

The highly-educated working poor: Adjunct professors

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There's a growing army of the working poor in our USofA, and big contingents of it are now on the march. They're strategizing, organizing, and mobilizing against the immoral economics of inequality being hung around America's neck by the likes of Walmart, McDonald's, and colleges.

Wait a minute. Colleges? You go there to get ahead in life. More education makes you better off, right? Well, ask a college professor about that – you know, the ones who earned PhDs and are now teaching America's next generation.

The sorry secret of higher education – from community colleges to brand-name universities – is that they've embraced the corporate culture of a contingent workforce, turning professors into part-time, low-paid, no-benefit, no-tenure, temporary teachers. Overall, more than half of America's higher-ed faculty members today are "adjunct professors," meaning they are attached to the school, but not essentially a part of it.

It also means that these highly-educated, fully-credentialed professors have become part of America's army of the working poor. They never know until a semester starts whether they'll teach one class, three, or none – typically, this leaves them with take-home pay somewhere between zero and maybe \$1,000 a month. Poverty.

Adjuncts usually get no benefits, no real chance of earning fulltime positions, no due process or severance pay if dismissed, no say in curriculum or school policies... sometimes not even office space. Like their counterparts at Walmart and McDonald's, adjunct college professors are not treated as valuable resources to be nurtured, but as cheap, exploitable, and disposable labor.

Unsurprisingly, this contingent of the low-wage army is organizing, too. For information, contact New Faculty Majority: www.NewFacultyMajority.info.

"Adjunct Project Reveals Wide Range in Pay," www.chronicle.com, January 4, 2013.

"Adjuncts at ACC face cut in hours School seeks to avoid paying health care for some faculty," [Austin American Statesman](http://www.austintelegraph.com), November 26, 2013.

"Adjunct professors in dire straits with low pay, lack of full-time jobs," www.america.aljazeera.com, October 15, 2013.

"Adjunct professors are the new working poor," www.cnn.com, September 25, 2013.

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