

institutions in the United States, Canada, and Mexico were almost uniformly critical of the commercialization and corporatization of higher learning and education, as well as the inability of universities and schools to pay their contingent labor a fair wage or to provide equitable working conditions.³ Jonathan Karpf, the conference chair, described the current landscape as “lamentable”; Ernesto Ortiz, executive committee member of *Secretario de Trabajo y Conflictos Académicos del STUNAM*, warned that in today’s higher-education campus, “[k]nowledge is turned into merchandise.”

In the first plenary, Karpf—reading remarks from Adrianna Kezar (University of Southern California)—highlighted how the average wage for adjunct lecturers for one course was \$2,700, which yields an annualized salary equivalent to that of fast-food workers in America. Kimberly Ellis shared how 12,000 contingent faculty members in Eastern Canada went on strike to protest their working conditions in 2017, supported by their full-time colleagues and students. Malini Cadambi Daniel, National Director of SEIU Faculty Forward, cited a Berkeley Labor Center report stating that a quarter of all contingent faculty were on some form of US government assistance. Finally, Chandra Pasma of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) briefed the audience on a forthcoming publication about contract faculty in Canada,⁴ with statistics from CUPE’s research project. Pasma noted that more than 56% of university faculty in Canada are contract faculty across all teaching disciplines, and she emphasized that it was an institutional choice whether universities hired full- or part-time professors—even after considering government funding cuts.

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The insights of and sharing by the panelists provided useful context on the working conditions for contingent academic labor. However, it would have been helpful if alternative perspectives on trends in higher education or opportunities for dialogue with guest speakers with positions in university administration or leadership also were provided.

Overall, the conference proceedings would have benefited from inviting other speakers representing a more diverse range of political, institutional, and personal perspectives beyond COCAL’s immediate focus.

Workshop and Breakout Sessions on Strategies to Improve Working Conditions

The workshop sessions in the second half of the conference provided useful learning points and strategies for individual contingent faculty members or for those considering unionization to negotiate fairer working conditions. The California Faculty Association (CFA)—the “exclusive collective bargaining representative for the California State University faculty, including tenure-track faculty, Lecturers, Librarians, counselors and coaches”⁵—provided most of the workshop facilitators. They ran sessions on “How to Use Social Media Effectively to Run a Contract/Pressure Campaign” (Niesha Fritz, CFA Communications Specialist) and “Communicating with Reporters...and How to Write an Effective Press Release” (Alice Sunshine, CFA

Communications Director); making masks and puppets for campaigns; nonviolent direct action; and using political pressure to improve contingent working conditions. In their workshop for the last topic, CFA Director of Government Relations Djibril Diop and CFA Legislative Director Mario Guerrero presented how CFA secured strong contracts for contingent faculty in the California State University system. CFA members, including contingent faculty, may receive wages pegged to full-time salary scales and even pensions, depending on their length of service at an institution. CFA also advocates strongly for universities to convert lecturers to full-time faculty instead of hiring new professors.

Learning Points for APSA and the Profession

The persistence and enthusiasm of the COCAL organizers in forging a venue for contingent faculty to meet likeminded colleagues and partners, as well as to educate one another about political action and activism, is a positive development. The current crisis facing academia in terms of precarity and contingency in employment for the majority or a large minority of faculty members, including in political science, is at its root a political, social, and economic crisis. It is timely for APSA and its members to seriously examine the state of the profession as it pertains to contingent academic labor in the teaching of political science and, more broadly, the repercussions of recent trends in higher education on society and our students. From this perspective, COCAL provides a potential model for

interested political scientists to study the dynamics of political organization by contingent labor. ■

NOTES

1. Available at <https://cocalinternational.org>.
2. For details of COCAL’s early history, see <https://cocalinternational.org/aboutus.html>.
3. For the full conference program, see <https://cocalinternational.org/COCAL%20XIII%20Program%20as%20of%20May%2027%202018.pdf>.
4. Erica Shaker and Chandra Pasma’s report, “Contract U: Contract Faculty Appointments at Canadian Universities” (November 1, 2018), is available at www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/reports/contract-u. At the conference, Pasma requested that the audience keep details of her presentation off the public record because the report was pending publication at the time.
5. CFA’s website is available at www.calfac.org.

THE DISCIPLINE IS OVERDUE FOR A SET OF MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR EMPLOYING CONTINGENT FACULTY IN POLITICAL SCIENCE: HERE IS THE BLUEPRINT

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During the 2018 APSA Annual Meeting, we organized a group of contingent faculty and other political scientists interested in

contingency-related issues to come together under the auspices of APSA's first-ever Hackathon. The idea for this project originated in APSA's service committee on the status of contingent faculty, on which Veronica Czastkiewicz serves. The goal of the group's day-long meeting was to create a list of minimum standards for hiring and retaining contingent faculty, with the hope of generating action by the APSA Council on creating standards for contingent faculty in the profession. Many other professional organizations have adopted similar standards. What follows is a description of the efforts and outcomes of our Hackathon participants.

However, we concluded that every institution, regardless of material or administrative constraints, can work toward improving the status of contingent faculty under the umbrella of three normative values: fairness, voice, and respect.

Initially, we thought of grouping various proposals for elevating and normalizing contingent faculty under concrete topics such as material goods, professional development, and so forth. However, we concluded that every institution, regardless of material or administrative constraints, can work toward improving the status of contingent faculty under the umbrella of three normative values: fairness, voice, and respect.

In determining which specific guidelines to include under the umbrella of *fairness*, we compared contingent faculty to tenured or tenure-track (TTT) peers. It is our belief that to treat contingent faculty fairly, colleges and universities should:

1. Practice transparency in hiring, firing, and evaluation procedures.¹
2. Allot equal pay for equal work.²
3. Ensure benefits such as health insurance, access to retirement-savings plans, unemployment insurance, and sick leave.³
4. Provide office space (i.e., shared or personal), technology (e.g., computers, printers, and email), and libraries and research materials.
5. Ensure access to funds for research grants and conference travel.
6. Offer teaching-assistant support when a course meets student-teacher capacity or if other criteria otherwise would grant this support to TTT faculty.
7. Give preferential consideration after continued service for any of the same upcoming courses.

To give contingent faculty the *voice* they are due, colleges and universities should:

1. Allow contingent faculty at relevant meetings (with appropriate compensation for their time and service) and grant them voting rights in faculty governance.
2. Invite contingent faculty to participate in relevant faculty and institutional committees (e.g., curriculum, student assessment, and budgetary and program planning), with appropriate compensation.
3. Invite contingent faculty to departmental and college events.⁴
4. Record and make available to the college/university and APSA data showing the number and proportion of contingent faculty.⁵

Finally, the experiences of contingent faculty and our group's discussion at the Hackathon with regard to respect and dignity were among the liveliest of all discussions. To incorporate this value into the relationship that institutions have with their contingent faculty, we would urge them to:

1. Create and make available hiring and orientation materials.
2. Formalize promotion, parental and other leave procedures, and other informal practices as they relate to employment and promotion.
3. Introduce faculty to the school and department and show them how to access all available resources.⁶
4. Provide for salary increases over time that recognize years of experience and/or service, to include a policy or formula for seniority that may include ranks and be associated with increased levels of job security.
5. Formalize and encourage mentorship within the department or program. This may include:
 - a. Instituting course-observation procedures for experienced TTT to provide feedback for improvement.
 - b. Sharing course ideas or materials.
 - c. Writing letters of recommendation.

In addition to this general list of proposed minimum standards for the employment of contingent faculty in political science, our Hackathon participants identified opportunities to leverage existing infrastructure in other organizations within political science or higher education. These proposals included:

1. Asking college- and university-ranking organizations such as *US News and World Report* and *Princeton Review* to request that institutions make available their data on contingency (similar to the data mentioned in footnote 5).⁷
2. APSA should conduct comprehensive and frequent research on the status of contingent faculty in the profession, including survey research that considers the distribution of contingent faculty (i.e., geography and type of contingency) and work conditions (see previous complex variables of fairness, voice, and respect).
3. Professional organizations should increase travel grants and reduce conference and membership fees for contingent faculty. (Contingent faculty are not unemployed, which is a membership category of most organizations; however, the current floor of \$30,000 annual income (i.e., APSA) is itself aspirational for many contingent faculty.)
4. Showcasing and promoting best practices or model departmental policies, job advertisement for contingent faculty, and so on by professional organizations in political science.
5. Encouraging student awareness of contingency as it relates to faculty, as well as student participation in demonstrations and other forms of activism in this area.

This is not meant to be an exhaustive list; neither do the proposals represent a floor or ceiling for considering standards for contingency. However, we believe that if APSA truly aspires to represent all political scientists—including those in contingent positions—the Council must consider and move forward with the adoption of a set of standards similar to those outlined here. ■

NOTES

1. This means that faculty need an explicit explanation of what their prospects are at any institution by identifying whether the job is a one-term deal or has the opportunity to go beyond the current contract. This alleviates some of the job insecurity that our group lamented. Similarly, if a contract is terminated, an explicit explanation is required.
2. We realize that TTT have other obligations in service, advising, and research; therefore, we considered prorated pay, compensating for contact hours, and/or paying based on course-buyout policies for those on leave. The buyout method seemed to be the most agreed-on and preferred solution for calculating contingent pay.
3. These should be universally available proportional to employment, with opportunities for subsidization to ensure full coverage.
4. These can be social- or professional-development events that connect contingent faculty to other members of the department and institution. They should occur mostly during business hours out of respect for family and other professional obligations that contingent faculty often have.
5. This should include the actual number of full- and part-time contingent faculty, along with the total number of full-time permanent faculty; the number and percentage of political science courses taught by full-time permanent, full-time temporary, and part-time instructors, respectively; the contractual length of employment for each full- and part-time contingent political science faculty member; and the total length of service of each full- and part-time contingent political science instructor in the department, division, or program.
6. In many cases, contingent faculty are expected to know about or find out for themselves basic necessities such as classroom location, advising rules, and add/drop procedures.
7. We believe that even if these data are not initially incorporated into any ranking system, their availability to prospective students, parents, and donors could greatly influence the status of contingent faculty.

CANARY IN THE COAL MINE: CONTINGENT FACULTY IN THE PRO-DIVERSITY ERA

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The APSA September Chart of the Month, “Field of Study Diversity,” stresses APSA’s commitment “to advancing diversity and inclusion through the profession,” although “more work needs to be done” (APSA 2018). “Diversity” here refers

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to diverse backgrounds and experiences, organized around categories of gender, race, disability, and sexual identities rather than diversity in economic status. This is in keeping with the American view that the organized pursuit of political representation and political equality is more legitimate and feasible than the pursuit of economic equality (Hochschild 1981).

In 2016, APSA established a status committee on contingent faculty in the profession, with a mixed membership of contingent, tenured-track, and tenured faculty, which joined the long-standing

status committees representing women, blacks, Latinos, LGBT, and other underrepresented groups. One long-term goal motivates the new committee’s projects, some of which this spotlight showcases: changing the terms of debate within the profession so that the extreme “diversity” (read “inequity”) in compensation and opportunities for professional advancement in political science loses its legitimacy, as well as when discrimination due to gender, race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation is not involved.

One reason why it is difficult to think through issues linked to contingent faculty is that this term masks much diversity also in the working conditions of those concerned. Some full-timers are in secure and decently paid teaching positions; others cobble together teaching positions at several institutions to survive. Some professionals teach part-time for love of their topic and students; however, most part-timers do so constrained by personal reasons and without making ends meet. Although research has shown for one generation that many non-tenured academics are underpaid and experience minimal professional and infrastructure support such as yearly library privileges (Pratt 1997), little has changed. So what is to be done when state support for public universities also is declining?

Individual negotiations can help, up to a point. They may provide a title, which acknowledges publication, service, and awards; an office; and library and email privileges. Negotiations also may inform about administrative mindsets and policies and, in turn, highlight the human cost of bureaucratic decisions. However, improved monetary compensation and job security remain out of reach. In 2008, starting salaries for adjuncts were quietly slashed by almost 15% in the University of Minnesota (U of MN) political science department, and long-standing course-by-course appointments were not renewed—with no apparent reaction from tenured faculty. As for collective action, a two-year effort at the U of MN to organize tenured, tenure-track, and contingent faculty within a single union failed in 2017 when a Minnesota Court of Appeals ruled against it, rewarding a \$500 thousand investment in legal fees by university administrators, and faculty opposition.²

Thus, this political theorist wonders: Is there a way to recast the problem so that treating contingent faculty as genuine colleagues becomes not only intellectually legitimate but also ethically imperative and economically feasible? So that offering lower overall compensation because of “some pressure on discretionary funds” to a long-term and highly productive contingent

faculty who has just created a new course upon departmental request becomes unthinkable? Budgets are flexible; what is legitimate becomes affordable. Witness the demand for a \$15/hour minimum wage, deemed undoable a few years ago; it is now being adopted in many parts of the United States. Why not envisage similar changes of mindset in academia, and eventually, changes of policies?

I argue that the concept of “diversity” should be harnessed to legitimize the improvement of working conditions for contingent faculty. Some members of “diverse” categories in tenure-track