

# Part-Timer

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

Fall 2011 Volume 23, Number 1

PROMOTING PART-TIME FACULTY RIGHTS



## Occupy and Refund!

# Adjunct faculty issues at the heart of Occupy movement

### PART-TIME ACADEMIC

workers, who experience economic injustice on a daily basis, figure prominently in the CFT-endorsed Occupy Wall Street and Refund California movements as they call for better pay and working conditions, more robust funding for public services, and an end to the privilege enjoyed by corporations and wealthy individuals.

Larissa Dorman, part-time political science professor at San Diego City College, describes her activism as rooted in her experiences as an advisor to student clubs, an instructor, and a struggling worker.



GWYNND MAESTRE

Part-Time ESL instructor Nancy Mackowsky, left, from City College of San Francisco marched with Occupy Oakland to shut the port down on November 2. Below, lecturers at UC Santa Cruz joined the day of protest on campus.



COURTESY LOCAL 2199



JOHN GOVSKY

Sadie Reynolds, adjunct sociology instructor at Cabrillo College with her son, Rowan, at a Refund rally.

“I have not had any opportunities to even apply for a tenure-track job in the five years I have been teaching,” so despite her advanced degree and love of teaching, Dorman says, “I

ins, and organizing members to participate.

The report from Orange County is similar, according to Andrew Tonkovich, a lecturer

“In very real human terms these movements illustrate the solidarity between trade unionism and student activism to stop the fee increases and save the UC system for students and workers.

—Andrew Tonkovich, Lecturer, UC Irvine

don’t feel very confident about my future.”

Dorman is also vice president for political action of the AFT Guild, Local 1931, and proud that her local union is supporting the Occupy San Diego movement through financial contributions, holding teach-

ins in English at UC Irvine and president of Local 2226 who participates regularly in actions for social justice.

Tonkovich says the movements have invigorated students and faculty at UCI and brought people out who often don’t see each other. “In very

real human terms,” he explains, “these movements illustrate the solidarity between trade unionism and student activism to stop the fee increases and save the UC system for students and workers.”

In the heart of Occupy Oakland, Janell Hampton, part-time English instructor at Laney College and member of the Peralta Federation of Teachers, is motivated largely by concern for students. “Students live on Main Street,” she says, “where state budget cuts to the community colleges mean out-of-control lines at financial aid offices, no seats left in classes required for transfer, not

See **Occupy!** back page

Not only has Dorman advised various student groups on her campus, including one devoted to raising awareness about the impact of budget cuts on public education, but she is keenly aware of the ways that her own professional and personal life are affected by economic injustices.

## PROFILE | Joe Berry

# Berry says unite now with faculty at for-profit colleges

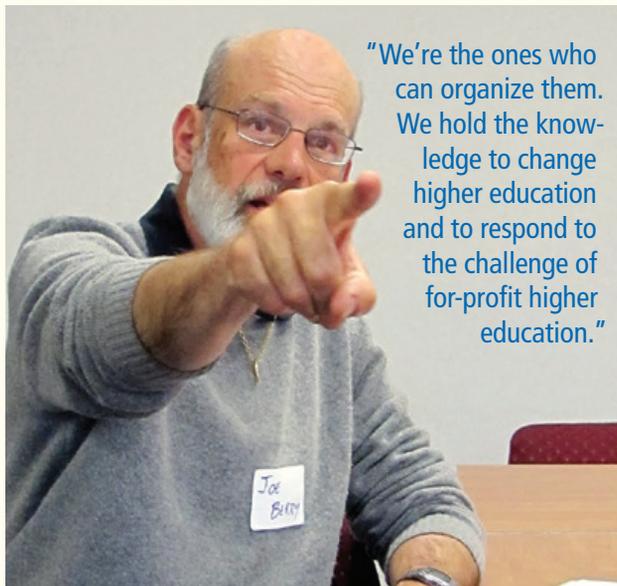
**MEET JOE BERRY.** If you don't know his work, you should.

Author of the book *Reclaiming the Ivory Tower: Organizing Adjuncts to Change Higher Education*, Berry has worked for decades in multiple states as both a part-time instructor and an organizer of part-time, contingent academic instructors. Recently retired from teaching Labor Studies, he continues to pour his time and energy into the struggle for the rights of the most vulnerable instructors in higher education.

"The issues of inequality, unemployment, and precarious employment," Berry explains, "all of which part-time faculty, by our existence, exemplify in higher education" are the very issues at the heart of the Occupy Wall Street and the 99 percent movement.

"This is a moment when the labor movement can be revitalized and redefine itself as once again representing the entire working class and not just the small percentage who are represented by unions."

Even among college faculty, Berry points out, only 25 percent



"We're the ones who can organize them. We hold the knowledge to change higher education and to respond to the challenge of for-profit higher education."

DAVID MILROY/CPFA

are organized — and only 20 percent of part-time faculty have the benefits of union membership. But he termed that representation "a great base to build upon" compared to most contingent workers.

Berry says now is the time to activate a much higher percentage of faculty members. "Who are these people?" he asks. "Our colleagues who teach contingently, without tenure or unions, in the world of for-profit higher education."

The number of instructors who teach at for-profit post-secondary education ranges from 100,000 to 200,000 — by some estimates up to a million. Many teach in public and private colleges and universities

too. "These are our people," Berry exudes. "We're the ones who can organize them. We hold the knowledge to change higher education and to respond to the challenge of for-profit higher education."

Berry believes for-profit higher education exists because of underfunding at public colleges. With the community colleges facing extreme budget and program cuts, "the for-profits stepped in with the promise of quick and convenient buying of a degree." The for-profits have become competition for the community colleges and other affordable public colleges and universities unable to fulfill their missions of providing students the high-quality vocational and liberal arts educations necessary for active citizenship.

"As long as that option exists," Berry urges, "we can't just respond by decrying it from the outside. We in public higher education can't have high standards while there's a tar pit of low standards for teaching, compensation, education, and financial ethics sitting right there in our same sector — any more than we can survive as a public sector labor movement while organized labor in the private sector languishes. The most valuable contribution we can make is to rebuild the private sector labor movement."

The casualization of academic labor, Berry says, is caused by the same forces that passed NAFTA and furthered corporate globalization. "The 1 percent on the global scale want to turn educational services into a tradable commodity and move public work for the common good into the private sector for individual gain."

Berry sees the international Coalition of Contingent Academic Labor (see left) and the New Faculty Majority as important organizing hubs. "It's much easier now to find commonalities around the world. If we can speak truthfully about these commonalities, we will have a tremendous strategic advantage," Berry concludes. "The existence of the Occupy movement and the potential power of the contingent faculty movement could help reconfigure the labor movement in very real ways. We need to get on the train."

## COCAL: Leading international battle for equity

**JOE BERRY'S** dedication to organizing contingent faculty extends to his participation in the Coalition of Contingent Academic Labor, an integrated network of North American activists that he refers to as "one of the most important achievements of contingent organizing since the mid-1990s."



COCAL is tri-national because Canada and Mexico are experiencing the same trends in higher education as the United States. The casualization of faculty and the inroads made by private for-profit corporations threaten labor and education standards in all three nations.

The coalition is one of the reasons, according to Berry, that the three national higher education unions — the AFT, the NEA, and AAUP — have developed long-term strategies regarding part-time and contingent labor. "COCAL personifies the reality of labor struggle," Berry explains. "It is agriculture, not plumbing. You don't just turn a faucet to get results...you have to nurture the seeds and the roots. We are the grassroots."

> The 10th meeting of the coalition, COCAL X Conference, will take place at UNAM, the National Autonomous University of Mexico in Mexico City, on August 10-12. The conference is open to all contingent academic workers. To learn more, go to [cocalinternational.org](http://cocalinternational.org).



# FreewayFlyers

## Coast rights injustice for part-timers working in non-instructional positions

**AFTER YEARS OF** patience and persistence, the Coast Federation of Educators secured compensation for two part-time non-instructional faculty members who were discovered to be working more hours than a full-timer — at a fraction of the pay.

When confronted with these violations, according to Local 1911 President Dean Mancina,

the district claimed this group of faculty was exempt from both the California Education Code and the local's collective bargaining agreement.

In one of the cases, the faculty member knew she was being treated unfairly but had reasonable expectation of a full-time job offer so chose to comply temporarily with the

inadequate compensation. To her dismay, she was offered a full-time job, but as a classified employee and at a significantly lower rate than she had been making as an adjunct. She declined the offer and now, years later, was finally awarded back pay, the cash equivalent of health benefits she should have been earning, and interest on the debt.

The combined settlement for the two faculty members totals more than \$20,000. "To see this through to the win has taken an inordinate amount of patience and time," Mancina said, "but this victory means all part-time faculty in non-instructional positions at Coast will be treated the same as full-time faculty in similar settings."

## Part-Timer welcomes Linda Sneed

**LINDA SNEED**, part-time English instructor at Cosumnes River College in Elk Grove, is the new assigning editor for *Part-Timer*.

"I have always been a passionate instructor," says Sneed, who began teaching college in 1993. "More recently, I have discovered how much work is necessary to defend affordable quality education and the rights of the working people who make this possible for students every day."

Sneed is one of four part-time faculty representatives on the executive board of the 2,000-member Los Rios College Federation of Teachers, is a member of the CFT Part-Time Committee, an elected representative for part-time faculty on the CFT Community College Council, and earlier this year, became one of two part-time faculty members of the 24-member CFT Executive Council.

"In all of these positions, I work to represent your interests as professionals dedicated to your students and deserving of the same rights and benefits afforded your full-time colleagues," Sneed concludes. "CFT will continue to inform and inspire part-time faculty to take action in every possible way to improve our working conditions."

## Los Angeles negotiates improved health benefits



**ADJUNCTS IN** Los Angeles who teach more than a 50 percent load per semester will have 100 percent of their vision coverage paid, thanks to a new contract negotiated by the Los Angeles College Faculty Guild.

For adjuncts teaching at or above a 33 percent load, Local

1521 also secured a commitment from the district to contribute 50 percent of the average premium cost (at the individual rate) in any one of three HMO or two PPO medical plans.

Adjuncts may also buy into two dental plans, but at their own cost.

## Santa Clarita adjuncts win 10 percent pay increase for doctorate

**NEGOTIATORS FOR** Part-Time Faculty United at the College of the Canyons won a 10 percent pay increase for adjuncts with a doctoral degree, a 2 percent overall increase on the salary schedule (retroactive to fall semester), additional funding for office hours, and more paid flex hours for adjuncts in departments that do not hold regular meetings or retreats.

Additionally, part-time faculty will now have the right to one-year class assignments, an improvement upon the current system of semester-to-semester class assignments in the Santa



Clarita district. Lastly, senior part-time faculty who have taught at the college 10 years or more will be evaluated every six semesters rather than ever four semesters.

Union members voted unanimously to ratify the contract, which represents important

advances for the 410 adjunct instructors in the district.

But according to Pete Virgadamo, president of Local 6262, much work remains to be done in the next round of negotiations. "The fact is that for all of our hard work, we are poorly compensated and have little in terms of benefits. Part-time faculty here are among the lowest paid in Southern California, and make as much as 25 percent less than adjuncts in neighboring districts."

Virgadamo said Local 6262 plans to continue the fight for better pay, access to health insurance, and improved job seniority.



# Three CFT-sponsored equity bills continued in 2012 legislative session

“two-year bills,” meaning their authors opted to take more time to craft details and gain broader support before taking them further in the Legislature.

Multiple factors make these bills controversial. Many legislators prefer to see working conditions determined and bargained locally, and not everyone involved in public higher education agrees on what is in the best of interest of colleges, faculty members, and students.

For example, limiting full-timer overload assignments to 50 percent of a full-time load, as **AB 383** would, is seen by

many full-time faculty as an assault on the “overtime” they are accustomed to taking and may think of as an entitlement. Offering minimal re-employment rights to part-time faculty, as **AB 852** would, is regarded by some administrators as hamstringing their ability to use part-time instructors as “units of flexibility.”

Even providing a salary schedule for part-time faculty that mirrors the full-time schedule so that retirement credit for adjuncts can be based on units taught to provide more accurate reporting, as

proposed in **SB 114**, has been challenged as too much of a fiscal drain on district resources.

Whatever the outcome of these bills, one benefit of their introduction and public discussion is that legislators have learned more about the conditions faced by part-time and other contingent faculty throughout the state. One thing is for sure: Educating elected representatives is essential if we expect to make legislative gains that can translate into real victories at the negotiating table.

**WHEN LOCALLY** bargained contract improvements seem impossible, statewide legislation becomes an attractive option. Over the past few years, CFT and other education unions and associations have sponsored bills to strengthen part-time faculty job security and improve working conditions. While the ultimate gains of this strategy could be tremendous, the process of passing bills can be extremely challenging.

Three CFT-sponsored bills introduced in 2011 embody this challenge. All three are currently

## CFT-sponsored legislation for part-timers

**SB 114** Creation of a mirrored salary schedule for part-time and full-time faculty

**AB 383** Limit full-time overload teaching

**AB 852** Re-employment rights for part-time faculty

## Occupy!

*Continued from page 1*

enough sections of those classes being offered, and tuition hikes.” Hampton celebrates the Occupy movement for “bringing concerns such as these to the forefront of so many people’s lives.”

Across the bay in San Francisco, Melissa McPeters teaches part-time in Transitional Studies at City College and at four other locations. Referring to the precarious situation faced by part-time faculty, McPeters says, “Each semester, we are threatened with cuts. It is only a matter of time before part-time instructors are filing for unemployment during the school year.”

McPeters sees the suffering

of faculty and students alike. “We part-timers struggle in our academic institutions and in our daily lives. We also represent our students who tell us of their hardships caused by funding cuts at the colleges. The funds do exist though — within corporations and the 1 percent of our population.”

In the Sacramento Valley, Folsom Lake College instructor Robert Laurent decries rising tuition and fees and says student loans, which leave students in debt for decades, do not adequately address the problem.

As a part-time teacher of astronomy and physics, Laurent manages to “cobble together the equivalent of a full-time job out of multiple part-time teaching positions,” but he believes that it

would be better for both his students and him if he could teach full-time. “One of the advantages is that they could find me in a regular office rather than scrounged desk space.”

Laurent applauds the movements for “pushing for the restoration of some of the higher tax rates on the very wealthy, which could begin restoring California’s educational system to the great system that it was.”

## On the Web

>To learn more about Refund California go to [makebankspay-california.com](http://makebankspay-california.com). Follow the Occupy movement in major California cities at [occupyoakland.org](http://occupyoakland.org), [occupysf.com](http://occupysf.com), and [occupysandiego.org](http://occupysandiego.org).



**Part-Timer** is published by the California Federation of Teachers, an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO. The CFT represents faculty and classified workers in public and private schools and colleges, from early childhood through higher education. The CFT is committed to raising the standards of the profession and to securing the conditions essential to provide the best service to California’s students.

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*Part-Timer* is printed by union workers at Eagle Press in Sacramento using soy-based inks on Forest Stewardship Council-certified paper containing 10 percent post-consumer waste.

