn what you can do to help shape those changes.” The invitations called for all part-time faculty to join their “colleagues for an afternoon of information, collaboration, action and fun.”

The future of the LRCFT Part-Time Faculty Caucus nevertheless rested on periodic meetings held at the LRCFT’s local union hall in Sacramento. Linda Sneed and Sheryl Fairchild frequently facilitated the meetings, while Paul Baltimore volunteered as note taker. During these meetings, part-time faculty from the Los Rios District planned on direct engagement in the active life. The Caucus had not yet participated in marches and demonstrations, but many discussions indicated a tacit endorsement for such activism. In addition, the “PTFC Be Involved Card,” distributed to any and all part-time faculty passerbys, featured checkboxes for those who wish to “Advocate for Part-Timers at the Capitol” or organize “pedagogical potlucks.” Paul Baltimore explained that the “structure and future of the Caucus would be determined by its participants rather than masterminded by its facilitators.”

The 2017 LRCFT Part-Time Faculty Caucus Concerns Paper, circulated chiefly among Caucus members, illustrated novel formulations of potential activism. The Paper enumerated five modes of “Support Networks.” First, the Caucus would create electronic support networks, via social media. Second, the caucus would maintain face-to-face support networks. Third, the caucus hoped to organize an orientation for new members. Fourth, the caucus planned on inaugurating an inquiry and concomitant interviews with part-time faculty across the Los Rios Community College District, aiming to identify “areas of concern.” Finally, the caucus would contribute to a process, or even a forum, to report information and updates to the LRCCD “part-time community.”

The formation of the part-time caucus for the Los Rios College Federation of Teachers offered compelling insights into the hope and hopelessness of a fledgling institution within a community college district.

The LRCFT Part-Time Caucus demonstrated that any assessment of part-time faculty activism in California community colleges must take into consideration the shifting venues and vehicles for an active life. Although many statewide committees and associations increasingly prefer lobby efforts over protests and demonstrations, new pathways for activism—from social media to part-time caucuses—create viable channels for activism. Across California, part-time faculty will undoubtedly approach these new avenues with critical perspectives. Yet, as the contemporary history of part-time active life revealed, these teachers continually configure and reconfigure alternative modes of activism into meaningful pathways for empowerment. Along the way, part-time faculty substantiate their claims and crucial roles in community college learning communities. ■

How can the system remain complacent under this current two-tier system in which the majority of faculty must function under such stressful conditions? In addition to the negative impact on the faculty, what is the consequence of this daily strain on service to students and the colleges? Are we comfortable with this situation?

Lifting the 67 percent workload cap would move the system closer to part-time equity and increase student success. If part-time faculty were able to teach a larger load at one college, these could all occur:

- » Increased student success due to more part-time faculty availability;
- » Faculty travel less everyday (good for the environment);
- » Faculty are physically and mentally healthier;
- » More faculty participation in shared governance;
- » Greater faculty integration into the life of the college;
- » Part-time positions would become more appealing and would attract more talent;
- » Part-time positions and faculty would be more stable;
- » Being a part-time faculty member could become a more viable career choice;
- » Increased part-time faculty equity;
- » Part-time faculty would be professionally supported and could support themselves;
- » Fewer part-time faculty would have to share the same office space;
- » Scheduling fewer part-time faculty would save districts time and money;
- » Colleges would have less trouble finding part-time faculty to teach courses

What Can You Do Now?

This bill needs your support. Please advocate for the support of AB 897 to allow us to make progress toward part-time faculty equity:

- » AB 897 (Medina) raises the part-time workload cap from 67 percent to 85 percent.

FACCC will keep you posted as opportunities to advocate for this bill in Sacramento arise. Meanwhile, contact your local representatives in their district offices to educate them about this bill. During a moment in which the California community colleges are attempting to become more equitable institutions, how can our colleges remain complacent under this permanent two-tier structure? While studies affirm the negative impact on our students, the corporatized model of education finds it too convenient to eliminate a non-benefitted underpaid workforce.

Community college faculty and their representative organizations are re-envisioning community college education through the lens of equity and social justice. As the system implements best practices for student learning, engagement, growth, and success, it should also lead the way in implementing best practices for part-time faculty inclusion and equity. ■

Some of the ideas presented in this article have been published in previous FACCC venues. I want to thank Rich Hansen, Mary Ellen Goodwin, and Deirdre Frontczak for collaborating on previous pieces focusing on part-time faculty equity.



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