



# ADJUNCT FACULTY AND THE RING OF POWER

By Dennis Selder

As adjuncts, we often feel invisible in the places where we work, almost as if we were wearing Bilbo Baggins's ring of power. We move quickly from classroom to parking lot, heading off to other campuses without much opportunity for chit chat; our presence in meetings, if permitted, is tolerated but not encouraged. When we make comments in such meetings, it's clear that our credibility and subaltern status give our words an elasticity that bounces them out of full-timers' ears before they are heard. Our part-time representatives, if these exist, on the faculty senates or as part-time reps in unions are indulged with patient indifference and a polite smile: hopefully the adjunct will stop talking soon so the real business can begin.

Likewise, the public does not see us. We go by many names – adjunct, part-timer, contingent, lecturer, grad student teacher, temporary worker. The proliferation of labels bewilders the eye and obviates any chance for an awareness of our experience. Even our students, those with whom we spend the most time, have but a glimmering of understanding of our circumstances, one that equals their grasp of critical theory. Mostly our quiet absence on campuses during the many hours we are not around is treated as a minor irritation as they try getting through their days. And then there are the tutoring labs and writing centers, all set up to pick up the slack where the adjunct leaves off. No wonder chairs care so deeply about these additional resources.

But just like the ring of power, there is one small group who see us with absolute clarity. Part-timers may be shocked to learn of the careful attention with which we are paid, and even though it is from afar, it is a bloodless and distant gaze. This group is not, as you might suppose, the full-time faculty. To them we are more like a bad dream, something they are continually trying to forget, often because many of them once had the ring of power on their own fingers. No, the group who sees us so well does so partly because without us they die. Just like the nine riders who hunted Frodo, they need our labor and invisibility to sustain them.

To whom am I referring? To give you a clue, I quote from one of their recent reports called the FCMAT standing for "Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team." This "team" and its subsequent report was produced to justify shutting down San Francisco City College. In their analysis, part-time faculty were too close to parity with full-time faculty, and this did not allow the college to reap the fiscal rewards of our cheap labor. Here is how they put it:

CCSF's part-time faculty salary schedule and health benefit provisions in its collective bargaining agreement with the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) Local 2121 have negated any significant short-term cost advantage of using part-time faculty. The lower costs associated with part-time faculty have typically allowed community college districts to maintain their class schedules and offerings at a lower cost, but this is not the case at CCSF (30).

And so their recommendation follows:

Negotiate to reduce total staffing costs

...including ... reducing the cost per hour for part-time faculty, and/or reducing or eliminating the cost of part-time faculty health benefits (36).

And another recommendation was that they (CCSF):

Ensure that managers exercise their right to assign part-time faculty [and] that these assignments are less than 50% (7.5 units in credit and 12.5 units in noncredit instruction) to mitigate the cost of district-paid health benefits (49)

The FCMAT was commissioned by the ACCJC, or the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges. It is a privately held company that is currently empowered to provide or deny accreditation to California Community Colleges as authorized by the Chancellor's

Office. What is worth pointing out is none of its recommendations have anything to do with the quality of education at San Francisco City College. In fact, the same report roundly criticizes the college, not just for paying part-timers too much, but also for having too many tenured faculty, which has made it too expensive to provide education to students. In the report's words, "CCSF's total

number of academic full-time equivalent positions is 517 more than Mt. San Antonio and 548 more than Santa Monica. These numbers indicate a substantial difference in cost per FTES served" (39). An FTES (Full-Time Equivalent Staff) is a metric for measuring the costs at community colleges. In other words, the criticism is that the education provided to students wasn't cheap enough.

Closer to home are our own unions. This summer there was a battle to change how we are referred to in California's Educational

Code, the body of laws that currently allows us to be legally discriminated against as a group. As the Society for Human Resources notes, "The classification of 'temporary' is defined by the employer. As such, the employer has the right to determine what length of time the employee has to work

to fall into a category other than temporary." But they also note that:

While employers may discriminate in the administration of fringe benefits on the basis of job classifications (e.g., exempt, nonexempt, temporary, regular, full-time and part-time), it may be unnecessarily risky to try to discriminate on any other level. Employees doing similar jobs should be

treated similarly with regard to their benefits to avoid claims of unlawful discrimination.

The point, then, is that our status in the Educational Code as "temporary workers" is the legal foundation that allows our employers—the community colleges—to discriminate against us. The legislation (AB 2705) sought to change "temporary" to "contingent." This would have undermined the legal foundation that maintains our tenuous circumstances. AB 2705, had it passed, would also have been a more honest representation of our long-term employment status. Many of us have worked twenty-five years for the same institution. How is that "temporary?"

It turns out that the CFT – the largest union that purports to represent part-time faculty in California – fought to defeat AB 2705. Union leadership used union dollars – dues from part-timers – to pay lawyers to write legal arguments opposing the proposed law, and they contacted legislators, presenting these arguments and urging a no vote. They also falsely claimed that changing temporary to contingent would have undermined the right to unemployment benefits. Here is a statement from Jim Mahler, Council President for the CFT in the Sept/Oct issue of California Teacher:

CFT succeeded in defeating an ill-considered legislative bill which purposed to bring "respect" to adjunct faculty members by changing their Education Code classification from 'temporary' to 'contingent.' The bill's supporters overlooked the potential see "Ring..." **PG. 8»**



## National Adjunct Walkout Day Organized

By Marnie Weber, MFA

Beginning October 2, a few tweets went round the twitterverse calling for adjuncts to stage a national walkout on February 25, 2015.

Since then, quite a bit of buzz surrounding the idea has circulated, including a short piece in the Quick Takes section at Inside Higher Ed asking, "What would academe look like without adjuncts?" IHE quotes an anonymous adjunct regarding the walkout:

The adjunct said the walkout day doesn't have a central organizing committee, and that it will look different on different campuses. Groups might highlight the "educational or administrative issues impacting adjuncts on their particular campus, across the country, or [the] plights of individual adjuncts," she said. But the central idea of the movement is that "no adjunct or campus must face these shared issues alone."

Yes, a national call to overt action is long

overdue. Calling for organizing not at the national but at the campus or district level is a good idea, too. This keeps thing on a grass roots level.

Even so, we need to think about the various ways this thing can be accomplished so that the maximum amount of people feel

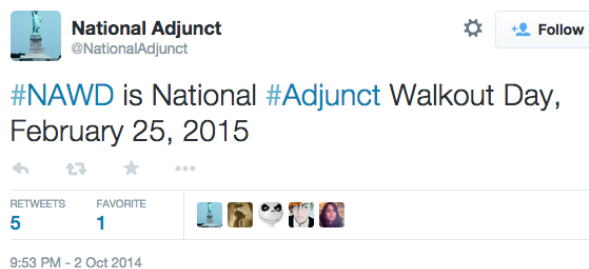
rallies including supportive non-adjuncts: educators and others who are affected by the casualization of labor. Or, adjuncts could show support by making Adjunct Walkout lesson plans. Adjuncts could also share ideas via the variety of listservs and other common adjunct online meeting spaces.

There are those who feel the need to know who is behind the national call to action. This is understandable as humans are curious beings. But the idea to maintain anonymity as to who is behind the call may be essential to making ourselves heard. Think in terms of why The Economist famous for anonymous attribution, prefers to maintain its tradition:

"The main reason for anonymity... is a belief that what is written is more important than who writes it." From this perspective, placing content above attribution allows for more people to have a voice and an impact.

And after all, isn't what's wanted is that we be heard?

comfortable joining in. In addition, since this affects students, it seems only natural to include their voices. All this suggests that the walkout be either literal or metaphorical, as determined by each local group or individual choice. For example, a metaphorical walkout could be manifested as protest



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# Lessons from COCAL: It's All in the Process

By Krista Eliot, PhD Candidate

Thanks in part to financial support from the CPFA, I had the opportunity to attend COCAL XI. It was a wonderful way to mark the end of my first year of involvement in the labor movement as an "adjunct activist."

This conference differed from others I have attended in a couple of significant ways. For one thing, it was my first international conference entirely focused on contingent faculty issues. It was an uplifting

and empowering experience to make connections with activists from across the country and internationally. Recently, I have been focusing my efforts on the issue of public service loan forgiveness for contingent faculty, and it was particularly helpful for me to connect with others working on the same issue.

This conference also differed from others that I have attended in that, instead of treating the attendees as an audience to be informed, we were expected to actively participate in generating plans of action. Plenary speakers were limited to speaking for a brief five minutes in order to prioritize audience questions. In the interest group break-out sessions, of which there were five, each group was tasked with coming up with a goal and strategies to meet that goal. The groups focused on Legal Issues and Legislative Advocacy, Student Issues, Media Organizing and Narratives, Building National Agendas, and Bargaining for Equity.

I divided my time between the Student Issues and Legal Issues/Legislative Advocacy groups. From what I saw, the process of trying to include everyone in the conversation, come to agreement on a single goal, and stay focused on that goal was extremely difficult. People went off on tangents and had trouble being concise. There were inevitable differences

of opinion that sometimes became heated. Claims that some issues would be better handled through collective bargaining than legislative action were challenged by those from "right to work" states. The process required great patience on everyone's part—especially on the part of the moderators, who sometimes had to

**"The key is to focus on the process. There is no short cut to a more democratic future, so we have to keep doing the hard work of cooperating and listening to each other."**

absorb the frustrations of those who got tired of waiting for their turn to speak. There is no question in my mind that it would have been easier to appoint a few people to committees and ask them to come up with goals and strategies for the rest of us to vote on. However, doing things this way was a conscious decision to include everyone in the process, even if it meant doing things the hard way.

In the effort to include everyone, there was still certainly room for improvement. Simultaneous translation was only available during the plenary sessions, so in some of the interest group meetings, non-English speakers were marginalized. There seemed to be widespread agreement in the final plenary meeting on the last day of the conference that despite the additional costs involved, simultaneous translation of all break-out sessions, as well as the plenary sessions, should be a high priority in the future. I also think that live streaming future conferences would be a valuable way to include those who want to participate but cannot find funding to attend.

As I was planning some art activities for my three-year-old son this past week, I found myself making connections between the process approach to art that I am using with him and the lessons that I learned from my participation in COCAL XI.

Process art involves exploring art materials and enjoying what happens as you go. It is the experience of making art, rather than the final product, that is the focus. In much the same way, I felt that the most important thing I got out of COCAL XI was experiencing the process of democratically coming up with shared goals and strategies for the movement to end contingency in higher education. As difficult as it may be to include everyone, it seems clear to me that taking short cuts

in this regard has weakened the labor movement. We need to learn how to be part of a collective and to realize that the most brilliant strategy in the world will never succeed unless we have come up with it together and feel a collective sense of ownership, as well as a collective responsibility to act on it.

As a new participant in this movement, I have already seen how difficult it is to get contingent faculty involved—and even more difficult to get them to stay. I wonder sometimes if I will burn out myself from the effort of trying to juggle family, teaching, research, and activism. The ultimate goal of ending contingency sometimes seems impossibly far off, and the incremental steps toward the goal can seem almost futile in light of the enormity of the inequality that we have to overcome.

For me, the key is to focus on the process. There is no short cut to a more democratic future, so we have to keep doing the hard work of cooperating and listening to each other. This work comes with the reward of really learning from each other. It also comes with the reward of knowing that as long as we keep standing up for ourselves, the corporations cannot win. To quote Joe Berry, "when we fight, we are winning." I believe this is true.

Onward march.

## Reflections on the Hayward Award

By John Sullivan, MA

This year, 2014, was the first time that part-time faculty were eligible to receive the prestigious Hayward Award, and I was privileged to be nominated by the Riverside City College Academic Senate. According to the website of the Academic Senate of the California Community Colleges, "The award honors outstanding community college faculty who have a track record of excellence both in teaching and in professional activities and have demonstrated commitment to their students, profession, and college." Rebecca Sarkisian, in Music at Fresno City College, and I were chosen by a review panel and presented with the award at the March 2014 Board of Governors meeting.

My hope is that Rebecca and I are the first in a long line of part-time faculty to receive this award. We represent the shift that has taken place in the profession over the past forty years. No longer are we adjuncts who come and teach a class for what the Education code labels an "emergency need." We are faculty who have taught for many years, or will in the case of those just starting out. While some in our ranks still work in their fields and teach a class as a "professional expert," many more of us are teachers who earn our livings, or supplement them, as community college professionals. What we have seen over the past forty years is the standardization of part-time teachers as an integral part of the academic community, and with

reductions in full-time, tenured faculty, more of the work of the college has fallen on our shoulders. On average, at least 50% of college classes are taught by part-time faculty, the 75/25 ratio is upside down for all practical purposes, and at many institutions, some disciplines are staffed entirely with part-time faculty.

The introduction of Student Learning Outcomes and requisite assessments, the Student Success recommendations, and ACCJC's accreditation standards mean that the role of part-time faculty will continue to expand. As a result, we are increasingly required to be professional experts. Our participation is no longer optional, not with half of all classes taught by part-time faculty and students increasingly graduating without ever taking classes from a tenured faculty member. To meet accreditation standards, part-time faculty have to be part of the review process not just in assessing SLOs, but in the conversations about them and the revisions to the Course Outlines of Records that contain them.

Increasingly, whether some people like it or not, the old role of the adjunct has disappeared. Our role has been professionalized despite those who continue to minimize, marginalize, or negate it, and we are education professionals even though many institutions, systems, contracts, and laws have yet to treat us as such. So when I was asked to reflect on the meaning of the Hayward, I reflected on the profession, and on my colleagues, and on the colleges,

and on what this means to all of us in the academic community.

It means that the ASCCC has finally elected progressive leaders who recognize the important role of part-time faculty in the mission, goals, and purposes of the colleges; it means that the bar has been raised to reflect where so many of us are as professionals by recognizing our work within our fields, disciplines, and institutions; it means that a significant inroad has been made in eradicating the antiquated view of part-time faculty as adjuncts with no ties to the institution and replacing that view with the perspective that we are education professionals with experience and expertise who provide a solid investment in and loyalty to the institutions for which we work; it means that we now have a standard to which we hold ourselves to live up to, and we aspire to perform our responsibilities at a level beyond the essentially meaningless stamp of "satisfactory" on a generic evaluation form.

The Hayward means that we are all faculty on an equal foundation who are equally worthy of recognition because we serve the same students in the same communities at the same colleges, and we are, therefore, worthy of professional recognition. It is a step—a large step—in the right direction, one that I hope the faculty, senates, and colleges will build on to integrate part-time faculty into the professional academic communities of which we are already an essential part.

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# Adjuncts Are But a Symptom

**One way to exert power in restraint of democracy is to bend the state to a market logic, pretending one can replace “citizens” with “customers.” Consequently, the neoliberals seek to restructure the state with numerous audit devices (under the sign of “accountability” or the “audit society”) or impose rationalization through introduction of the “new public management”; or, better yet, convert state services to private provision on a contractual basis.**

– Philip Mirowski “The Thirteen Commandments of Neoliberalism”

By Marnie Weber, MFA

Who’s minding the store while thousands of academics across the globe debate ‘best practices’ for activism? The free market analogy is apropos, for while we focus our attention on the divisive nature of academia’s two-tier system, the assault on public education and the part-timization of the workforce go on unabated.

Adjuncts are a white collar symptom of systemic and deep global wounds to freedom. The plight of adjuncts is often compared to that of fast food and WalMart workers, but we need to consider that our advanced degrees provide us a privilege not shared by most of the wounded. We are equal to our fellow wounded but possess an additional step to economic access. So, even though many adjuncts subsist at or near poverty levels, we also exist within a realm of opportunity granted via advanced education – an irony we can’t afford to ignore.

Because the piece of the pie relegated to education keeps shrinking, we are all fighting for our very existence, and without realizing it or meaning to, we are being conditioned to accept a norm that says there is no public good, only allegiance to oneself. Such a focus erodes freedom. We need a concerted effort to fight the undermining of programs that actually helped bring about the ideals of democracy for forty-plus years, one of which is public education.

The ongoing Adjunct Question is a tool being used to misdirect us from the subversion of public education since the 1940s and the big push against New Deal programs. This era saw the formation of Friedrich Hayek’s Mont Pelerin Society, the adoption of ideas by Ludwig von Mises, and the birth of the Foundation for Economic Education (FEE), “generally regarded as ‘the first libertarian think-tank,’” into which both Milton Friedman and future John Birch Society founder Robert Welch put energy:

The purpose of the FEE – and libertarianism, as it was originally created – was to supplement big business lobbying with a pseudo-intellectual, pseudo-economics rationale to back up its policy and legislative attacks on labor and government regulations. (Mark Ames)

Think of it this way – there is billions at stake in the testing-accountability movement that accepts public funding into its own coffers as a way of doing business, framing the siphoning as ‘public-private.’ This means that tax dollars are being used to make profits at the expense of all of us, profits that are not being returned to the classroom. Nor are these monies being used to support citizens’ interests such as job security, pro rata compensation, student loan subsidies, or education the way we practice it ourselves.

No, as it turns out, public education is an investor’s dream. Often cloaked as social enterprise investing and venture philanthropy with directive strings attached, education investment opportunities include everything from owning charter schools, student loan corporations, and assessment facilities to manipulating curriculum and

operating billion dollar hedge funds. As reborn education activist Diane Ravitch put it:

What’s in it for the hedge fund guys? A fun hobby; power; a chance to call themselves “civil rights leaders” (not too many to be found in the big cities’ exclusive clubs); and, yes, a chance to make money. Those who invest in charters can double their money in seven years, thanks to a federal program called the New Markets Tax Credits.

It may seem realistic to accept the neoliberal argument that education is not a right (and it is eek, socialist!), and therefore schools must compete for consumers just like businesses, but it’s actually opportunistic and clearly doesn’t work. The question should be: how do we fight the nexus of the behemoths of big politics and business in order to redress the contingency crisis?

The two-tier system is an excellent tool for the divide and conquer strategy of Jeffersonian free markets. Forcing tenured professors to protect the tenure system misdirects attention away from the assault on the teaching profession as a cover for union busting and removing obstacles to the godhead of the market. While educators as a whole are attacked on multiple fronts, the unions we rely on to protect academic freedom and tenure are in a fight for their lives. The business-political elites have been busy forcing education unions to spend large sums fending off legislation meant to weaken our voices. Unfortunately, the two tier system, viewed by assailants as a socialist program, unwittingly and conveniently helps weaken public education. This is not a justification for the inability of unions to protect academic freedom and make gains for all faculty members – just a demonstration that the assault on multiple fronts is working very well.

So, if the unions are busy fighting for their existence (relying on the same methods used in the past), and tenured faculty are busy protecting tenure (relying on academic freedom arguments that necessitated the rise of faculty unions), and the adjunct faculty are busy working to improve their working conditions, who is minding the store?

Our old ways of handling academic infighting is made obsolete by the legislating of our lives in which every move is calculated toward repealing any semblance to the freedoms we understand as guaranteed in the Constitution. In “Reclaiming the Politics of Freedom,” Political Science Professor Corey Robin argues that big business, “uncurbed and unchecked, portends...personal domination,” and that government is a source of freedom:

When government is aligned with democratic movements on the ground, as Walter Reuther and Martin Luther King Jr. understood, it becomes the individual’s instrument for liberating [oneself from one’s] rulers in the private sphere, a way to break the back of private autocracy

Contingent labor is being made out to be the new norm, not just in academia, but worldwide. We need to consider that our fight is not just a fight for adjunct faculty, but for the denial of what the UN International

Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights states as

The right of everyone to the enjoyment of just and favourable conditions of work which ensure, in particular:

- Remuneration which provides all workers, as a minimum, with:
- Fair wages and equal remuneration for work of equal value without distinction of any kind, in particular women being guaranteed conditions of work not inferior to those enjoyed by men, with equal pay for equal work;
- A decent living for themselves and their families in accordance with the provisions of the present Covenant;
- Safe and healthy working conditions;
- Equal opportunity for everyone to be promoted in his employment to an appropriate higher level, subject to no considerations other than those of seniority and competence;
- Rest, leisure and reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay, as well as remuneration for public holidays.

We must take the big picture into consideration to broaden our thinking and thus our discourse. This doesn’t mean

abandoning our work to claim our rights and improve our working conditions, but enriching it. Educational budgets are ensconced in state budgets, and changes to Ed Codes are likewise made without consulting the public, so working to change the very legislative conditions that cripple education is a necessary tool. In this way, lobbying advocacy groups such as California Part-time Faculty Association (CPFA) are vital. We must also challenge the entrenched power of the business elite who seek to further shift Americans from citizen to consumer with calls to investigate this unwarranted influence at the local, state, and national levels. Equally important, adjuncts should join efforts against the business elite, working hand-in-hand at every level of education and connecting to efforts from those who, like us, are being denied freedom through economic manipulation.

Think about how we have become accustomed to doing so much more with so much less – and with little to show for it but our sense of loyalty to the public. If we are to take back education and our freedom, we need to be a solid front of citizens who seek to denormalize what is being force fed us as givens.

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# Death of a Canary Signifies Need for Healthy Reform

By Colette Marie McLaughlin, PhD

A large body of research reveals escalating tuition, student debt, and inequity among educators is limiting access to and destroying the quality of higher education. The societal costs of these problems reveal solutions—other than continuing to allow students and part-time faculty to bear the brunt of rampant greed—are needed.

The death of Mary Margaret Vojko in Sept. 2013 illuminates the consequences of the unethical treatment of part-time faculty. This 83-year-old woman had worked full-time at Duquesne University as an adjunct for 25 years. A few months prior to her death, she had been removed from campus by police and dismissed from her \$12,000 a year job after she was found sleeping in her university office because she lacked the money—due to the cost of her cancer treatments—to heat her home. Like many adjuncts, she had neither health insurance nor a retirement package. Her death from a heart attack while in a panicked state demonstrates the way inequality both within and external to US campuses has profoundly disturbing impacts on adjuncts who—while seeking to improve the lives of their students—give selflessly until they have no more to give but life itself.

Some claim privatizing universities and outsourcing education is a viable solution. Venture capitalists want to “modernize” campuses by relying upon non-unionized educators delivering standardized, pre-packaged, on-line courses akin to a Phoenix University-like product that will benefit shareholders and CEOs. Such a product seems antithetical to cultivating

the creative minds and talent pool that has traditionally enabled the US to lead the world in innovation. While there is no denying serious problems exist in higher education, it seems more effective to retain what is working and eliminating or modifying what does not work or work well. Nor is it reasonable to trust claims without proof. Massive corporate tax cuts that have significantly reduced state funding to colleges were based on assurances that those tax breaks would

**“Einstein solved problems by thinking differently, which is why he was able to conceive of new paradigms in physics. We part-time faculty need to stop giving our power to administrators and senior faculty who benefit from the status quo.”**

provide jobs, yet little evidence exists that this occurred. Meanwhile, lost revenues are being backfilled with higher tuitions and additional part-time faculty in lieu of full time hires.

*Washington Monthly's* Sept. / Oct. 2011 feature, “Administrators Ate My Tuition” describes how expanding bureaucracies are diverting funds from academic programs. This injustice is also caused by factors beyond administrative bloat. American Institutes for Research’s 2013 Report, “Labor Intensive or Labor Expensive? Changing Staffing Compensation Patterns in Higher Education” attributed the increasing costs to the swelling ranks

of professional staff, inflated benefits, shrinking state support, and increased pay given established (tenured) professors. UCLA Researchers Perez and Litt’s paper, “The Work of the University: The Adjunct Phenomenon,” describes an increasing reliance on adjuncts to balance budgets which creates a two-tiered professoriate that negatively influences governance, research, and quality of education, Miranda Merklein’s blog “How the Adjunct Crisis Hurts Students and the Importance of

faculty who are worth their paychecks are also burdened by “mission creep,” the demand that they take on more and more administrative tasks—without additional compensation—which leaves them with less and less time for students. And clearly, this mission creep is logically at odds with the increased staffing of (highly paid) non-instructional professionals who should be doing this work. (Does it not occur to the wealthy reformers that since it takes multiple administrators to make decisions, logic would dictate cuts should begin here?)

Einstein solved problems by thinking differently, which is why he was able to conceive of new paradigms in physics. We part-time faculty need to stop giving our power to administrators and senior faculty who benefit from the status quo. While there is no denying more than a few exceptional administrators and senior faculty exist, they need to prove their commitment to the students they serve and their contingent colleagues who help them serve those students by joining our efforts. Higher education is at risk, so it is high time we reassess the long practice of increasing salaries merely for time in office. Nor should tenure be an excuse not to perform the duties for which full timers are paid.

Part-time faculty are the majority employee group at most all colleges. We have the power, and we need to use it. Help end unethical practices that threaten the quality and costs of the education students are receiving. Attend the upcoming CPFA Spring Conference April 11th at the California History Center on the De Anza Community College campus.

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Linda Chan • John Govsky • Amy Roberts • Linda Sneed

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## Report from the Chair: IMHO

2014 is turning into a banner year for CPFA's Executive Council (EC), and I want to take this opportunity to introduce our readers to our newest Council members. Our Annual Conference held at Long Beach Community College (LBCC), in May witnessed a new group of CPFA'ers who stepped up to become EC members. Their infusion of new energy and interests has given us renewed purpose and direction.

Welcome:

- Colette McLaughlin, Gavilan College, Public Relations/Communications Director
- Marnie Weigle, Southwestern College, Social Media Director
- Raymond Brennan, DeAnza College, Bay Area Regional Representative
- Bonnie Massey, Irvine College, Director of Administration

In addition, CPFA also welcomes the following members who have agreed to serve on the EC and were appointed earlier this year:

- Dennis Selder, Southwestern College, Membership Director and
- Denise Johnson, Chaffey College, Southern Regional Representative

I look forward to working with all of them, as well as our longtime serving members:

- David Donica, Director of Finance,
- Robert Yoshioka, Legislative Analyst and
- Deborah Dahl-Shanks, Ex-Officio.

As is the case with all of the EC members,

many will also assume other duties, as needed, and will serve in various capacities when called upon. So in addition to these positions, Denise has taken on the role as our Layout Editor for our bi-annual newspaper. Also Raymond has stepped up to the plate to become our Content Editor. Marnie is overseeing our Blog. These new 2014 EC members bring much needed energy, ideas, and all are about "thinking outside the box," which is always a welcome trait to have! I could not ask for a more focused and dedicated Executive Council!

At the same time, we say farewell to two EC members:

Pam Hanford, our longtime Publications Director and Editor of our Journal and

David Milroy, past Chair, Director of Administration, pioneering founder of CPFA and intrepid distributor of thousands of copies of our Journal for over 10 years, and the good news is that he will continue to be responsible for this herculean task.

Their efforts on behalf of part timers throughout the system and beyond are greatly appreciated and will be missed.

Serving on the EC is not without its rewards or compensations...although most of what we, as EC members receive, cannot be tallied in dollars and cents. We all do what we do because we believe in our cause and want to make lives better and more fulfilling for the tens of thousands of part time faculty AND OUR STUDENTS. We work toward getting paid a living wage with benefits, and being

provided those working conditions that will allow us to help our students succeed. We strive for professional recognition at the local, union, and statewide levels; and we seek salaries and institutional standing that acknowledge our value to the community college system that currently mandates only partial compensation and only token (minimal) job security and re-hire rights, seniority, and due process.

CPFA is the only non-union, membership funded, part time faculty advocacy group that solely represents the interests of part time faculty throughout the California Community College System. We speak for the mute, frightened, and silent contingent academic workers. Contingent workers who are under-represented, often circumscribed by their full-time faculty, frequently controlled by their local bargaining units, and who may be ignorant of larger educational issues directly affecting the ways we are able to do our jobs. What is worse, far too many are circumscribed and marginalized by administrative, union, and faculty leaders who tell them to wait patiently for the crumbs that they are thrown as part of routine contract negotiations, and this while CA tenured track faculty continue to live very well, indeed!

With these thoughts, please join me in welcoming our new EC members and join us this coming legislative season to see what kinds of legislation we can craft that will effectively and significantly impact



our financial, social, and political situation as we move forward with our invigorated agenda for 2015 and beyond. Activate your membership, or in some cases re-activate, and take a major role in ensuring your professional and personal success as contingent faculty, however you choose to define yourselves.

- John Martin, Chair



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## Membership Update

I was delighted and grateful to be voted membership director in March of this year. I really wanted this position because it gives me the opportunity to use our collective talent to further the interests of part-time instructors and our students.

I learned an important lesson about part-timers last Spring when I was campaigning for a union position, namely this: part-timers collectively have cornered the market on expertise at community colleges. Not only are there more Ph.D.s among part-timers than there are among full-timers, but there is also more professional experience and years teaching. At Southwestern College, I met mathematicians working in the defense industry, practicing psychologists and

therapists, teachers who have figured out how to manage six classes at three different campuses. Some of us teach at both community colleges and universities and have experience working with diverse groups of students with widely varying skills and educational backgrounds.

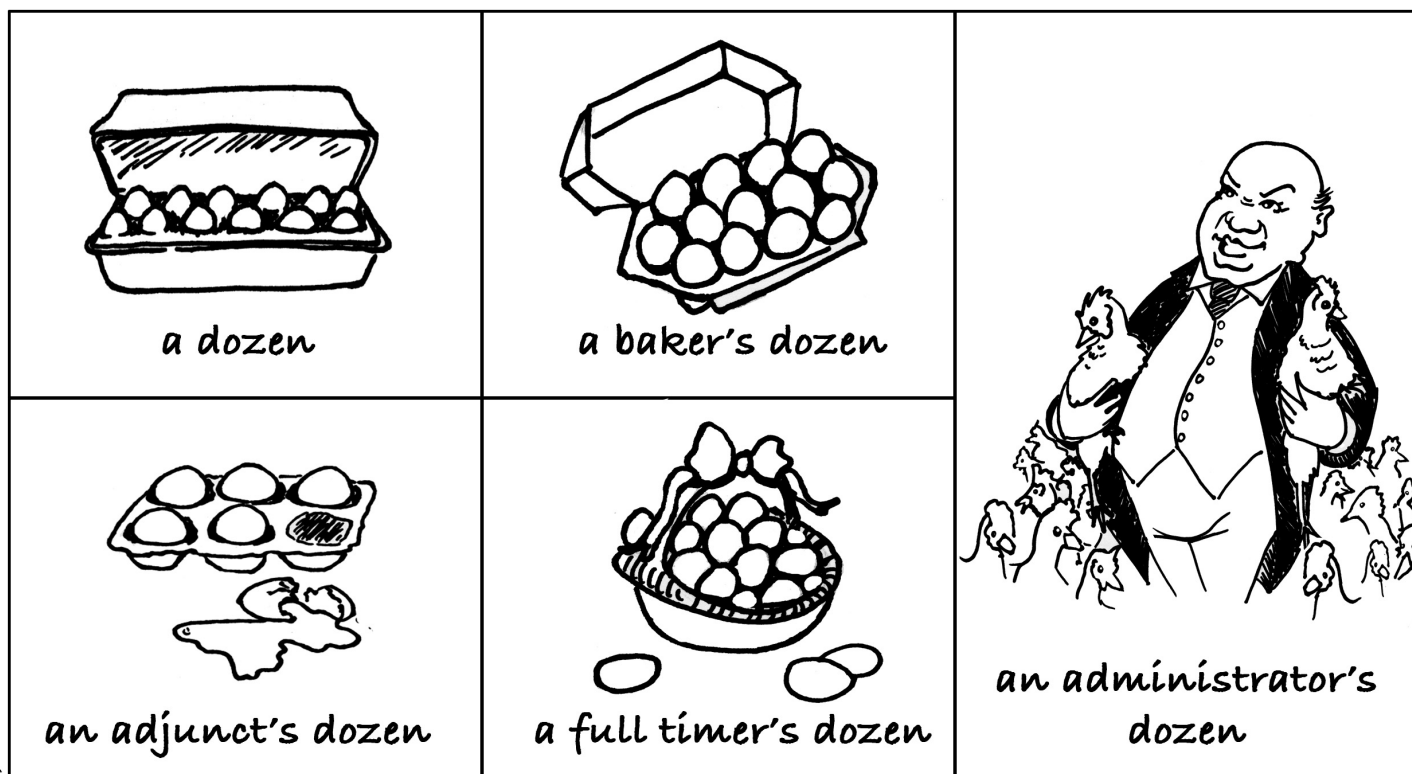
Given this underutilized body of talent -- namely us -- my goal for membership is to make use of it. Expect to see me emailing you to find out how you can do more for us and how we can do more for you. I am interested in finding out who our writers are, who likes to network, who wants to develop professional skills as lobbyists or event planners. I also am interested in finding out how CPFA can work more effectively at your local level: would you like

to see your community college(s) profiled for the quality of their working conditions? Would you like to see administrators at your college held accountable for office space? For bureaucratic bloat? You ask, and I will do my best to make it happen--keeping you in tow, of course. Sure, life as an adjunct isn't the academic honeymoon you were hoping for. But there is much to gain from the experience if you are open to it. Together we can make it happen.

- Dennis Selder, Director of Membership



## The Plight



by Denise Johnson and Dennis Selder



# Interview with Advocate and Activist Lin Fraser

For a writing assignment, a Sacramento City College student conducted an online interview with Lin Fraser, a part-time faculty advocate of 20 years. The complete interview follows.

## Do you think adjunct \* professors are being overused?

(\* Part-timers prefer to be called part-time, not adjuncts, by the way.)

AB 1725, passed in 1998, mandates that at least 75% of all classes be taught by full-time faculty. The reason for this law is quite simple: Students will have more access to instructors. There will be a sufficient number of full-timers for shared governance, instructor mandated performance observations, curriculum development, etc. Part-time faculty fill in (1) when departments are small and don't warrant or need full-time faculty, (2) when the number of classes offered exceeds the number of full-timers (math and English use the most part-time faculty), (3) when a full-time faculty person goes on sabbatical, (4) when there is a need for an emergency hire (a full-time faculty member becomes ill or quits right before a semester or quarter is to start,) and (5) when there are fluctuations in enrollment (if the student population drops, it's a lot easier to get rid of a bunch of part-timers.)

Statewide, that mandate has never been met. There are budgetary considerations, to be sure—some valid and more fabricated. For example, I have taught as a part-timer for over twenty years, and I have met many others who have worked part-time even longer. Some part-timers, of course, want to be part-timers, but a significant number desire full-time positions. But, full-timers get higher pay and receive benefits, which part-

timers generally do not. Thus, the districts balance their budgets on the backs of part-timers.

So, are part-timers overused? Hell, yes! And depending on the district, part-timers are over-used and abused. Do note, however, that the Los Rios District has a pretty good relationship with its part-time faculty.

## What are the pros of being an adjunct professor?

Surprisingly, there really are pros to being a part-timer. When teaching in multiple districts, a part-timer is exposed to a broader socioeconomic range of students. Being exposed to this wider range forces a part-timer to expand his or her teaching skills in order to reach all types of students and become a better instructor.

As mentioned above, there are part-timers who do not want full-time positions. Some teach part-time to supplement their incomes. Some teach part-time to give back to the community. And some do it just for the love of teaching.

A part-timer who needs to cobble together a full-time income by teaching in more than one district and who cannot afford to give up one of his or her part-time positions may end up teaching at a college where there are overpaid, ineffective administrators who are more like dictators. Or, a part-timer may find him or herself working in a highly negative political environment where there is conflict between the administrators and faculty, between faculty and staff (management, clerical, custodial, etc.), or even among faculty members themselves. In over twenty years as an adjunct, and on more than one occasion, I have been extremely grateful that I was not teaching

at certain campuses full time.

## What are the cons of being an adjunct professor?

By law, part-timers may not teach more than .6 FTE (full-time equivalency) in any one district. That necessitates commuting to colleges in other districts. I remember one year when I was teaching at three different sites, driving more than 700 miles a week, and teaching at two different sites during the same day. Commuting, of course, meant that I was less available to my students and that I had less time to grade papers—and oh yes, less time to eat decent meals, to get enough sleep, or even to go to the bathroom (but that's probably a bit more than you care to know.) Part-timing also can take a heavy toll on one's physical and mental health.

Then there is the consideration of money and benefits, or should I say lack thereof? Full-timers receive a salary and benefits while part-timers are paid by the hour and most of the time, receive no benefits. Most part-timers believe they should receive the hourly equivalent of what a full-timer makes and at least receive pro-rated benefits. Full-timers argue an hourly equivalent would be unfair because part-timers are not required to hold office hours, develop curriculum, serve on committees, or participate in shared governance.

But let's put all of the aforementioned in perspective:

The part-timers who do hold office hours are not paid for them, or if they are, it is a rate far lower than their own hourly wage. Moreover, if a part-timer is paid for office hours, usually it is only for one hour even if he or she is teaching more than one class. (Full-timers are compensated for one

hour for each class taught—and they have permanent office space while part-timers do not. Part-timers, if they are lucky, have access to an office shared by many, and they may only use that space during their scheduled office hours.)

Full-timers argue that part-timers are not involved in developing curriculum, serving on committees, or participating in shared governance. Of course, that is understandable if a part-timer is a freeway flier, also known as a "roads scholar." Part-timers cannot be in two places at same time. However, the full-timers' argument about part-timer non-involvement is a bit unfair. There is the previously mentioned time and commuting issue, but there is also the issue regarding how or even whether part-timers may participate.

It is often the case that part-timers are not permitted to participate in developing curriculum, serving on committees, and participating in shared governance. This situation varies from district to district. Even when part-timers are allowed to participate in these activities, they may have a voice but often have no vote. Full-timers insist that part-timers are simply not qualified, but when a part-timer is hired, he or she must meet the same entry level qualifications that a full-timer does, and a part-timer often has more than the minimum quals.

Job security—actually job insecurity—is a big issue for part-timers. Part-timers work from semester to semester, and there is no guarantee that they will be rehired. However, if a part-timer has worked for a district for eight to ten years, there is a certain amount of job security in that the district would rather rehire someone who is well



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known to them. Still, part-timers can lose classes because of insufficient enrollment, budgetary constraints, and most insulting of all, because they are bumped by full-timers. (Ironically, it often is the unpopular or even incompetent full-timer whose class does not fill who ends up bumping the part-timer with a full class.)

**Do adjunct professors offer students the same learning experience as tenured professors? Do you feel like you have less time to spend individually with students?**

In answer to the first question, yes, part-timers offer students the same learning experience as tenured professors. Just as there are outstanding, knowledgeable, and creative full-timers, there are part-timers who are outstanding, knowledgeable, and creative. Are there mediocre or even incompetent part-timers? You bet. But the same can be said for tenured full-time faculty, who, by the way, seldom get fired. And sometimes students simply get a better learning experience with part-time faculty. New part-timers enter the classroom with the latest and greatest pedagogical approaches to instruction. Their level of enthusiasm is high. Initially, many part-timers are always auditioning for full-time positions, so they really stay at the top of their game—at least for the first few years of part-timing. Consider, too, that old habits are hard to break, and when the part-timers accept that full-time positions are simply not forthcoming, they are so used to being on top of their game all of the time, that their teaching often remains at that high level.

As far as students are concerned, there have been times when I felt that I was not spending enough individual time with my students, but that was usually during the semesters when I was doing a lot of commuting. But when I was finally able to work out a schedule where I would teach Mondays and Wednesdays at one school and Tuesdays and Thursdays at another, I would make myself available all day—I had regularly scheduled office hours both days at each site, and if my office hours did not fit my students' schedules, they could set up appointments with me between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. Do understand, of course, that not all part-timers are as generous with their time, but the part-timers I know meet with students outside of their scheduled office hours. These part-timers do so because they feel it is their professional obligation—and they donate that extra time because they love teaching and helping their students succeed.

**What made you want to be an adjunct professor?**

Ah, silly me. I thought if the deans were familiar with my dedication to teaching, then surely, a full-time position would open up, and I would be hired permanently. But then, I became quite active in union work on behalf of part-timers, and I am fairly certain that part-timer advocacy pretty much ended any chance I had at becoming a full-timer.

**Do you hope to become a full time professor in the future?**

I have taught at Sacramento City College since 1993. (I was an emergency hire,) and I am now sixty-six years old. The dream of becoming a full-time instructor has long since faded.

**Are you currently working multiple jobs? If so, what are they, and how many classes are you teaching? Do you find the work load difficult to manage sometimes?**

I am no longer working at multiple sites. I broke my hip a few years ago and have slowed down some. Fortunately, I can still handle two classes, and I've started drawing on my pension. Ironically, I earn more with two classes and my pension than I did teaching five or six classes.

As with any profession, managing a work

load can be difficult from time to time. Of course, now that I am down to two classes, those times occur far less often. But during my freeway flying days, the workload would often become overwhelming. But I am still here to talk about it, so I guess it wasn't that bad. After all, I survived.

**Do you feel like you have a voice in the college's governance committees?**

I believe the governance committees are the purview of full-time faculty. Do understand, however, I may be wrong in that assumption. However, even if I could have been involved in governance committees, when I was a union representative, there really wasn't much time for anything else beside that and teaching.

**Do you have any concerns with job security?**

I once did have concerns with job security, but today about the only cause of concern is whether a class fills. I am in the top tier for hiring, and the dean and I have developed a good working relationship.

**How do adjunct professors affect the education system as a whole?**

Let me put it this way. If there were no part-timers, the colleges would have too many classrooms with no instructors. Without part-timers, colleges would go out of business since they could not offer all of the courses needed for the various majors. Without part-timers, colleges would close, jobs would go unfilled, and let's face it, the economy would be in the toilet for lack of trained employees.

**What did you do as an adjunct rep?**

As an adjunct representative, I have been involved in many activities. My duties varied from college to college and at the statewide level. I represented adjuncts at the local level, serving as a representative for adjuncts at Sacramento City College and at Sierra College. The following is a partial list of my activities for the two colleges.

(College #1):

- Regularly attended union meetings on behalf of part-timers.
- Worked to increase union membership, particularly among part-timers. (Part-timers outnumbered full-timers significantly but were not well-represented by the union.)
- Attended board of trustees meetings.
- When part-timers became dissatisfied with the unions, met with part-timers from all over California, helped form a non-union organization for part-timers.
- Served on the Little Hoover Commission's study on the plight of part-timers and testified at a Joint Education Committee meeting of the state legislature.
- Worked with an international organization that set up a week of demonstrations and informational meetings on behalf of part-time faculty.

(College #2):

- When one local had its rank and file split into two groups (full-timers and part-timers,) I helped write the new constitution and bylaws for the part-timers.
- Met with administrators and helped negotiate contracts.
- Attended statewide union conventions and conducted workshops on various issues.
- Attended rallies/demonstrations at the state Capitol.
- Wrote articles for the Bee, State record, union publications, etc. about how poorly part-timers are being treated.
- Took a small part in the successful passage of a bill modifying the State Ed. Code.
- Served as the Part-timer representative of the California Federation of Teachers and helped part-timers to organize.

## Why Can't We All Work Together?

By William Lipkin, MA, ABD Rutgers

I became active in the labor movement over 25 years ago at a time when very few people even knew what the word "adjunct" referred to. I immediately saw the inequities in every aspect of Higher Education and began to question and investigate. It did not take me long to realize that we were a new class of professional educators: a class with little pay, no benefits and few rights. As a Political Scientist/Historian I knew something was wrong but no one wanted to listen to me. Well, at that time we made up a small percentage of the teaching force and had little support outside of our own circle.

Did I give up trying to better the position of adjunct faculty? Of course not, but as our numbers grew the support did not. In fact many of us just hunkered in and continued to let ourselves be exploited. Many of us had been working as individuals in our own states or in our own Colleges to get more equity for adjunct faculty. Working alone is difficult when trying to achieve success, however many of us networked and kept each other aware of the failures and success we had achieved. We did this because we shared a common goal, "respect and better pay and working conditions for adjunct faculty."

Fast forward to the past 6-8 years and our numbers have swelled to the point that we overwhelmingly outnumber full time faculty. Then the "AHA!" moment came when some leaders came up with the idea of forming organizations across the nation and also include the growing number of contingent faculty to our cause. Several organizations have been formed over the past few years and they have been successful in bringing our issues before the public and making many aware of the situation in Higher Ed. National education labor unions have been supporting adjunct issues on a regular basis. Even individual groups in colleges have been making inroads.

But here is my question: Now that we have several national groups with the same basic goals, why is there so much discord between them? Why are adjunct faculty supporting one group and not another? Why are there personality conflicts between these groups? Certainly not everyone will have the same ideas nor will everyone always agree with each other, but if the goals are the same where has "solidarity" disappeared to? Isn't it better to have one or two strong groups speaking for us in one voice than groups competing for the spotlight? Do the groups that have been around for a few years really speak for the majority of adjunct faculty or are they drenched in the ideas and agendas of the leadership? I have read articles by, seen interviews with, and read email

# SBCC Instructors' Association



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The IA is a member of the California Community College Independents (CCCCI)

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statements from many of these leaders and often question the positions they are taking on issues. I often wonder how many of their members they have surveyed before making such statements.

Why can't we all work together? The time wasted with factional divisions can be better used by all of us to achieve the goals we all strive for. We need to put personalities and pettiness aside and work together as adjunct and contingent faculty for the furtherance of our basic rights as professional educators.

This piece originally appeared on CPFA blog at [cpfa.org/blog](http://cpfa.org/blog) crossposted with Precarious Faculty blog at [precariousfacultyblog.com](http://precariousfacultyblog.com).





