

Better Working Conditions For Faculty = Better Learning Conditions for Students



Adjunct or “contingent” faculty — 1.3 million non-tenure-track professors — teach the majority of U.S. college and university students, often under near-impossible working conditions. That must change.

TODAY'S REALITIES

- ▶ **Highly educated adjunct faculty are among the working poor.** More than 75 percent of the instructional workforce in U.S. colleges and universities are adjuncts and 50 percent are part-timers. On average, they earn about \$25,000 per year, the official poverty level for a family of four. Most adjuncts are not eligible for unemployment compensation or public service loan forgiveness and generally receive neither health nor retirement benefits. They have no job security, regardless of performance.
- ▶ **Poor working conditions limit opportunities for meaningful contact with students.** Mentoring, advising, and informal meetings with faculty are key to student success. Yet many adjuncts don't have offices on their campuses, office hours for students, or time to write recommendations for students because they spend so much time traveling from job to job, campus to campus.
- ▶ **Restore the focus on the core mission of higher education: teaching students.** Students need access to postsecondary education for personal growth and to equip themselves for success in the global economy of the 21st century. We need to invest in faculty — the backbone of higher education — to equip the next generation of Americans to succeed in school and in life.

CHANGE IS NEEDED

- ▶ **The next Higher Education Act (HEA) should provide incentives for institutions to invest in a predominantly full-time, tenure-track faculty.** In addition, accrediting agencies should implement standards that require better working conditions for adjuncts such as fair pay, benefits, access to resources such as professional development, and full participation in faculty work.
- ▶ **Make adjuncts eligible for public service loan forgiveness.** The Adjunct Faculty Loan Fairness Act of 2017 (S. 1927), introduced by Sen. Dick Durbin (D-IL), would allow adjunct faculty to participate in federal public service loan forgiveness programs.
- ▶ **Make adjuncts eligible for unemployment compensation between academic terms.** U.S. Department of Labor guidance on what constitutes “reasonable assurance” of a job offer must be updated to enable adjunct faculty to qualify, as they do under legislation passed by the states of California and Washington.