

Unequal Pay for Equal Work?



**Universities' Exploitation
of Adjunct Labor**

What is CUNY Equity Week?

- Seeks to focus attention on the increasing and exploitative contingent employment practices at CUNY.
- Many individuals or groups who participate in CEW are also concerned with what they see as the *corporatization* or *neoliberalization* of higher education.

Discussion Questions

- *What do you think we mean when we say “the corporatization or neoliberalization of higher education?”*
- *What evidence is there for this trend in universities? At CUNY?*
- *What do you think CUNY Equity Week has to do with students or with this class?*



What is “contingent labor” or “contingent faculty”?

- The term **contingent faculty** refers to non-tenure track faculty and includes those who teach anywhere from one to five courses (and in certain cases even more) per semester.
- At CUNY, contingent faculty are mostly made up of faculty members called **adjuncts** who may teach part-time or full-time but are not considered full faculty members.

Discussion Question

- *What does **tenure** mean and how does receiving tenure change a faculty member's status or experience?*

How is the experience of an adjunct different from a tenure-track faculty member?

- Adjunct faculty often do exactly the same work as full faculty members (e.g. teach, grade, research & publish, advise students, etc.) and they usually possess the same advanced degrees.
- Many adjuncts teach more classes than tenure-track faculty members. Despite doing the same work, however, adjunct faculty have a very different experience from tenure-track faculty in several ways.

Look Who's
TEACHING
At CUNY!

They're experienced!
They're dedicated!
They're good! AND
THEY ARE CHEAP!!

Under management's new plan, part-timers will be able to teach the equivalent of a full-time load at a fraction of the cost (of tenured faculty) in salary and benefits.

**STUDY WITH
THE BEST!**

**STUDY WITH
THE EXPLOITED!**

Study at a world-class university with sweatshop wages.

8700

CUNY'S INVISIBLE PART-TIME FACULTY

1. Compensation

Adjuncts receive much less pay than full time, tenure track faculty:

Salary for a full professor at CUNY	\$66,799-194,039
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Starting annual income for an adjunct teaching full time (3 courses/semester)	\$18,722
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1. Compensation (cont.)

- To put this in perspective, the median income for a New Yorker with no more than a high school education or GED in 2007 was **\$28,077**.
- This means that adjuncts at CUNY earn about ***\$10,000 less per year*** than New Yorkers with only a high school diploma, despite having a much higher level of education and performing a job traditionally considered that of a “professional.”

1. Compensation (cont.)

- When compared to New York residents with the same education level, the pay for CUNY adjuncts is even more shocking: in 2007 the average income for a New Yorker with any graduate or professional degree was **\$63,669**.
- That means that starting wages for an adjunct teaching a full load at CUNY are less than a third of what other New Yorkers with similar educations earn!

1. Compensation (cont.)

- Added to these low wages, adjuncts who have taught at CUNY for many years have seen their economic status *decline* over the years rather than increase with their length of service.
- Since adjunct wages have not kept pace with the increasing cost of living and inflation, adjuncts actually earn *less now* (in real dollars) than they did in earlier years.

2. Job Security

- Adjuncts have virtually **no job security**.
- Since they are hired on either a semester-by-semester or a yearly basis, they have **little to NO assurance** that their job will be there in the future, even if they have been teaching at a school for many years!

3. Benefits

- As with wages and job security, adjuncts receive far **fewer benefits** than full faculty members.
- For example, adjuncts at CUNY have to teach for two consecutive semesters just to become eligible for **health insurance**.
- If their teaching load drops below six hours they automatically lose their health coverage.

3. Benefits (cont.)

- Doctoral student adjuncts who teach one or more course per semester are eligible for health insurance through the state of New York.
- Students who are not employed at CUNY or who are earning Master's Degrees are not eligible for this insurance.
- When students lose their teaching positions, they also lose their health insurance!

Discussion Questions

- What is *academic freedom*?
- How does having no job security limit *academic freedom* for adjunct faculty?
- How does limiting *academic freedom* affect your learning environment?

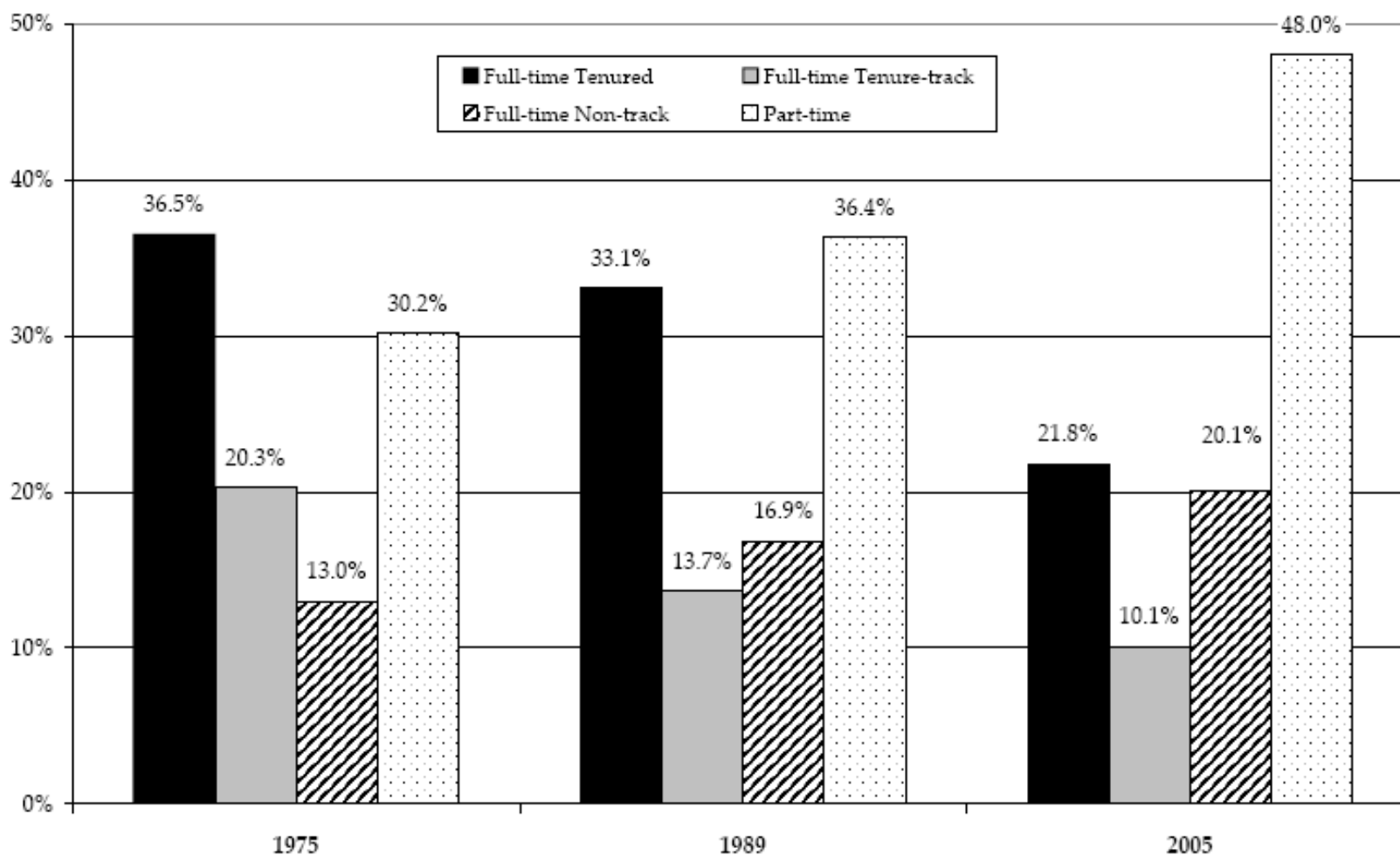
Growing Reliance on “Contingent Labor” in American universities and at CUNY

- In 1969, only 3.3% of full-time faculty appointments were non-tenure-track.
- Today, non-tenure-track positions of all types account for 65% of all faculty appointments in American higher education.
- Between 1998 and 2001, the number of full-time non-tenure-track positions grew by 35.5%.
- At CUNY, more than half of the teaching faculty are non-tenure-track and the administration has called for a further increase in the number of contingent faculty.

Growing Reliance on “Contingent Labor”

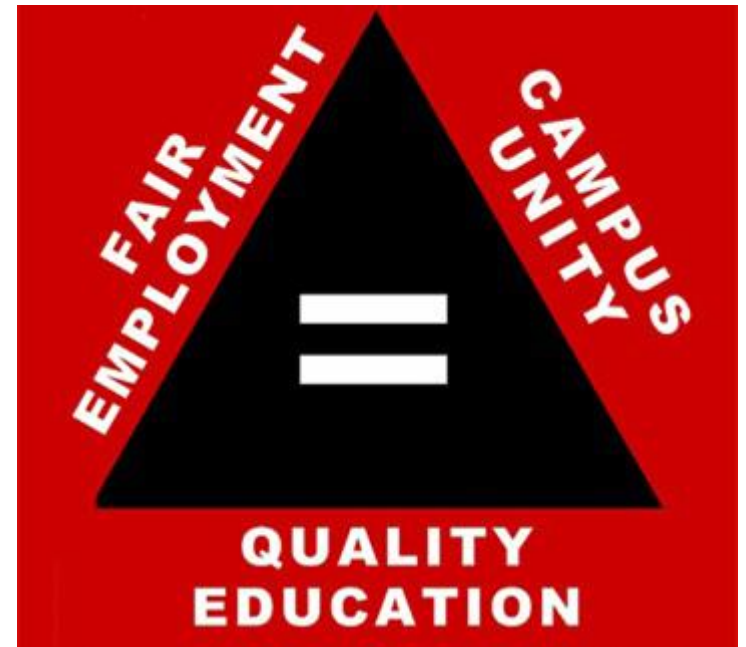
Trends in Faculty Status, 1975-2005
All Degree-Granting Institutions, National Totals

Source: U.S. Department of Education, IPEDS Fall Staff Survey. Compiled by the American Association of University Professors.



Discussion Question

- *Why should students care about the growing numbers of “contingent” workers at CUNY and at universities in general?*



Although adjuncts are talented, committed professionals, their work conditions hurt students and the whole university!

- When adjuncts are overworked and underpaid, they have less time and energy to devote to each class and each student.
- A critical element in a functional university is **fair compensation for comparable work** – this will improve students' experience along with that of adjunct faculty.

Although adjuncts are talented, committed professionals, their work conditions hurt students and the whole university!

- When adjuncts' academic freedom is threatened by limited job security, students suffer because they are exposed to a less diverse, less exciting set of ideas and approaches.
- When there is high turnover rate among adjunct faculty, students may be unable to take another course with (or even locate) an instructor they studied with in the past.

Discussion Question

- *Why does CUNY continue to employ so many “contingent” faculty members?*



Increasing Reliance on Adjuncts at CUNY

- As in many universities across the country, CUNY administrators justify their reliance on “contingent faculty” by citing budget constraints.
- In other words, adjuncts represent a cheaper labor force which is an attractive option when considering financial matters.

Increasing Reliance on Adjuncts at CUNY

- For this reason, CUNY Chancellor Matthew Goldstein claims CUNY must retain the “flexibility” that comes with a majority adjunct workforce.
- However, consider the fact that in **1975**, for 250,784 students, CUNY employed **11,300 full faculty members**, and today, for 225,962 students, CUNY employs only **6,817 full faculty members**.
- That’s almost half the amount of full-time faculty today for fewer students than in 1975. These statistics are even more shocking when we consider that CUNY did **not charge tuition before 1976**.

What are adjuncts doing to address this crisis?

- Many campaigns by “contingent faculty” have sprung up in recent history, and all attempt to address the issues raised above. One example of organizing on a national level is carried out by the COCAL (Coalition of Contingent Academic Labor.)
- Within CUNY, adjuncts, along with full-time faculty members, have attempted to utilize their union, the Professional Staff Congress (PSC.)
- They have also formed groups such as The Adjunct Project and CUNY Contingents Unite.

What are adjuncts doing to address this crisis?

- In the last round of contract negotiations, adjunct demands included wage increases, a greater degree of job security, and benefits for adjunct faculty.
- The only significant gain to come out of the most recent contract for adjuncts was health insurance for graduate student employees.
- Pay inequity, job insecurity, and a lack of other benefits such as parental leave and sick days still negatively affect adjuncts lives.

Discussion Questions

- How can students help address the academic labor crisis?
- Why should you get involved?



KENNEDY



IT'S NO USE. YOU
CAN'T MAKE ONE
FIST FIGHT
AGAINST ITSELF!

