

Part-Timer Survey Sheds Light on Who Are Our Part-Timers

by Kathleen de Azevedo Feinblum,
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Last semester, amidst the flurry of classes and freeway flying, a survey appeared in your mailbox. I was very pleased — 117



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instructors mailed back their responses (39 from Skyline, 54 from CSM, and 24 from Canada),

many with excellent comments. The full tabulation of results is 8 pages. Anyone who wants a complete copy can contact me. Realize that some professors checked more than one category, and responded to only certain questions. This is the summary of our findings:

Most of the respondents have been teaching part-time for more than 10 years, most have been working in the district for 2-4 years, and most teach 6-9 units at another school. An overwhelming majority considered teaching their primary career, taught both the fall and spring semesters, and had applied for a full-time teaching job at least once. However, some professors were even more persistent with 20 attempts at the full-timer brass ring, or "so many [tries] I lost count." The vote was even on whether to use the term "part-time" or "adjunct" but the write-in comments such as "no difference, we are exploited anyway" expressed the feelings of many.

District Wide Issues

Pro-rata pay was voted the most important issue, followed by preference for full-time hiring, then better health insurance. A strong second place went to compensation for office hours. Third

place went to a dependable seniority system and improved job security, such as a 2-year contract. The issues that received the most lukewarm responses were, campus e-mail, equal distribution of paychecks and direct deposit. In other words, show me the money first and I'll worry about getting to the bank later.

Health Benefits

A huge majority found our health benefit plan useless, though many would use the plan if the reimbursement were higher. An additional dental plan also got overwhelming support. The comments fell into two categories: 1) the length of time to qualify was "laughable" at 3 years, and the base requirement for teaching hours is too high since most only work 40%. 2) Trying to get correct information about the health plan was a telephone run-around nightmare.

Union Questions

The questionnaire came mainly from AFT members and a majority was satisfied with the union (57 to 24). Most of the negative comments expressed that the AFT was not aggressive enough in resolving part-timer issues. Others were enrolled in a local at another school and thought their funds covered the AFT in general. Please note, that each district has its own AFT and therefore collects its own separate dues.

Many wanted to meet during flex day and/or a couple of times a semester. Preferred times and dates were all across the board and has probably become moot this semester anyway. However, I had a part-time flex day activity with tons of info and food and only one person showed up. So, when should we meet?

Comments

I received a goldmine of comments. Instead of addressing them here, I'd like

to use them as subjects for further articles (such as the wonderful comment on part-timer evaluations, or the lack thereof). Part-timers are welcome to write for the Advocate. I have a list of those who indicated an interest in writing an article. You will be hearing from me now that we have the deadline dates. All I ask is that you let me know a week in advance if you are going to write something. That way I'll adjust accordingly, probably write a sidebar with news as opposed to a full- fledged article.

News You Can Use

Since the survey, AB420 was approved by the Senate (24 to 8) and the Assembly (54 to 26). The bill now joins the flurry of other bills that landed on the governor's desk on Friday Sept. 10, the result of this Legislative session. But before you hit the champagne bottle (or the Thunderbird, depending on your teaching load this semester), consider this: the bill has been watered down to legislative pabulum. The bill provides "access to health benefits, increases student access to faculty by expanding the part-time office hour program, and calls for a comprehensive study of the community college system's part-time faculty employment, salary, and compensation patterns" (Summary of AB420 provided by Judy Michaels, CFT Legislative Director, 9/8/99). So if you hear a "giant sucking sound," it is our pro-rata pay being drained away to pay consultants for this "study". HOWEVER, please continue to support the bill. A house without a roof is better than no house at all. Many part-timers have worked untold hours for this bill. They are not overjoyed either, but are continuing forward

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The Online Education Conference: A Part-Timer's View

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I attended the AFT 1493-sponsored Conference on Online Education in California Community Colleges and I



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was impressed. The five excellent panelists at the Morning Plenary Session reflected diverse views, ranging from Bill

Scroggins, past president of the Academic Senate, who talked about how online instruction can accommodate different learning styles; to David Noble, who warned that the Digital Revolution is being initiated by corporate interests who see schools as the next major money-making conquest. Blessedly absent were the hi-tech marketeers who so often seem to infiltrate education conventions.

We Must Pay Attention

Part-timers tend to think in present tense as opposed to future tense. We have classes for this semester only, we have (or don't have) enough money for this month only. It is difficult to pay attention to trends over the horizon, but pay attention we must. The Digital Revolution is here to stay (at least for a while) and part-timers must consider its implications.

Community colleges are bracing themselves for Tidal Wave II, the forthcoming swell of enrollment. By the year 2005, the enrollment is expected to increase by more than 35,000. Community colleges are not getting the funding needed to accommodate these changes. In fact, community colleges receive the lowest percentage of funding compared to the K-

12 and university systems. There are no plans at present to construct new community colleges and in fact, many schools are looking to cut costs. Therefore, I would not look for a surge of full-time jobs to rescue us in the wake of this flood. David Noble claims that the "commodification of education", where schools become money-making entities of corporations, require reduction of labor costs to make a profit. If Noble's prediction is right, and if present patterns prevail, the axe will fall on part-timer jobs.

Teaching Online Saves on Commute Time But Adds on Prep & Teaching Time

For many part-timers, teaching an online course is a good idea. Besides saving on commute time, some instructors may feel more comfortable teaching online than they do lecturing. However, at the conference, many instructors teaching online said they spend nearly twice as much time with online courses as they do with conventional courses. Susan Adrian of Mission College, one of the most enthusiastic supporters of online education, admits to clocking in 7 hours a day with her four English classes. At present, there is no compensation for working overtime. Therefore, part-timers who choose to teach an online course are faced with even more overwork along with their varied commutes. Online courses also take more pre-planning than regular classes. And so, consider this: Would you be willing to spend undue time developing a course when your school could lay you off at the drop of a hat? (Or a drop of enrollment?)

Most teachers have computers, but the set-up for an online course requires extra equipment, and tech support, and the cost often falls to the instructor. Since adjuncts aren't always privy to professional development grants, setting up to teach online can become an expensive

out-of-pocket investment.

Some Part-timers Feel Pressured to Teach Online Courses

Participants frequently mentioned that online education works for some students, and some instructors; there is an implication that both instructors and students should have a choice. However, several adjuncts mentioned that part-timers often do not have "a choice" and if some refuse to teach an online course, and refuse to put in the extra time and expense, there are others who will.

Almost everyone agreed that online education is new and many of the "kinks" haven't been worked out yet. There are also many professors who use or want to use computers as part of their regular class curriculum. The Digital Revolution will affect all of us, but part-timers need to be extra vigilant, so that our laws and contracts treat us fairly. Technology must be a means of empowerment, not exploitation.

AB420: Union & Part-timers Fought Together

Governor Gray Davis signed AB 420 on October 8. In its amended form, AB420 mandates a study to examine the work and wage patterns of part-timers and adds a million dollars to the state budget to provide better health benefits and office hours. (See page 1 for more complete story.) Of course, these items still need to be negotiated into district contracts. The union and many part-timers fought for this bill, through letter writing campaigns, lobbying and perseverance. Our own local got us a few improvements in negotiations. We have a ways to go, but no one can claim the union "does nothing for us."

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Part-Timers and Professionalism Do Mix

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Last semester, an ex-student of mine wanted to make sure I was indeed teaching the next level of English class as



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listed on the class schedule. She told me I was an exception to most part-timers who in general were "not good

teachers." She came to this conclusion because a friend of hers had taken a class with poor results, a class that happened to be taught by a part-timer.

In truth, one has as much chance of running into a poor class taught by a part-timer as by a full-timer. But when students sense that part-timers are being treated as second class teachers by their own district, all it takes is one bad experience to color students' perceptions. Faulty inductive reasoning, yes, but still there is a perception that part-times are not as good or as conscientious as full-timers. Unfair administrative policies and general apathy toward part-timers contributes to this pervasive attitude.

For all the talk of high standards in teaching, there is very little done to maintain these high standards. No one likes to be evaluated, but it is an essential process in not only the growth of a teacher, but in making students aware that their school cares about the quality of instruction. The official SMCCCD evaluation procedures states that a part-timer be evaluated once every 6 semesters. This is three years of teaching behind closed doors, three years of not being able to procure student comments, even positive ones, except for the few

sweet notes some give at the end of the semester. And if that lucky day comes, after 3 years, when a part-timer does get evaluated, one can only pray for a good semester of prime time classes full of sturdy students, and not a semester of "oddball hour" classes which tend to attract the late enrollees and the bewildered.

The repercussions are enormous. Those of us who are applying for full-time jobs, or even jobs for other part-time pools, find it hard to get letters of recommendation. Our student evaluations are old, as if we've fled the country for a couple of years. Students can go through community college without ever evaluating a teacher. The argument is that full-timers, who usually do the evaluations, are overextended. True, they are overextended with a lot of administrative duties, many of which seem to take precedence over the most important work done in the classroom.

The appearance of the word "staff" in the course schedule puts off a lot of students as well as teachers. I have seen improvement in getting class assignments early and having our names appear in the catalog. I also realize that "staff" is needed in some cases where there is no one assigned to the class. But when students see "staff" they see a non-entity. "Staff" has a vacuous connotation, somewhat like an unmarked grave. Students who want to take a class taught by their favorite part-timer are often not able to do so, thus, robbing the instructor of feeling like a "real teacher."

The very nature of part-time work does not allow us to be visible when it comes to professional development. Often, though courses are available to us, our schedules make it impossible to attend. Or, many of us do educate ourselves on the run, but who sees us? Who sees our shelves of books when many part-timers don't even have dependable office space? Who knows if we are studying the

Spanish Renaissance in our spare time?

Professional respect is a must. We need to come across professional in order to convince the powers-that-be that we deserve equal pay for equal work. Part-timers are fully able to reach high standards, but we must have the opportunity to prove our capability. In the latest CPFA Pro-News (that appeared in your mailboxes recently) Chris Storer, chairperson of the California Part-time Faculty Association (CPFA) claims that our "fundamentally immoral" two-tiered system undermines the "high philosophical goals of teaching," and the camaraderie and unity among all the teachers. What students see, is an uncaring system where the majority of their instructors seem to spend more time on the road than they do on their classes. This, in turn, reflects not just on the professionalism of the teachers, but on the integrity of the whole system.

Mark Your Calendars: State Part-Timer Leader to Speak at Flex Day

We are going to have a special flex day activity on Jan. 18 at 9 am at CSM in Room 18- 187. Chris Storer, CPFA chairperson, will be addressing professionalism in all its gritty detail. I will be putting flyers in your mailbox before the holiday rush. Clip the flyer and hang it on a wall of your overcrowded apartments! I haven't had a good turn out at our past flex day sessions. We're pushing harder with this one, hoping we can get some response. Otherwise, it will be harder to get other guest speakers in the future.

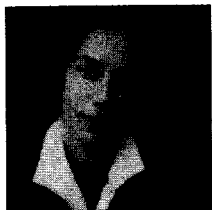
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**PART TIMERS ELIGIBLE FOR
UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS
- SEE PAGE 9 -**

THE PART-TIMER VOICE

Part-Timers' Rights Movement Growing Around the State

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The part-timer revolution is afoot. Throughout this issue of *The Advocate* are articles about the various goings-on. In this column, I'll provide the highlights.

Flex Presentation

The flex presentation on professionalism with guest speaker Chris Storer was a hit. In spite of the downpour that morning, 23 part-timers and full-timers came dripping wet but in full bloom. Storer said how originally, part-timers were used as night-school instructors for college transfer classes. During the 60's, when colleges strove to be more egalitarian, part-timers added diversity and a fresh perspective to otherwise traditional academia. As time went on, more and more part-timers were hired per teaching assignment, and today, "piecemeal" instruction is the norm. Just the high cost of implementing AB 420 shows the degree of exploitation.

Fellow adjunct instructors at the meeting discussed how the present system prevents them from fulfilling their professional potential. One instructor pointed to the unfairness of the interview process for full-time jobs, and how prospective applicants are often held accountable for not being collegial, not attending meetings and not volunteering for committees when in fact they do not have the extra time. Another instructor who works in the non-academic world in addition to

teaching, said that in spite of how much she loves her students, she is more respected as a professional in the outside world. As a teacher, she has faced so much resistance just trying to tap into resources at school, that she finds it hard to function at her optimal level.

January 12th Hearing

The January 12th Joint Legislative Audit Committee hearing on part-time faculty issues was an inspiring moment in adjunct activism. In short, it proved that our legislators are more hip to part-time inequality than the California Community Colleges' Board of Governors (BOG). By January 10, two days before the hearing, the CFT's Community College Council (CCC) and BOG had failed to reach an agreement on increased funding for part-timers. In spite of the multi-billion-dollar state surplus, our raises have consisted of only a small COLA increase. Tom Nussbaum, the Chancellor of the California Community College system, responded to the impasse by saying that the Community Colleges should be made more "accountable" for the funds they do have.

As part of the January 12 hearing, part-timers testified in front of the Joint Legislative Audit Committee, and related their harrowing horror stories of freeway flying. Many legislators were on our side. At one point, Assemblymember Sarah Reyes, Chair of the Assembly Budget Subcommittee for Education, became so impatient with the apathetic attitude displayed by many of the administrators, that she stood up and "got large and imposing

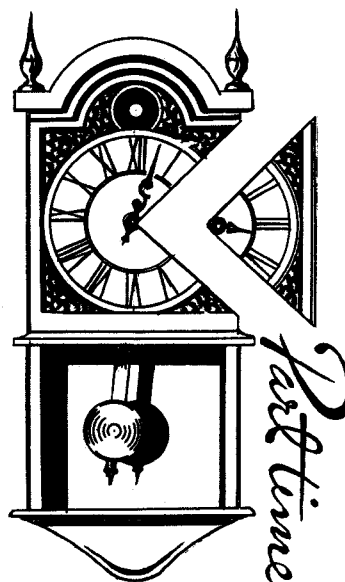
as only a politician knows how" Storer recalled. She gave them a sound lashing, reprimanding them and saying that if they didn't "change their attitude" toward their own instructors, they would never be able to address the chronic exploitation and inequality in their colleges. For more on the Legislative Hearing, please see the testimony by Scott Suneson, CFT Part-Time Faculty Coordinator, on page 1.

Part Timer Equity Week

The Action 2000 Coalition, a group of statewide faculty organizations is working on an all-out effort to make known the part-timer situation. They have declared April 3 - 7, 2000 to be "Part Time Faculty Equity Week" throughout the State of California. This week will be marked by activities on community college campuses that will raise the issues related to the exploitation of part-timers. I'd like to have some activity in the District during the week, but we'll need to do this together. Dan Kaplan and I are trying to set up a meeting to discuss Action 2000 and other possible projects. Please call the AFT office at x6491 to find out the time and date of this meeting. Also, see page 4 for more about the Action 2000 Coalition.

A Call for Quotes

I'd like to write an article for the next *Advocate* addressing the effects of class cancellations on part-timers. I've been hit with several cancelled classes within the last year, but I'd like some quotes/anecdotes from you, too. Questions to consider: How did you manage financially? Were you able to get classes elsewhere? Do you purposely overload your schedule? E-mailed responses are best. Please indicate whether you want to be identified or not. ■



ART BY ALONSO SMITH

THE PART-TIMER VOICE

How a Cancelled Class Effects a Part-Timer

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The first time was brutal. At a particular college, I was teaching choice classes—literature and

women's writing — rarely given to part-timers. I had great evaluations and felt confident as "a regular". One day I realized that I hadn't gotten my class assignments for the next semester in the usual prompt way. The same day, I received a brusque note in my mailbox: I was not given any classes. This rocked me off my roots and elicited typical part-timer reactions: Did they forget about me? Had I offended a colleague by mistake? The answer was simple. My department chair told me the enrollment had dropped and that the subsequent lay-off wasn't "about me" at all.

But it was about me. Though I was able to get another job, I was never the same again

Oh the Nerves

For a part-timer, "back-to-school" means a feeling of dread that doesn't go away until you get the roll sheet with twenty names. When I plan lessons with new course material I ask: "Is this effort for naught?" "Do I dare spend all this money and time creating a swell reader only to not be able to use it?" No one has time to feel the dawning of a rosy new semester with four hours of sleep the night before. On the first day of class, students see an instructor who is professional and

enthusiastic (or relieved). They don't see the instructor groveling for a spare class to make up for the class that was just canceled.

Juggling an Awful Lot of Balls

When a class is canceled, I scramble for another, often calling different school districts. My legacy is that now I work at three schools. Whereas I am lucky to have found employment and I have learned new teaching techniques from being flexible to new demands, I teach and commute, period. No time to grow to love the school. Part-timers often overload their schedules to protect themselves in case one class disappears. Or we bend the rules a little to keep the classes we do have. How willing are we to lower the boom on prerequisites? Depends. For a class of thirty, we have some leeway to redirect students to classes more appropriate. But for a shaky class of 18? Well, one has to eat.

Uneasy Liaisons

Class cancellations inadvertently set one professor against another. As we are all fighting for our best interests, no one wants to "suggest" a few students go to another class struggling with low enrollment. We feel the pang of resentment when our class is canceled only to have another open at the last minute, sometimes with a new instructor, one with less seniority. Under these circumstances, the new instructor may be less likely to get a warm reception from colleagues. Class cancellations also strain the relationship between full and

part-timers. If a full-timer loses a class, they have to overload their schedule for next semester which leaves one class less for a part-timer.

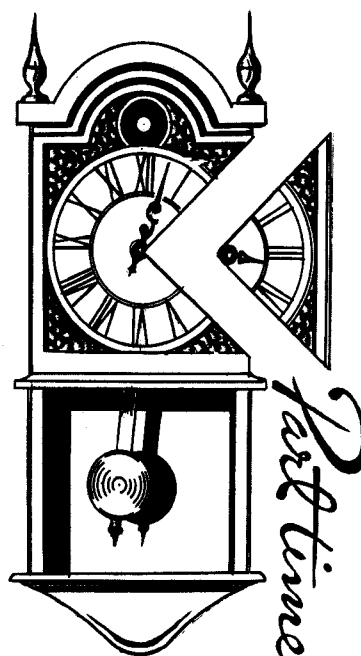
It doesn't matter how good you are at what you do. In the end, you feel like nothing but the excess they have to cut. It is like having a relationship with a womanizer. You never know when he's going to dump you, so how thoroughly can you love the man?

Show Me the Money

The most obvious repercussion of this whole mess is the loss of income. While canceled classes are an inconvenience for students, they can be devastating financially to a part-timer. If a part-timer teaching four classes loses one, that's 1/4 of their income. An eliminated daily class is a huge shark's bite. Finding other employment becomes a nightmare. Since schools start around the same time, it's very hard to get a job at another school. A canceled class also leaves a gaping hole in what was an ingeniously planned schedule. The worst is when you are offered a class at the last minute, and have to turn it down because it falls during commute time.

When administrators expand classes in the hopes of attracting students or have classes at experimental or unpopular times, they need to do it carefully. Decisions from the top affect human lives below. The system already produces anxious and exhausted teachers. We shouldn't even milk cows in that condition. Why should we teach students in such a manner? ■

See Other Part Timer News:
Increases for Part Timers in State Budget Proposal . . . Page 1
Part Timers Equity Petitioning, Rally & Lobbying. . . Pages 9 & 10



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THE PART-TIMER VOICE

Petition Drive Builds Support for Part-Timer Equity

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It is good to end the academic year on an encouraging note. Action 2000's statewide petition drive proved to be the year's galva-

nizer for part-timers. The participation of many full and part-timers made the petition drive of April 3-7 a resounding success. This article is a "thank you" to those who participated.

The petition was to get Governor Gray Davis to put the money necessary to provide health benefits, paid office hours, and equal pay for equal work into his next budget. The battle cry: 60% OF INSTRUCTORS AT COMMUNITY COLLEGES ARE PART-TIMERS WHO ARE PAID 37% OF WHAT FULL-TIMERS EARN lured people to petition tables and surprised many students who did not know the underpinning of their education was so fragile. The petitions, collected from community colleges campuses throughout the state, will be handed to Governor Davis on Lobby Day May 8. San Mateo Community College District's contribution: 1350 signatures!

The Process

The task at first was daunting, as I didn't know how I was going to organize the three campuses for this effort and keep up with my crazy schedule, but instructors Paddy Moran of CSM and Indrani Chaudhuri of Cañada took the helm at their respective campuses. I took care of Skyline College. Suddenly, it all became do-able.

CSM Report

Paddy Moran, a professional artist who teaches painting, figure drawing and color at Ohlone College, College of San Mateo and Evergreen Valley College, organized volunteers at CSM. Paddy, along with math instructor Kazumi Tsuchiyose set up volunteers to attend the tables at the student union building from 9-3 on Monday through Thursday. In addition, Paddy coordinated another petition drive at Ohlone College. For Ohlone, she called on part-time faculty, friends and even family members to help. The effort paid off: Ohlone gathered 822 signatures. She felt (and I agree) that the part-time faculty who participated felt a sense of empowerment, and that they were actually doing something to improve their quality of life.

Cañada Report

Indrani Chaudhuri, math instructor, was the contact at Cañada. Because of Indrani's heavy workload and the difficulties of getting volunteers at our smallest campus, Cañada was a tougher nut to crack. Indrani, working pretty much by herself, circulated petitions in the cafeteria on Tuesday evening and Wednesday afternoon. She also gathered signatures in the business, humanities, math and science and counseling offices and in the Learning Center. The general feeling about her efforts was: "Go for it! Its high time!"

Skyline Report

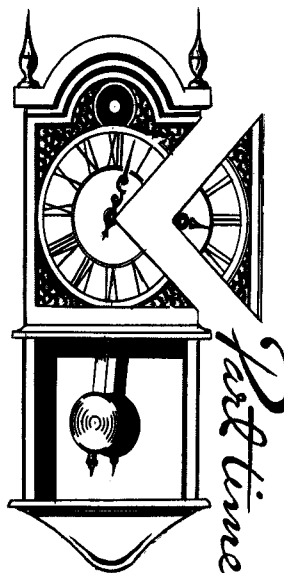
At Skyline, the tables were set up from 8-2 on Monday through Wednesday. Thanks to the English department list-serve, I got 12 volunteers, 4 of

whom were full timers. Karen Wong graciously let me deliver my message via the phone tree and I got even more responses. In addition, instructors volunteered to take petitions into their classes. Other petitions circulated in the Learning Center and in the night faculty office. Posted flyers advertising the petition drive (many of which mysteriously disappeared) did attract some signers to the petition tables on the foggy mornings, but a lot of the impetus was due to wonderful faculty support.

Lobbying

Copies of the petitions not only went to the governor, but went to our Congresspeople as well. Meanwhile, Paddy Moran and I took a copy of the petitions to Senator Jackie Speier's office. We spoke to the district director Kevin Mullin who did a small double take when he saw the pile of signatures. He gave us Senator Speier's support. The next week, I visited Assemblyman Louis Papan's district director Jeremy Dennis. Not only did I receive Mr. Dennis' support, but I also was sent a letter that Papan had passed on the petitions to Governor Davis with a letter of endorsement. I also presented

another set of the petitions to the San Mateo County Community College Board of Trustees at their April 12 meeting. At this meeting, the Board passed its own resolution in support of the campaign for equal pay for equal work for part-time faculty. (See this resolution on page 6 of this issue.) Meanwhile, intrepid Paddy Moran lobbied Assemblyman John Dutra who assured her he would "heartily support" the \$80 million proposal to create a "Human Resources Infrastructure Program".



ART BY ALONSO SMITH

Continued on page 6