



HISTORIC VICTORY

New law brings reemployment rights for part-time faculty

Governor signs CFT-sponsored bills calling for districts to negotiate with unions

COMMUNITY COLLEGE

districts will be compelled to negotiate what CFT-sponsored legislation calls “reemployment preference for part-time, temporary faculty.” The landmark provisions require districts to negotiate with the union in order to receive significant funding available from the state Student Success and Support Program.

Gov. Jerry Brown signed the two bills on September 30: **AB 1690**, carried by former part-time instructor Jose Medina, D-Riverside, and **SB 1379**, by former teacher Tony Mendoza, D-Artesia.

What is “reemployment preference”?

Because part-time faculty in the California community colleges are defined in the state Education Code as “temporary,” they are not guaranteed any form of reemployment at the end of each academic term’s teaching assignment. However, many part-time faculty are in practice “reemployed” by col-

Minimum standards for reemployment preference

- Length of time taught at the college or district
- Number of courses taught there
- Professional evaluations
- “Availability, willingness, and expertise” to teach specific classes or accept specific assignments



leges and districts where they have previously taught, frequently teaching two or more academic terms per year over many years.

Reemployment preference refers to rights earned by part-time faculty to be reemployed or offered an assignment by a college or district before other part-time faculty who have not yet earned those rights. Such rights are sometimes called

“rehire rights” or “the right of first refusal.”

How will this law help part-time faculty?

Part-time faculty without any locally bargained “reemployment rights” have no ability to predict their future employment at institutions they may have taught at for decades and are effectively “at will” employees. Some but far from all Cali-

fornia community colleges have established, through collective bargaining, some form of reemployment rights for part-time faculty. These range from a straight seniority list, with individual faculty ranked and then rehired according to length of service, to “pools” or levels of reemployment preference in which all members have achieved some minimum length of service. In this latter scenario, all members of a given pool or level have equal reemployment rights.

This law will require districts seeking state Student Success and Support Program funds to establish “minimum standards” for reemployment rights that include: length of time taught at the college or district; number of courses taught there; professional evaluations; and “availability, willingness, and expertise” of individuals to teach specific classes or accept specific assignments.

(Continued on back page)

Union helps win family leave, more office hour funding

Family leave for all community college instructors

The governor also signed into law **AB 2393** (Campos, D-San Jose), which provides full- and part-time faculty with up to 12 weeks of paid parental leave for both new mothers and fathers. When a qualified employee has exhausted available sick leave

and wants to use parental leave, he or she would receive “differential pay,” which is calculated by reducing the employee’s salary by the amount paid to a substitute. For districts with no differential pay policy, qualified employees will receive half of their normal salary. The new law also applies to classified employ-

ees (community college and K-12); teachers in K-12 schools won this benefit last year.

Increased reimbursement for part-time faculty office hours

The CFT secured millions of dollars in this summer’s state budget appropriations. As a result, the community colleges will receive an addi-

tional \$3.6 million mandated to fund office hours for part-time faculty, bringing the total allocation to nearly \$7.2 million in 2016-17. The state will reimburse districts up to half the expenditure. Gov. Brown signed the budget bill, contained in **SB 828** and associated trailer bills, on June 26.

Campus Equity Week can build adjunct-student solidarity



AP PHOTO/STEVIE HELBER

CAMPUS EQUITY NOW!

MOST PART-TIME instructors are aware of how damaging adjunct working conditions can be to our lives economically, physically, emotionally, and psychologically. You may also be aware of how these working conditions can hurt students, the institutions, and tenure-track, full-time employees as well.

But how aware are students? At the beginning of every term, I ask my classes how many of them know what an “adjunct” (what I choose to call myself) is. Many such instructors may think that raising such a question with students constitutes unprofessional “whining.” But these adjuncts internalize their exploitation and put on a brave face to make

their teaching appear seamless in quality compared with full-time instructors.

It’s as if students shouldn’t know that, unlike full-time instructors, most of us have other jobs to go to, which significantly limits student access to us; we may teach more classes than full-timers out of necessity, meaning we need more time to return graded work and we may appear harried when we come to class. If we teach in multiple districts, we may not be fully aware of institutional resources for students.

I propose that it is part of our job to inform students of these realities. We should make it clear that we will do our best to provide all stu-

dents with quality instruction, but that colleges create barriers for students and for us by maintaining inequities between part-time and full-time faculty working conditions, compensa-

By Geoff Johnson

tion, and institutional support. Will students empathize? They will if we empathize with them, and Campus Equity Week is a perfect opportunity to achieve this by educating students about our working conditions and learning about theirs.

Few students have a stable, full-time job, and many work at jobs that will never offer them full-time or stable employment. In order to avoid having to provide insurance for their employees, or in some cases, to simply keep them “hun-

gry for hours,” businesses will purposefully underemploy students who find it difficult to cover basic needs. Further,



these jobs usually lack any kind of security.

What part-time faculty share with so many students is labor contingency, a growing trend that destabilizes all of our lives.

We need to help our students see our situations, and we need to see theirs. To make any real progress, we should understand this as a moral, social, and, yes, a professional obligation.

— Geoff Johnson is an English and humanities instructor at San Diego’s Mesa College and member of AFT Guild, Local 1931

TAKE ACTION

Find the union’s valuable CEW toolkit online

The **CFT Part-Time Committee** has compiled a toolkit for Campus Equity Week as part of coordinated efforts to raise awareness about the unstable, contingent working conditions of the majority of higher education instructors. National Campus Equity Week occurs in odd-numbered years during the last full week of October, but many campuses stage CEW events every year: hosting films, staffing information tables, performing public theatre, and moderating discussion groups. Visit the committee’s toolkit for downloadable materials to kickstart your Campus Equity Week events at cft.org/campusequityweek.

PROPOSITION 55: Tax the wealthy, fund education

FOUR YEARS AGO, California voters responded to the decimation of public services following the 2008 financial crisis by passing Proposition 30. Since 2012, funds generated by Prop 30, through a temporary increase in income tax on high earners and a small sales

tax increase, have accounted for an average of 15 percent of community college district budgets. Prop 30 helped stu-



dents and workers throughout our state, particularly the most financially vulnerable, by restoring lost state funding for essential programs.

On November 8, we must pass Proposition 55, a more progressive tax measure that extends the increased income

tax on high earners. If you care about public education and want to maintain the high-quality classes and services we offer California residents through our community colleges, vote **YES on Prop 55**.

> Find materials in our online toolkit at cft.org/yeson55.



Organizing connects part-timers to their unions

PART-TIME faculty continue to get connected to their unions through the CFT Building Power program. Building Power provides funding, training, and support for local member-organizers to reach out specifically to part-time instructors, engaging in small-group and one-on-one conversations to learn more about what matters most to them.

On its two campuses, Canyon Country and Valencia,

Part-Time Faculty United at College of the Canyons has reached out to instructors in record numbers. Since last spring, membership in the part-time-faculty-only union has jumped from 38 percent to 75 percent, and participation in union events including unemployment benefit workshops has increased dramatically. The local recently

negotiated paid office hours and more dedicated space on campus to hold them.

At all four Fresno-area colleges represented by the **State Center Federation of Teachers**, dozens of member organizers held one-on-one conversations with part-time instructors. More than 100 part-timers joined the union, and nearly twice as many signed a petition urging the district to negotiate paid office hours for adjuncts.



BUILDING OUR POWER



• **Experience** “heartbreaking stories from the academic underclass,” including some of our own CFT members who teach at community colleges and universities in article published by *Salon* at goo.gl/PRBLdk.

• **Read** about racial and economic inequality among students and faculty in higher education from the Faculty Forward Network online at goo.gl/wkgsse.

• **Listen** to a discussion at the University of Alaska of adjunct faculty locally and nationwide at goo.gl/tzbtwj.

• **COCAL XII:** The 12th biennial conference of the Coalition of Contingent Academic Labor was held in Alberta, Canada, in August. Attendees from Mexico, the United States, and Canada shared their struggles and victories, strategizing future gains for contingent academic workers in higher education. Learn more at cocalinternational.org.

New study explores sociology adjunct working conditions

AS THE ONLY part-time faculty member of an American Sociological Association task-force assembled to investigate the teaching of sociology within community colleges, **Peralta Federation of Teachers** member and Laney College instructor Cynthia Mahabir co-authored a scholarly study of data collected from part-time sociology instructors in the

nation’s community colleges.

Titled “Sociology Faculty Members Employed Part-Time in Community Colleges: Structural Disadvantage, Cultural Devaluation, and Faculty-Student Relationships” and published in the journal *Teaching Sociology*, the article documents differences in working conditions between full-time and part-time instructors, ulti-

mately arguing for greater support by full-time faculty and administrators for their part-time colleagues — the majority of Sociology instructors in the nation — in the interest of student learning.

> Read the study abstract at goo.gl/z8T1xe and find the entire article through academic databases (DOI:10.1177/0092055X16654744).

LocalAction | Seniority lists for reemployment, paid participation in governance

■ After years of struggle and months of member-power building, the **Cerritos College Faculty Federation** convinced the local board of trustees on September 21 to approve the collective bargaining agreement its mem-

bers had recently ratified, 283 to 2. The new contract provisions benefiting part-time faculty include seniority lists for reemployment, paid office hours, and increased hourly compensation with an additional 2.5 percent

increase effective July 2017.

■ **Cabrillo College Federation of Teachers** negotiated a continuation of their 2014 pilot program to pay part-time faculty for involvement in select participatory governance committees, or

“ancillary activities.” A recent survey of Cabrillo faculty suggests that a majority of part-time instructors participate in ancillary activities for which they are not compensated.

Falling enrollment, cancelled classes, and part-time faculty

MANY OF US have been teaching in community college for 20 years or more, and we remember the days when the mission was education, not production. Classes might have 25 or 30 students, so we could have seminar-style discussions and individual project presentations, and even memorize the names of our students. We might assign lengthy papers and essays, and we had time to read each one, make comments, and allow students to rewrite them.

Past practice in some districts was to allow any class with 15 students enrolled on the first day of class to continue to meet. The purpose was to make sure that a wide variety of classes were available to students at different times to fit their complex schedules so that they could matriculate within two years. The goal was small



class sizes and individualized instruction. We believed that because of this, we served students better than huge lower-division university courses.

But more recently, districts have promoted “productivity,” meaning more students in each class. In this worldview, our students are products before they are human beings, and profes-

sors are assembly line workers cranking out “student success.”

To assure that each class is “productive,” administrators are cutting “unproductive” classes. Some have told faculty that the magic number is 20 students. Others have cut classes with more than 20. Supposedly, students will move into the remaining classes, bringing them up to 40, 50, or 60 units of production. Classes have been cancelled weeks before enroll-

ment ends, giving faculty no chance to recruit students, who find their schedules upended and must try to cobble something together at the last minute, with the expected result of an extended stay at the community college. Part-time faculty members teaching for decades have lost their classes and their health insurance, even while districts have returned to financial health.

— By Renee Fraser, history instructor at Moorpark College and member of Ventura County Federation of College Teachers, AFT Local 1828

What can you do?

JOIN AND SPEAK UP Join the union so you can vote on contract changes that benefit part-time faculty. Find out how your union is addressing enrollment management and inequities in class scheduling and cancellation, and join their efforts.

TAKE ACTION Offer to help organize fellow part-timers in discussions and campus actions. Participate in Campus Equity Week.

SERVE Learn how you can become part of your union team through appointment or election. Serve as an officer, a steward, or an organizer.

New law brings reemployment rights

(Continued from page 1)

Will this affect my job? If so, when?

The law stipulates that in order to receive SSSP funds, any district *without* a collective bargaining agreement for part-time instructors in effect as of January 1 must begin good faith bargaining by July 1 with those instructors’ exclusive representative to establish a system of reemployment rights. Any district *with* a collective bargaining agreement is required to establish such a system “as part of the usual and customary negotiations between the district and

the exclusive representative for part-time, temporary faculty.” Thus, negotiated changes will occur at varying times over the next several years.

What kind of reemployment can I count on in the future?

Because of the governor’s preference for local control of legislation implementation, we’re likely to see variations in the form reemployment rights take throughout the state. Changes where you work will depend on what local unions and districts are willing and able to negotiate on behalf of

part-time faculty.

How can I strengthen reemployment rights where I work?

Because this legislation requires local bargaining by the exclusive representative of part-time faculty, you should communicate directly with your union leaders. Join in discussions about this legislation, asking questions and adding your thoughts at union meetings and gatherings. Encourage your colleagues to do the same.

— By Linda Sneed, CFT Vice President and member of Los Rios College Federation of Teachers, AFT Local 2279

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A Union of Professionals

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