

# FORUM

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

FALL 1998

CONFERENCE ON COLLEGE COMPOSITION AND COMMUNICATION

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### From the Editor: On Becoming Visible

In a note posted to the non-tenure-track faculty listserv<sup>1</sup> shortly after the 1998 CCCC in Chicago, Deborah Normand remarked, "I wish you had been there with us. It was the NTT's Cs." At this writing, nearly two months since that conference, the energy and excitement that infused Deborah's comment continue to inspire me as I prepare this manuscript for publication. The tide has finally begun to turn, I think, toward greater awareness and more productive action in support of the profession's non-tenure-track ranks, so it's no wonder we're feeling a bit more hopeful and revitalized than in times past.

One truly thrilling aspect of the conference (for me, at least) was the visibility of *Forum* itself. As most of you know, the inaugural issue of our newsletter was published as an insert in *CCC* just before the conference, thus guaranteeing access to about 10,000 readers, but in Chicago, offprints of our newsletter were seemingly everywhere: on information tables, in the NCTE exhibit, in the hands of conference participants. The most unexpected thrill occurred at the business meeting Saturday morning when CCCC's Chair Cynthia Selfe opened the Chair's Report with a lengthy commentary about *Forum*, identifying that insert as one of the most significant CCCC events of the year. She then announced the organization's plans to publish alternating issues of *Forum* in *CCC* and *TETYC*, thus expanding our net readership even further among two-year college teachers. Following the conference, these plans were amended slightly to complement publication in the journals (fall issue in *CCC*, winter issue in *TETYC*) with

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<sup>1</sup>To subscribe, write to Deborah Normand: [ennorm@lsuvm.sncc.lsu.edu](mailto:ennorm@lsuvm.sncc.lsu.edu)

**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. Note: Submissions will not be returned.

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

Roberta Kirby-Werner

*Forum* editor

8731 Plainville Road  
Baldwinsville, NY 13027-9644

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.

online publication. Clearly, our reach now extends beyond the profession itself to anyone with Internet access. Now that's visibility!

My primary goal in this issue of *Forum* is to publish—to make visible—selected papers presented at or written in response to panels, workshops, special interest group meetings, or featured speaker sessions in Chicago—all of particular interest to NTT faculty. As you read these pages, the struggles and victories they recount, the specific actions they recommend, and the theoretical as well as practical bases for action they present, you undoubtedly will sense the writers' commitment to building coalitions, to rallying NTT faculty and the profession as a whole behind the cause to improve our working conditions and overall integration in the professional life of the academy. More importantly, you will discover ways you can get involved to promote positive change at home, in the places you work. As you succeed in these endeavors, I urge you to make them visible to the rest of us here in *Forum*.

—Roberta Kirby-Werner  
Syracuse University  
September 1998

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**A Sense of the House: Perspectives on Non-Tenure-Track Issues in 1998**

Kim Flachmann, Chair  
Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Forum

- CCCC will support the printing and distribution of the Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Forum Newsletter;
- CCCC will compensate the editor of the newsletter;

- CCCC will pay for the NTT Faculty Forum Chair's membership in the National Adjunct Faculty Guild;
- CCCC will pay for the National Adjunct Faculty Guild Chair's membership in CCCC.

The decrees listed here represent the CCCC atmosphere within which the Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Forum is currently functioning. I have been a member of the organization since 1972, starting in the profession as a part-timer, and have never seen such positive, aggressive support from CCCC for part-time and full-time temporary faculty.

This story gets even better with Cynthia Selfe's inspirational address at CCCC, including its concrete commitment to the status and working conditions of temporary faculty in English, and with positive agenda items from the Annual Business Meeting, such as the organization's plans to sponsor their Gift of the Profession and their mentoring programs.

The examples I could cite to show the new relationship that has emerged between the temporary faculty in our profession and CCCC are numerous. They are also not merely fluff, but real commitments to the people who fill these temporary positions and contribute so dramatically to the discipline. The members of the Steering Committee of the Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Forum were genuinely exhilarated when they left the convention this year.

Over the past few years of the organization's life, I have felt a growing commitment to the plight of the non-tenure-track faculty members in English. We are now at the stage where we are working cooperatively with the Executive Committee to find real solutions to problems that exist in the lives of an enormous number of our faculty on a daily basis. As the proportion of temporary faculty grows among college writing instructors, CCCC is currently making a concerted effort to keep up with and, in some cases, get ahead of the group's collective needs.

It feels good to have our goals fully supported by CCCC and, in many instances, propelled by CCCC. We currently have a working relationship with the CCCC Executive Committee that inspires both segments to deal frankly and efficiently with non-tenure-track issues. Serious problems still exist with the status of temporary faculty in English departments, but I feel a determined confidence and strength in the heart of the profession that I haven't felt for years.

*Kim Flachmann is the Writing Program Coordinator at California State University, Bakersfield, and has been an active member of the Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Forum since 1990.*

## **Speaking from the Middle**

Susan Griffin

This year at CCCC, there was something new—not just another statement about lamentable working conditions in the profession, but a workshop on actions we can take, such as collective bargaining and coalition-building. There were about a dozen participants, most of them activists on their campuses. Here's what I'm struck by as I reflect on that workshop and the spirit of the conference that followed.

My own non-tenured position—which had always seemed so marginal, so different, such a deviation from the traditional academic path—is after all average. In fact, for those who teach writing courses in higher ed, it's typical. I'm one of the many non-tenure-track faculty in a writing program that's technically part of an English department but functions independently. Just as I'm right in the middle of the age range of higher ed faculty (48!), I'm right in the middle of the range of teaching positions: no tenure, but at least I'm full-time; no job security, but I do have a multiple-year contract that can be renewed; no sabbaticals, but I do get some support, like travel funds for conferences like the CCCC; no participation in faculty governance, but I do have a union, the University Council-AFT, and thus a contract that provides for individual grievances, ways of resolving systematic problems legally, and a connection to other organizations working for positive change in higher education.

But here, too, I end up in the middle. Unlike the powerful K–12 unions in California, ours is small, poor, and constantly threatened by the anti-union University of California. Still, we have managed to survive and win some important victories for our non-tenure-track faculty and for the librarians, the other group we represent. I heard stories at the conference that were much worse—two exploited part-timers told a tale of almost medieval intimidation as a result of attending an AAUP meeting! On the other hand, as I listened to friends' stories of tenure suspense, waiting for that all-important decision, I felt acutely my place down the chain. I actually teach writing—I don't administer a writing program or supervise TAs or freeway flyers like those tenure-track or tenured friends.

Here's the question I still have, as a writing teacher and union activist, halfway through her career, and absolutely average in rank. I've heard what graduate students are thinking as they face careers in an era of radical change in academia. I've heard from exploited part-timers about outrages done to them. But I haven't heard from the other end of the scale. What are those tenured faculty thinking, those who direct writing programs, and those in other fields? I know we have statements from professional organizations condemning the abuse of part-time faculty, calling for restraint and reason. As everyone at the 1998 CCCC remarked, we've had such statements for a long time—and the problem has grown worse, not better. In the last issue of *Forum*, one of our workshop participants, Karen Thompson, a part-timer at Rutgers

University, quoted one of her tenured colleagues: "If half of an institution's faculty 'don't count,' the other half is in deep trouble, whether they know it or not (A22)." It'd be reassuring to me if I thought most tenured faculty had that thought—but I suspect they don't. So how else can we explain them? They have their heads in the sand? They're asleep at the wheel? Neither of those metaphors seems, to me, to capture the tenured mindset at this end of the century.

I refer to them, not kindly I realize, as the "Après nous, le deluge"<sup>1</sup> generation. After all, if I'm the average age for a college teacher, at 48, many of them are older. They're close to retirement. And they don't see a crisis—new Ph.D. candidates keep pouring through their doors, willing to work, eager, energetic. Has it really struck them yet that the traditional academic career may not exist for these young people? And have they thought about what that means, the price that we'll pay? Well, I can tell them about that—as the one in the middle. Full-time, renewable appointments aren't bad—but they aren't tenure. Will there be a price? Sure. Every three years, my institution has a chance to simply let me go. Does that affect my standing in this intellectual community? Sure. At a recent disciplinary hearing, I was consistently referred to as "just" a lecturer, not a "real" professor—and that lack of respect did affect the outcome. So here's a cost—we lose not only academic freedom about what we say in the classroom, what topics we choose for courses, but also our power to prevent cheating and preserve the academic integrity of our courses.

Thus, the challenge in the next century for those of us at the middle—middle-aged, mid-career, middle rank—is this. As the tenured cohort shrinks and the non-tenured group grows, the ways in which we both define and defend our jobs may well set the paradigm for future academic employment. Nothing is inevitable—despite all the predictions we hear. As one of my own professors used to say, "Life is not a novel—the end is not already written." We get to write the future by what we do in the present. So I encourage everyone to take action on your own campus. And come to the second collective bargaining workshop at next year's CCCC!

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*Susan Griffin is a Lecturer in the UCLA Writing Programs, on leave this year to serve as Coordinator of her union, the University Council-AFT.*

<sup>1</sup>Roughly translated, "After us, the flood," this is a reference to Louis XIV, King of France, who, when asked if he was worried about his excesses and what would follow, supposedly said, "Après moi, le deluge." That is, all the real trouble will come when I'm gone, so what do I care?

**Talking to Janitors, Working with Students:  
What's Next for (Contingent) Academics?**

Scott Hendrix

Academic Labor? What's that mean? At the 1998 Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC), academic labor meant a group of 20 or so folks hammering out ideas and practical plans of action in the full-day workshop, "Collective Bargaining, Coalition-Building, and Organizing Strategies: Improving Working Conditions Through Considered Action." One plan of action we hammered out? Contingent academics need to begin to build coalitions of support and advocacy. Seems like a good enough idea...a plan of action that is viable for nearly all academic workplaces. In planning and building coalitions, however, we ought to consider not only other part-time and adjunct teachers, but also other contingent academic workers, as well as our undergraduate students, other campus and community groups, and organized labor. Specific local conditions will set foundations and limits for the particular shape and actions of these coalitions. Our starting point, Though, should be the same—to make academic work (*teaching and learning*) less contingent, more visible and more valued, both financially and professionally.

Local coalitions can also lay the groundwork for expanding unionization, and democratization, of our national workplaces. Joel Rogers, Professor of Law, Political Science, and Sociology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and Chair of the New Party, argues that labor needs "a new organizing strategy and a new mass politics. Above all, perhaps, it needs to recognize that the two are not independent, that they require each other for success" (12). The same principle holds true for academic coalition-building. In addition, Rogers insists that unions advance "only when they do things that not only visibly benefit members or potential members, but benefit the broader society as well—and thereby gain the social cachet and political support they need, in this capitalist world, to defend and grow worker organizations" (12). Do these statements apply to our own efforts at organizing and supporting contingent academics? Do we see our own working conditions linked to larger issues of social justice, racial and gender equity, and "mass politics"? Can we afford to imagine them otherwise?

Janitors come to mind when I think of invisible academic labor. A part-time colleague at the University of Kansas reminds me that janitorial work in the English Department used to be highly visible. Three years ago, we Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) voted in the union (KAPE/AFT) and gained collective bargaining rights. Then the janitors switched to night work, and we lost essential human contact with another group of contingent university workers. Janitors play a key role in the vision of academic labor that I want us to imagine. Janitors here are nearly invisible. Most work

from 11:00 P.M. to early in the morning, before faculty and students populate the campus. Janitors are not well-compensated; salaries begin at \$6.50 an hour, with basic benefits. That's about \$13,500 per year, for 40 hours a week. (In comparison, English GTAs average about \$10.00 an hour; other part-time teachers earn slightly more; tenure-line faculty salaries begin in the mid-\$30,000s.)

Yet the work janitors perform is essential to the status of the university as a site of learning, as a symbolic state institution, and as a tool of capital production. The invisibility of these university workers mirrors the invisibility of contingent teaching faculty, especially those in the Humanities and in departments of English. The academic work of all these groups is foundational to higher education. Yet all are contingent in the mix of money and funding priorities that fuels higher education. Only students, with their coveted tuition dollars, are more contingent. (Students have one advantage over us: they add fuel to the fire. Tuition funds 42% of private college operations, 18% of public college operations [NCES].)

Highly flexible laborers, easily replaceable, none of these groups have been able to gain much ground in the struggle for equity in academe. For example, in my English Department, the numbers of teaching faculty looked like this in fall semester 1997:

- 41 tenure-line faculty (37 teaching; 11 teaching one section; the rest two).
- 31 part-time, non-tenure lecturers (13 teaching three sections each; 11 teaching four sections; one teaching five sections; several lecturers also teach writing and literature sections elsewhere).
- 63 part-time graduate teaching assistants (six GTAs teaching three sections each; one GTA teaching four sections; a few GTAs also teach elsewhere).
- Four office support staff (all women; down from seven two years ago).

No matter how long and hard I look at these numbers, nor how much administrators try to spin them, they are never going to add up to a healthy sum for academic working or learning conditions. So what's to be done? What can we do about these numbers, and about our own individual bottom-line numbers in terms of wages, benefits, class sizes, and job security?

Karen Thompson argues that we "need to find a new terrain" on which to ground our action and organizing toward improved working conditions for part-time, adjunct, and full-time faculty (A20). She's right, and I'm hoping to map out one local terrain for action and organizing. Karen was one of the CCCC workshop folks. She argued that the August 1997 United Parcel Service (UPS) strike was a labor action that academics and university workers could learn from and work to apply locally. In the spirit of the UPS strike—where full-timers walked in support of part-timers, and in support of their own jobs, and where there was visible public support for the striking drivers—I want to argue that we academic workers need to build local coalitions that can function as sites of action education and activist organizing. In some

cases these coalitions can be built around existing labor unions or professional associations, but imagining new terrains also enables us to see other options, which might help build toward collective bargaining in the long-term.

We left the 1998 CCCC workshop on “Collective Bargaining, Coalition-Building, and Organizing Strategies” with a goal of educating for action in three areas:

1. contingent faculty (part-time, adjunct, graduate students, etc.);
2. tenure-line faculty (with individuals and with faculty organizations);
3. general public (especially student and community activist groups).

I would also suggest (as above) other academic workers and stakeholders: janitors, housekeeping and food-service workers, undergraduates (work-study labor and student organizations), parents of undergraduates, student government, community groups, cooperative businesses, religious and human rights organizations, and always local and national labor unions. This kind of outreach is a first step toward “mass politics.” So how to begin?

We are educators and rhetoricians, after all. Many of us are damn good at teaching. But we need to turn our command of language to broader and to multiple audiences (as Gesa Kirsch reminds us). Newspapers and other public media are often desperate for education stories. Most local newspapers and radio stations have a reporter assigned to the college. Find out this person’s name, phone number, e-mail, and work hours. Get in the rolodex. Many colleges have a student newspaper. Write letters to the editor, or seek out student writers and let them know your academic work story. In either case, make your story relevant to undergraduate education, to larger social concerns (as Joel Rogers urges). If we don’t take up our pens and telephones, and begin to tell the stories we want others to hear about us, our working conditions, and our students, we sacrifice the critical first steps of power we can use for building coalitions and collective bargaining.

Three of the CCCC workshop folks are putting together a press kit for just such education and coalition-building. The goal is to build a kit that can be adapted to specific local conditions but that also promotes focus and unity at the national level. (See the **Who Pays?** flyer on the next page, a sample of this group’s work.) In addition, the NCTE already has developed an informational packet (NCTE Working Condition Study Group Packet) that lays the groundwork for coalitions and collective action in support of improving academic working conditions. Likewise, coalitions will vary from worksite to worksite, from campus to campus, and from state to state. Thus we need parallel and long-term national organizing; we need to engage our professional organizations—NCTE, CCCC, and MLA, for instance—as forces for structural change (see Ira Shor’s recent call for a CCCC labor policy).



**When teachers are exploited, WHO PAYS?**

YOU DO, if you're a student,

because your teacher is overworked, underpaid, and without job security. Do you want your papers graded by a teacher who is exhausted and worried about paying the bills? A stand for academic labor rights is a stand for better teaching.

YOU DO, if you're a tenured professor,

because the growing use of part-time and adjunct faculty as a main source of academic labor is a threat to tenure and academic freedom in higher education. A stand for academic labor rights is a stand for academic freedom.

YOU DO, if you're the parent of a student,

because the money you pay to send your children to college is being used according to corporate models that maximize profits over educational excellence. A stand for academic labor rights is a stand for your children's education.

YOU DO, if you're a taxpayer,

because the institutions which are partly funded by your tax dollars are serving the interests of corporate research (a tax break for big companies), rather than educational excellence—while the students who will lead the country in the near future may not be getting the attention they need. A stand for academic labor rights is a stand for the future of the United States.

YOU DO, if you're a graduate student employee,

because the job market today makes the possibility of a full-time academic job more unlikely even as often-exploited teaching assistants and research assistants increasingly staff undergraduate programs. A stand for academic labor is a stand for your future career.

YOU DO, if you're an adjunct or part-time instructor,

because institutions which take advantage of your devotion to students and the teaching profession, expecting you to work a lot for very little in return—with the false impression that it might lead to a full-time position—are exploiting you AND your students. A stand for academic labor is a stand for your profession.

This sample flyer was drafted by Mike Evces and Karen Thompson, two participants in the workshop described in the Griffin and Hendrix papers. We welcome you to use this text any way you see fit and also invite your feedback. (Author information follows the Hendrix paper.)

Coalition building is essential at a big state research university, but it's a good idea no matter where you work. Small, private four-year colleges as well as public community and state colleges all have their labor concerns—or likely will in the future. Even if your college has no part-time labor (hallelujah!), or most faculty are tenure line, or if unionization is not an option, you still should plan for coalition building. Contact faculty support groups, contact local colleges with similar demographics, contact parents and alumni, consult with student senate, with other on-campus worker groups and organizations. In short, make your organizing pro-active rather than re-active. At the very least, by talking with other labor and advocacy groups, you learn who your friends and your enemies are. Coalition-building will never be easy, though, and it never really ends. It's sometimes flat out frustrating. But remember that we are teachers. We know how to talk. We can use phone calls, e-mails, hallway chats, conference meetings, late-night drinks as organizing tools. This kind of organizing work is absolutely language as social action, public rhetoric for public purposes. It should be a welcome challenge for teachers and specialists in language, writing, and human communication.

At my campus, our GTA union has joined forces with several undergraduate groups, student senate, and local community organizations. This coalition didn't happen overnight. We tried to join with tenure-line and adjunct faculty, but they weren't very supportive of our fight for improved working conditions. (Where's a good UPS strike when you need one?) We also tried to build ties with the classified employee senate (a non-union entity representing non-teaching staff) but were rejected by the executive board; they didn't want to poison their "good relationship" with the university administration. Dead end again.

So we set our local publicity machine in motion.

- Letters went around to all graduate students, faculty, and support staff—and posters went up all over campus.
- We stuffed mailboxes every couple weeks.
- We set up info tables in front of the student union and in front of buildings with lots of classrooms—at least once a month.
- We wrote letters to the editor and wrangled seats on the college newspaper editorial board.
- We faxed press releases to the town newspaper whenever we had a bit of news the college reporter might print.
- We dogged the administration's words and actions and "hollered when they done wrong," leading to word-of-mouth and media publicity.
- We held public rallies—mostly just one or two people speaking, some live music, or a labor rep from another union.
- We walked around with petitions, catching people in hallways, at bus stops, telling them about our cause, getting their signatures, getting our name out.

- We delivered our petitions to the administration.
- And we always faxed press releases first.

So we got publicity, and this slowly gained steam. After about a year of this public action, several undergraduate groups *contacted us* about joining our cause. Public education did its work. These groups led to other groups, on and off campus. Our GTA union gained bargaining power on campus—and we got our contract. It's not great, but it's a start. In return, we support other groups who work for a city-wide bus system, or bike lanes; who lobby for more minority faculty and students; who support local civil rights, and community waste reduction and recycling. We do have a union for GTAs, but much of our organizing power comes from the local coalitions we are part of, the activism and ideas these coalitions generate. We still don't talk with janitors or with tenure-line faculty about organizing, but that needs to happen. These undergraduate and community folks have lots of energy and are hungry for change. Let's get hungry with them. If language as social action and public education can happen in Kansas, then there's hope for us all.

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*Scott Hendrix is a Graduate Teaching Assistant and Ph.D. Candidate in the Department of English at the University of Kansas, and a 2.5 year member of the Steering Committee of GTAC/KAPE/AFT, the bargaining unit for GTAs at the university.*

*Mike Evces is a graduate student employee at the University of Iowa, College of Education, and a member of UE Local 896 COGS, the Campaign to Organize Graduate Students. He was on the first contract bargaining committee and was Chief Steward for 1996–1998.*

*Karen Thompson is a part-time lecturer in the English department of Rutgers University, President of the Part-Time Chapter of the Rutgers AAUP, and Chair of the national AAUP's Committee G on Part-Time and Non-Tenure-Track Faculty.*

**Excerpt from “Early Concerns of CCCC”**

Sharon Crowley

Editor’s Note: A Featured Speaker at the CCCC Convention in Chicago this past spring, Sharon Crowley presented a paper designed to “pull CCCC back to its roots, . . . to improve the status of first-year composition instruction in American universities”<sup>1</sup> (1998 CCCC Annual Convention Program, p. 87). What follows is the peroration of this paper, what Sharon describes as “a call to the leadership and to the membership to commit their professional efforts, as well as the resources of the organization, to improving the working conditions of teachers of the first-year course.”

And so I now take advantage of the podium that has been so graciously afforded me by CCCC to urge its membership to recall that at the heart of what we do are the thousands of teachers who regularly teach four or more sections of first-year composition every semester, year in and year out, without expectation of re-employment or promotion. As you all know, during the ‘70s and ‘80s, American universities began to replace full-time faculty appointments with part-time temporary positions. As a result of this policy, nationally 40% of lower-division instruction in four-year colleges and universities is now delivered by nonpermanent faculty. At community colleges, the figure is 65%.

Despite all the wonderful developments that have taken place in composition theory and pedagogy since 1950, then, it is an arguable point whether the professional lives led by most of its teachers are very different from those led by the junior faculty who were so gravely exploited by their senior colleagues prior to 1950. And yet these are the folks who make it possible for those of us who are tenured and tenurable to reap the benefits of disciplinarity. I realize that there is a problem with my speaking for nonpermanent faculty at this podium since I am not among their number. I feel that I must speak for them here, however, because these folks do not attend CCCC. They don’t have travel money, and they don’t have the time.

You may recall that CCCC issued a statement on professional standards and conditions of employment for teachers of composition some years back. I think that statement is now dangerously dated because it tried to extend the protection of tenure to everyone who teaches first-year composition. I no longer think that tenure will continue to protect academic freedom or that it can be appealed to as a means of improving conditions of employment. Tenure is under serious threat from the right, and it is awarded for research, not teaching, anyhow. I think that universities will contin-

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<sup>1</sup>See *Composition in the University: Historical and Polemical Essays* (University of Pittsburgh Press) for Sharon’s study of the institutional status of the first-year composition course, on which part of her talk was based.

ue to convert tenure-track positions to impermanent positions for economic and managerial reasons. And so now I think that what we have to do is lead the way in establishing good working positions for people whose primary job in the academy is teaching.

The new MLA standards go a long way in this direction. The MLA recommends that

- the compensation of part-time faculty members must be substantial enough to ensure that they are supported in, and can be held accountable for, course preparation, student involvement, and professional development appropriate to their responsibilities;
- there must be an equitable provision of salary based on a standardized salary policy that remunerates for commensurate qualifications and is indexed of full-time faculty salaries (aiming for *pro rata* compensation) rather than per-course-hour rates;
- all part-time faculty members, along with full-time adjuncts, must receive essential benefits (especially health and life insurance and retirement contributions) on at least a *pro rata* basis;
- all part-time faculty members receive sufficient notice of their appointments or reappointments to enable them to prepare their courses adequately (33–34).

Frankly, it embarrasses me that suggestions as good as these have come from MLA, rather than from CCCC, the organization whose members know what it is like to teach composition, and which historically has a much better understanding of the working conditions of nonpermanent faculty than does MLA.

I want to close by recommending some further actions that CCCC can take to improve the working conditions of composition teachers. If you are a member, familiarize yourself with the situation of nonpermanent faculty. There are at least two workshops on conditions of employment at this meeting, and there is a Special Interest Group as well. Any participant in those groups, or Susan<sup>2</sup> and I, can give you lists of sources to read.

While educating ourselves about this issue is important, it is even more important, in my opinion, that we put the issue of nonpermanent employment at the heart of our organization's efforts. To that end, I ask members of CCCC to urge the Executive Committee to revisit the suggestions made to it by three generations of committees associated with the Wyoming Resolution. I have already recommended that we rewrite the Statement on Professional Standards to bring it in line with the current

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<sup>2</sup>Here Sharon refers to Susan Wyche of California State University, Monterey, who introduced her.

employment situation. But we should also change our dues structure so that graduate students and those who are minimally employed pay a nominal membership fee—say, ten dollars. Then we should raise the dues for senior people, to a hundred or a hundred and fifty or two hundred bucks—whatever it takes to set up an office, hire an attorney and a lobbyist, and begin to help teachers across the country who want to negotiate better working conditions or to unionize. We should form alliances with accrediting agencies, with teachers' unions, with the AAUP, NEA, and MLA. These organizations are now a lot more worried about part-time employment than they were in the '80s. They are developing strategies for protecting university and college teachers, and we need to be talking to them. We need to name, train, and fund regional directors to help teachers push locally for better working conditions. Finally, let's put the notion of censure back on the table. Let's name universities and colleges who systematically abuse their teachers.

While we are doing all of that, I ask you to remember who it is that puts the bread on our table: the absent multitudes whose labor we exploit, whose labor allows us to enjoy positions as WPAs, researchers, and scholars. Those folks are the heart of composition instruction in America. They always have been. It is time we remembered that, and it is time that we put them at the center of our organizational efforts.

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*Sharon Crowley teaches writing and the history of rhetoric and composition at Arizona State University.*

### **The Adjunct Faculty Manifesto**

Francis Fletcher, Jamey Nye, and Steve O'Donnell

*The authors of this piece thank Dr. John Jamieson and EGOIST (English Graduate Organization Introducing Subversive Theorists) for introducing them to the radical and humanizing works of Paulo Freire and Karl Marx.*

A spectre is haunting English departments—the spectre of exploitation and oppression within our own ranks. Who in academia is not aware of the subjugation and marginalization of adjunct faculty? Presently, academia is more and more splitting into two great camps, into two classes directly facing each other. The inequities between the two classes are growing; the chasm is widening.

The current imbalances in English departments have polarized this institution. How has it happened that so many adjunct faculty have come to be ensnared in an

unjust academic system? In part, adjunct faculty deny their own oppression. They view their predicament as an unfortunate yet necessary rite of passage. Their preparation as English teachers has taught them that the job market is depressingly competitive. Unsteady part-time work without benefits, it is believed, is the result of this competitive market (not the result of political and economic corruption) and has become the standard measuring block of academic progression. This standard is largely accepted. The adjunct faculty who question the unjust standards of academia, those who recognize their own oppression, cling to the false belief that their oppression is only temporary.

This myth of transition or upward mobility is the largest contributor to the ongoing oppression. Modern academia has as its foundation the American ideals of equal opportunity and upward mobility; for adjunct faculty, these are nothing more than ideals. No such conditions exist. Still, the economic lower class of academia naively believes that they too, by virtue of their teaching in a democratized institution, will climb the academic ladder. Institutions do not discourage their naiveté. In fact, institutions purvey the myth that academia is a unified whole, a system with checks and balances that protects and promotes adjunct faculty. No such protections exist. Without these protections, adjunct faculty find themselves embroiled in an impersonal, exploitative, and oppressive institution.

Adjunct faculty are educators; but for them, to be educators is to be oppressed. This is their dilemma. Against the guilt or change which may come from acknowledging the exploitation of adjunct faculty, the readiest safeguard for government officials, administrators, and even tenured faculty is voluntary isolation. We can observe their isolation in their silence on this topic and in their unified inaction. Even the name they bestow upon the oppressed, "adjunct faculty," is an abstraction which categorizes and dehumanizes in order to prevent sympathy and solidarity. The term "adjunct" denotes exclusion and subordination, borders and fringes. The popular alternatives "part-time" and "temporary" indicate impermanence and insignificance, fragmentation and exclusion.

To further deflect responsibility, administrations find solace in the fact that adjunct faculty seem to choose their subjugation. They say, "Nobody is keeping them here." This is a false comfort and should be corrected. The myth that adjunct faculty choose their lot is related to other American myths such as that of equal educational opportunities for the poor and the myth of equal employment opportunities for minorities. The consequences of viewing adjunct faculty as victims of a corrupt system, as suffering and exploited humans, would lead to nothing less than academic revolution.

A major organization in composition studies recently held a session on teaching for social change: "empowering our students" was the much repeated catch phrase. Can we empower students while oppressing teachers? Much was said about teachers' civic responsibilities to promote social change. Can social change exist in our

classrooms if it is absent from our institutions? Modern universities are egalitarian, so claims academia, so declares our governments, so believes our public. The current state of adjunct faculty prove this to be untrue. Academia has long struggled to rid itself of discrimination. Should it now replace discrimination with exploitation and oppression?

We have reached a crossroads in higher education, a point at which the exploitation of adjunct faculty can no longer persist. For our institutions, equality brings the burdens of financial hardships and radical restructuring, the struggles of moving away from university as big business towards university as educator, the responsibilities of promoting and maintaining equality in the future. For adjunct faculty, equality brings the benefits of security and self-worth, a renewed faith in higher education, a fulfilling and meaningful career.

How will we achieve equality? Several important organizations in English have already published guidelines for doing this. Their contributions are a testimonial to the significance of our mission. In brief, the various guidelines include the following measures: job security, reasonable work loads, fair compensation, opportunities for promotion, professional support, and appropriate working conditions. Certainly, other measures could be included, but those mentioned above embody the thrust of our movement. Implementing these guidelines, however, has met with strong and unbending resistance. As such, adjunct faculty and their supporters must themselves be strong and unbending. To compromise our demands would be to compromise the lives of adjunct faculty.

The very notion of equality, true equality, is a radical one. Yet, it is precisely this radical spirit which many adjunct faculty suppress, for theirs is a tenuous situation. Employed by the very institution which oppresses them, adjunct faculty lack individual power. We need a collective voice and collective action. Let not the individual bear the weight of this oppression alone, but let us overcome oppression together.

Adjunct faculty unite!

*Francis Fletcher is a non-tenure-track faculty member at Modesto Community College. Jamey Nye is a Ph.D. candidate in Rhetoric and Linguistics at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Steve O'Donnell is a graduate student in English at California State University, Sacramento.*

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