

FORUM

ISSUES ABOUT PART-TIME AND CONTINGENT FACULTY

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From the Editor: Amplifying Labor Research and Advocacy

Amy Lynch-Binieck

While “knowledge is power” may seem cliché, in labor research and advocacy work, it’s a timeless refrain. I’ll never forget a tenured professor telling my graduate student self, in response to a paper I’d just written about adjunct working conditions, that “only a few backwater schools treat instructors that poorly.” The next draft was so chock-full of evidence of the systematic, nationwide abuse of labor that it metaphorically dared him to say that again. I was privileged to have the time, space, and resources to track down the evidence I needed beyond my personal experiences. Because labor research focused on higher education has not enjoyed the same academic capital as other subjects, it doesn’t usually receive the same attention or celebration and, as a result, can require more effort to uncover.

And it’s not just misinformed tenured professors who need more information. In a 2016 issue of *Forum*, Dawn Fels, Clint Gardner, Maggie M. Herb, and Liliana M. Naydan reported on the progress of their study of contingent writing center staff. One result surprising them was the eagerness of participants to discover how their work fit into the national picture:

Several participants mentioned that they chose to participate in our study because they were curious about whether their working conditions are unique to them or their center or whether others are experiencing similar situations. In fact, one participant speculated that their working conditions must be unique, that it was hard to imagine other writing center administrators facing a similar set of challenges. . . . This theme,

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About *Forum*

Forum is published twice a year by the Conference on College Composition and Communication. Amy Lynch-Binieck, editor of *FORUM*, welcomes you to submit essays related to the teaching, working conditions, professional life, activism, and perspectives of non-tenure-track faculty. Faculty and scholars from all academic positions are welcome to contribute. Of special interest are research, analyses, and strategies grounded in local contexts, given that labor conditions and the needs of contingent faculty vary greatly with geography, institutional settings, and personal circumstances.

Essays should address theoretical and/or disciplinary debates. They will go through the standard peer-review and revision process.

Submissions for the fall issue should be received no later than April 1; for the spring issue, the deadline is August 1. Note: Submissions will not be returned. Submit your work electronically to lynchbin@kutztown.edu and put the words "*Forum* article" in your subject line. Submissions should include your name, title(s), institution(s), home address and phone number, institutional address(es) and phone number(s), and if applicable, venue(s) where the submission was published or presented previously.

For further information and to make submissions, please contact Dr. Amy Lynch-Binieck, Editor, *Forum*, at lynchbin@kutztown.edu.

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then, of participants wondering, "Am I alone?" or feeling isolated from their field by their working conditions is notable, especially if we consider how their contingency might affect and compound this feeling. (A15)

These examples suggest that labor research in our field needs more visibility: we certainly need more research into the effects of labor practices on our teaching, our students, our own well-being, and our institutions' health, but we also need to *amplify* that research, to make it more familiar and accessible to everyone.

This was one motivating factor behind the Indianapolis Resolution, developed by a diverse assemblage of non-tenure-track and tenure-line faculty, writing center faculty, and graduate students during a workshop sponsored by the Labor Caucus of the Conference on College Composition and Communication in March 2014. (Full disclosure: I was among them.) An arm of the resolution addresses the pressing need to amass the field's labor research and advocacy work in a single space:

At the level of pedagogy, we call upon our disciplinary and professional organizations to . . . Create a clearinghouse of information about how disciplinary professional statements . . . have amply codified best practices for reasonable and equitable working conditions, and where appropriate are in need of updating; how innovative teachers and administrators have made compelling, forceful, and successful arguments to help their institutions improve working conditions for all faculty. ("Indianapolis Resolution")

Such a clearinghouse has the potential to make labor research and advocacy in higher education, but perhaps especially advocacy by and for contingent faculty, just a bit more easily and better informed. When we can more efficiently find models of both successes and failures in contingency studies, we are better equipped to design and implement changes in our local contexts.

Steve Fox and Mick Powers have this in mind in their essay below, “Half a Loaf? Hard Lessons When Promoting Adjunct Faculty.” They explain that in sharing the account of their own local efforts, “This case study may encourage and guide faculty at other institutions to develop a comparable process allowing contingent faculty an opportunity for professional advancement.” *Forum* has long been a platform for sharing instructive models and analyses like that of Fox and Powers, but we shouldn’t be content with a single journal, tucked into the issues of larger sister publications, and the occasional special issue of other academic periodicals. Ideally, *Forum* would combine its voice with the voices of many others in the clearinghouse called for in the Indianapolis Resolution.

I’m pleased to report that the Center for the Study of Academic Labor (CSAL) at Colorado State University is making moves to become one of those much-needed spaces. I invited Sue Doe, one of the directors of the center, to describe its mission and potential in this issue. The CSAL is positioned to become a valuable resource, and I encourage you to visit it online.

In the spirit of the articles in this issue of *Forum*, I also encourage you to document the policies, practices, and local research intersecting labor and contingency that exist in your own institutions and to consider how you might best share them with the larger field. Contributing to *Forum* is a good place to begin!

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Half a Loaf? Hard Lessons When Promoting Adjunct Faculty

Steve Fox and Mick Powers

In discussions of working conditions for non-tenure-track adjunct faculty in university and college writing programs—most recently, the “CCCC Statement on Work-

ing Conditions for Non-Tenure-Track Writing Faculty”—the goal of equity leads to calls for comparable pay and benefits, hiring practices, access to professional development, class sizes and assignments, and work space and resources. Sometimes there are calls for pathways to better positions: for example, part-time faculty should be given opportunities to apply for full-time positions, or full-time non-tenure-track faculty should be offered pathways to tenure-line positions. What seems less common is specific advocacy for some sort of promotion process for part-time, non-tenure-track faculty. The New Faculty Majority lists professional advancement as one of its seven goals: “Equity in Professional Advancement: Progressive Salary Steps and Equal Access to Professional Development Opportunities for All Faculty.” The “CCCC Statement” does briefly mention promotion in its first

At many institutions, part-time faculty work for years without recognition of their experience and excellence. A fifteen-year veteran may be paid the same per-course rate as a newly hired adjunct.

core principle: “Departments, programs, and faculty must work to ensure equity for NTT writing faculty by attending to issues associated with employment: compensation; job security; benefits; access to resources; access to shared governance; and opportunities for professional advancement.” In similar fashion, the *MLA Professional Employment Practices for Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Members* recommends that “All faculty members should have access to advancement opportunities

that allow for a progressive career path” (Committee). In fact, at many institutions, part-time faculty work for years without recognition of their experience and excellence. A fifteen-year veteran may be paid the same per-course rate as a newly hired adjunct. Excellence in teaching is seldom recognized through a review process that leads to recognition, much less promotion.

Whenever broad principles like those cited above are discussed among university faculty, people often respond by saying, “At my institution,” followed by accounts of local contexts, histories, and constraints. To think globally and act locally is a cliché precisely because it is an obvious statement of how the world works. The authors of this article think it might be instructive to share an account of how we participated in an effort to apply principles of faculty equity at our university. As we worked with other faculty and administrators to implement a promotion policy for part-time faculty, we learned yet again that every effort to improve the working conditions of contingent faculty ultimately highlights the ways those faculty positions remain inadequately supported and out of alignment with the conditions of tenure-

line faculty. This case study may encourage and guide faculty at other institutions to develop a comparable process allowing contingent faculty an opportunity for professional advancement. It will also remind us all that systemic inequity cannot be papered over and must be addressed by systemic change, not temporary amelioration.

Institutional Context

At our institution, Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI), a large urban university in the Midwest with some PhD programs, especially in professional schools (such as medicine, law, engineering, nursing, etc.), each school has considerable autonomy through what is known as Responsibility-Centered Management (RCM). Variations in salaries, working loads, and budgeting are the norm, and are especially striking when it comes to part-time faculty working conditions. In some schools, part-time faculty are paid well and receive increases over time; in other schools on the same campus, including the School of Liberal Arts (SLA), where the writing program is located within the English department, part-time faculty salaries remain low, increases are infrequently given, and when given are applied equally to all part-time faculty currently employed, with no recognition of years of service or professional excellence. By

Every effort to improve the working conditions of contingent faculty ultimately highlights the ways those faculty positions remain inadequately supported and out of alignment with the conditions of tenure-line faculty.

comparison, full-time non-tenure-track faculty are eligible to apply for promotion to senior lecturer, a process involving dossier preparation, external (to the department) review letters, and review by department and school committees.

In an attempt to improve the status of part-time faculty across campus, two campuswide programs have been initiated. One is an office for part-time faculty affairs, most recently located in the Center for Teaching and Learning; this office typically focuses on faculty development, offering workshops and resources. Because of RCM, this office in its various incarnations has never advocated for specific salary policies or working conditions. Several years ago, however, the provost (called Executive Vice-Chancellor, EVC) asked his associate vice-chancellor to establish a second initiative, a committee on part-time faculty matters. This committee has included full-time administrators (such as associate deans) and faculty who work with part-time faculty, as well as part-time faculty representatives. Out of this committee

came a recommendation to the schools that they establish a promotion policy and process for part-time faculty.

The School of Liberal Arts was the first school to act on this recommendation. The school faculty assembly approved the promotion policy in April 2014, to take effect in August 2015. The first applications were due early in 2016, with promotions to be awarded that spring to take effect the following fall. Two factors were important in this school being the first to adopt such a promotion policy. One is that the SLA associate dean for faculty affairs was formerly chair of the English department; before that, he was director of the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) program. In those roles he worked with many part-time faculty and with Steve, who is director of the writing program, which consistently employs at least twenty-five part-time instructors (and in the past many more). A second factor is the existence of the Associate Faculty Coalition (“associate faculty” is the campus term for part-time faculty) that was founded in SLA and continues to have its strongest leadership and membership from that school. The Associate Faculty Coalition is not a union or a “sanctioned” campus organization, but somewhere in between. Its purpose is to organize associate faculty so that they can gather information on their working conditions, represent their colleagues to campus administration, and mobilize associate faculty to act on their own behalf. The coalition has organized teach-ins, met with administrators and faculty committees, and even produced a video; however, it has struggled to get enough active involvement by the faculty it represents (see Donhardt and Layden). Still, the associate dean consulted with Mick, the president of the coalition, on the new policy.

Developing the Promotion Process

During the drafting process for the promotion guidelines, the associate dean asked part-time faculty to give feedback. The guideline draft went through at least two different rounds of changes as part-time and full-time faculty met with the associate dean and worked together to share ideas about what was best for the promotion process. The associate dean’s intent—and perhaps the intent of the campus recommendation, was to make the part-time faculty promotion process comparable to that for full-time faculty, without making it onerous and intimidating. After all, the stakes in such a promotion are not nearly as high as those for full-time faculty. Being promoted to senior associate faculty does not offer anything like tenure or even a contract, and the salary raise is modest. Departments and programs are urged to give senior associate faculty first consideration in course assignments. During one of the meetings with the associate dean, Mick asked in an open exchange why the part-timers should commit to the application process for promotion, keeping

in mind the benefits mentioned here. Together some very important aspects of the promotion were discussed, the first being the modest raise of 10 percent. Many part-timers in SLA, including many from the writing program, while acknowledging that a raise is a raise, saw such a modest increase as a form of patronizing by the administration; they argue that such a modest increase does not begin to represent the value of their experience and their teaching excellence. Some wondered why they should have to go through an entire dossier process in order to get a raise they felt they deserved without having to apply at all. Both Mick and the associate dean knew this was a legitimate concern. Ultimately, Mick decided that getting any raise would be better than no raise. Being promoted to senior associate faculty does come with modest benefits, and the hope is that once part-timers have proven teaching excellence, more money may come. So what is important here is that, if part-time faculty successfully apply for and receive promotion, this would constitute documented proof by the university's own standards that these instructors teach with a noteworthy degree of excellence. The outcome of this promotion process could become strong validation for pursuit of more money and better working conditions in the future.

Another benefit to promotion is that senior associate faculty are considered for course sections first over associate faculty. Especially during lean years, as the number of sections available to part-timers decreases, this benefit may become important. Also, part-time faculty who apply for full-time teaching positions will be better positioned for those applications, having prepared a dossier for the promotion and having a promotion to put on their CV. Overall, putting together a dossier for promotion can provide a sense of accomplishment at the very least, but more importantly, prepares one for future opportunities.

What few concerns Mick had about clarity in the guidelines were directed to the associate dean, who then came up with a revised draft that was both clear and concise. After the promotion guidelines were distributed to SLA departments, these departments and programs then decided on more detailed expectations for proving excellence in teaching. The English department expectations focused on two criteria: "excellence in classroom or other assigned teaching" and "excellence in one or more areas of impact on teaching beyond the classroom." The areas of impact beyond the classroom included dissemination of scholarship of teaching and learning, campus and community connections, and professional development. The dossier consisted of a candidate statement, a teaching philosophy, a CV, and an optional appendix with supporting documentation. The review committee, appointed by the department chair, included three full-time lecturers, with plans to add a senior associate faculty member starting the second year.

Implementation

Within the English department, Steve and the chair jointly planned and provided workshops to help applicants learn the appropriate style and language for the statements asked for in the dossier. These workshops proved very useful to many of the part-time faculty, making the application process anything but onerous and intimidating. A large number of these part-time instructors throughout SLA had been teaching with excellence for many years and had ample evidence ready to present to the promotion committees in their dossiers. However, part-time faculty from certain departments reported to Mick that they did not receive professional development in the form of workshops nor did they receive encouragement to apply. In some cases, part-time faculty were not even made aware of the promotion opportunity by their chair. No doubt much depends on the voice that part-time faculty have in a particular department or program and the presence of labor-minded advocates among department and program leadership. A total of twenty-two associate faculty were promoted in this first year of the program: nine in English, nine in communication studies, and one each in history, journalism, sociology, and world languages and cultures.

The first time around, the promotion process for part-time faculty was seen by most participants as largely successful. However, the contingent nature of these part-time positions remains, regardless of promotion status, especially in the current situation, where the School of Liberal Arts is in a severe budget crisis, facing a fourth year with a deficit budget. The only meaningful budget savings come from faculty (and staff) salaries and benefits. In an attempt to avoid layoffs and program elimination, the dean suspended raises (except those for promotions) and travel money. He also asked tenured faculty to teach one additional course over a two-year cycle, asking that the extra course be one that normally enrolls enough students to run and is taught by a part-time faculty member. This budget crisis has highlighted the value of the promotion, in that senior associate faculty are given priority in staffing, but also has emphasized the contingent status of all associate faculty, senior or not. First consideration for courses, one benefit from the promotion mentioned above, refers only to faculty on the same tier. Having tenured faculty take on sections usually given to part-time instructors means this benefit for senior associate faculty could be worth less in upcoming semesters because fewer sections would be offered to non-tenure-track faculty. Thus, part-time faculty, including those promoted to senior associate faculty, might not receive enough sections to meet their own personal financial expectations, especially those who are dependent upon the maximum number of teaching credits (nine for part-timers) to

make enough money to get them through each semester. In the writing program, at least, all senior associate faculty were given priority consideration and received the number of sections they requested in fall 2016 and spring and fall 2017.

As part of this budget crisis, the campus administration has taken on oversight of SLA budgetary decisions (as they have done with other schools in budget crises). Thus, the dean was caught in a difficult bind when it came to implementing the new associate faculty promotion process. Part-time faculty had been invited to submit promotion dossiers early in the year (January–February), and departments were asked to submit recommendations for these applicants to the dean's office by the end of March. Around this time, the school was being asked to submit all fiscal decisions for campus review. Several people (including Steve and the English department chair) presented an argument to the dean that these raises were comparable to the promotion raises given to full-time faculty and should be granted. April, May, and June went by with no word on what would be done. After several months, the dean finally received approval to grant these promotions and raises, and emails went out to the promoted faculty. However, in the 2016–17 academic year, the promotion process for part-time faculty was suspended due to the budgetary crisis.

The associate faculty coalition president did urge many part-time faculty to apply for promotion. However, a number of part-time faculty either did not know of the promotion or, because of their circumstances, could not or decided not to apply, with the anticipation of applying in spring 2017. Because the number of semesters of experience needed to qualify for the promotion is eighteen credits and at least four semesters at IUPUI, those who could not apply by the first year's deadline might have become eligible at the end of fall semester 2017. Now that these promotions have been put on hold until the budget crisis subsides, none of those faculty members will receive the opportunity seized by twenty-two instructors in the first year of the process.

Lessons Learned and Implications for the Future

Some might argue that this promotion process, while mimicking that of full-time faculty, provides only a pale imitation of full-time faculty processes and status. Imagine that a university suspended all opportunity for tenure-line faculty to apply for tenure or promotion during a budget crisis, or that after promotions were granted, they were suspended. These are the realities that contingent and part-time contingent faculty face, especially at institutions that have no union contracts. Michael Bérubé and Jennifer Ruth argue for the creation of tenure-track teaching-intensive faculty lines, insisting that without the professionalism and academic

freedom provided by tenure, contingent faculty lines remain precarious and erode faculty status and the health of universities. They acknowledge that improved working conditions for contingent faculty are worth fighting for, yet insist that tenure-line faculty must also look to the long term and work for tenure for all faculty. We

Working hard to improve conditions for ultimately untenable positions could be a distraction. We hope that seizing opportunities at hand does not keep us from supporting even more radical and much-needed changes.

agree with their recommendations, and admit that working hard to improve conditions for ultimately untenable positions could be a distraction. We hope that seizing opportunities at hand does not keep us from supporting even more radical and much-needed changes. Bérubé himself recently took some comfort in securing a review-and-promotion system for full-time non-tenure-track faculty at his university.

With that larger picture kept in mind, then, we argue that institutions should want all faculty to become more experienced teachers and experts in their subjects, and so universi-

ties would benefit from rewarding their part-time faculty, as they do their full-time faculty, by offering them an opportunity for promotion. Unfortunately, as proven above, even when a promotion process is successfully put into place, other factors can affect implementation. Thus it would be even better if part-time faculty were to become part of the same system that governs permanent faculty and have meaningful representation in faculty governance. The underfunding of higher education in this “age of austerity” often undermines our efforts to advance our discipline, enhance faculty working conditions, and improve student learning (Welch and Scott). As Tony Scott argues, “Tenured compositionists have a responsibility to our field, our students, and the contingent teachers who do most composition work. We should not use tenure as a secure platform for entrepreneurial profitmaking—our terms of work are sustained by others: none of us works in a vacuum” (216). Ultimately, a university’s commitment to contingent, especially part-time, faculty does not rise to the level needed for consistent expectations, equal treatment, or secure employment. A promotion process for part-time, adjunct faculty can be a good practice, but it needs to be accompanied by other systemic changes that lead toward better working conditions for all faculty.

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The University Center as Institutional Advocate: CSAL—The Center for the Study of Academic Labor

Sue Doe

Higher education needs locations where academics of all ranks can undertake the analysis of university labor practices while defending the value of colleges and universities, particularly in terms of their central mission of teaching. Brad Hammer called for such a systematic effort in the Fall 2010 *Forum* and labeled it “contingency studies” (A1). In the following, I argue that university centers and institutes offer promising locations for this important work, situating contingency studies as a legitimate subject of inquiry, scholarship, and artistry. It is into this space that our center at Colorado State University, the Center for the Study of Academic Labor (CSAL), has stepped with the hope of providing a scholarship home to those who interrogate labor practices in higher education.

CSAL

CSAL became a sanctioned university center in 2014. Its aim is to offer a scholarship home for research and artistry relating to two broad categories of inquiry: contingency studies and tenure studies. It offers a location for placing original research and artistry that addresses contingency in higher education and serves as a clearinghouse for efforts in shared governance, unionized efforts, professional association advocacy, legislative efforts, and government data collection so that scholars who study labor trends have access to the data they need. Practically speaking, CSAL is committed to the following:

- publishing reports
- developing citation sets and bibliographies
- constructing and maintaining databases on topics such as the New Faculty Majority’s Women and Contingency Project
- offering a photo-multimedia archive suitable for archiving and analysis
- reporting on site-specific, grassroots inquiry approaches that show promise for adaptation to new locations
- archiving/historicizing local research and advocacy/organizing efforts
- providing open access to best practices
- publishing a journal showcasing the work of engaged scholars in contingency studies—*Academic Labor: Research and Artistry*
- hosting conferences by, for, and of contingent faculty and those studying academic labor

CSAL is committed to making an important contribution to the discussion of academic labor by offering a space for traditional social science research and for creativity/artistry as complementary forms of inquiry. We also believe that a center such as ours legitimizes the critical study of university processes pertaining to labor, directing that which scholars do especially well, research and artistry, towards the examination of higher education itself. The objective of casting a critical eye onto university systems is constructive and undertaken to sustain and improve, not destroy, college and university systems and structures. Nonetheless, it must be said that while university systems have a long history of offering sociological, psychological, political, and economic research and insight on work done outside of higher education, too little attention has been paid to universities themselves. There has not been sufficient examination of faculty and other university employee groups in college and university systems who are too often seen as “operating costs” that need to be kept to a minimum. Such definitions provide a clear logic for the economies and flexibility associated with contingent hiring, but to be credible, higher education must open itself up to examination and critique. Such efforts form the focus for the scholarship we invite at the Center and our affiliated projects such as our journal, *Academic Labor: Research and Artistry*. We believe that in engaging this work we are taking on an undertheorized and underexamined metamessage that is currently going out to students as a result of the contingency experienced by the majority of their teachers: that even a graduate degree is inadequate protection against insecure employment, transient living circumstances, and poverty. Yet the cost of higher education continues to go up, and with it student debt. How are students to believe in the value of higher education if higher education’s economies are not interrogated?

Mission of CSAL: The Center for the Study of Academic Labor (CSAL) promotes research and scholarship on the transformation of academic labor in higher education, including but not limited to scholarship on contingency and tenure.

Why a Center?

Centers like ours are typically created to promote scholarship in teaching and/or research in ways that enhance and extend the functions of departments and colleges. They generally provide services that enhance the mission and stature of the institution, extending the reach of scholarship to larger audiences. Centers such as

ours do not offer courses/curriculum and do not maintain faculty lines. Therefore, they function somewhat outside of traditional university units. This situatedness gives a center a particular kind of freedom as well as the distinct advantages of being located within an institution. The work of a center can be theorized through an activity theory lens.

My CSAL colleagues and I have theorized elsewhere how activity system theory can be useful in explaining the work done in universities, especially by contingent faculty, within nested systems (Doe et al. 432). As that application of activity theory suggests, the work of contingent faculty is as varied as the work done by tenure-track faculty, despite so-called de-bundled faculty roles. We believe that it is also possible to apply activity theory to the kinds of work that can be accomplished on behalf of faculty, both those on the tenure track and those off it. This work can be undertaken by programs, departments, colleges, and even whole universities such as our own, which in 2013, by presidential edict, declared the objective of becoming the best place to work off the tenure track. The work can also be undertaken by interested external parties such as unions, professional associations, and advocacy groups. Indeed, in the discussion of academic labor, particularly as it pertains to contingent faculty, all of these units are play-

CSAL will archive materials from campuses that have addressed contingency and wish to historicize their work. Archived materials will be open source and available to those visiting the website. We invite your campus stories, histories, and materials. As we share resources, we build capacity and assist future generations of faculty.

ing a role in describing, improving, and interrogating the work of faculty and can be seen as part of a large activity system relating to academic labor.

Centers such as CSAL function both inside and outside institutional walls. They lie outside of traditional academic units, functioning separately. In the case of CSAL, the center functions within an activity system that interrogates academic labor. The independence of such a center allows it to engage in inside-outside efforts by standing somewhat outside of traditional units while also being within a university system and thus able to utilize local resources. When considered one of several nested activities in a university system, centers such as ours represent sites that interrogate faculty work and contribute to the faculty labor movement, connecting with other entities that take interest in similar questions and issues. By creating our center as an inquiry-based archival clearinghouse, we have positioned

CSAL in the national narrative. Not alone among university-situated efforts, we may nonetheless be unique in focus. The Delphi Project within the Pulias Center for the Study of Education at the University of Southern California, the National Center for the Study of Collective Bargaining in Higher Education and the Professions at Hunter College, and the Center for the Study of Higher Education at the University of Arizona all undertake similar work. Our niche, however, is to provide a scholarship home for those who make “contingency studies” their scholarly focus, which might include those doing research, publishing essays, developing databases and bibliographies, collecting data or analyzing existing data, and archiving initiatives and practices—all for the purpose of informing and advocating. As we see it, the work of research and artistry—or scholarship—in a center such as ours lies parallel to work done through other mechanisms such as shared governance, professional associations/organizations, legislative and policy initiatives, unions, and advocacy efforts.

CSAL offers concrete approaches for campus research efforts. For example, the 2009 and 2014 Survey of Non Tenure-Track Faculty at CSU is fully uploadable and exportable to your campus from the CSAL website.

Objectives

CSAL hopes to legitimize scholarship on the topic of contingency; to archive, sponsor, and publicize efforts to address contingency; and to engage faculty of all ranks in discussions of higher education’s increasing reliance upon and allegiance to strategies of contingent employment. To accomplish these goals, CSAL convenes partners and authors who

- historicize the trend of contingency in the academy and the way it affects people;
- disrupt business as usual in the academy to point out the human impacts and dimensions of employment policies;
- investigate issues of academic labor through research and artistry;
- publish ideas and approaches for addressing contingency issues;
- celebrate the work and workers of the academy;
- honor all types of work in the academy, especially that which has been marginalized.

Finally, CSAL does not imagine these categories of contribution as static or immutable. As an act of belief and advocacy for all members of the professoriate, CSAL welcomes the ideas and participation of all ranks and specializations. We invite you to join us in the important work of examining academic labor via the strategies and approaches you have been prepared to undertake through your disciplinary preparation; whether research or artistry, we welcome your contributions so that we might together address the academic labor issues that so challenge us today.

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