



Negotiated rehire rights

Long-time instructor describes pain of losing assignment, outpouring of faculty and student support

WHAT HAPPENS when your employer disregards your contractually negotiated rehire rights? Part-time instructors at Oakland's Laney College recently found out. One of them is Cynthia Mahabir, a sociology instructor and Part-Time Representative on the executive board of the Peralta Federation of Teachers. Mahabir has taught for 17 years, but the district did not rehire her this fall, despite the rehire rights negotiated between the union and the district. Mahabir gave an in-depth interview to *Part-Timer*.

Q How long have you taught sociology at Laney College?

A For 17 years and I love it.

Q What gives you the most satisfaction about teaching?

A Teaching at a community college has been far more satisfying personally than teaching at four-year institutions. The classroom excites me and is my

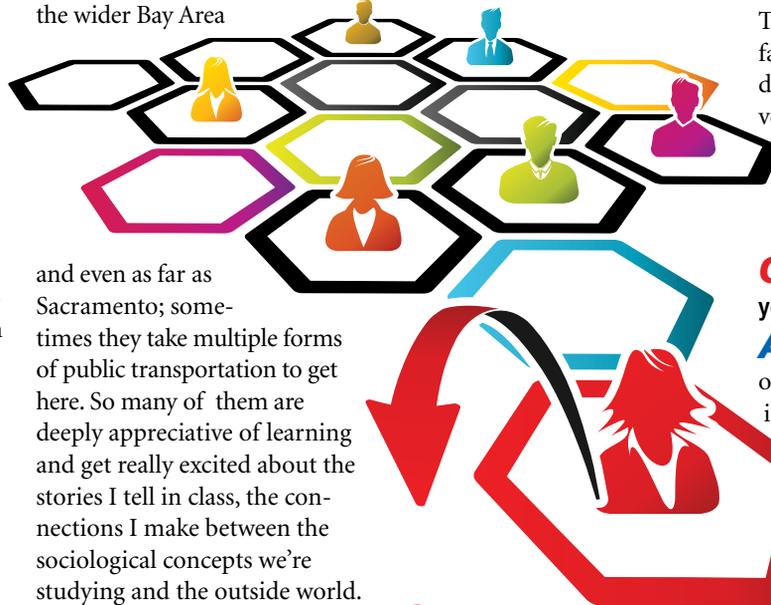
source of gratification. I really like the students, who represent a very interesting mix of ethnicities, immigrants and native-born students, and people of different ages. They come from the wider Bay Area

and even as far as Sacramento; sometimes they take multiple forms of public transportation to get here. So many of them are deeply appreciative of learning and get really excited about the stories I tell in class, the connections I make between the sociological concepts we're studying and the outside world.

Q How did you feel when you learned you weren't going to be rehired?

A My heart sank. I felt like

I'd been summarily discarded, especially when I discovered they had cut off my access to district email and I couldn't even communicate with colleagues or former students.



Q What's your sense of why this was done to you?

A It seems clear to many of us that it was retaliatory. I had taken public positions that the administration did not like. There have been some ex post facto fabrications justifying the decision, but none of them is very convincing or defensible according to our contract language on rehiring part-time faculty.

Q How has the union helped you during this difficult time?

A Our local union was aware of my case, and that of other instructors, even before I was because the administration sent them a letter saying I was not to be rehired because I was not a "good fit." The union was ready to file a grievance even before I thought about what should happen! Because I'm the Part-Time Representative for our local union and some of the public positions I had taken were in that capacity, the union was clear that they would do everything possible to fight for me. They also understood it was extremely important to defend our rehire pool contract language.

We compiled a detailed report about my case that was put in all faculty mailboxes. We conducted two reinstatement

Q How has this changed your life?

A It's been hard. It was emotionally and personally corrosive for a while, but I've figured out how to deal with it. I'm willing to fight because I think this is an injustice.

I have a lot of support from my part-time and full-time colleagues at the college and others across the nation. I'm staying focused, not getting drawn into nasty public exchanges, but instead putting energy into the processes we have in place to challenge this administrative decision.

Know Your Rights

To maintain stable teaching ranks, many local unions have negotiated some form of rehire rights or preference hiring for part-time faculty in the collective bargaining agreement between the union and the district.

- » Know your contract
- » Inform your union representatives if the contract has been violated
- » Document events in writing
- » Don't be intimidated into silence
- » Keep public discourse focused on the issue

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Write a letter today!

Join CFT campaign for office hours pay, full-time positions

HOW CAN WE GET

more state funding for office hours, equal pay for equal work, and new full-time positions that that will benefit existing part-time faculty? CFT is calling on part-timers and their allies to urge the governor to include line items in the state budget dedicated to these essential improvements.

Advocate for our interests in providing equal education opportunities for students by writing directly to Gov.



Brown and others who influence the state budget. Ask the governor and the Department of Finance for these new resources:

- **\$100 million** to make existing part-time faculty full time
- **\$50 million** to increase the salaries of temporary, part-time faculty as a first step toward achieving pay equity with their tenure-track colleagues
- **\$30 million** to fund paid

office hours for part-time faculty.

> Send your letters to:
Governor Jerry Brown
State Capitol, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

Michael Cohen, *Director*
Nick Schweizer, *Program Budget Manager*
Department of Finance
915 L Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

AFT Convention forms Part-Time Caucus

Part-time and contingent faculty throughout the United States now have a stronger voice in our national union with the formation of a Part-Time Caucus at the AFT Convention in July.

Several California part-timers, including Citrus College astronomy instructor Lin Chan, Cabrillo digital media instructor John Govsky, City College of San Francisco English instructor Margaret Hanzimanolis, and College of Marin history and politics instructor Robert Ovetz are helping shape this tool to influence AFT priorities and connect part-timers nationwide.

Community College Part-Time Faculty Task Force

CalSTRS offers more assistance with service credit reporting

TO HELP PART-TIME faculty understand how districts report service credit and to ensure they receive all service credit they have earned throughout their teaching careers when they retire, CalSTRS has opened new centers in Irvine, Glendale, and Santa Clara, staffed by benefits counselors trained to navigate part-time-faculty issues.

Since 2009, when CalSTRS formed the Community College Part-Time Faculty Task Force to evaluate service credit reporting, evidence has mounted that many community colleges do not provide the retirement system with correctly calculated Full-Time Equivalent employment information for each part-time faculty member.

FTE is the hours a part-time employee would be required

By Sharon Hendricks



to work in one academic year if he or she were employed full-time in the same position. CalSTRS calculates

a part-time member's earnable salary by multiplying hourly pay rate by the FTE hours

...many community colleges do not provide the retirement system with correctly calculated Full-Time Equivalent employment information for each part-time faculty member.

for a specific teaching assignment. However, if an employer reports the same FTE hours for all teaching assignments when they actually have different

FTE hours, the service credit reported will be incorrect.

The task force also learned that many districts default to the statutory minimum FTE of 525 hours and apply this to all part-time faculty when reporting service credit. Universal application of the minimum FTE shortchanges some part-timers because teaching assignments have varying FTE hours. To address this statewide

problem, CalSTRS will begin incorporating specific FTE requirements into its audits of community colleges. Information from the audits will then

be used to provide district-specific reporting guidance and training. CalSTRS will also evaluate possible amendments to the Education Code that would clarify FTE requirements so that all part-time faculty enrolled in CalSTRS will receive what they have earned upon retirement.

Along with expanding outreach efforts, next steps include evaluating findings from the college audits, and reconvening the task force on an annual basis.

Sharon Hendricks is Vice-Chair of the CalSTRS Board, Retirement Liaison for the Los Angeles College Faculty Guild, AFT Local 1521, and an associate professor at Los Angeles City College.
> Email shcalstrs@gmail.com.



Freeway Flyers

Local Action

»Part-timers at Victor Valley College made tremendous gains in their last negotiations cycle, moving from a flat rate for adjunct instructors to a four-column salary schedule that mirrors the full-time faculty schedule. Members of the **AFT Part-Time Faculty Federation**, Local 6286, will see pay raises ranging from 1.6 percent for those fulfilling minimum requirements to almost 12 percent (plus a \$100 per unit stipend) for those with PhDs.

»Allan Hancock College part-timers are building a more powerful union! The **Part-Time Faculty Association of Allan Hancock College**, Local 6185, signed up 112 new members since January 1, and received multiple organizing and communications awards at the AFT Convention in July.

»Part-timers in the **Cabrillo College Federation of**

Teachers, Local 4400, are working hard to reverse the Board of Governors-imposed limits to course repeatability that have restricted access to higher education for many students. Dance instructor Sharon Took-Zozaya wants her students to benefit as they used to from ongoing access to dance and fitness classes, while theater arts instructor Susan Stewart says, "It is for student success that we are so moved to make these changes."

»Learn more about the repeatability issue at goo.gl/6NoQhM and goo.gl/xqdjW8.



CUNY's Stanley Aronowitz spoke at COCAL XI.

ACCJC has taken part-time jobs from San Francisco

WITH CITY COLLEGE of San Francisco still in limbo status due to unfair sanctions from the Accrediting Commission for Junior and Community Colleges, nearly 150 part-time faculty have lost their jobs in the past couple of years and few, if any, part-time counselors have been rehired.

The number of part-timers receiving medical and dental benefits has declined as classes were canceled due to falling student enrollment. All faculty have taken a pay cut, representing a 20 percent reduction in real wages.

The fight for fair accreditation continues in a lawsuit filed by the City of San Francisco against the ACCJC, and in a strong campaign by local, state, and national unions.

GetConnected



Affordable Care Act: Open enrollment for 2015 health plans through Covered California begins November 15 and ends February 15, 2015. Use the shop and compare tool at coveredca.com.

Call for entries: The upcoming anthology *Teaching Poor: Voices of the Academic Precariat* will honor difficulties and triumphs of today's contingent, part-time, and precariously employed higher education teachers. All genres of writing are welcome. Contact Lee Kottner at teachingpoor@gmail.com.

COCAL IX: Find the report and photos from COCAL XI, the eleventh international conference of the Coalition of Contingent Academic Labor at cocalinternational.org. Learn how you can join the informative COCAL email list.



California part-timers shared experiences and strategies to strengthen working conditions and to protect public higher education at COCAL IX held August 4-6 in New York City. Pictured, left to right, David Milroy, Grossmont College; Mel Ciena, University of San Francisco; John Govsky, Cabrillo College; Nancy Mackowsky, City College of San Francisco; Rebecca Seeman, USF; Hugo Aparacio, CCSF; Joe Berry, retired; Linda Chan, Citrus College; Helena Worthen, retired; Krista Eliot, Palomar and Mira Costa Colleges.

PHOTOS BY MEL CIENA

Two new laws will benefit part-time faculty in California

Improved transfer of unused sick leave

Assembly Bill 2295 (Ridley-Thomas, D-Los Angeles) makes it easier for part-timers to transfer unused sick leave from a previous community college employer to a new one by extending the transfer period from a mere one year to three academic years.

This new law will primarily benefit part-timers who have taught in multiple districts by adding previously uncounted sick leave to the total amount accrued upon retirement,



potentially increasing the retirement benefit for part-time instructors.

Workload reduction to avoid health coverage disallowed

Assembly Concurrent Resolution 95 (Gomez, D-Northeast Los Angeles) expresses the will of

FROM THE STATE CAPITOL

the California Legislature that community college districts shall not reduce the workloads of part-time faculty or classified employees to disqualify them from health coverage through the Affordable Care Act.

Anecdotal evidence sug-

gests that some districts have engaged in this practice already to reduce their financial obligations to currently employed part-timers. This resolution, signed into law by the governor, does not change existing law but paves the way for future legislation protecting access to health care coverage for part-time faculty in the community colleges.

>To read the resolution, go to goo.gl/IDMEuQ.

Rehire rights

(Continued from page 1)

ment petition drives with high faculty and student participation. We also organized a series of presentations before the Peralta Board of Trustees. I invited some students to speak because of the claim made by the administration that I was “not the best fit” for Laney students. Hearing what students said about the effects of my teaching was really special and touching. They expressed such appreciation. I’m deeply gratified to see how they develop and to know I’ve played a role in shaping the next generation.

Q What possible outcomes do you see at this point?

A Our contract has a clear timeline for procedures in cases like mine. The first stages

require informal conversation between union representatives and administrators. This case will be going to arbitration. The union is asking for rehire and restitution of wages.

Q How does this situation make you feel about teaching as a part-timer?

A I love my work; but I’m realizing how little people know about what happens to part-timers, the actual experience of job insecurity and dis-

posability. This really came out in our print materials, on our website, and at the Board of Trustees meetings. We know we’re helping people recognize the importance of a good contract and a strong union, especially for part-timers.

Q What advice would you give to other part-timers?

A Know your strengths and don’t get intimidated. Inform your union reps about what’s happening to you, and document it all. Keep your focus on your emotional well-being and on the larger picture — our rights as part-time faculty.

—Interview by Linda Sneed

>Find detailed coverage of this case in the summary compiled by the Peralta Federation of Teachers at pft1603.org.



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