

FORUM

NEWSLETTER OF THE NON-TENURE-TRACK FACULTY SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP

WINTER 1998

CONFERENCE ON COLLEGE COMPOSITION AND COMMUNICATION

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From the Editor

Whether or not you hear the trumpets blaring a mighty fanfare as *Forum* makes its debut here in *CCC*, the members of the Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Special Interest Group certainly do. We're thrilled not only to have resurrected our newsletter, but also to have this space in one of our discipline's journals to publish our concerns more widely. The fact that we are here, in the journal, attests to NCTE/CCCC's endorsement of our mission: to prompt ongoing discussion of issues concerning non-tenure-track faculty and to effect positive changes in our working conditions, salary and benefits, and overall integration in the professional life of the academy. We're grateful to NCTE/CCCC for this opportunity.

Unlike the rest of *CCC*, our publication is likely to be a bit eclectic in terms of its contents. This issue of *Forum*, in fact, includes an interesting variety of articles, though, as you might expect, they all have some connection to the professional work of non-tenure-track faculty. The lead article, by Deborah Normand, introduces you to the Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Special Interest Group and brings you up to date on the group's recent initiatives and accomplishments. Next in the collection is an article featuring six writers' reflections on the Conference on the Growing Use of Part-time/Adjunct Faculty held in Washington last fall. The varied perspectives of these writers are interesting to consider in light of the conference's purpose. I trust they will provoke similarly varied responses among our readers. The third article is Lisa Mongno's discussion of the intersections between her professional writing life and her life as a writing teacher. Hers is the only piece which doesn't take up working conditions directly, but it's a pleasant departure from the rest. Finally, Karen Thompson brings us back to some of the most pressing issues confronting non-tenure-track faculty with a paper she presented at the "Working Session on Working Conditions" at CCCC last year.

About Forum

Forum is published twice a year by the Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Special Interest Group (NTT SIG) of the Conference on College Composition and Communication. As editor, I welcome you to submit news items, book reviews, editorials and/or articles related to non-tenure-track faculty in college English or composition courses. Submissions for the fall issue should be received no later than April 15; for the winter issue, the deadline is August 15.

You may submit your work electronically, via e-mail or an e-mail attachment, or through U.S. mail. For e-mail submissions, address your work to rjkirby@mailbox.syr.edu and put the words "Forum article" somewhere in your subject line. If you choose U.S. mail, please send two hard copies as well as a diskette copy (Macintosh format preferred) of your submission(s) to

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For both e-mail and U.S. mail submissions, include the following information in a cover note:

- your name
- your title(s)
- your institution(s)
- home address and phone number
- institutional address(es) and phone number(s)
- if applicable, venue(s) where submission was published or presented previously

For additional guidelines or information about *Forum*, contact Roberta Kirby-Werner at one of the addresses provided above or at (315) 443-1213.

The opinions expressed in *Forum* are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor, the Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Special Interest Group, or CCCC.

You'll also notice a reply form enclosed in this issue (page A24). We'd like the non-tenure-track faculty among our readers to use this form to let us know who you are and where you are. This information will begin to help us get a more accurate count of how many non-tenure-track faculty teach in English and/or composition. Even more practically, this information will help us gauge how many copies of *Forum* we should print with each press run.

As I close, I'd like to announce a new section of *Forum* which will debut in the winter 1998 issue. The new Letters section will be a dedicated space for responses to the articles published in *Forum*. I welcome you to write and to help me represent more of the ongoing discussion of non-tenure-track faculty concerns.

—Roberta Kirby-Werner
Syracuse University
February 1998

The Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Special Interest Group: Who We Are and What We Do

Deborah B. Normand

The need was there. So too was the model for a forum. Encouraged by the standing-room-only turnout for a session on "Implementing the Wyoming Resolution: Passing the Torch or Dropping the Ball?" (1995 CCCC, Washington, D.C.), a group of participants sought a way to continue their dialogue on improving the working conditions of non-tenure-track faculty.

The Part-time Faculty Forum had been the arena for issues related to non-tenure-track faculty, but

after that meeting in Washington, D.C., we saw the limits of the title and chose Non-Tenure-Track as a more inclusive term for the Special Interest Group we wanted to propose for the 1996 CCCC in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The focus of that Non-Tenure-Track Special Interest Group (NTT SIG) would be the same one we have had each convention—to review the progress we have made since the Wyoming Resolution and to offer practical suggestions for protecting and supporting non-tenure-track faculty. We generated three pages of practical suggestions at that first meeting of the NTT SIG in Milwaukee. Even more encouraging was the fact that everyone at the meeting committed to making at least one suggestion a reality. The most important of those suggestions were

- broadening our definition of who we are, for our ranks include temporary and permanent part-timers as well as temporary and permanent full-timers;
- encouraging non-tenure-track faculty at our home institutions to join and become active in NCTE and CCCC;
- committing to attend CCCC when our pocketbooks allow us, submitting proposals for the conference, and attending our Special Interest Group session;
- presenting sessions at regional, state, and local conferences to let other non-tenure-track faculty learn about the NTT SIG and *Forum*, the national newsletter for non-tenure-track faculty.

At the NTT SIG for the 1997 CCCC in Phoenix, Arizona, we generated yet another list of practical solutions which constitute a three-pronged effort for improving the working conditions of non-tenure-track faculty: improving our communication, increasing our visibility, and making connections.

Improving Our Communication

One of our major goals was to resurrect *Forum*. We decided to enlist someone from our ranks as editor, and we're pleased that Roberta Kirby-Werner from Syracuse University agreed to take on this challenge. We also decided to request an honorarium or some form of remuneration for the editor, and we secured travel support from NCTE for the editor to attend CCCC. We are especially proud of these accomplishments because *Forum* had gone unpublished for over a year until NCTE and CCCC set aside a sizable production budget to help restart the newsletter and expand its readership.

We also secured a place for *Forum* as a special insert in this issue of *College Composition and Communication*, supplemented by numerous offprints. Thus, this issue will reach over 10,000 potential readers, and we can distribute offprint copies

to non-tenure-track faculty who cannot attend CCCC and who do not receive the journal.

In addition, for more decentralized communication, we created an e-mail listserv so that NTT SIGers can keep in touch with one another (the address is *ennorm@lsuvm.sncc.lsu.edu*). Of course, not all attendees are on the list, as many colleges and universities do not provide computer access to their part-time and temporary faculty, and private e-mail services are a luxury many cannot afford.

Increasing Our Visibility

We persuaded Susann Dorman, a non-tenure-track faculty member from Louisiana State University who does not routinely receive travel funds, to accept a nomination to the CCCC Executive Committee (Group IV). We also committed to introducing sense-of-the-house resolutions asking CCCC officers to request that NCTE lower the membership rates of adjunct faculty and to identify the employment status (full- or part-time, tenure-track or non-tenure-track) of members. In addition, we reaffirmed our commitment to publish articles about improving the working conditions of NTT Faculty.

Making Connections

We affirmed the importance of building coalitions with other SIGs and Committees of NCTE. One of us will be presenting the NTT SIG's concerns at a Special Interest Group titled "Building Coalitions" at the 1998 CCCC in Chicago. This is the first time we know of that an attempt has been made to bring together representatives of the various Special Interest Groups. We have also received invitations for three of our members to be on the Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Forum of CCCC.

This list of initiatives and accomplishments demonstrates significant progress; you are likely already practicing many of the suggestions. What is so positive about the NTT SIG is that it allows us to build a community of colleagues who have the same goal—recognizing our professionalism and working together so others can recognize it too.

If you want to be a member of a committed community, join us at the 1998 CCCC in Chicago. After all, we are *you*.

Deborah B. Normand is Assistant Director of Freshman English at Louisiana State University and has been an active member of the Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Special Interest Group since 1995.

Conference on the Growing Use of Part-time/Adjunct Faculty: Reflections from NCTE Participants

On September 26–28, 1997, over fifty representatives from ten professional associations in the humanities and social sciences attended the Conference on the Growing Use of Part-time/Adjunct Faculty in Washington, D.C. (see the October 10, 1997, issue of *The Chronicle of Higher Education* for more details). The goals of the conference were as follows: (1) to create a shared understanding of part-time academic employment patterns; (2) to compose a collectively authored statement recommending guidelines for fair labor practices; and (3) to create an action agenda for implementing the guidelines recommended in the collectively authored statement. NCTE sent a group of six representatives to this conference, and reflections from each of them appear below.

Eileen Schell, Assistant Professor of Writing and English at Syracuse University; Previously Co-Director of the First-Year Writing Program at Virginia Tech and Adjunct Writing Instructor at North Seattle Community College

I applaud the 1997 Part-Time Faculty Summit's¹ collectively authored "guidelines for good practice." The stated guidelines include the following:

- improvements in the selection and hiring of part-time faculty;
- extended contracts and improved job security;
- consideration of part-time faculty for tenure-line appointments;
- clear contractual statements about duties and responsibilities;
- clear and timely notice of appointment or reappointment;
- professional support including orientation, mentoring, and professional development opportunities;
- provision of appropriate working conditions: access to telephones, computers, library privileges, e-mail accounts, office space, parking;
- provision of health and life insurance, sick leave, and retirement plans;
- opportunities for merit pay and promotion;
- regular evaluation based on appropriate guidelines;

¹Editor's note: Eileen uses "Part-Time Faculty Summit" throughout her article to refer to the Washington conference.

- provision of grievance procedures;
- integration in collegial processes, including faculty governance (Benjamin 9–10).

There is little to quarrel with in these guidelines; in fact, they reinforce those already available from the American Association of University Professors, CCCC/NCTE, and MLA. However, working to implement such “good practices” is no easy matter, as those of us who have strived to implement the “Wyoming Resolution” and the CCCC “Statement on Principles and Standards for the Postsecondary Teaching of Writing” can attest.

First, would the “good practices” guidelines be advisory or enforceable? Second, are the guidelines specific enough to be enforceable? Who would enforce them and under what conditions? The action agenda urges faculty to lobby for good practices on their home campuses; it also recommends that Summit participants create a continuing coalition of the sponsoring associations to publicize case studies of good practices and model institutions (11). The action agenda also suggests that professional organizations should ensure compliance by meeting with “accrediting associations to seek implementation of good practices and the exercise of enforcement mechanisms” (11). Such a claim suggests that professional organizations will urge the appropriate bodies to potentially deny accreditation to institutions found to be in noncompliance with proposed good practices. But would such a measure be effective? Do most or all accrediting bodies, as they are now constituted, deny accreditation to colleges and universities based on the number of part-time faculty they employ? My guess would be no since part-time faculty constitute upwards of 40 percent of all postsecondary faculty.

This is not the appropriate place to recount the history of accrediting agencies in the United States, but recent changes in their structure and regulations suggest that traditional accrediting criteria are being transformed and, in some cases, rendered irrelevant (Schuster 28–29). In “Reconfiguring the Professoriate: The Part-Timer Phenomenon and Implications of the Academic Profession,” Summit participant Jack H. Schuster, Professor of Education and Public Policy at Claremont Graduate University, speculates that traditional accreditation procedures are likely to play a lesser role as a “quality control mechanism that might exert pressure to contain the use of part-time faculty” (19). Indeed, Schuster cautions that the movement toward distance learning and certificate-granting as opposed to degree-granting programs may mean new postsecondary accrediting bodies will be established; moreover, these bodies may apply more “relaxed standards” (19).

Thus, I question the possibility of exerting significant influence via the accrediting process. CCCC/NCTE explored such an organizing strategy and was unable to follow through with it. In the early 1990s, the CCCC Committee on Professional Standards

proposed that seven members of the CCCC should be assigned to each of the six accrediting regions of the U.S. with one person housed in D.C. These regional facilitators were to draw together fifty CCCC members to study how their regional accrediting agency worked and to influence the appointment of faculty to these teams, to organize regional meetings for faculty in order to create a grassroots organizing network, and to contact and educate other professional organizations and agencies with influence over higher education policy. To support these activities, the Committee requested funds of \$25,000 from CCCC. The Committee, however, was unable to obtain the funds needed to lobby the accrediting agencies. In addition, CCCC/NCTE, for a variety of reasons, both political and economic, decided not to create the grievance/censure procedures proposed in the "Wyoming Resolution." This raises another question regarding the Summit's assumptions about the role and function of professional organizations in lobbying for change: What should be the role of professional organizations in reforming faculty working conditions?

Historically, the primary role of professional organizations (with the exception of the AAUP) has been to advocate improvement in faculty working conditions but not to actively pursue change via the accrediting process or grievance/censure procedures. Most of the organizing items in the Summit document seemingly depend on the good will of the faculty and their professional organizations. However, we in CCCC/NCTE have learned over the last decade and a half that a statement with no "teeth in it" will not have the intended effect. A labor statement, as Lester Faigley said in his 1996 CCCC Chair's Letter, must be accompanied by well-orchestrated organizational efforts:

From the Wyoming Resolution and the ensuing debate with CCCC, we have learned that we will have to do more than write statements and that we need to form alliances with other organizations if we expect to address issues of working conditions in any substantial way. We also should recognize that "working conditions" lumps together many broad issues and that we need to learn more about community organizing, the economics of higher education, and the impact of changing technologies on literacy education. (1)

Instead of focusing on the accrediting process, I believe a more fruitful direction for change might be to schedule a meeting between the ten professional organizations and representatives from academic labor unions. I realize, of course, that what I am proposing here will make most professional organizations nervous. However, a clause in the action agenda for the 1997 Part-Time Summit suggests a possible opening for such an alliance: "Where possible, faculty should actively organize to secure the implementation of good practices in their institutions through... the use of collective bargaining where it presently exists or may exist in the future to negotiate improved

practices" (9). The link between organized labor and academe is a potential site for change, especially if the Summit participants are serious about gaining pro rata pay and health insurance for part-time faculty.

In addition, the Summit groups that continue to meet need to work on addressing the links between

- the rising number of part-time faculty and the erosion of tenure;
- gender and part-time employment, since 47 percent of all part-time positions are occupied by women, while 33 percent of full-time positions are occupied by women (Benjamin 4);
- the overproduction of Ph.D.s and the rising number of Ph.D.s who are employed off the tenure track;
- part-time employment in the academy and the tendency to employ contingent (part-time and temporary) workers in America and abroad as a cost-saving measure;
- part-time labor and "quality" education.

To elaborate on this last point: What do we mean by quality education? How can we address the "quality issue" without denigrating or blaming part-time faculty for the deficiencies of their working conditions? In addition, how can we link efforts to improve working conditions more closely to the idea forwarded by Ernest Boyer that reflective teaching can constitute a form of scholarship?

Finally, there was much discussion at the Summit about addressing the public regarding the rising numbers of part-time faculty. What do we mean by addressing the public? Who would speak for the Summit alliance and how would part-time faculty's needs and concerns be represented?

Without a doubt, the chief success of the 1997 Part-Time Faculty Summit was that it allowed participants to forge alliances across disciplinary lines. What remains to be seen, however, is if these alliances can be sustained in a meaningful and change-oriented way. My hope is that we can adapt the "good practices" guidelines to fit different disciplines and that we can strengthen the action agenda proposed at the conference and make them work.

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John Lovas, Chair of the Two-Year College English Association (TYCA) of NCTE, and Interim Dean, Language Arts, De Anza College

In the fall 1997 term, the De Anza College Language Arts Division, composed of the departments of English, ESL, Reading, Speech, and Technical Communication, nominated a part-time faculty member to serve on a search and selection committee for the position of Dean, Language Arts. When informed of this action, the district director of human resources said, "Why in the world would you want to do this? What possible added value does it bring to this committee to make this kind of decision, [a person] who may or may not be here when the next term begins..."

The Academic Senate approved the appointment. At the president's direction, the provost, who chairs the selection committee, informed the faculty member that she could not serve. The result, at the moment, is a wide-ranging institutional discussion about the professional role of part-time faculty, who constitute over 60 percent of our faculty.

This incident focuses for me what the Conference on the Growing Use of Part-time/Adjunct Faculty both was and aspires to be: an effort to define the issues and trigger a wide discussion of them.

Recognizing the complexity of these issues, the conference took a multidisciplinary approach, including delegates from a range of institutional types: public and private universities, four-year colleges, and two-year colleges. A considerable body of statistical data made it clear that the overuse of part-time positions is widespread, growing, and based primarily on cost savings, not program quality and diversity.

Refreshing candor about the overproduction of Ph.D.s in some institutions and disciplines suggested that some programs may be contributing to a marketplace condition in which highly qualified professionals can readily be hired in highly unprofessional conditions. I was encouraged to hear delegates from Ph.D.-granting institutions indicate a willingness to refocus these programs, with a view to preparing students for a wider job market, including effective preparation for teaching in two-year colleges.

For me, the most nettlesome issue came with some insensitivity expressed about the quality and importance of lower-division teaching, where so much instruction by part-time faculty occurs. Most of the delegates from institutions that make heavy use of teaching assistants seemed resistant to considering their role in this whole discussion of ensuring professional-quality teaching in all of our institutions.

A great deal was accomplished in a very short time. If the work of this conference can precipitate a wide-ranging discussion, within our institutions and with the public, about the quality issues raised by increasing reliance on professionals in less than professional circumstances, then it will have succeeded.

Roberta J. Kirby-Werner, Senior Professional Writing Instructor, Syracuse University Writing Program, and Editor of Forum

Debates among academics regarding the part-time/adjunct “problem” in higher education have captured a great deal of my interest over the years. After all, having been an adjunct/part-timer since 1983, I’m part of that problem—or so others would like me to believe. Actually, my experiences at Syracuse over the past decade and more recently at CCCC tell a much different story, one which stands in stark contrast with the horrendous, unprofessional working conditions experienced by many of my postsecondary colleagues across the country. In fact, most of the “good practices” discussed at the Conference on the Growing Use of Part-time/Adjunct Faculty (and which Eileen Schell itemizes in her reflection) have been achieved to some degree in the Syracuse Writing Program, suggesting quite powerfully that adjunct/part-time hires, even substantial numbers of them, need not be such problems after all.

Because of my generally good feeling about the material conditions, professional support, and job security available to me as an adjunct/part-timer, I confess to feeling some awkwardness at venues like the Conference on the Growing Use of Part-time/Adjunct Faculty where the focus is on worst-case scenarios that are so far removed from my own experience. True, it’s exactly these cases that demand some kind of correction, and I’m happy to contribute whatever I can to recommend actions and guidelines for good practice that I’ve observed or experienced firsthand. The specific concerns I have about my workplace, however, found no comfortable place in the conversation, at least not at this conference. No one wanted to hear, for example, that one of our biggest issues at Syracuse currently is the less-than-one-percent cost-of-living increase part-timers earned this year because the lion’s share of the raise pool was used for merit increases. Though we empathize with teachers who’ve yet to achieve benefits we’ve already begun to take for granted, our concerns, clearly, are of a different order.

While my efforts to contribute to the conversation did little to dispel the awkwardness of my position, I discovered yet another problem which prompted my overall ambivalent response to the conference: an intense skepticism toward the efficacy of such “paper initiatives.” For one thing, the work required to overcome the inertia favoring the status quo in higher education by itself is daunting. Seeing results will demand a

high-energy effort on the part of lots of people with lots of influence. Furthermore, if and when people do take up this cause, I would worry that the understandings, guidelines for good practice, and action agendas that once looked acceptable on paper might get interpreted and applied in undesirable ways. From my perspective, this is exactly what happened with the "Wyoming Resolution," a document I felt I could embrace because of its careful articulation of my professional concerns. By contrast, the "Statement on Principles and Standards for the Postsecondary Teaching of Writing" struck quite a different chord; rather than fighting for and protecting the interests of adjuncts/part-timers, except in the worst of cases, that follow-up document seemed more focused on "protecting [adjuncts] out of a job" (Kirby-Werner) with its strict limits on non-tenure-track hires, regardless of available salary, benefits, working conditions, etc.

Even in the document we drafted at the conference in Washington, I observed an unsettling tendency to generalize the conditions and work of adjuncts/part-timers, e.g., "Part-time faculty report spending substantially less time on class preparation and out-of-class interaction than full-time faculty..." (Benjamin 4). A consequence of such generalizing could be to put all adjunct/part-time faculty at risk in an effort to correct more isolated problems of teachers being ill-prepared for their classes. For this consensus document to earn widespread acceptance, therefore, great care must be taken to recognize both individual and institutional exceptions to such generalities.

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Janice Albert, English Teacher for 35 years with the Chabot-Las Positas Community College District and a Regional Director for the English Council of the California Two-Year Colleges (ECCTYC)–TYCA Pacific Coast of the National Council of Teachers of English

David Adamany, President of Wayne State University, speaking at the conference on the use and overuse of part-time faculty on September 26–28, suggested that what happened to the medical profession will happen next to higher education: managed education on top of managed health care.

A member of the audience asked, What could doctors have done differently? and I immediately remembered stories of their disproportionate wealth, court judgments that punished doctors soundly for malpractice, and the phrase, "Take two aspirin and call me in the morning," which has become a universal formulation for "don't bother me." The public became convinced that doctors no longer cared for them.

How can university professors show they care? It was suggested by members of the conference that they could cut back on the production of Ph.D.s, they could devise a way to evaluate the quality of their service to their institutions, and they could teach lower-division classes. Each time it came up, this last idea was met with silence.

Has higher education relegated teaching to the community colleges, to part-time faculty, and to graduate students so long that senior professors will find it impossible to sit down with eighteen-year-olds in a classroom?

Parker Palmer, Senior Associate of the American Association of Higher Education and Director of the Fetzer Institute's Teacher Formation Program, says, "Teaching is a human exchange between the generations of a very deep and difficult nature." Making possible this exchange between the generations was a point of pride in The (Undergraduate) College of The University of Chicago when I was a student there. Senior professors taught undergraduates, and we were all the better for it.

Palmer also talks about teachers' fear of the judgment of the young, and this is a reasonable fear in this age of little or no respect for any kind of authority. Senior professors may fear not being treated with the respect that their work has won for them. Because this is an understandable worry, a university would be wise to foster a spirit of appreciation for teaching before encouraging its professoriate to enter the choppy waters that graduate students, part-timers, and community college teachers have had to learn to master.

The result might be increased respect all around, as well as autonomy for higher education institutions well into the future.

Patricia Lambert Stock, Professor of English and Director of the Writing Center, Michigan State University, and Chair of the College Forum, NCTE.

Several papers that were prepared to initiate discussion among delegates at the recent Conference on the Growing Use of Part-time/Adjunct Faculty estimated the number of part-time and adjunct faculty currently working in higher education. Acknowledging the fact that accurate counts of part-time faculty are difficult—if not impossible—to gather, Jack H. Schuster (Center for Educational Studies, Claremont

Graduate University) reported that while part-time/adjunct faculty accounted for 35 percent of all faculty in 1960/61, they constitute 43.44 percent or more of the faculty in higher education today.

Similarly, Jane Harper (Chair of the Division of Humanities at Tarrant County Junior College in Texas) reported that even though different agencies' studies have resulted in different findings, recently collected numbers indicate that part-time/adjunct faculty account for more than half of the faculty in the nation's two-year colleges. Consider, for example, percentages of part-time/adjunct faculty reported at two-year colleges by the American Association of University Professors (52 percent), the National Education Association (55 percent), the American Council of Education (64 percent), and the National Center for Educational Statistics (64 percent).

Disturbing as these numbers are, they do not compare with the numbers of part-time/adjunct faculty teaching in the field of composition studies. Just a suggestion of these numbers was presented to the conference by David Lawrence (Director of MLA English Programs and the Association of Departments of English) and Philip Smith (Professor of English, The University of Pittsburgh, and Chair of the ADE Ad Hoc Committee on Staffing) in data they collected from 38 Ph.D.-granting institutions. According to these data, 55.2 percent of "freshman composition" courses are taught by graduate student teaching assistants; 20.6 percent by part-time faculty; 19.3 percent by full-time adjuncts; and 4.9 percent by tenure-accruing faculty members.

As a delegate to the conference, representing NCTE's College Forum (CCCC, CEE, CS, and TYCA), I was as troubled as I have ever been by the conditions of teaching and learning that are created by the overuse, often the misuse, of part-time/adjunct faculty in composition studies. But, I was also cautiously encouraged: As a result of the conference, ten influential professional organizations reached consensus on a position statement about overuse of part-time/adjunct faculty and committed themselves to working individually and collaboratively to circulate and garner support for that statement among other organizations positioned to influence practice in higher education.

Gesa Kirsch, Associate Executive Director for Higher Education at NCTE and a Faculty Affiliate at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

When I read the background papers and listened to presentations from panelists, I was struck by the importance of how to frame—rhetorically, that is—the problem of the increasing use of part-time and adjunct faculty in higher education. Because we

need to address many different audiences, including students and their parents, state legislators, taxpayers, professional associations, administrators of institutions of higher education, full-time faculty members, and accreditation agencies, we need to develop different rhetorical frames to make a convincing case about the severity of the problem of employing more and more part-time and adjunct faculty. (Currently, over 40 percent of all faculty in higher education—across disciplines and types of institutions—are part-timers or temporary employees.) As the conference participants discussed these multiple audiences and how to best reach them, at least three ways of describing the problem emerged.

(1) The growing use of part-time and adjunct faculty is clearly—and most obviously—a labor equity/working condition issue. The wages of part-time and full-time instructors are not proportional; that is, a part-time faculty member who teaches the equivalent of a full-time load (often at several institutions) does not earn wages equivalent to that of a full-time faculty member. Moreover, he or she typically receives no (or minimal) fringe benefits. Looked at this way, part-time and adjunct faculty would need to pursue the strategies that have succeeded in other businesses to bring about labor equity—primarily unionization and collective bargaining. There are a number of movements afoot that work in this direction, such as the recent unionization of graduate students (at Yale University) and of part-time faculty (at Rutgers University).

(2) It is also clearly a quality-of-education issue which affects students' right to learn. Employing an increasing number of part-time instructors negatively affects curricular cohesion, availability and stability of core faculty members, faculty self-governance, and, perhaps most important, students' ability to establish working relationships with faculty who can oversee long-term projects, advise them, and guide them into their future professions. Combined, these issues are likely to have a negative impact on students and the quality of education.

It should be noted, however, that the quality of instruction, *per se*, is not the issue with the employment of part-time and adjunct faculty; in fact, most are outstanding teachers (because they are not likely to be renewed if their teaching performance falters). The real concern with quality of education arises as a direct result of the working conditions of part-time and adjunct faculty: they are in no position to develop long-term relations with students (as the very nature of their temporary assignment suggests); they typically lack the time and resources (limited office space, phone and e-mail access) needed to advise, mentor, and supervise students; and they are often excluded from faculty governance. Thus, they have little input on curricular decisions, such as the design, implementation, and evaluation of courses they are asked to teach. In short, the temporary nature of their assignments does not allow part-time and adjunct faculty members to make the kinds of long-term contributions to institutions, departments, and students that are expected of full-time instructors. As a

consequence, departmental and curricular coherence disappears, governmental involvement shifts to fewer and fewer people (who are no longer representative of those they govern) and the quality of education (not to mention faculty morale) is likely to suffer.

(3) Finally, it is also a financial issue. With the decreasing number of dollars allocated to higher education in most states, tuition has increased much faster than inflation, and the financial cost for higher education has largely been shifted to college students and their families. With increasingly tight budgets, institutions want flexibility to adapt to changing enrollment patterns, to changing student majors, and to changing educational requirements. Part-time and adjunct faculty appear to offer a “quick fix” solution to financial constraints faced by institutions of higher education. “Appear” is the operative word here, as the quick-fix solution may have detrimental effects in the long run—an issue conference attendees returned to time and again.

I list these three frames here because they suggest very different strategies for addressing different audiences concerned about the increasing use of part-time and adjunct faculty. As conference participants reflected on this need to frame the discussion, they drafted a preamble to the position statement that emerged from the conference, a preamble that frames the problem in a variety of contexts. Key phrases from the preamble include the following:

“The next century will require strong and flexible institutions....”

“We believe that those concerned about the quality of education must act together now to assure that use of part-time and temporary appointments to achieve short-term monetary savings...do *not* risk imposing far more serious costs on students and their families.”

“We urge administrators and faculty, on behalf of students and their families, to explore and find their common interest in *avoiding excessive or inappropriate reliance* on part-time or adjunct faculty.”

“Appropriate limits on the number and kind of part-time and temporary appointments and *assurance of humane conditions of employment* will serve the values of knowledge, wisdom, and humanity that must endure in our system of higher education....”

In short, as rhetoricians, many conference attendees recognized that the audience is key in determining how the problem is framed, what consequences of the problem will be emphasized, and what actions should be recommended.

**"I Teach Writing": Writing as Teacher
in the Field of Composition**

Lisa Mongno

On the bookshelf rests a black binder, about 11" × 17", that I don't pick up much. It just sits there, behind me even now, as I slash away at this article. I don't show my portfolio to many people—mostly (but not exclusively) those who ask—and I don't take it to the university where I teach. I've never really wanted to trumpet myself—if we agree that the body of our work comprises our "selves"—up and down the halls of the building where I work, proclaiming my latest, often nonacademic, publication. The truth is, I don't have to share it. I know I'm a writer, my students know I'm a writer, and the administrator who hired me—fortunate me in the academic market of today—knows I'm a writer. But really, what difference does a humble portfolio of a few technical writing pieces and some newspaper clippings make? Answers aren't found in the pages of my assembled career. Rather, and perhaps most obviously, the answer resides with my position: a young faculty member who obtained a full-time writing department instructorship with "only" a master's degree.

As I measure myself against my competition of the summer when I was hired, I see only one distinguishing feature: it matters that I write, especially that I have worked as a professional writer in the nonacademic world. Because I asked (after I was hired), I know that I was the only applicant to present a professional portfolio in my interview: A medical brochure. A sales training manual. A feature column for a small-town paper. An advertisement. . . . I took that portfolio to every interview and always offered to share it within that context. Why?

I believe, as Maxine Hairston has pointed out in "The Winds of Change: Thomas Kuhn and the Revolution in the Teaching of Writing," that writing teachers should be people who write (13). The old assumption no longer holds that "anyone with a Ph.D. in English is an expert writing teacher" (Hairston 6). In fact, through work done by the writing projects all across the country, the formerly-thought-revolutionary idea that "all writing teachers should write in order to understand the writing process firsthand" has become widely accepted within academe. Large research universities such as New Mexico State University require documented professional writing experience as a component of the Ph.D. program in Rhetoric and Professional Communication—at NMSU, in the form of an internship. Writing experiences inform the teaching of writing.

When I write, I become a student of the writing itself. Writing is a form of exploration and discovery, and the act of writing puts every writer in the student-learner position. Perhaps that is what's so scary about being an academic who also writes for a paying audience: the relinquishment of authority. When I write for my community, I

move out of the realm of “expert” and into the world of “employee.” Short of a diatribe (something rarely done for hire), all writing becomes negotiable as it is written, and the writer becomes, simultaneously, a contributor to reality and a learner from reality. Theoretical exigencies become actual voices. As I write for a small-town newspaper, I am constantly reminded that my writing is not perfect, that it may not suit the demands of the day. And no, I do not mean that I am too brilliant for my plebeian audience; I have had editors say to me, “Can’t you think of a more creative hook—this is a feature, after all.” The criticism of the paying world has informed my teaching.

As the writing teacher engages in the act of writing, then, the teacher is reminded of the exigencies of being a student: *How do I write it? When do I need to have this done? Is that what I really meant to say? Will my audience read it the way I intended?* and a multitude of other questions. Instead of a grade, the professional writer gets a check, a call for more work, an anecdote or two for class, and perhaps a bit more understanding of trying to write in the manufactured environment of the writing classroom.

My writing impacts my teaching, tying pedagogy to experience... and, recently, my teaching has impacted my writing. As I look for new writing experiences now, I think about how they may contribute to my teaching—I weigh them in terms of what I may learn, and in turn share with my students. *How will I write this? Is it similar to the activities my students complete in class? How will it differ from previous writing experiences?* My writing has become a part of the unspoken conversation in my classroom. When I look at student work, I remember not just those hazy recollections of the college classroom and professor of yesteryear, but also the editor of last week. In short, my humbling is recent.

How does this professional writing experience affect the act of teaching composition? Occasionally, I pretend to self-indulge (isn’t it really for the class’ benefit?) and I share my writing experiences overtly with my comp class. When I ask them to explain the importance of editing, I often share the embarrassment I experienced as a medical copy writer. I’ll never forget the “Brochiodialator” brochure, and the \$6,500 that typo cost the company in print costs. I was amazed to still be employed after that. It doesn’t take more than a few summers of freelance work before stories begin to abound... how feature writers have to find stories—much like the invention strategies used in composition classrooms; how grant writers have to work collaboratively, akin to small group work; and so on. I hope my experience makes writing more real for students, and that they understand my teaching process as it is based on my previous experiences.

However, being a “writer” has not been a wholly positive experience in the academic world. Because I do not have an M.F.A., when people refer to our “writers,” I am often not included in that particular subset of my department. Worse yet is the moniker “creative writer”; I have had the displeasure of hearing a colleague remark, “I wish we had a creative writer here; I’d like to ask their [sic] opinion.” I contend that these attitudes are the children of the belletristic tradition, what James Berlin de-

scribes as the "literacy of liberal culture [which] is based on a conservative ideology that treasures continuity. While the new is not altogether rejected, longevity is the best recommendation for any concept or institution. Only a small minority can achieve the realm of higher truth, and it is this group that must be trusted for leadership in politics and culture" (Berlin 32). Although some believe that common publishing is not pursuant of higher truth, and therefore less than ideal, the fact remains: my common publishing has enabled me to be a more influential force in the literacy, the politics and cultures of my students as they begin to negotiate the university and its unfamiliar terrain. My publishing experience provides a bridge between academia and the "real" world for them that is often crucial in freshman classes.

However, I still encounter a belletristic conservatism skulking in the hallway behind me, the tiny voice that says, "But any idiot can get into print, and they often do." A small part of me cringes, knowing that I have not yet written a masterpiece, that the short, effable breaths of my literary body have been fleeting... many far from the literary, belletristic tradition of "great" writing. This complaint against the writer who teaches writing, however, overlooks a key feature in the teaching of writing: the efficacy of firsthand knowledge. The truth rings a tiny bit more hollow with each "I heard it from..."; it is far more convincing to my students to hear "It happened to me this way..."

And that, in sum, is the way it happened to me. One day, while working as a writer—four jobs, much travel in the central Arkansas area—I got a phone call from the new director of a Writing Program. He'd found my resume, he said, in a rather large pile, and he noticed that I had some professional writing experience. He wanted to talk to me about some teaching—after all, my graduate degree did focus on the teaching of composition. I was stunned. After the last five years of teaching in an adjunct capacity... could it be true?

In my first year at the university, I have written a grant: the first grant in which I am listed as the project director. I have had time to devote to other writing and research projects, and I even had the unprecedented luxury of choosing what to do with my first summer off... off to a new piece of writing, that's what I decided—to become a student of the craft itself, and let my teacher speak.

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The Ultimate Working Condition: Knowing Whether You Have a Job or Not

Karen Thompson

The working condition I want to emphasize today is job security. It is a condition from which other working conditions emerge: “no need for an office if we don’t know if you’re staying,” “why provide health or pension benefits if you’re not going to be around long,” “salary concerns are irrelevant if you’re leaving soon.” Part-time and adjunct faculty don’t just have poor working conditions; for the most part, they have no working conditions. If everything you do professionally is colored by a context of wondering if you’ll be teaching again next term, then the ultimate working condition becomes knowing whether you have a job or not.

The literature already abounds with detailed stories of freeway flyers piecing multiple jobs together into a livelihood; of award-winning teachers worrying from semester to semester whether they are employed; of conscientious, highly credentialed instructors losing their positions overnight. What is the impact of thousands of post-secondary educators—some 45 percent of the academic workforce (at least 60 percent if you include full-time non-tenure-track)—functioning in these circumstances? It means we are vulnerable and insecure. It means we are teaching without academic freedom, unless you’re counting on First Amendment Rights being enforced. And even if institutions or associations claim all teachers do have academic freedom, we know that anyone worried about whether they’ll be back in the fall is watching what they say, stepping to the proper beat, or just plain anxious to please. They are less likely to complain about improprieties, to object to mistreatment, and especially less likely to form unions. Educationally, this means innovation, experimentation, and certainly open inquiry will inevitably be compromised.

Compare this to the super-security of the tenured faculty, which, by the way, comprises as little as one quarter of the national faculty total. We see a big gap, resentful underlings, and negative public opinion that’s increasingly becoming the most pressing item for academics to address. If so many instructors teach lots of classes for little money and virtually nothing else, why is it necessary for some to have lighter workloads, quadrupled salaries, and lifetime security? Of course, we know these things are more than justified by the demands of scholarly research and publication, (graduate) student advising, community and institutional service, and the kind of professional commitment that academics must make to a discipline. But the fact remains: the ranks of tenure-track faculty are consistently shrinking. The numbers of part-time and adjunct faculty, of course, are growing, and perhaps more notable is the trend to expand the rolls of high-paid administrators, some of whom may teach courses.

We need to turn this around. We need to find ways to curtail the erosion of full-time tenured lines; we need to convince our administrators and government officials that it is in the interest of quality education that full-time positions be increased. But it's probably unrealistic to think we could totally reverse the situation—we're not going to turn thousands of part-timers into full-time tenured faculty, and we might not want to. We need to find a new terrain. We need our system of higher education to be staffed with full-time faculty who are committed and secure, and, where some part-timers may be needed, they too must be secure in their roles.

We need some measure of security for part-time and non-tenure-track faculty. There are models out there now that can be examined, but we need to be bold and innovative ourselves. There are negotiated categories like "senior lecturer" that establish some security, or "certificates of continuing employment" that function as a quasi tenure. There are things that can be done—and I would say that they are most effectively accomplished through collective action. And I will come to that later.

Although job security is my focus, I want to just briefly underscore the crucial place fair compensation plays in developing these kinds of changes. Pro rata salaries for part-timers are necessary to eliminate the incentive to exploit them as a reserve labor force. If part-timers are no longer the cheap alternative they have become, administrations will be less inclined to rely on them so heavily. Actually, part-timers should receive pro rata plus because they get no benefits. That's what happens in the corporate world—when consultants are employed, their rate of pay is frequently higher than that of regular employees to compensate for lack of benefits, short-term employment, etc. We must energetically work to change our pay structure from piecemeal to parity before the pattern in the general workforce goes too far in the opposite direction. Already Manpower is the single largest private employer in the country.

But the economic circumstances won't absorb such changes, you say. This is true only if we accept the cuts in educational funding without a whimper, if we unquestioningly accept the explanations we're given about funds being unavailable. For instance, there is no reason in the world that the prison industry should be in such a growth period when the annual cost of incarcerating someone runs ten times the expense of college, and when education is so essential in the prevention of poverty and crime. We have to focus vigilantly on not just improving our own working conditions but on re-funding higher education in general. I'll come back to this later too when I make some practical recommendations.

But first a warning: we need to specifically avoid distractions and deflections that will lead us astray and take our minds off central concerns. I'll give you a few examples. The National Council of Teachers of English has instituted study groups on Working Conditions, and I applaud their initiative in raising these issues. One of my own papers appears first in the table of contents for the support materials for these

groups. But such study groups may be an extremely time-consuming activity for people already busy beyond belief. And while I don't want to say that study groups are a waste of time, I worry that our most competent organizers, our most articulate voices may get bogged down or buried in this kind of activity when we desperately need them actively organizing for change. Perhaps we can optimistically hope that we'll be able to do both.

There are more seriously misleading tendencies reaching for us out there. Recently, for instance, I encountered an article entitled "The Care and Feeding of Part-Time Faculty." What is this, I said to myself. Are we pets now? Think about what this kind of imagery suggests. Pets are, of course, extraneous; they're also dependent and contingent; they submit to, indeed, live solely for, their masters' pleasure; and they're known to function through begging. This is a kind of paternalism we need to escape, not foster. Even if there is that "trapped" element that we share with pets, must we endorse the rest of the picture? And, of course, the best pets are those who train their masters.

Then there is the governess comparison which I believe was presented in a paper at last year's 4Cs. At least this one raises us to the human level, but I'm worried about the typical distraction it poses. It's true that part-timers, like governesses, are "invisible, isolated, and undervalued." Part-timers do need recognition and professionalism, but these things follow in the wake of just compensation and security. We already labor under too many illusions: "teaching for the love of it," "for the opportunity to work at such a prestigious institution," "for the chance to be mistaken for a professor." My son tells me he has to laugh when his friends say "your Mom is a Rutgers professor?!" He constantly counsels me to give up that job with all those papers and pressure. What kind of professionalism is it when you could make more and maybe be treated better waiting tables?

Some of these issues of respect and professional treatment are more thoroughly discussed in the only recent book-length treatment¹ of the situation of part-time and adjunct faculty: *The Invisible Faculty* by Judith Gappa and David Leslie. This can be a useful book in some respects, but it basically presents an administrative view (both authors are ex-administrators) and implicitly suggests: never mind too much about compensation or security; these competent educators need acknowledgment of the valuable contributions they make and improvements in their day-to-day treatment. It reminds me of a statewide conference that was organized a few years ago in New Jersey, by mostly administrators, to address "problems of adjunct faculty." They

¹This was true as of spring 1997.

actually were suggesting giving part-timers a coffee mug since salary increases were an impossibility. I attended a workshop where the leader initiated discussion by saying, "We're going to talk about any concerns of part-timers—except compensation." It's not that we don't need these day-to-day improvements, like office space and support services, or that a little recognition and respect wouldn't be most welcome, but we must be sure to focus on the major concerns from which the others follow: compensation and security.

So it's time to develop a plan of action: set some goals and recommend some practical steps. First, we need to work toward building a united faculty. I'm speaking to full-time faculty as well as part-timers and adjuncts now. One of my tenured colleagues at Rutgers recently said regarding the plight of part-timers and teaching assistants, "If half of an institution's faculty 'don't count,' the other half is in deep trouble, whether they know it or not." We have to make sure they, the full-time faculty, know it. As long as part-time faculty are underpaid, overworked, disrespected and insecure, it makes it that much easier to undermine established faculty salaries, increase workloads, and do away with shared governance and tenure.

At Rutgers, we're fortunate to have a situation where there is considerable cooperation between different levels of faculty and where the AAUP represents all teaching personnel (full-time, part-time, teaching assistants and graduate assistants) for collective bargaining. That doesn't mean we don't have problems—we've been trying to renegotiate our contracts for a couple of years. There are deep divisions between contending factions and an enormous struggle over how best to move the organizations forward. Sometimes it's difficult to keep a clear perspective on central concerns. I like the way Chris McVay, an advocate for adjuncts and faculty in general at Kent State, puts it:

The war being waged at this moment is not—should not be—between tenure-track faculty and us. It is between faculty—all faculty—and business-minded administrators who kowtow to business-minded legislators. It is between genuine education and saving a buck. So we need a unified faculty defending, upholding genuine education.

After that we need organization. Unions with national roots are my first choice. The AAUP, NEA, and AFT all have excellent formal policy statements on part-time faculty. Their individual track records vary from one local situation to another. There are also states where unionizing is not an option or where law specifically prohibits part-timers from organizing. In that case, we can use governance associations, the faculty senate, or even informal committees. The important thing is organization. This point struck me dramatically during a recent presentation by steelworker-turned-professor, Stanley Aronowitz, who recounted that when he was a steelworker 30 years ago, "You

couldn't get fired unless you hit the foreman—sober! THAT was tenure," he said. This kind of protection, and freedom, is the result of strong organization: in this case, it was the steelworkers at the peak of unionization; in the university, it has been governance organizations.

If organization doesn't appeal to you, you might want to take Theresa Enos' advice and quit. The suggestion reads, "Quit unsatisfying jobs. Quit underpaid jobs. Quit demeaning jobs. Quit doing drudge work. Quit doing other people's work to make them look good." Such command syntax has an empowering tone, but in the end organization will carry you further, with more satisfaction. Again, my son provides me with an appropriate analogy. If you join the team because you love the game, you can't quit if the coach is a tyrant, some players are weak, or the team's record is poor. You have to stay and improve those things—if you want to play the game. A winning team is like a strong organization.

But beyond self-interested organization, we need to form alliances within the entire university or college community. Students, of course, are the center of our work, the reason we're employed, so mutual understanding and joint activities are crucial. If administrators successfully pose faculty salaries and appointments against students' needs and tuition costs, we can never move ahead together working effectively for better funding of higher education. So students need to know *who's* in front of the classroom: they need to know how we're treated, how much we're paid, how insecure we are. They need to see where their money is going, or not going; how their issues are connected to our issues. It's not just tuition versus salaries. Restrictions in course offerings, reductions in enrollment, cuts in student aid are all part of the contraction of higher education, which includes downsizing faculty and rising administrative spending. It's the university as corporation where profit takes precedence over education. Student/faculty alliances can more effectively convince administrations to put quality education first by working together. A strong coalition of full-time faculty, part-timers, teaching assistants, support staff, and students would be the best vehicle to achieve success.

Working together, of course, means widespread communication. Where part-timers are concerned, this isn't easy. Mailings and posters are seldom enough, but never underestimate the power of a newsletter or a well-placed cartoon. One-on-one phone calls, or, better still, meetings are the most tested methods of organization building. New electronic methods with e-mail bulletin boards, discussion groups, as well as individual conversations may prove invaluable. Whatever it takes, communication is key.

The communication network must go beyond the campus boundaries to affect public opinion. Higher education's need for positive publicity is overwhelming. Access to the media is something that often requires long-term cultivation. We need to

push our professional organizations to develop more effective media contact and more effective political lobbying. We can do some of that right here at the CCCC. Let's see... CCCC... Collegiality, Communication, Coalition, and Collective Action.

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