

-- Sandra Baringer

Some part-time faculty want full-time jobs; some don't. A recent survey in the Foothill-De Anza district indicated 56% of part-time faculty members who responded would like to have full-time jobs. A survey in the Los Angeles district came up with 55%. The study by the California Post-secondary Education Commission that surveyed twenty-two representative community college districts and was published in 2001 concluded that "half" of part-time faculty members were interested in obtaining full-time jobs.

Given this fact, it isn't surprising that a substantial number of former CPFA leaders have obtained full-time jobs. Timothy Dave, CPFA's first treasurer, now teaches physics full time at Peralta. Mary Ann Ifft, CPFA's first northern regional representative, teaches English full time at De Anza. Ralph Sutter, our webmaster since CPFA's inception, now teaches Spanish full time at Cuesta.

But despite these success stories, many part-time instructors maintain a low profile because they feel that they will be perceived as "whiners" if they complain about poor salary, lack of benefits, and abysmal working conditions. This perception is sometimes reinforced by employment consultants who stress the importance of a positive attitude. In researching her most recent book *Bait and Switch* on employment issues among older professionals, free-lance writer Barbara Ehrenreich concluded that her true personality would be insufficiently perky for success in today's job market for professional women.

With all this in mind, *CPFA News* decided to ask some of our own now-fully-employed activists how they did it. The answers vary, but we hope those of you on the market will find something useful in their perspectives.

Our respondents are Suzanne Crawford, formerly a CPFA southern regional representative, Lantz Crawford, founding Legislative Analyst and former Chair, Mary Jo Anhalt, former central regional representative, and Richard Lewis, founding southern regional representative.

Where and when did you get your full-time teaching job and in what subject?

Suzanne Crawford: Cerritos College in fall 2004, in the English department.

Lantz Simpson: Santa Monica College in fall 2002 English.

Mary Jo Anhalt: Bakersfield College in fall 2002, Math Department. I had done a fulltime-temporary assignment in 1998

Richard Lewis: At Los Angeles City College in September 2001, in the Law Department.

How many years did you teach part-time in the community colleges before landing this full-time job?

Suzanne: Before getting my full-time job, I had worked in community colleges since January 1990. I had taught at one CSU, part-time, for some years before then.

Lantz: 15 years

Mary Jo: I was part-time from 1985 to 1999. ***Richard:*** I taught part time from January 1994 to June 2002

How many of those years were you applying for full-time jobs?

Suzanne: I did not always actively apply for full-time work. At one time when my kids were small, for example, and I had a husband who contributed to the family income, I was part-time by choice. There were also some discouraging years between applying---especially when I had come as close as the final interview of the whole grueling hiring process, something which happened to me four times, only to lose out---when I temporarily resigned myself to being part-time indefinitely. Then, eventually, I would screw up the courage to go out and try again. I estimate my years of actively pursuing full-time teaching at the community colleges add up to a total of five (5) years.

Lantz: . I applied for a FT position at SMC 7 times.

Mary Jo: I applied a total of four times for a full-time position during those fourteen years.

Richard: All.

Did you work part-time at the same district prior to getting this full-time job? If so, for how many years?

Suzanne: No. I did not work for Cerritos before my hiring.

Lantz: Yes, 15 years.

Mary Jo: Yes, 14 years.

Richard: No.

How many personal interviews did you get during the years you were applying for full-time jobs? Any full-time job offers besides the one you are working in now? How many total interviews over the years?

Suzanne: I was a finalist four times before my Cerritos hiring; three of those happened at schools I was working at when I was interviewed.

All of my interviews over the years amount to perhaps 10 to 15.

Lantz: Six interviews; no other offers.

Mary Jo: I think I interviewed three times- in 1985, 1998, and 2002. I taught high school full time 1998 - 2002.

Richard: Three interviews; no offers.

Do you think your advocacy for better working conditions for part-timers helped or hindered your ability to obtain full-time employment? How?

Suzanne: I think my intense involvement at one campus in particular helped me in the long run albeit in a rather indirect way.

While I suspect my activism probably caused me to wear a "Do not hire" target on my back most of the time at the two campuses where I did work during my years of activity, I think the level of acceptance that I gained at one campus helped me eventually---for lack of a better description---change my consciousness. In other words, that I felt as accepted and as esteemed as a full-timer, or nearly so, I think affected how well I performed in my interviews.

The last year or so before my Cerritos hiring, I worked at Orange Coast and Saddleback. I was actively involved in both unions, but even more so at the latter. In fact, in spring of 2004 I was elected to be that faculty association's secretary. I had taken to attending the board of trustee meetings, filling out one of those slips of paper requesting time to speak and then speaking out on behalf of part-timers and their issues. I was on the negotiating team; I was actively involved in numerous events and activities. When I walked across campus, I was no

longer an invisible part-timer. I was greeted by my full-time colleagues who would ask me how negotiations were going or thank me for being part of the team.

When I got hired, administrators and board members all congratulated me. Of course, they were probably happy this thorn in their sides was leaving, but at least they seemed pleasant and respectful about it. I believe my final year at Saddleback provided a major growth opportunity for me; I had sort of evolved into being a full-timer--internalized it in some way, if you will. That, I believe, ultimately paved the way for me finding a full-time position. I had also reached a place where a part of me simply resolved, resolved with a strength and intensity that I had not had before, to get a full-time job: I decided it HAD to be.

Lantz: I think I basically shamed the college into hiring me. Being president of the local union also helped.

Mary Jo: I have some "colorful" memories of CPFA meetings at Cuesta and in Bakersfield and of being "flamed" on the listserv. I don't think the "activism" really hurt my chances at a full-time position, and it did make me more aware of important issues.

Richard: I'm not sure of the impact of my Union and CPFA association had on my hiring chances for the full time positions I applied for. I am aware that at the two colleges I worked at part-time my continued employment was adversely impacted. I continued to receive assignments but I was always aware that the supply could dry up at any moment.

What do you think was the one most important factor that helped you succeed in getting your FTJ?

Suzanne: Well, in addition to "feeling like a full-timer" as I was trying to describe and being extremely resolved, I think getting a full-time job for most of us is largely a result of complex factors: luck, timing, luck, performance, luck, likeability, luck.

Lantz: Persistence.

Mary Jo: Knowing the "players" in the department and the administration and being willing to drive to the remote locations where they needed a math teacher.

Richard: I also think it is important that those others who are hiring you see you as someone who will fit into the department and at the institution.

Teaching experience, past-student references,

What advice do you have for part-time community college faculty in your field attempting to obtain FTJs?

Suzanne: Don't give up. If you haven't already done so, apply beyond the little circle of those schools that are comfortable for you (such as those you already teach at). If you get an interview, research as much as you can about the department and the school. I even arrived more than an hour early the days of my interviews and wandered around campus to get a sense of its students, its buildings, etc. I bought a catalog in the bookstore and read about the school's history, etc. And, without sounding like Pollyanna here, be positive, upbeat, and energetic. Be the type of person that you would want to hire if you were on a hiring committee.

Lantz: Make a sober realization that the odds are greatly stacked against you. Understand that it will take you years to find a FTJ. Stop whining and organize!

Mary Jo: Hang in there. Don't drop the dream!! Bakersfield College hired 36 new faculty this year, the most ever, including three in math, about half with local part-time experience.

Richard: Find another subject you can meet minimum qualifications for. Law positions are in very short supply, try ESL there's tons of jobs in ESL!