

the committee and assisted in the coordination of this collection. Thanks are extended also to all of the reviewers who gave their valuable time to improve this spotlight collection. ■

#### REFERENCE

Coalition on the Academic Workforce. 2012. "A Portrait of Part-Time Faculty Members." Available at [www.academicworkforce.org/Research\\_reports.html](http://www.academicworkforce.org/Research_reports.html).

#### SOLIDARITY SHOULD NOT BE CONTINGENT: WE ARE LIVING IN PRECARIOUS TIMES

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"A striking implication of these estimates is that 94 percent of the net employment growth in the U.S. economy from 2005 to 2015 appears to have occurred in alternative work arrangements." (Katz and Kreuger 2016)

Contingent, precarious, non-permanent, temporary, non-tenure-track—these are only some of the terms and titles used to designate what is, by many accounts, the *majority* of the workforce in higher education. This is a startling fact but one in keeping with a trend that reaches far beyond the academy. In 2015, 17% of the US workforce was employed in "alternate employment relationships,"<sup>1</sup> an increase of 6% since 2005. This means that the majority of jobs created in the United States during that decade were precarious in some regard. Against this backdrop, the role of the recently created APSA Committee on Contingent Faculty in the Discipline—"to bring attention to issues that impact contingent faculty in the discipline and to determine how APSA can best engage and support them"—seems both daunting and urgent.

#### The Scale of Contingency in Academia

Available data highlights the increasing prevalence of precarious employment in academia. A 2011 survey of faculty revealed that 29.2% were tenured or tenure-track, 51.4% were part-time,

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and 19.4% were full-time but non-tenure-track (Curtis 2014). In contrast, in 1975, more than half (55.8%) of faculty were tenured or tenure-track, 12% were full-time non-tenured, and 30% were part-time (Curtis 2014). Similarly, another source reports that the tenured-to-non-tenured ratio was 45% to 55% in 1975 and 30% to 70% in 2015 (American Association of University Professors 2018).<sup>2</sup>

Still another survey of part-time faculty found that 81% had been teaching for three years or more, that contingent academic work was the primary occupation for 77%, and that only about 25% preferred part-time work over a tenured position (Coalition on the Academic Workforce 2012).<sup>3</sup> The data illustrate that these

faculty do not fit the historical notion of an "adjunct"—that is, a professional teaching a specialized course while maintaining a full-time job outside of the academy. APSA's Graduate Placement Survey reinforces the decline in the traditional tenure track: only 26% of PhDs on the job market were placed in tenure lines in 2016/2017, down from 41% in 2009.

#### What Can We Do?

What can a professional association do in response to this ubiquitous trend? Fortunately, models for action—from the ambitious and costly to the modest and inexpensive—are available.<sup>4</sup> They are listed as follows relative to the resources they require:

- *Educate Members.* Several academic associations, including the Coalition on the Academic Workforce, publish data on the number of contingent faculty as well as actions and policies for departments to consider.<sup>5</sup> This includes strategies to encourage appropriate respect, resources, and inclusion for faculty in contingent positions and best practices for hiring contingent faculty as well as those from contingent lines for tenured positions. See Czastkiewicz and Lunde Seefeldt in this spotlight regarding the development of a document for APSA that can be promoted to members and department chairs.
- *Support any efforts by contingent faculty to unionize.* The presence of unions improves pay and conditions for non-tenure-track faculty across all dimensions (Segran 2014). If support is not possible, at least remain neutral.
- *Join with other academic associations* to advocate for ratios of and appropriate resources for non-tenure-track faculty to be considered as part of accreditation for colleges and universities (Kezar, Maxey, and Eaton 2014).
- *Further reduce or eliminate costs* of association-membership and conference-registration fees for part-time faculty (Inclusive Fees Campaign 2015).
- *Consider hosting a "virtual conference"* to facilitate greater participation by contingent faculty. Cultural anthropologists have tried this for environmental causes (Nevins 2018).

- *Encourage networking with contingent colleagues around conferences.* Professional associations could host networking events and invite contingent faculty from nearby campuses to attend (Chernoff 2018).
- *Offer portable benefits* such as health, dental, term life, and disability through APSA to contingent faculty in the discipline. The Freelancers Union (2018) provides a model for promoting these benefits.

#### Why Should We Act?

The most obvious reason to address increased contingent employment is that it is simply the right thing to do. We should

seek to ensure that our colleagues are treated fairly and respectfully. Contingent employment also imposes costs on APSA and its members. It affects teaching quality and student success by constraining faculty time and resources (The Delphi Project 2013a; 2013b). Moreover, it impacts research productivity (Bland et al. 2006). Declining ranks of tenured faculty also mean that those remaining in tenure lines face increased service demands. In short, increased contingent employment impacts APSA's aims of promoting high-quality teaching and research, advocating for the profession, and ensuring that political scientists can best serve the public good. ■

#### NOTES

1. "Alternate arrangements" were defined as temp work, independent-contractor status, on-demand work, and contracted employees.
2. These figures include graduate students in the contingent counts.
3. APSA is a member of the Coalition on the Academic Workplace.
4. For sharing insights, I thank members of the Modern Language Association Committee on Contingent Labor; Emily Swafford of the American Historical Society; and Alyson Reed of the Linguistic Society of America.
5. The Delphi Project on the Changing Faculty and Student Success—a partnership between the Association of American Colleges and Universities and the University of Southern California's Pullias Center for Higher Education—has numerous tools to educate tenured faculty and administrators on how to support and assist non-traditional faculty.

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- COMPARING CONTINGENT FACULTY PAY AND WORKING CONDITIONS: THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AND THE CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY**
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- Recent years have seen a wave of adjunct-faculty union organizing, particularly in the private sector. These bargaining units typically are adjunct-exclusive, in large part because of the US Supreme Court's 1980 *NLRB vs. Yeshiva University* ruling, which held that private-sector tenure and tenure-track faculty are managerial. However, unionization for both full- and part-time faculty has long had legal support in the public sector (with state-level variation). Although this has led to some adjunct-exclusive bargaining units (e.g., some state community colleges in New York), in two of the largest systems in the country—the City University of New York (CUNY) and California State University (CSU)—adjunct faculty are in the same units with their tenured colleagues.
- The CSU and CUNY systems both have approximately 25 campuses, and both faculty unions were taken over by progressive leadership at approximately the same time (1999 and 2000, respectively). Yet, CSU adjunct faculty (called "Lecturers") have a version of pay parity as well as broad-based job security, whereas those at CUNY make only \$3,200 per course to start and only 2,200 of more than 10,000 adjunct faculty have job security. This difference is stark. What factors explain the divergent outcomes for adjunct faculty in the CSU and CUNY systems? This article presents the following five hypotheses:
1. *Right to Strike*. Unlike in the private sector, public-sector labor law is governed at the state level. New York State has long had extraordinarily onerous penalties for public-sector strikes, whereas California's 1978 legislation permits them. The Professional Staff Congress (PSC)—which is the American Federation of Teachers union local representing CUNY faculty and professional staff—has twice threatened to strike, once in 1973 and again in 2016. Conversely, the California Faculty Association (CFA)—California State's faculty union—has led true work stoppages and threatened them more legitimately at other times.
  2. *State-Level Politics*. Although both New York and California are large progressive states with substantial tax bases, their political compositions vary significantly. The New York State Senate has long been controlled by the Republican Party. In 2010, when its grip had slipped, a group of rogue Democrats began to caucus with Republicans—a practice that finally ended in 2018 when progressives defeated six of the eight aisle-crossers. Meanwhile, recent Democratic supermajorities in both chambers of the California legislature increased taxes, generating more revenue for agency funding. Between 2013 and 2018, California increased spending on higher education by 52.5%—the highest increase in the country—whereas New York spent only 14.6% more in the same period (Seltzer 2018). In addition, CUNY faculty salaries have never recovered from cuts foisted on the system during the financial crisis of the 1970s.
  3. *Contingency*. In 1969, an arbitrator handling a case about reappointment rights ruled in favor of CUNY adjunct faculty—in essence, upholding a system of just-cause termination. However, when the PSC—formed from a merger of two unions—ratified its first contract in 1973, this practice was abandoned