



FACT SHEET ON CONTINGENT FACULTY the new majority college teachers

- Contingent faculty are called by many different titles. Adjunct, visiting, part-time, hourly, temporary, graduate teaching assistant (TA) and lecturer are some of the most common names.
- What they all have in common is not having tenure, which is the traditional academic version of job security. Tenure means that in order to fire a teacher, the employer must prove just cause through a due process procedure that protects the teacher's rights. Contingent faculty, by definition, do not have this protection, UNLESS they have gained it through unionization and collective bargaining. They can be let go at any time or not rehired with no explanation required by the employer.
- Contingent faculty are not all the same: some are grad students finishing degrees, some are full-time professionals in various fields teaching on the side, some are working full-time on other, non-academic jobs while teaching part-time because they have not been able to get a permanent full-time teaching job, and many, many are piecing together various teaching &/or temporary or part-time jobs.
- All contingent faculty need and want equal respect for their work, equity in compensation, predictable employment and academic freedom. Few have these today.
- Most (over 50%) of the people teaching college classes today are contingent, no matter what they are called. They teach an especially high percentage of lower division undergraduate classes and non-credit adult education classes, but they are present in large numbers in all parts of higher education, public and private.
- Most contingent faculty work on a class by class, semester by semester basis. Most work part-time, sometimes in multiple jobs, but a growing number are on full-time temporary appointments for one year or less. They are often hired at the last minute or even after classes have begun. Therefore these faculty cannot effectively plan for their own future or for their students' classes.
- Most contingent faculty have little or no voice in department curriculum decisions, course offerings, hiring or all the other aspects of the institution that even non-union tenured faculty customarily have through committees and academic senates.