Part-time Faculty: The Persistent Paradox

By Deirdre Frontczak, Debbie Klein, and Louise Mackenzie

Part-time faculty are the consummate paradoxe of the California Community Colleges. Although the Education Code describes part-time faculty as “temporary,” they are a permanent part of the landscape. Adding insult to injury, the state law does not require this 40,000 corps of faculty professionals to be paid for anything beyond the classroom hour (collective bargaining agreements can add more), and they are limited to teaching 67% of an equivalent full-time load in a single district.

Moreover, this exploited underpaid and under-supported strata of the faculty often teach the most vulnerable students in our state, creating a dynamic that no one would call a recipe for success.

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 after that faculty rights 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 my book, Equality for Contingent Faculty: Overcoming the Two-Tier System (Yamsterdam University Press, 2014), I contributed an article entitled “The Academic Labor System of Faculty Adjuncts but not Tenure.” Since the term “apartheid” originally referred to racial disparities in South Africa, it can refer to any system or practice that segregates people according to color, ethnicity, caste, etc.

The two-tiered system, enshrined virtually everywhere, creates a system of privileged “haves” and unprivileged “have-nots,” whereby the tenure-track faculty form a minority, now less than 25% of all college professors, who rule over the majority of faculty with little to no job security, low wages, few benefits, and virtually no way out of this academic ghetto.

Worse, the hierarchical often called adjuncts or contingents, are often represented by the same unions who represent the tenured faculty who serve as their immediate supervisors. In 1980, the National Labor Relations Board ruled that tenure-track faculty were “managers” and not entitled to unions at all at private colleges and universities (NLRB v. Veshia University). The NLRB has since made it clear that tenure-track and non-tenure-track faculty cannot be placed in the same bargaining units. (See Seattle University v. Service Employees International Union, Local 925, NLRB Region 19 decision, April 17, 2014).

Public colleges are governed by state laws, often drafted and supported by unions. While some states have outlawed “mixed units,” some have allowed them, and a few have mandated them. It is not fair to force adjuncts, who have no job security, into the same bargaining unit with tenured faculty, especially when these tenured faculty function as supervisors, hiring, evaluating, and re-hiring and/or firing the adjuncts.

Contingent professors have lacked a name for their exploitation. I invented the term “tenurism,” a form of “rankism,” as defined by Robert Fuller in his book, Somebodies and Nobodies: Overcoming the Abuse of Rank. I wrote, “I think we can now give a name to the treatment of non-tenured faculty by their tenured colleagues: tenurism. Like racism, which categorizes people by their race, and sexism, which categorizes people by their sex, tenurism categorizes people by their tenure status and makes the false assumption that tenure (or the lack of it) somehow defines the quality of the professor.” —Keith Hoeller, 2014

Despite these legislative efforts, the basic inequities between the two classes of faculty have intensified with the system claiming powerlessness under the guise 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 at just over 56%.

Part-time faculty, as academically qualified and talented as their full-time colleagues, are hired to prepare, teach, and assess their classes. Most part-time faculty offer office hours even though many colleges do not provide compensation or appropriate office space. Limted to teaching 67% of a full-time load at any one institution and paid at a rate much less than the full-time equivalent, and provided with little or no health care benefits and professional development, 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.

FACCC, faculty unions (CFT, CTA, and CCCI), and the Academic Senate (ASCCC) have a long history of advocating for part-time faculty. Some have团结ed to push for compensation parity (equal pay for equal work), job security, and medical and other benefits. Faculty groups are also

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Tenure for the Common Good
By CAROLYN BETENSKY

Activists have been fighting for years for decent working conditions and pay for adjuncts and graduate student instructors. The majority of these activists are adjuncts and graduate students themselves. They have formed collective bargaining units under the auspices of the AAUP and other unions, and they have created organizations such as the New Faculty Majority and Faculty Forward (which grew out of the SEIU). While some tenured and tenure-stream faculty have supported their adjunct colleagues and graduate students in their attempts to unionize and to secure a living wage and benefits—and I’ll single out the University of Illinois Chicago and Portland State University here—many have not. The AAUP has certainly been out in front of this problem, and individual tenured scholars such as Michael Bérubé, Paul Kattenberg, and Robert Nissel have fought the good fight. But until now, tenured faculty have not come together as a group, as tenured faculty, to pool our ideas and strategies. Those with the least job security in our faculty, to pool our ideas and strategies. Those with the least job security in our faculty, to pool our ideas and strategies. Those with the least job security in our faculty, to pool our ideas and strategies. Those with the least job security in our faculty, to pool our ideas and strategies. Those with the least job security in our faculty, to pool our ideas and strategies. Those with the least job security in our faculty, to pool our ideas and strategies. Those with the least job security in our faculty, to pool our ideas and strategies.

When I propose that tenured faculty come together, I mean either under the umbrella of the AAUP or outside of it. As I mentioned above, the AAUP has been in the vanguard in addressing adjunctification, but the AAUP fights many different kinds of battles and represents all ranks of university professors. I acknowledge that the struggle for an advocacy group that coalesces around an issue is particularly important. The first and most obvious strategy is to get people talking about the problem on a regular basis instead of treating it as if it’s disappearing. Let’s start a forum to discuss the issue and organize ourselves to advocate for change. The first and most obvious strategy is to get people talking about the problem on a regular basis instead of treating it as if it’s disappearing. Let’s start a forum to discuss the issue and organize ourselves to advocate for change. The first and most obvious strategy is to get people talking about the problem on a regular basis instead of treating it as if it’s disappearing. Let’s start a forum to discuss the issue and organize ourselves to advocate for change. The first and most obvious strategy is to get people talking about the problem on a regular basis instead of treating it as if it’s disappearing. Let’s start a forum to discuss the issue and organize ourselves to advocate for change.

As a Republican Congress continues its assault on the Affordable Care Act, the State of California prepares to join the World’s other developed countries in guaranteeing access to health care for all its people. Senate Bill 562, “The Healthy California Act,” introduced by Democratic Senators Ricardo Lara (Huntington Beach) and Toni Atkins (San Diego) will develop a single payer system of universal health care, guaranteeing comprehensive services for all Californians. All medical necessary services will be covered, including: routine medical diagnosis and treatment, emergency, co-pays, and deductibles. This will save billions of dollars in wasteful and unnecessary administrative costs, corporate profits, and exorbitant executive salaries that could medically necessary services have been denied to the health of California’s people. Billions of dollars of additional savings will be realized through negotiation of equitable reimbursement rates for health care providers, hospitals, pharmaceutical companies, and other providers of medical equipment and supplies. The utilization of a single payer system will allow us to plan the rational allocation of resources and delivery of health care services. The rapid duplication of services and maximizing the likelihood that services will be available where they are needed. SB562 has passed the Senate and is currently in the State Assembly. It has the enthusiastic support of rank and file Democrats as well as much of the Party’s leadership. Additionally, polls indicate that a universal, single payer health care system, like that of SB562 has significant—maybe majority—support among unionists and all rank and file Republicans. The time has come.◊

David Welch, BSN, HCA serves on the Executive Board of National Nurses United/California Nurses Association. Tom Reed, M.A., MFA, is a member of the Butte County Health Care Coalition. For more information about SB 562, go to www.healthycaliforniaact.org.
Bill Seeks To Strengthen Due-Process Rights For Faculty

By Jeffrey Michels

AB 1651 (Reyes), cosponsored by the California Community College Independent (CCCC) and the Faculty Association of California Community Colleges (CPFA), seeks to provide support from many California labor and faculty organizations, including CPFA, has passed the Assembly and Senate and now waits for the Governor’s signature to become law. Aimed at strengthening due-process protections for faculty members accused of misconduct, the scope of the bill was narrowed during the legislative process, particularly in dialogue with the Governor’s office. Originally, AB 1651 sought to require that faculty be provided a copy of any misconduct-complaint a college district intended to investigate formally. As amended, some key deals were made with cases where a faculty member is placed on involuntary paid administrative leave. In such situations, if the Governor signs the bill, districts will be required to notify faculty in writing of the general nature of the allegations upon which the complaint was based, place the employee on administrative leave are based, and they will be expected to complete their investigations within 90 days. Even in its amended form, the bill makes valuable progress in protecting faculty, since for the first time in law, it defines involuntary paid administrative leave, and it establishes some due-process rights for faculty who are placed on this sort of leave. The fact that faculty are so strongly represented in the contract has allowed districts in the past to claim that they are not being “disciplined” (even while faculty are barred from contacting their students or coming onto campus), and so districts have denied faculty even minimal due-process rights while on leave. AB 1651 takes a small but important step forward by clarifying that even on paid leave, faculty have rights to information and expeditious process.

Jeffrey Michels is President of the California Community Colleges Independent, incoming President of the Bay Faculty Association and Executive Director of United Faculty of Contra Costa Community College District. He can be reached at JeffreyMichels@gmail.com.

REAL REPRESENTATION FOR PART-TIME FACULTY

UPTE-CWA – over 15,000 members strong – represents part-time faculty at these community colleges:

Butte College
Part-Time Faculty Association (PFA-UPTE)
Contact: Stacey Burks, burksst@butte.edu

College of the Sequoias
Contact: cos@up-te-cwa.org

Mt. San Jacinto
Contact: Tom Milazzo, tmilazo1@yahoo.com

UPTE fights for part-time faculty rights

University Professional & Technical Employees
Communications Workers of America, Local 9119
510-704-UPTE www.upte.org/local/cc
Tenurism, continued from page 1

This is the argument in favor of the privileging of the tenure-track faculty: The tenure-track deserves its superior treatment because they have won a competitive national search process and passed the tenure-review process and awarded the prestigious status of tenure.

Contingent faculty, however, are often hired on the spur of the moment, and are not put through the rigorous tenure process.

Given the large number of well-qualified applicants and the scarce number of tenure-track positions, it is reasonable to believe that many of those who did not secure a tenure-track job were equally, or perhaps even better, qualified than the one who was chosen for the position. For teaching competence, it has been argued that the major factor in receiving tenure is whether or not the faculty are teaching at research universities. Contingent faculty are not supported in their research and must often conduct it in their own time and at their own expense.

But what about the tenure process? Academia’s major mantra is that tenure exists to protect “academic freedom.” Does it in fact do so? While it appears to do so, it is in fact based on an entirely arbitrary criteria, according to entirely arbitrary values, more often than not the colleges feel they are threatened.

How can the system remain compliant 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-benefited 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.

If we want to preserve the needle on part-time faculty equity while also better serving students, the California Community College system will need to: - Fully integrate all faculty on aspects of community college policy, including student success, equity, workforce education, and Guided Pathways.

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leading the conversations about creating a state-wide system and culture that fosters respect, inclusion, collegiality, and professionalism among all faculty.

Can the system remain compliant in the face of the two-tier system structure? While studies affirm the negative impact on our students, the corporatized model of education finds it too convenient to eliminate a non-benefited underpaid workforce.

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In the September/October issue of Academe, “Tenured Allies and the Normalization of Contingent Labor,” tenured allies must talk about the erosion of tenure lines as if it were a problem of the gravest urgency—because it is one. And the only way we can do this is to talk to each other, privately and in public forums, about what happened, what is happening, and what is yet to happen to labor conditions under which many of our colleagues struggle on their own campuses. It’s not that merely talking about the casualization of academic labor will eliminate the problem, but talking about it frequently is a pre-condition for the organized efforts that will.

I’m well aware how quixotic and unsexy it sounds to try to get tenured professors together to fight for the common good, but this is an approach that to my knowledge has not been attempted in just don’t have time to waste feeling powerless when we haven’t exercised the power we have.

Folks interested in joining me to strategize, lead, or participate in any fashion should email me at carojabete@gmail.com or visit the facebook page above. And the website of the Tenured Allies and the Normalization of Contingent Labor.

Carolyn Betensky is a Professor of English at the University of Rhode Island.