

# Part-Timer

PROMOTING PART-TIME FACULTY RIGHTS

Community College Council of the California Federation of Teachers  
American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO

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## Do you know what to do during a campus emergency?

Part-time faculty identify needs for further training and information

**HOW MUCH DO YOU** know about maintaining a safe and secure environment where you teach? If you don't know your campus' safety and security protocols and expectations of faculty in emergencies, do you know where to find them?

Soon after an isolated incident at Sacramento City College in September that left one person dead and another hospitalized, part-time Sociology instructor Angelo Williams began thinking about campus safety, what he needed to know, and how to support students in the wake of the event.

"Students wanted to talk," he reports. "We spent substantial class time over the next few weeks discussing the events in relation to sociology concepts. The student body president visited my class and listened to the students' concerns, which was great. Some students even



Beth Verhage loves teaching ESL at American River College and wants to learn more about promoting student and staff well-being on campus.

got involved in initiatives to increase safety on campus."

While a relative rarity on col-

lege campuses, widely reported violence at Sacramento City College, UC Merced, and

Umqua College in Oregon has made part-time faculty think more about how to prepare for a range of possible emergencies at work.

Beth Verhage, part-time ESL instructor at American River College, feels anxious about what to do in the event of a medical emergency in class. Following the recent arrest of a student overheard making threats toward the campus that were deemed "credible," Verhage began wondering how prepared she is for emergencies. "There is a list of emergency protocols in all my classrooms, which I appreciate. But I'd love to have more direct training in what I need to do in a range of possible scenarios."

Many part-timers are unable to attend safety and emergency preparedness trainings offered on their campuses due to the

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## One conversation at a time

# Part-time faculty join the union in record numbers

**AS A CFT VICE PRESIDENT** and representative of part-time faculty in my district, I'm pleased by the efforts made by my local union and the CFT to strengthen member engagement and outreach. The CFT "Building Our Power" campaign is helping locals do a better job of

not only sharing information with bargaining unit members but seeking their input.

A priority at the community colleges is connecting more



**By Linda Sneed**

fully with part-time faculty. In my four-campus district, we're starting to accomplish what we've been dreaming and talking about for years but not always doing: making contact with all part-time faculty

— union members and non-members alike — to hear their concerns and ideas.

We want to know: How do you feel about your work? Are you adequately supported departmentally and institutionally? Are you connected to your colleagues? Are you getting the training you need? Do you feel included? Do you feel respected?

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# BUILDING OUR POWER

**PLAN AHEAD**

# Will you be eligible for unemployment this summer?

**AT THE END** of each semester or academic term, full-time faculty go on break, while adjunct faculty become unemployed or underemployed — still working and making less than \$600 per week — until the next semester or term starts.

During these periods, you may be eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits of up to \$450 a week, for up to 26 weeks per year in California.

Remember that unemployment benefits are a type of insurance — just like automobile, homeowners, renters or health insurance. California’s Employment Development Department, created in 1935, collects taxes from employers. When you become unemployed or underemployed in California, you have a right to collect on that insurance.

Even if you have an offer letter for the next semester, part-time faculty in California, as “temporary” employees according to state Education Code, do not have “reasonable assurance” of continued employment. This



is because rehiring of part-time faculty is contingent on funding, class enrollment, and the potential for displacement or “bumping” by permanent faculty or other part-time faculty in districts with contract language affording some part-time faculty the “right of first refusal” when classes are offered.

The easiest way to apply for unemployment benefits is online. Claims should be completed by Saturday of the week that you become unemployed or underemployed. Do not delay submitting your claim (or re-opening it if you have already filed within the previous year). There is a one-week unpaid waiting period, but only the first time you apply within the 52-week claim period.

When you apply, remember to identify the last day you worked as the last day of the college’s finals schedule during regular academic terms, since this is the date the EDD will

likely recognize as the end of your employment. Also, be sure to answer “No” to any questions asking if you have offers or assurances of future employment by your former employer.

If you apply for unemployment insurance benefits and encounter problems with your claim, cite the Cervisi decision of 1989, which affirmed Cali-

fornia part-time community college faculty as eligible for unemployment at ends of academic semesters and terms.

If your claim is still not approved, contact your local union representatives as soon as possible and ask for their help in filing a timely appeal.

> Apply for unemployment benefits at [edd.ca.gov](http://edd.ca.gov).

## A landmark victory: *Cervisi v. California Unemployment Insurance Appeals Board*

In 1989, CFT mounted a legal challenge to the California Unemployment Insurance Appeals Board and won. After part-time French instructor Gisele Cervisi and other part-timers at City College of San Francisco were denied unemployment benefits at the end of an academic term, the so-called “Cervisi ruling” held that temporary (i.e., part-time) faculty are eligible for unemployment benefits between academic terms because they do not have “reasonable assurance of reemployment” given that future assignments are contingent upon enrollment, funding, or “bumping” by other faculty members.

Currently, only California and Washington have legal precedents guaranteeing part-time faculty access to unemployment benefits between academic terms. But the AFT, working with advocacy groups that support contingent faculty rights, has urged the U.S. Department of Labor to recognize all the nation’s part-time and other contingent faculty as eligible for unemployment in their respective states.

> Add your name to the AFT’s online petition to the Department of Labor at [goo.gl/40Ad4Q](http://goo.gl/40Ad4Q).

## Show your support for the Adjunct Faculty Loan Fairness Act

**SEN. RICHARD DURBIN** (D-Illinois), with co-sponsor Al Franken (D-Minnesota), renewed last year’s attempt to make part-time faculty eligible to participate in the William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan forgiveness program, also known as the Federal

Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program.

To qualify, part-time faculty would need to teach at least one course at an institution of higher education, a postsecondary vocational institution, or a tribal college or university, and not have a

separate full-time job. While retaining this status, they would need to make 120 on-time monthly payments on federal direct loans as public service employees to qualify for loan forgiveness.

The bill (S.1556) was introduced in June 2015,

read twice, and assigned to the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee.

> Express your support for this bill by contacting your representative in Congress and by signing AFT’s online petition at [goo.gl/gAvc54](http://goo.gl/gAvc54).





## Campus Equity Week

# Faculty engage communities, publicize plight

**CAMPUS EQUITY WEEK** draws attention to inequities among faculty in higher education and calls for economic justice, job security, and institutional support for contingent and part-time faculty. Originally organized by the Coalition of Contingent Academic Labor, these October events aim to bring greater awareness to the precarious situation for contingent faculty in higher education, organize for action, and build solidarity.

Following are highlights of actions held during Campus Equity Week 2015 at colleges with AFT locals representing part-time faculty.

**Citrus College** offered informative literature to the campus community, including “Who Is Professor ‘Staff?’ and How Can This Person Teach So Many Classes?” to raise awareness about the de-professionalization of faculty and the resulting injustices experienced by contingent faculty and students. They also shared information about Sen. Durbin’s bill

to relieve contingent faculty’s student loan debt burdens.

**Laney College** hosted filmmaker Brad Retelle and screened his new film *Freeway Fliers*. The chancellor of the Peralta district as well as a trustee, students, part-time and full-time faculty, and Peralta Federation of Teachers representatives attended and participated in a lively discussion of issues of equity raised in the film.



Seth Slater, who teaches English at Cuyamaca College, speaks at a campus rally.

**San Diego City College** faculty held a rally and urged campus community members to send letters

to Gov. Brown in support of equal pay for part-time faculty, generating nearly 10,000 letters that were delivered to the governor’s office. Faculty members Jim Miller and Ian Duckles co-authored “Inequality for All in America’s Higher Education System,” published in the *San Diego Free Press*. (Read it at [goo.gl/kuXS9S](http://goo.gl/kuXS9S).)

**City College of San Francisco** held a teach-in for students about the faculty contract fight and students’ rights, attended by more than 200 people. Presenters explored the connections between faculty working conditions and student learning conditions.

➤ For more information and to plan for next year, go to [campusequityweek.org](http://campusequityweek.org).

**Grossmont and Cuyamaca Colleges** in San Diego County held rallies with speeches by part-timers, full-timers, students, and administrators about the work done by adjunct faculty and the ways they are exploited. Faculty tabled and talked with campus members about how to end this exploitation.

**Mesa College** in San Diego staged creative installations dramatizing part-time faculty working conditions and hosted a series of events including panel discussions, testimonials about life as a part-timer, and film screenings, including *Con Job: Stories of Adjunct and Contingent Faculty*. (Watch it online at [goo.gl/t7eDpc](http://goo.gl/t7eDpc).)



Filmmaker Brad Retelle, center, with Peralta chancellor Jowel Laguerre and union president Ed Jaramillo, right.

## GetConnected



**Freeway Fliers** is a film by former California part-time instructor Brad Retelle about “higher education’s best kept secret” documenting the growth of part-time (adjunct, contingent, associate, non-tenure track) faculty in America’s colleges and universities. It offers extensive commentary on successful organizing and activism, including National Adjunct Walkout Day. View the new film free online at [freewayfliers.com](http://freewayfliers.com).

**Professors in Poverty**, produced by Brave New Films, documents contingent faculty nationwide living in poverty. Find out more about wage and salary trends among part-time faculty and higher education administrators, watch a preview, and discover how to host a screening of this film at [bravenewfilms.org/professorsinpoverty](http://bravenewfilms.org/professorsinpoverty).

**Equality for Contingents:** Read the *CounterPunch* article by Keith Hoeller, editor of the 2014 book *Equality for Contingent Faculty*, and his call to end this two-tier system in higher education at [goo.gl/xJ35nK](http://goo.gl/xJ35nK).

**COCAL 2016 in Canada:** Join fellow contingent faculty from Canada, the United States, and Mexico to share information and strategies to improve the working lives of part-time and other precariously employed teachers in higher education at the 2016 Coalition of Contingent Academic Labor conference at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Canada. For more information, go to [cocalinternational.org](http://cocalinternational.org).

# Part-time faculty join union in record numbers

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How can we organize to make the good work of teaching in community colleges a truly good job?

Part-timers have shared their experiences, offered valuable suggestions, learned more about their contracts, and gotten to know their union representatives in my district and many others. They've discovered opportunities to be more involved with the union, making their voices heard not only during contract negotiations, but all the time. Some have become campus union stewards; oth-

**Linda Sneed** teaches English part-time at Cosumnes River College in Sacramento and is an executive board member of the Los Rios College Federation of Teachers, AFT Local 2279.



Los Angeles organizer Herlim Li helps part-time English teacher Jennifer Smith join the union.

BOB RIMA, JR.

ers have discovered they aren't union members and want to change that.

This isn't quick or easy work. But I am proud of CFT, my local union, and many others who are committed to connecting union representatives to part-time fac-

ulty. We are taking more time to have one-on-one conversations with colleagues about their working lives and their ideas for positive change. We're not just talking but listening. And we're creating new mechanisms to act on what we hear, for the good of us all.

# More training on campus safety needed

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nature of part-time faculty schedules. The "just-in-time professor" can easily be frustrated by the gap between a desire for training and real-world scheduling conflicts.

Williams wonders whether technology can be leveraged to make essential information available in new ways: "Could we make videos — short videos on safety, emergency preparedness, and protocols for handling various classroom issues — available to faculty? Could workshops and trainings be filmed to offer some of the important material presented to those of us unable to attend live events?"

Williams recently found himself needing to intervene when one of his students appeared to be sexually harassing another student. "I was glad that I had attended a workshop alerting me to whom I should contact to help me resolve this problem," he reflects. "I knew I shouldn't try to handle this situation by myself, and those I contacted resolved the situation swiftly and sensitively. But I'm not sure I know how to respond in all situations that may pose danger to students."

Indeed, *Inside Higher Education* recently reported a study by the New Faculty Major-

ity finding that many contingent faculty are unsure how to respond properly in a variety of situations involving student and staff safety and well-being.

Williams encourages part-time faculty to ask themselves what they do and don't know about responding appropriately to these circumstances and to reach out to colleagues, union representatives, and administrators: "If you don't know how to act in a particular situation, ask. And if you'd like more training opportunities and materials, ask for that, too."

## SNAPSHOT: The AFT is the place to be!

**372** part-time faculty joined AFT Local 6185 at Allan Hancock College since fall 2013.

**600+** part-time faculty have joined AFT Local 1521 in the Los Angeles Colleges in the past year.

**48** part-time faculty joined AFT Local 6262 at the College of the Canyons in just six weeks.

**>Sign up** to become a member of the union. Contact your AFT local union now or download a membership form at [cft.org/get-involved/join-cft](http://cft.org/get-involved/join-cft).

California Federation of Teachers  
AFT, AFL-CIO  
A Union of Professionals

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