

A SUNTA board motion was called to support CLR's Resolution on Contingent & Part-time Academic Labor. The Board passed the motion on October 21, 2013.

American Anthropological Association Resolution on Contingent & Part-time Academic Labor. Quorum of 250 & majority vote needed to pass resolution. Vote at Annual Business Meeting Th 11/21/13 6:15pm.

From the Committee on Labor Relations, American Anthropological Association (please share):

Background:

The number of faculty members teaching in the US in non-tenure track, contingent positions—defined as part-time or adjunct faculty, full-time non-tenure track, postdoctoral teachers, or graduate student teaching assistants—has more than doubled since 1970. Today, these colleagues teach more than 75% of classes nationwide.

Part-time faculty—who teach on a per-course basis, also called adjunct faculty— make up 70% of this contingent workforce, and fully half of all higher education faculty in the United States. Yet they are paid shamefully little in comparison to tenured or tenure-track counterparts, and most receive no medical or retirement benefits. They have little opportunity for advancement, their employment is insecure, and they have relatively little say in university or college governance. Moreover, because compensation is so low, and because, often, they are bound by caps on employment that are unconnected to qualifications or enrollments, part-timer faculty sometimes hold several positions to support themselves, making their workloads extremely difficult. Low pay, few or no benefits, and a paucity of opportunities for professional growth don't just hurt currently employed contingent faculty, they are also a disincentive for students who wish to continue careers in academia.

According to a 2010 survey by the Coalition of Contingent Academic Labor [i] (CAW, of which the AAA is an organizational member) compensation rates for adjunct faculty nationwide average just \$2,700 per three-credit course (\$2,235 at two-year colleges, \$3,400 at four-year or doctoral institutions.) Median pay for anthropology courses is somewhat higher at \$3,000, but it nonetheless remains extremely low. In addition, there is minimal pay increase based on credentials or seniority, and minimal support for work or professional development outside the classroom.

The presence of a union on campus has a positive impact on wages. The data show that institutions where part-time faculty respondents were not represented by a union paid a median of \$2,475 per course, as compared with \$3,100 at institutions with union representation.

The data also suggest a racial disparity in pay and in the type of institution of employment (two-year or four-year, doctoral universities.) Part-time faculty who identified themselves as Black (not of Hispanic origin) and those who identified as Hispanic or Latino or multiracial earn less than other racial and ethnic groups. (Since the number of respondents in this category is small, CAW considers that it is important to undertake further analysis and collect more data focusing on this issue.)

The survey shows that part-time/adjunct faculty are not in their positions only temporarily. Over 80% of part-time faculty respondents have taught for at least three years; over 55% six or more years, and over 30% for ten or more years. 73.3% consider teaching in higher education their primary employment. More than three-fourths reported they were currently teaching at least one course for the third time or more at the same institution; more than half were teaching at least one course for the sixth time or more.

It is time for academic institutions to show respect for those who work day in and day out to ensure that students succeed and to give the highest priority to investment in the members of higher education's academic workforce, across all segments and statuses.

Given these conditions and circumstances, faculty unions have considered good practices for contingent employment, and organizations, such as Coalition of Contingent Academic Labor and New Faculty Majority Coalition, have formed to promote the interests of contingent faculty. Scholarly associations also have a role to play. The Modern Language Association (MLA), Organization of American Historians (OAH), American Historical Association (AHA), and the American Sociology Association (ASA), have all produced recommendations, standards, and guidelines for the employment of contingent faculty. While these groups support the creation of more tenure-track positions in academia, they are also mindful of the urgent need to improve the conditions for part-time/adjunct and contingent work.

The following resolution outlines principles that reflect the AAA's concern for fair and equitable treatment and respect for all academic faculty members, regardless of status.

Resolution:

The AAA membership resolves its commitment to the following principles:

1. Fair and equitable compensation, including medical and retirement benefits, for all members of the academic workforce.
2. Job security for all members of the academic workforce.
3. Participation in faculty governance for all members of the academic workforce.
4. Academic freedom, including freedom from retaliation in all teaching and research across the academic workforce.
5. Opportunities for professional advancement, including progressive salary steps, and professional development and institution-based grants, across the academic workforce.
6. Access to secretarial and technological support services, to the library, and other campus privileges across the academic workforce.
7. The right of contingent faculty to self-organize to improve their working conditions and pay, and to address other workplace matters.
8. Future efforts to collect more data related to questions of racial disparities in part-time pay and employment.
9. Further consideration of ways the AAA can be an effective advocate for contingent

faculty.

[i] “A Portrait of Part-Time Faculty Members. A Summary of Findings on Part-Time Respondents to the Coalition on the Academic Workforce Survey of Contingent Faculty Members and Instructors,” Coalition on the Academic Workforce, 2012.

CAW’s questionnaire was open to any faculty member or instructor. There were 28, 974 total responses, of which 25,212 were valid; 4,292 were from full-time tenured or tenure track (not contingent) faculty. Of the 20,920 responses from contingent faculty, 19,850 were from those in teaching positions, employed as part-time or adjunct faculty, full-time non-tenure track, postdoctoral teachers, or graduate student teaching assistants. The remainder were in contingent research positions; non-teaching graduate assistants, or post-doctoral research fellows. Faculty members in part-time positions were the majority of respondents, totaling 10,331; 4% (423) identified their primary field of specialization as anthropology.