



A Union of Professionals

THE FACULTY AND COLLEGE EXCELLENCE CAMPAIGN

A Call To Action

College and university faculty, both full-time and part-time/adjunct, are the heart and soul of quality higher education for the nation's college students. The *Faculty and College Excellence* Campaign is a national effort spearheaded by the American Federation of Teachers. The purpose of the campaign is to:

- Convince the nation's public officials that excellence in higher education is coupled with—in fact, *requires*—both a strong, secure full-time tenured faculty corps and fair and equitable treatment of part-time/adjunct and other nontenure-track faculty.
- Challenge the nation's colleges and public officials to curb the financial exploitation and unprofessional treatment of hundreds of thousands of instructors hired to teach on a part-time/adjunct or other nontenure-track basis with disproportionately low salaries and totally inadequate professional support.
- Alert the American people to the dangerous erosion in the corps of full-time tenured teachers and researchers in our colleges and universities.
- Develop a *Faculty and College Excellence* standard of staffing practices that promotes high quality education.
- Win the introduction and passage of state legislation to bring the *Faculty and College Excellence* standard to each state.

The goal of the campaign is to ensure that *all* faculty members receive the financial and professional support they need to do their best work and to establish a better balance between full-time tenured faculty and part-time/adjunct and other nontenure-track faculty in our colleges and universities.

The initial stage of the campaign is to secure the introduction of *Faculty and College Excellence* legislation in as many state legislatures as possible, along with companion federal legislation, to provide contingent faculty members with the compensation and professional support they need while restoring full-time tenured positions. Following the introduction of legislation, AFT and its affiliates will seek public legislative hearings and enactment of the *Faculty and College Excellence* program. The Campaign will engage faculty members, administrators, students, labor unions and progressive advocacy groups in a coalition to build grass-roots support for the effort, to elicit sponsors for *Faculty and College Excellence* legislation, and to engage in advocacy and political action to win passage of the legislation.

Background

During the twentieth century, the United States developed the finest and most diverse higher education system in the world. Today, there are close to 4,200 colleges and universities across the country, enrolling nearly 14 million students and employing just over 3 million academic professionals. These range from vocational/technical institutes and community colleges to state universities and private colleges and universities.

This did not happen by accident. It happened because government and academic leaders, backed by the general public, committed themselves to policies that make for excellent education and backed those policies with a strong financial commitment. Here are some examples:

- Government at all levels invested directly in creating and nurturing an extraordinary array of public colleges and universities. The high point of state and local support per student was reached in 2001 at \$7,121 per student.
- The federal government made a major commitment in the 1960's to offer federal financial assistance to students who needed help in meeting college costs. Federal grant, loan and work-study programs now provide about \$74 billion in aid to over 10 million postsecondary students.
- Recognizing that great teachers and researchers are the heart of the educational program, American colleges and universities attracted outstanding faculty by offering them well-paid, secure jobs which allowed them to make a full-time, long-term commitment to the institution and its students. In 1960, 75 percent of college faculty members were full-time. Today, fewer than 30 percent of instructional staff hold tenured or tenure-track positions.
- Colleges and universities put procedures into place that gave faculty members the primary role in shaping the academic program, ensured that faculty members could conduct their teaching and research without outside interference, and guaranteed they would not be removed from their posts for petty or political reasons.
- In exchange for undergoing a long and difficult probationary period that ranges from three to seven years, and submitting themselves to stringent peer evaluation throughout their careers, faculty members were given a great deal of professional autonomy to ensure that educational considerations always came first in higher education policymaking.

These policies served higher education well. Americans have good reason to be proud of their colleges and universities. Foreign students flock to our shores for advanced education. In 2000, 25 percent of foreign students who attended colleges outside their own country enrolled in American institutions. Today, however, American leadership in higher education is in jeopardy because these policies, the policies that made higher education great, are being seriously eroded.

- State support for public colleges and universities is declining on a per pupil basis, as is the proportion of state budgets devoted to public higher education. Adjusted for inflation, state and local funding per student at public colleges and universities is now at its lowest point in 25 years.

- Despite the rise in overall federal dollars, the most critical number—the *purchasing power* of federal student grants—has declined sharply and continues to decline each year. For example, the average Pell Grant in 2003-4 covered only 23 percent of the total charges at the average four-year public institution, whereas it covered 35 percent of total charges in 1980-81.
- Because public colleges and universities are losing government support, institutional administrators all over the country are looking everywhere they can to raise money. First and foremost, the burden is falling on students and their families. Tuition increases have been the number one way to make up for lost public funds. Over the last ten years, tuition increases have totaled 51% at public four-year colleges, 36% at private four-year colleges and 26% at two-year colleges.
- Public colleges and universities are also scrambling for new sources of support, including corporate-sponsored research and training grants, lucrative licensing agreements and privatization of student services. According to the U.S. Department of Education, university revenues from outside sources increased 155 percent between 1992 and 2000. This activity has helped institutional budgets, particularly at large research universities, but it has also led to a situation in which corporate business considerations, profits and intellectual property rights are trumping academic integrity in institutional decision making.
- To save money, many public colleges and universities have been trying to replace faculty decision making with corporate-style management. This style of management places the highest value on financial deal-making and program and personnel cuts, bypassing, whenever possible, the proven tradition of collegial decision making and academic primacy that best characterizes American higher education. The most profound aspect of this is the subject of our Campaign, the exploitation of part-time/adjunct and other contingent faculty members and the erosion in full-time tenured positions.

Aside from the issues of academic staffing with which this campaign deals, the results of an inattention to higher education support are starting to show in many ways. The U.S. Education Secretary's Commission on the Future of Higher Education has cited data that should be of great concern to every college student and every family contemplating college for their children.

- College costs are rising much faster than family income.
- Among the 30 member nations of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the United States used to rank number one but now ranks just seventh in the percentage of citizens who enter postsecondary education and then complete a bachelor degree or postgraduate program.
- While the percentage of students entering higher education has increased 20 percent in 20 years, the number of students graduating has gone up only three percent. When other factors are held constant, a study found that a \$1,000 increase in state appropriations per full-time student at a four-year public institution was associated with about a one percent increase in graduation rates—when state funding goes down, graduation rates may decrease. In addition, Liang Zhang from the University of Minnesota who is also a faculty associate at the Cornell Higher Education Research Institute contends that a slow increase in state funding, as we are

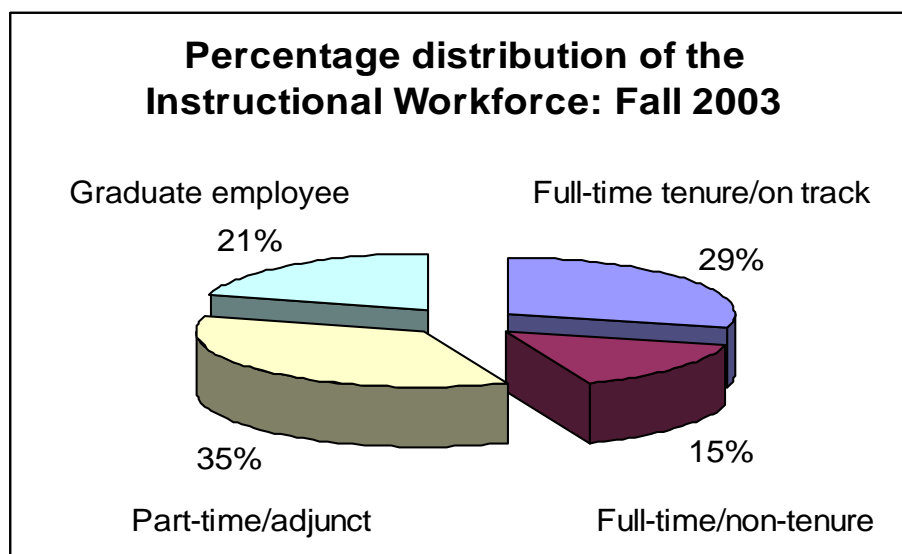
seeing now, seems to be associated with a fast increase in tuition costs which, in turn, is likely to have a negative impact on graduation rates.

- Because low-income high school graduates disproportionately attend the public institutions most dependent on government support, the gap between affluent students and low-income students is widening. Low income high school graduates who are college qualified are five times less likely to attend college than high-income, college qualified graduates. Affluent students with the lowest grades and test scores have as good a chance of attending college as the poorest students with the highest grades and test scores.

The Dangerous Condition of Academic Staffing

The American public knows that nothing is more important to an excellent college education than excellent faculty, but nowhere are the negative trends in higher education more apparent than in the way colleges hire and support the academic faculty today. Over the last twenty years or so, colleges and universities have increasingly turned away from filling full-time tenured jobs. At the same time, hundreds of thousands of nontenure-track faculty members, especially part-time/adjunct faculty, have been hired and then denied proportionate salaries, decent benefits and professional supports such as paid office hours. This has taken place largely under the radar screen of public attention, but the numbers are truly astonishing.

The pie chart below illustrates the situation. Less than thirty percent of the instructional workforce today is full-time, tenured or tenure-track. Part-time/adjunct faculty members now constitute the single largest group of faculty, about 35 percent of the instructional workforce, and then we have to account for contingent full-time nontenure-track faculty and graduate employees teaching courses. As a result of all this, while the proportion of contingent workers across all occupations is about 30 percent, *the proportion of contingent labor in higher education is now about 70 percent*. In terms of time in the classroom, full-time faculty members teach 60 percent of the undergraduate classes. The research capacity of American higher education is seriously threatened when less than one-third of the faculty is paid and supported to do research.



Contingent faculty members, particularly part-time/adjunct faculty, are paid very low salaries (less than \$2,700 per course on average.) They generally receive few, if any, health or pension benefits. This means that they must look for other ways to provide for themselves and their families, which diminishes the time and attention they can devote to the institution and to students.

Part-time/adjunct faculty members are rarely provided the professional support they need to do their best work. For example, they generally receive little or no pay for office hours to advise their students. Often, they are not given offices or support staff altogether. Not surprisingly, there is high turnover in the ranks. The lack of professional supports plus high turnover means that students often can not count on long-term mentoring relationships with their adjunct professors or access to letters of recommendation and professional contacts that are so valuable to graduating students.

In most cases, part-time/adjunct faculty members are not given an opportunity, or paid a sufficient salary, to become part of the decision making process that develops the college curriculum. Because contingent faculty generally can be fired without cause or notice, even if they have served the institution for years, these faculty members do not have the level of independence and academic freedom as faculty members with tenure. Generally, contingent faculty members are neither paid nor encouraged to continue their academic research.

Part-time/adjunct faculty members do an extraordinarily good job of teaching—and this has helped keep the dimensions of the brewing crisis from public attention. However, the fact is that students can not get all the consistent support and guidance they need from faculty members who do not receive a decent salary, who are not regularly available outside class time and are unable to participate fully in developing the academic program. We must ensure that all the faculty members serving the nation's college students have the supports needed to do the highest quality work.

The Need for a Full-time Tenured Faculty Corps

Too often today, colleges are pretending that it does not make much difference educationally if they eviscerate the corps of full-time tenured faculty and replace it with badly treated part-time/adjunct and contingent faculty. The truth, however, is that a faculty corps consisting primarily of full-time tenured faculty is essential to excellent education.

- Just as in other professional fields, full-time commitment and professional treatment results in more knowledgeable and better service to students and taxpayers. From doctors to lawyers to aerospace engineers, the public expects to be served by practitioners who are paid professional salaries and have the time and resources needed to do the job. Education is very labor intensive and requires a great deal of interaction with students in and out of the classroom. One probably would not want a doctor who had no medical assistants, no access to computers and no time to read the latest findings in medical journals. Yet, nearly two out of three new faculty hires today are placed in part-time/adjunct or contingent positions that may not pay a decent wage or offer much in the way of professional support.
- Full-time, tenured faculty members are essential in selecting the best faculty and evaluating their work. Faculty should be hired, evaluated and granted or denied tenure by colleagues who are up to date on the latest scholarship in their field, who have experience in evaluating fellow academics and who know the policies and needs of their college and their department.

This kind of professional attention is nearly universal in filling full-time tenured faculty positions but the employment of part-time/adjunct faculty members is typically last-minute and haphazard.

- Full-time tenured professors are essential to developing quality educational programs for their colleges and students. A course of study in an academic discipline—and for entire colleges and universities—needs to be developed by faculty members who are knowledgeable about their institution’s mission and committed to its success. Full-time tenured faculty also have the knowledge, time and resources to offer personalized instruction and advise students about their courses, their academic goals and career plans.
- Full-time tenured professors are in a position to make sure that academic considerations always come first in the way a college is governed. Traditionally, colleges and universities make decisions under a policy of “shared governance” between faculty and the college administration. Shared governance provides full-time tenured faculty with the primary role in determining curriculum, teaching and research standards as well as a say in other decision making. This ensures that teaching and research will remain an institution’s most important priorities, not just “efficiency” or “flexibility.”
- Full-time tenured professors have due process protections that enable them to protect intellectual freedom on campus. Colleges and universities—indeed, our entire society—need the kind of free-wheeling dialogue, debate, experimentation, and verification of findings that comes when scholars are unafraid to speak, to write, to think, to theorize, to conduct experiments and debate their findings without fear. Contingent faculty members, however, may have a harder time exercising academic freedom if they know their jobs may be on the line whenever there is a change in the conventional wisdom or the political winds.
- Full-time tenured faculty members are in the best position to maintain high academic standards for students. Because of their freedom from reprisal, permanent, full-time tenured professors can grade students without worrying about the potential effect on their employment.
- Full-time tenured faculty members are indispensable to maintaining American leadership in research. Scholarly and creative activity are the engines that keep America on top in commerce, medicine, science, and technology. Higher education research enriches our culture and generates breakthroughs in every walk of life. Over the years, innovations as varied as margarine, air bags, life-saving pharmaceuticals and now the Internet have resulted from basic or applied research that was conducted in colleges and universities. Just as new research flourishes in academic settings, good teaching depends on good scholarship. By following the latest developments in their fields and discussing their most recent findings, full-time tenured faculty members can keep their courses of study current and challenging and prepare their students for global competition.

Full-time tenured faculty members are in a good position to conduct research because it requires sustained periods of study and experimentation. Thus, the 2004 National Survey of Postsecondary Faculty found that full-time tenured and tenure-track faculty consistently produced more scholarship—including percentage of time spent on research and number of

publications—than full-time nontenure-track faculty at all types of higher education institutions—public, private, two-year or four-year.

The Need to Improve Working Conditions for Contingent Faculty

The advantages of an educational system staffed in large measure by full-time tenured faculty are manifest. At the same time, as we noted before, part-time/adjunct and other nontenure-track faculty members play a positive, indeed essential role on college campuses. The evidence is clear; part-time/adjunct and other nontenure-track faculty members teach well and make major contributions to the institutions they serve. They offer extremely valuable professional and academic perspectives to their students. They may teach subjects for which there are not enough students to justify a full-time teaching load, they may fill in for a full-time professor on leave and they may enable colleges and universities to meet short-term fluctuations in enrollment.

However, today's overuse and exploitation of part-time/adjunct faculty members is driven overwhelmingly by a wish to save money, to provide education on the cheap. Today's working conditions for part-time/adjunct faculty and other nontenure-track faculty impair their ability to do their best work. For example, as long as so many part-time/adjunct faculty members have to run from college to college to earn a living, as long as they have to worry about their lack of health and pension benefits, as long as they are hired under less-than-professional conditions, as long as evaluation of their work is cursory or non-existent, as long as they lack office space and basic professional support, as long as they are unable to participate in college governance—as long as all this is true, our colleges and universities will have more and more trouble delivering world-class quality education. Improving the compensation and working conditions of part-time/adjunct and other nontenure-track faculty members goes hand-in-hand with high-quality education.

The fault-line that has developed within the profession has severe consequences for the fundamental American value of equal educational opportunity. While elite private institutions still have a preponderance of full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty, part-time/adjunct and other nontenure-track instructors are particularly numerous at the public colleges and universities and the community colleges that students from middle and working class families and low-income households are most likely to attend.

The Faculty and College Excellence Standards for Academic Staffing

We believe that American higher education is now at a crossroads, a time when misguided staffing policies threaten to jeopardize the quality of education that students need and deserve. The *Faculty and College Excellence Campaign* is a national movement to ensure that the policies which made American higher education great are not abandoned, before it is too late.

Following is a statement of the *Faculty and College Excellence Standards for Academic Staffing*, which establishes two basic principles to develop a staffing structure and academic practices that will enable American higher education to maintain its world leadership. The principles enunciated here apply to full-time tenured and part-time/adjunct and other nontenure-track faculty members. Separate sets of standards for graduate student research and teaching employees and for professional staff members are found in the AFT publications, *Recognition and Respect: Standards of Good Practice*

in the Employment of Graduate Employees as well as Empowerment and Voice: Standards of Good Practice in the Employment of Professional Staff.

Principle One:

Bring About Fairness and Equity in the Treatment of Part-Time/ Adjunct and Other Nontenure-Track Faculty Members

- Provide salary and benefits to part-time/adjunct and other nontenure-track faculty members in proportion to that paid full-time tenured faculty of the same qualifications for doing the same work. The formula for determining pay equity may vary at different colleges but the general principle is one of pairing proportional professional responsibilities with proportionate compensation. Full pay equity enables all faculty members, full-time and part-time/adjunct, to provide office hours to their students, to participate in curriculum development and shared governance and to conduct research—in short, to be full service professionals for their students. In the absence of full pay equity, part-time/adjunct faculty and other nontenure-track faculty should receive payment for conducting office hours, participating in shared governance and related activities.
- Provide academic freedom and due process protections to part-time/adjunct and other nontenure-track faculty members. Students need professors free to conduct classes and raise issues without being constantly subject to arbitrary dismissal. After a period of intensive observation and evaluation, part-time/adjunct and other nontenure-track faculty members should be granted due process protections from arbitrary dismissal. Such faculty members should be subject to non-reappointment only if the courses taught are not being offered and subject to continued satisfactory evaluation with, again, the necessary due process protections.
- Require that preferential consideration be given to the service of part-time/adjunct faculty and other nontenure-track faculty in filling full-time tenured positions as they arise, in accordance with the requirements of the position, the needs of the department, the employee's seniority at the institution and institutional and state affirmative action and other personnel policies. This policy would not keep colleges and universities from conducting national searches and choosing the best available person for the job. Too often, however, service as a part-time/adjunct or other nontenure-track faculty member has been overlooked when new full-time tenure-track positions become available. This principle, coupled with adequate funding to support it, is aimed at assuring that the creation of new full-time tenured positions would not freeze out part-time/adjunct and other nontenure-track faculty from employment opportunities.

Principle Two:

Reverse the Erosion of Full-Time Tenured Faculty Positions

Build the ranks of full-time tenured faculty positions and establish a better balance in the employment of full-time tenured faculty and contingent and/or part-time/adjunct faculty. As noted earlier, contingent and part-time/adjunct faculty play and will continue to play a substantial and critical role in instruction. However, the relative numbers are significantly out of balance today.

- If, for example, we look at the number of undergraduate classes taught by full-time faculty in relation to the number of classes taught by part-time/adjunct faculty, we find that nearly half of today's courses are now taught by part-time/adjunct faculty, with the proportion of part-time/adjunct and other nontenure-track faculty considerably higher at many institutions, particularly the nation's community colleges.
- If we look at the number of people who are in full-time tenured or tenure-track positions as opposed to other instructional categories, we find that 70 percent of today's instructional force is made up of contingent faculty and only 30 percent is made up of full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty members.

Different colleges have very different missions, conditions in one state differ from those in other states, and ideal goals in one situation will not apply to other situations, but the following yardstick is recommended.

- A reasonable balance between full-time tenure faculty positions and part-time/adjunct and other nontenure-track faculty positions should be established so that, at the end of a "ramping up" period, at least 75 percent of the classes in any academic department are being taught by full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty while the remaining classes are taught by part-time/adjunct faculty and other nontenure-track faculty.

Faculty and College Excellence Legislation in the States

Our Campaign seeks the enactment of legislation and funding to carry out the most important features of the *Faculty and College Excellence* Standards for Academic Staffing in states across the nation. Although the specific provisions of *Faculty and College Excellence* legislation will undoubtedly differ from state to state, we expect the legislation will establish goals and provide funding to achieve the following purposes.

1. The legislation would establish a state policy of providing salary and benefits to part-time/adjunct and other nontenure-track faculty in the state's public colleges and universities proportionate to that paid to full-time tenured faculty of the same qualifications for doing the same work. Depending on state conditions, this could be set as a goal to be implemented within a certain amount of time or as a requirement to be met immediately. There may be one formula for determining proportional pay, or the formula may vary depending on institutional circumstances, but advisement and committee participation should be part of the calculation.
2. After an initial evaluation period and subject to ongoing evaluations, the legislation would require public colleges and universities to establish procedures protecting part-time adjunct faculty and other nontenure-track faculty members from arbitrary dismissal, with appropriate due process protections. Faculty members would be subject to non-reappointment only if the courses taught are not being offered and subject to continued satisfactory evaluation with appropriate due process protections.
3. The legislation would require public institutions of higher education in the state to establish procedures that give preferential consideration to the service of part-time/adjunct and other nontenure-track faculty in filling full-time tenured positions depending on the requirements of the

position, the needs of the department, the employee's seniority at the institution and institutional and state affirmative action and other personnel policies.

4. The legislation will establish a more appropriate balance between full-time tenured faculty and part-time/adjunct and other nontenure-track faculty at the state's public colleges and universities by installing a ratio of 75-25, phased in over time, between the number of undergraduate classes in each academic department taught by full-time tenured faculty members and the number taught by part-time/adjunct and other nontenure-track faculty. *To ensure that this goal is met without eliminating current positions, the legislation will require each institution to develop a plan for achieving its goal by creating new full-time tenured positions, by hiring contingent faculty members to fill such positions and/or by filling vacant positions.*

5. To couple the legislation's goals with the financial capacity to achieve them, and to thereby ensure that one group of faculty is not pitted against another, the legislation will establish dedicated appropriations to bring parity in compensation for part-time/adjunct and other nontenure-track faculty *and* to employ more full-time tenured faculty. Without adequate funding, goals such as those stated above remain just that—goals. Achieving the *Faculty and College Excellence* legislation will require a renewed public investment in the best academic staffing for our colleges and universities and, most of all, today's and tomorrow's students.

Please note that some states may not be ready to consider this package of reforms because they have not carefully studied the problem before. In some such cases, a precursor to the full *Faculty and College Excellence* legislation could be legislation to conduct a one-year state-funded study of trends regarding the employment of full-time and part-time/adjunct faculty and of faculty working conditions. A number of states have already undertaken such studies. In general, such studies have documented the loss of tenured positions and the overuse and exploitation of part-time/adjunct and contingent faculty.

Finally, it must be noted that very many AFT affiliates have already achieved impressive results at the bargaining table and in the legislature with regard to equity and academic staffing. The *Faculty and College Excellence* legislation is in no way intended to dismiss or impede those efforts. Rather, the campaign and the legislation are intended to provide a framework for advancing the union's priorities on academic staffing. Naturally, some affiliates may choose to continue their ongoing legislative efforts as they move the overall academic staffing agenda forward.

Federal Faculty and College Excellence Legislation

In general, the federal role in addressing academic staffing issues is extremely limited, because the federal government does not provide direct all-purpose funding to higher education institutions and partly because it is the policy of the federal government, quite properly, not to interfere in academic policy at the institutional level. However, there are two areas where legislation would advance *Faculty and College Excellence* goals. The legislation would have two components.

1. Undertake a national study under the auspices of an independent agency such as the American Association for the Advancement of Science or the National Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance charting the growth of part-time/adjunct and other nontenure-

track faculty in higher education, the loss of full-time tenured and tenure-track faculty and the impact of these developments.

2. Require that accrediting agencies recognized by the federal government include in their institutional requirements a provision that the preponderance of faculty members at the institution should be full-time and have the benefits of tenure.

Conclusion

Come join us, then, in this Campaign to make our very good higher education system the best it can be, the best it needs to be for the nation's college students in a rapidly changing, competitive world. Let's get our colleges and universities moving in the right direction again by preserving and strengthening the policies that made American higher education great in the first place.