

Sinclair AAUP News

Issue 2, October 2009



The Case for a Higher Full-time/Part-time Ratio by Susan Harris

The administration is committed to shifting to a higher percentage of part-time faculty at Sinclair. Some of this shift has been created by non-renewals of annually contracted faculty. Many new part-time faculty have also been hired as the number of students attending Sinclair rises. This increase in part-time faculty negatively impacts faculty, Sinclair, and most of all, our students.

As the number of sections of classes increases, the need for qualified, experienced part-time faculty grows. It is increasingly more difficult to find people to fill these positions. And why would high quality faculty want to teach under these conditions? The pay is very low, there are no private places to meet with students, they do not take part in course development, they have fewer opportunities to stay current in their academic field, and they are vulnerable to dismissal. According to a study of post-secondary faculty by the National Center for Education Statistics (<http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/nsopf/>), 40.4% of part-time faculty at public 2-year schools would prefer to teach full-time. Furthermore, for 33.8% of them, part-time employment is their primary employment. Some part-time faculty teach at multiple institutions. This situation has created a highly educated group of working poor. Even the most highly qualified and dedicated part-time faculty cannot do their best work in this environment. Our students deserve better than this.

This increase in the number of part-time faculty has also created a burden on full-time faculty, who are responsible for the hiring and guidance of these faculty. It is dangerous to assume that new part-time faculty members will do fine without active mentoring from full-time faculty. Support for the mentoring of new faculty used to be compensated. A decision was made to stop paying faculty for this important work. Such compensation showed a commitment by the administration for ensuring quality teaching, and showed respect for the time spent by the full-time faculty member. As the non-teaching demands on our time grow, it becomes increasingly more difficult to create and revise courses, pursue professional development, and concentrate on the most important part of our jobs: our students.

While the percentage of full-time faculty decreases, the percentage of our full-time administrators is going up. This was noted in the recent AQUIP Systems Appraisal Feedback Report as follows: "While Sinclair is currently reorganizing itself to meet changing community needs, no rationale is provided for how a 63% increase in administrative/professional employees concurrent with an increase of less than 10% in faculty positions in the past decade serves to strengthen the focus on student learning."

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(Continued from page 1) What is the best answer for our students? The creation of more full-time tenure-track positions. This will ensure the highest quality faculty for the position, and most importantly will give our students what they deserve: great teachers, with the time and means to serve students to the best of their abilities. ■

Should Annually Contracted Faculty Join AAUP ?

This past year, a significant number of annually contracted faculty (ACF) were notified that their contracts would not be renewed via letters from the Provost sent as late as June 22, little more than a week before the termination date and the cut-off of medical and dental benefits and life insurance. These faculty were direct victims of the administration's personnel budget cuts. More troubling, this retrenchment process seems to be far from over, despite marked increases in enrollment.

Why should ACFs join the AAUP? The advantages are many:

- The AAUP gives you representation where there is none now. Sinclair's AAUP chapter is concerned with improving the lot of ALL full time faculty, and as members, you can better represent your particular concerns within our faculty governance model.
- The AAUP allows you to be heard on matters that affect you professionally, such as distance learning, assessment, and academic freedom. Your opinion will be valued and will count.
- Membership in the AAUP will encourage the administration to take your concerns seriously. Administrators now see you as "temporary" full time faculty members, to be retained or let go according to budgetary strategies that completely disregard your years of service to the college and to students.
- A key word in Sinclair's AAUP Chapter Mission Statement is "Respect." Administrators at the College should respect all faculty groups. Without this respect, the ACF will continue to disproportionately be victims of the administration's budget strategies.
- If your contract is not renewed, AAUP sponsored companies offer medical and dental insurance at more affordable rates than are available through COBRA.
- Membership in AAUP ensures the support of the Ohio Conference of the AAUP as well as the national office should your position ever be threatened unfairly.

To help protect your future as a full-time Sinclair faculty member, please consider enrolling in AAUP membership. Let the administration and your colleagues know you care about quality at Sinclair.

Bill Le Jeune, LACS



OUR NEXT MEETING

Please join us! Meetings are held every other Friday in room 4211 from 2:30 to 4:00 p.m. Mark these dates on your calendar: 11/6, and 11/20. Can't spare an hour and a half on a Friday? Then come for just part of the meeting. Refreshments are always served!

Be not afraid!



Don't fear reprisal from Sinclair's administration if you become active in the AAUP - you are protected by Ohio law. In fact, you are more protected *if* you participate than not! **Julie C. Ford** of Doll, Jansen & Ford explains:

Your Rights as a Public Employee to Organize

Public employees in Ohio have the rights:

- to form, join, or assist a union (or to refrain from doing so);
- to choose whether or not to be represented by a union;
- to bargain collectively with their employer over wages, hours, and terms and conditions of employment; and
- to engage in “other concerted activities for the purpose of collective bargaining or other mutual aid and protection.”

It is illegal for a public employer to interfere with these rights in any way, including by attempting to restrain or coerce employees in the exercise of their rights or by discriminating against employees who have exercised their rights to seek union representation or to engage in concerted activities. These rights apply to employees of public colleges and universities with the exception of part-time faculty members and student teaching assistants, who are not within the law's definition of “employee,” and possibly heads of departments (this varies from school to school), and heads of divisions, who are considered to be “supervisors” and cannot be included as a unit of faculty for organizing and bargaining.

The **State Employee Relations Board (SERB)** enforces these rights, which are contained in the Ohio Public Employees Collective Bargaining Act, passed in 1983. An infringement of employee rights is considered an “unfair labor practice,” and SERB is empowered to provide various remedies, including reinstatement and back pay in the extreme case of a discharge or other act of retaliation. It should be noted, though, that such retaliation has been rare in the context of colleges and universities in Ohio.

You can obtain more information about your rights at <http://www.serb.state.oh.us/>.

The Card Campaign

SERB also processes requests for union elections by public employees. Typically, a union – referred to in Ohio law as an employee organization – or a group of employees circulates a petition or “authorization” cards, which employees sign to indicate they want union representation, an election or both. A public employer that is presented with evidence that a majority of the employees in a particular unit want union representation may agree to recognize the union voluntarily. Most commonly, however, the evidence is filed with SERB with a request for a representation election. The employer is *not* permitted to see the cards or to know who has signed. The agency may conduct proceedings to make sure that the petition covers an appropriate group of employees – that the group shares common interests (faculty and clerical staff would not be in the same unit, for example), that there

are no supervisors included and the like – and schedules an election. Unfortunately, SERB’s processes sometimes grind slowly, but an election will be the end result. If a simple majority of the employees voting in the election chooses to have representation, the employee organization is certified as the bargaining representative of the employees. At that point, the employer has a legal obligation to bargain with the union in good faith.

Julie Ford is a partner in Doll, Jansen & Ford, a Dayton law firm that practices exclusively in the areas of labor and employment law on behalf of unions and employees. She has been representing labor organizations and working men and women – including truck drivers, college professors, factory workers, nurses, and airline pilots – for 17 years.

Faculty Concerns

This is how the AAUP works: local chapters identify their OWN issues and their own solutions to problems. We need to know your concerns. Please join us in a positive, professional effort to improve Sinclair's faculty and the quality of the education it delivers.

At a recent chapter meeting where faculty members were invited to share their concerns about work at Sinclair, the following issues were mentioned:

- Part-time/full-time ratios
- Assault on tenure
- Academic Freedom
- Quality of education
- Quality of the workplace
- The need for a positive environment at the college
- Faculty need to have a voice
- Representation/Respect
- Faculty control of Academe
- Shared governance
- Stronger work contract with the administration
- The current business model of running the college
- Power to negotiate
- Self-determination
- Exploitation of ACFs
- Under qualified instructors
- Part-time quality and mentoring

Does any of this resonate with you?

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