

COLLEGE OF DUPAGE ADJUNCT ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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COD ADJUNCT ASSOCIATION IS DOING THE RIGHT THINGS

The mission of the CODAA is to create a unified voice for adjunct faculty at the college in order to improve the quality of our working conditions and thereby improve the quality of our students' education. Only with a unified voice do we believe we can truly take part in COD's mission while holding the administration accountable to it:

- *To be at the forefront of higher education
- *To serve the needs of the community
- *To offer the highest quality educational opportunities
- *To recognize, develop, and support excellence in teaching
- *To innovate and continually improve

The core membership of the CODAA began last year as a study group of full-timers and adjuncts sponsored by the National Council of Teachers of English. NCTE provided a packet of materials for the group. However, through the meetings it soon became apparent that study alone was not a sufficient means for addressing the crisis state American higher education has created through the over-use of adjunct faculty.

RECOMMENDATIONS

By May 1998 our study group had crafted 11 recommendations for fairer use of adjuncts within the English department. We then polled all full-time and adjunct English faculty for approval of these recommendations. 19 of the 34 full-time faculty members signed their approval of the

recommendations. More than 20 adjuncts approved them as well.

On May 18, 1998 the NCTE study group submitted a report of its findings entitled "Discounted Teachers, Discounted Education" to Cynthia Cordes, Associate Dean of the Liberal Arts for English. 15 college-wide recommendations were added to the 11 English-specific recommendations with the names of their over 40 endorsing faculty members attached. Dean Cordes then forwarded all of these recommendations and the 83 page report to Walt Packard, Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs.

COLLEGE-WIDE SURVEY

At the same time the study group had formulated an extensive 75 question survey for adjuncts college-wide in order to determine their concerns and to help create a profile of the often invisible faculty.

Of the 2376 surveys mailed, 289 were returned completely filled out. The return rate of over 12% -- enviable for any mass mailing -- suggests widespread shared concerns.

Official tabulated results are still a work in progress, but some of the earlier results are reported below.

Is there adequate interaction between full-time and adjunct faculty?

YES 73 NO 178 N/A 38

Do adjuncts need representation on the Faculty Senate?

YES 231 NO 19 N/A 39

BROWN BAG LUNCHES

As the study group progressed to this point, it attracted the attention of adjuncts from other disciplines and area colleges. Eventually the study group had participants representing the disciplines of Philosophy, Counseling, Geography, Psychology, Fine Arts, and Speech as well as adjuncts from Columbia, Daley, North Central, Triton, and Devry.

In order to meet this apparently broad interest, the NCTE study group began holding college-wide brown bag lunches in the spring on topics such as shared governance and innovation. These were well attended and brought in new perspectives from adjuncts in Math, History, and Human Services. Some full-timers and administrators also attended these brown bags. In short, voices from virtually every constituency of the college have taken part in these initial conversations.

CODAA plans to hold another series of brown bags again this year because of their success. We hope to stagger the schedule so that more faculty can attend and share their experiences.

THIS YEAR'S GOALS

And the conversation about these issues must and will continue. CODAA's most immediate goal in 1998 is to secure representation on COD's Faculty Senate. In order to do this, we must submit at least 100 adjunct signatures to the Senate Secretary. We already have over 25 signatures. Currently COD adjuncts have no official representation on this or any other governing body at COD. We encourage you to sign our petition.

Our second most immediate goal is to continue regular (monthly) publication of this newsletter -- one of the easiest ways to build lines of communication among adjuncts. This first issue is possible because over \$500 in spontaneous donations was collected from adjuncts last year.

We will also be waiting to see what actions the administration takes on the NCTE study group's recommendations. Depending on whether or not the administration lives up to its claims of shared governance, more assertive efforts may be necessary.

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AREA ADJUNCTS COMPARE WORKING CONDITIONS

In March 1998 the Oakton College Adjuncts Association sponsored a regional conference on adjunct working conditions. Representatives from numerous colleges and universities throughout Northern Illinois and the Chicago area exchanged information on the status of adjunct organizations at their respective colleges.

The Oakton conference was intended as a more detailed, action-oriented follow-up to the larger Roads Scholars Conference held in February 1998 in downtown Chicago.

Members of Columbia College's successful organizing effort presented their story to the audience after representatives from other colleges had presented their pertinent demographic and financial information.

Anyone who is interested in a sheet comparing wages, benefits and perks or in attending future area conferences can look for the handout in IC 2070.

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TRIB MAGAZINE ARTICLE FEATURES COD FACULTY

Did you happen to see the July 12 edition of the *Chicago Tribune Magazine*? COD and Harper College adjunct, Tammie Bob, penned a terrific piece, "Part-time College Teachers Live the Tough Lessons of '90s Style Economics," on the academic climate driven by "bottom-line," rather than educational, concerns.

Several COD faculty and staff were interviewed, including Bob Lorek, Tom Tipton, Loretta Pyrdek, Cynthia Cordes, Bill Troller, and Walt Packard. Each has his or her own perspective and comments on the status of adjuncts, especially in the community college system.

The response to the article has been overwhelmingly favorable to the adjuncts, in the two weeks worth of letters to the editor published by the *Tribune*.

The article emphasizes the national trend of cost containment

measures at the post-secondary level which increasingly rely on adjunct faculty, not only to fill last minute and specialized classes, but to teach core courses and replace retiring full-timers.

Did you know that over 80% of COD faculty is now part-time, with approximately 2300 teachers on the active list? COD has one of the highest adjunct to full-time faculty ratios, 4-1, of any college or university in the Chicago area!

As helpful as Tammie Bob's article has been to focus local attention on the plight of adjuncts, it is only one of many articles that have been published recently nationwide -- from general circulation newspapers and magazines like the *New York Times* and *Spin* to specialized academic journals like *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and *College Composition and Communication* -- addressing the use and abuse of adjuncts.

This is an issue whose time has come.

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MORE INFORMATION

There is a plethora of books and articles available on adjunct faculty issues -- many right at COD's library or over the internet. Here is a select list.

American Historical Association, et. al. "Statement from the Conference on the Growing Use of Part-Time and Adjunct Faculty." September 1997. WWW.NCTE.ORG/POSITIONS/PT.HTML

College of DuPage. "Budget 1996-1997." (LRC)

College of DuPage. "Five Year Plan 1995-2000." (LRC)

Daily Herald. "Colleges Take Economics Course with Teachers." December 16, 1997: 1.

Gappa, J. M., and Leslie, D. W.. *The Invisible Faculty: Improving the Status of Part-Timers in Higher Education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1993.

Nelson, Cary (Ed.) *Will Teach for Food: Academic Labor in Crisis*.

Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1997.

Schell, Eileen E. *Gypsy Academics and Mother-Teachers: Gender, Contingent Labor, and Writing Instruction*. (Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 1998).

Thompson, Karen. "The Ultimate Working Condition: Knowing Whether You Have a Job or Not." *Forum: Newsletter of the Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Special Interest Group. College Composition and Communication*. Vol. 49 (1) February 1998: A19-A24.

Wolf, Barbara. "Degrees of Shame." Video Documentary.

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HOW TO JOIN CODAA

Any adjunct faculty member at COD is eligible to join CODAA. If you would like more information about the CODAA or would like to be added to the newsletter mailing list, contact Loretta Pyrdek or Tom Tipton, a full-time faculty member at COD. Most meeting times, agendas and places will be announced in this newsletter.

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What Can You Do? What Can We Do?

1. Join CODAA and attend the meetings.
2. Sign the petition to gain representation on the Faculty Senate.
3. Keep lines of communication open. Talk about these issues with as many other adjuncts and full-timers as you can.
4. Keep your options open. Consider all ethical means for improving your and your colleagues' working conditions.
5. Keep the welfare of your students and future generations always in mind. What will American higher education be like in twenty years if the current over-use of adjuncts is allowed to continue?
6. Keep yourself and others educated about these issues. Check if your professional association has an official statement on the use of adjuncts.