

GRUF Times

Because when the going gets rough, the GRUF gets going!

Adjuncts Are Exploited!

What Can Green River Do about It?

The GRUF Times asked Erin Gilbert, an adjunct faculty member at GRCC, about the treatment of adjuncts:

Adjuncts are hardworking, highly educated, capable instructors whose dedication to quality teaching and determination to see students succeed are rewarded by shockingly low salaries and a lack of job security. This lack of support for adjuncts translates into a lack of support for all faculty and students. The result is far-reaching, ultimately damaging diverse college communities.

On February 25th National Adjunct Walkout Day, a part of National Adjunct Awareness Week, will draw attention to the plight of adjuncts. The organizers of this grassroots call to action note that although “tuition and student fees rise at unprecedented rates over 75% of college faculty positions in the U.S. are now filled by ‘adjunct’ or contingent faculty. Adjunct positions often pay poverty-level wages, typically do not provide benefits, and offer no job security.”

Green River is no exception. The majority of instructors working for the college are poorly paid adjuncts with quarterly

contracts. Many hurry from one college to another every day, forced by necessity to teach on multiple campuses simply to earn a living. Some qualify for food stamps, or balance on the brink of homelessness while delivering a quality education to students.

Meanwhile, tenured positions evaporate, and more adjuncts are hired as the student population grows. Unfortunately, what administrators miss is that students, staff, and tenured faculty have reduced access to talented and innovative adjunct faculty who have to split their time among several different schools just to survive.

Since the laws of Washington State make walking out on February 25th unfeasible, the organizers of the event urge adjuncts to take advantage of this momentous occasion to become more visible with an informational picket. Many students don't know what adjuncts are, let alone how many of their favorite instructors may fall into that category. Tenured faculty are welcome to join their adjunct colleagues on the 25th in a demonstration of support, solidarity, and shared concerns about higher education.

Letters to the Editor

Want to respond or contribute to the GRUF Times? Emails us gruftimes@gmail.com

Report Card

If you taught a class called Supporting Adjuncts 101 and the administrators were your students, what grades would they earn?

Street Heat

All Faculty: Do you support the rights of adjuncts? Then join our informational picket on Wednesday, February 25th.

Street Heat Action Agenda

Thursday 2/19

1-2:30: Sign-making at the UF office in RLC 103

2:30-5: All-faculty showing at the Board of Trustees Meeting. This is a formal call to action, phase I, of the work to the contract.

Friday the 20th

Send GRCC delegation to Olympia for political mobilization AFT Lobby Day.

Wednesday the 25th

8-2: Informational Picketing at both entrances of the college for National Adjunct Day.

Noon: Rally in Kennelly Commons in support of Green River's adjuncts.

Best Employment Practices Report Card

In 2008, Senate Bill 2528 established goals for improving the lopsided staffing ratios among full- and part-time faculty. Ultimately, the goal was to provide stability, equity, and security for adjuncts. Let's take a look at a couple of these Best Practices:

Best Practice 1: Salary

Part-time faculty should be paid a rate equal to that paid full-time faculty having the same qualifications and experience for doing the equivalent instructional work.

Best Practice 3: Faculty Mix

The ratio of full- to part-time faculty at each college should be based upon program and student need. The funding necessary to improve services to students through increasing courses taught by full-time faculty should be provided by the Legislature.

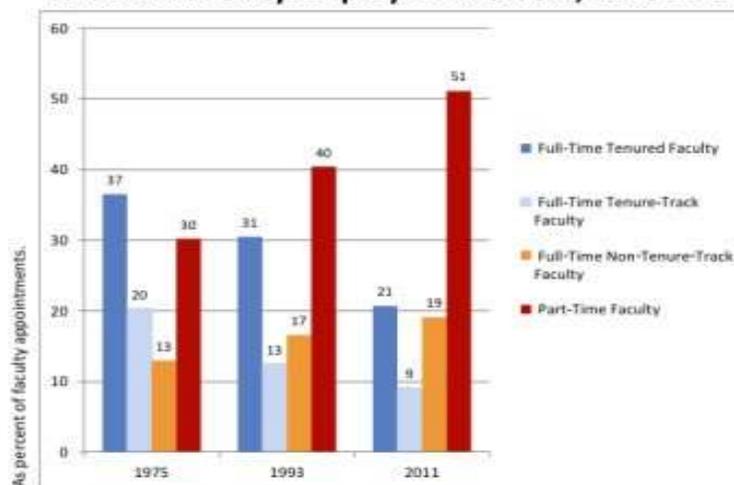
Best Practice 10: Best Practices Report

The best practices principles should be used in making state and local decisions and agreements affecting part-time faculty. At least annually each college should conduct a review of their actions related to the achievement of these best practices.

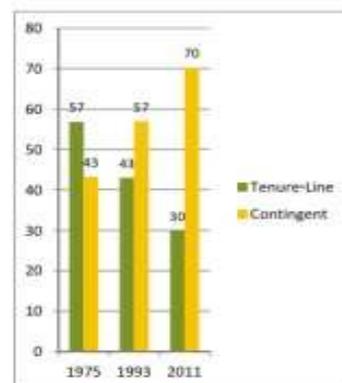
So how is the WA Legislature doing in supporting adjuncts? How is Green River doing? How would you grade both of them on these outcomes? If this was a class you were teaching, would they pass?

You can do something about this. Please join us for next week's informational picketing, and let our administrators and community know about this important social justice problem.

Trends in Faculty Employment Status, 1975-2011



A different way of looking at the same numbers--all tenure-line faculty grouped together and all contingent faculty grouped together.



Notes: All institutions, national totals. Figures for 2011 are estimated. Figures are for degree-granting institutions only, but the precise category of institutions included has changed over time. Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Source: US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS Fall Staff Survey; published tabulations only.

Compiled by: AAUP Research Office, Washington, DC; John W. Curtis, Director of Research and Public Policy (3/20/13)