FOREWORD

THE NEW FACULTY MAJORITY IN WRITING PROGRAMS: ORGANIZING FOR CHANGE

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This volume, in concert with a growing body of labor scholarship, strives to help readers make the tight connection between teachers' working conditions and students' learning conditions. As co-editors Seth Kahn, William B. Lalicker, and Amy Lynch-Biniek contend, the way we treat writing teachers as a class translates into the quality of writing education we can provide for our students. Their co-edited volume is "less about envisioning a utopia toward which we strive—particularly because we don't all agree on what that utopia looks like—and more about taking concrete steps to fight both exploitation of adjunct faculty and the denigration of composition studies as a worthy field of study" (Introduction). This is a goal that volume contributors commit to wholeheartedly across the varied sections and chapters.

As this collection documents, the economic conditions of higher education have shifted over the past thirty plus years due to increasingly neoliberal, corporatized, and privatized models of higher education. In turn, this neoliberal model of higher education guides the budgeting and prioritizing of academic goals and labor practices. As instructional budgets have been slashed and federal and state funding for higher education has diminished, colleges and universities, to save monies and maximize work-force flexibility, have intensified their hiring of faculty off the tenure track, including adjunct, part-time, and full-time, non-tenure track positions, with some of these faculty members teaching entirely online instead of on brick and mortar campuses. The Coalition on the Academic Workforce, an interdisciplinary group studying and addressing labor conditions in higher education, found that of the "nearly 1.8 million faculty members and instructors who made up the 2009 instructional work-force in degree-granting two- and four-year institutions of higher education in the United States, more than 1.3 million (75.5%) were employed in contingent positions off the tenure track, either as part-time or adjunct faculty members, full-time

non-tenure-track faculty members, or graduate student teaching assistants" (Coalition on the Academic Workforce 1), according to data drawn from the United States Department of Education's 2009 Fall Staff Survey. As this volume affirms, contingent faculty members are particularly prevalent in required, lower-division courses like writing, math, languages, and the introductory social sciences. Writing programs and required writing courses have long been sites that are staffed by large numbers of contingent faculty and teaching assistants.

Contingent positions, once represented as a temporary measure to cover teaching shortages in the 1970s (see Abel), have now become a long-term labor strategy: a way for universities and colleges to avoid the provision of health benefits, shrug off responsibilities for pensions and/or retirement benefits, undercut shared governance and the tenure system, and create the greatest possible flexibility in the academic work force. Indeed, the conditions of many contingent faculty members bear a striking resemblance to that of workers at Walmart and other corporations that make heavy use of part-time employees and who also make sure their female employees do not rise into higher-level positions as managers.

While the term "contingent" describes positions in which faculty members teach on short-term contracts with low pay and little or no job security, inadequate office space, and challenging curricular and professional conditions, the idea of contingency fails to capture the true complexity of positions located off the tenure track. Across higher education, contingent faculty members have become the "new faculty majority" as Kahn, Lalicker, and Lynch-Biniek argue, and many, along with tenure-track faculty allies, have worked tirelessly to transform their professional conditions through alliance-building and resolute collective action (Introduction). These chapters, authored by tenure-line and non-tenure-line faculty alike, address strategies to improve teaching and learning conditions with respect to compensation, contracts, benefits, professional conditions, and shared governance processes. The contributors do not emphasize a "one-size-fits-all" model for change; rather, they demonstrate how strategies for organizing and reform arise in response to specific local, political, historical, and economic conditions.

INSTITUTIONAL CASES

More specifically, the co-editors and the contributors focus on the idea of "institutional realities and cases," what they refer to as "multiple, creative, constructive responses that can both enact labor justice and champion the disciplinary energies of all members of our collegial community" (Introduction). The tone across the volume consistently cuts against what Kahn, Lalicker, and Lynch-Biniek

refer to as the "three more common registers of discourse on contingency—hollow (but certainly well-intentioned) exhortations; dramatic (and not unjustifiably so) depictions of abusive exploitation; or a combined anger and despair" (Introduction). What the co-editors and volume contributors offer instead are discourses of resolute change, problem-posing, problem-solving, and institutional and department/program-level change, all finely attuned to the tensions, challenges, positionalities, and rhetorical registers of institutional reform and transformation.

The movement toward drawing upon institutional cases to document labor reform and transformation is a well-instantiated and long-standing one in the labor scholarship in our field—a move that Linda Robertson, Sharon Crowley, and Frank Lentricchia along with others involved in the Wyoming Resolution called for in the late eighties and one modeled earlier in M. Elizabeth Wallace's 1984 edited collection *Part-time Academic Employment in the Humanities*. It is also the approach that Patricia Lambert Stock and I largely adopted in our 2001 co-edited collection *Moving a Mountain: Transforming the Working Conditions of Contingent Faculty in Composition Studies and Higher Education*. The institutional case, informed by the larger discourses of organizing and scholarly work on labor and higher education, thus can become a space from which to analyze, assess, and dissect local reform and organizing strategies.

Many of the chapters in this volume explore the successes and possibilities as well as the potential limitations and unexpected outcomes of local reform. As chapters by Mark McBeth and Tim McCormack, Richard Colby and Rebekah Schultz Colby and others demonstrate, departments and programs across the country have created non-tenure-track faculty positions that offer reasonable salaries correlated to recommended national standards, multi-year renewable contracts, opportunities for professional development, and other structures needed to support professionalization. Even with these improvements, the authors and co-authors across this volume document the challenges that accompany local reform: the challenge of new academic leaders implementing labor structures and assessment measures without consultation; budgetary crises that affect the most vulnerable instructors and students; tenure-track faculty members who are out of touch with non-tenure-track faculty's needs and concerns; and a lack of shared governance practices. In the midst of necessary and needed reforms to improve pay, benefits, professional conditions, and participation in shared governance, the authors have a healthy and clear-eyed understanding of what they are up against in both implementing and sustaining reforms. For instance, Carol Lind and Joan Mullin's chapter considers "a course release award process" whereby non-tenure track faculty (NTTF) are offered a semester away from teaching in order to pursue intellectual development and/or new course development.

This system, while it has boosted morale among NTTs and resulted in improved courses, is subject to changing administrative conditions, since NTTs "live with the possibility that those in control—in a department in which they have limited voice—might decide at any time that it is not a good use of departmental resources" (Chapter 1).

Other contributors explore similar themes and questions of how to improve labor conditions and departmental culture in the midst of competing claims about how time and resources should be spent. Institutional memory and dynamics of institutional change must be considered when assessing the strengths or weaknesses of specific reforms. As Rolf Norgaard asks in his chapter: "What happens when gains are made, then risk being undone?" (Chapter 9).

ORGANIZING STRATEGIES

Beyond creating specific change with respect to compensation, contracts, benefits, and professional conditions, the chapters in this volume also assess varied organizing strategies in academic departments, programs, and across university campuses, including building alliances with tenure-track faculty members and enacting strategies for improving shared governance. Chris Blankenship and Justin M. Jory argue that NTTF (non-tenure-track faculty) must work toward creating an "organized public within the department that is dedicated to improving NTT conditions" and to "addressing the socio-cultural tensions among TT [tenure-track] and NTT faculty" (Chapter 10). Through exploring how contingent faculty can use specific genres such as departmental reviews and institutional surveys for advocacy purposes, they analyze how NTTF can advocate for themselves, but also how non-tenure-track faculty can make tenure-track faculty aware of the need to advocate for their non-tenure-track colleagues and the impact that contingent issues can have on departments. The uneven effects of contingency, though, raise these questions: Who can advocate for faculty working off the tenure track? What must their tenured and tenure-track allies keep in mind as they participate in such advocacy efforts?

The question of who can speak in concert with and advocate for non-tenure track faculty is raised and addressed thoughtfully by Seth Kahn, who offers important caveats to keep in mind about being a tenured/tenure-track ally and activist. Indeed, throughout the volume, readers will see examples of tenure-track and contingent faculty working together to advocate for labor justice (see Wootten and Moomau, for instance). Solidarity can be created, in part, through tenure-track and non-tenure track faculty working in concert with one another to change working conditions. However, working conditions are tied to complex emotional states and life narratives that must be acknowledged as

well—the anger, disappointment, frustration, fear, anxiety, timidity (see Wootten and Moomau) and other emotions that both galvanize and halt action. The chapter by Desirée Holter, Amanda Martin, and Jeffrey Klausman comes to terms, in a frank and open fashion, with the hard emotions associated with precarity and underemployment: increasing disappointment, disillusionment, and disaffection when adjunct faculty seek out and participate in professional opportunities that cannot result in long-term job security.

One point of solidarity, among many that Maria Maisto, Sue Doe, and Janelle Adsit underscore, though, is the potential of uniting faculty of all ranks around the "fraying fantasy" of "secure academic employment." In doing so they argue that we can

> underscore that the "adjunct activist" agenda has the best interests of all faculty in mind. While we know that contingency is not evenly distributed in academe, it is nonetheless the case that contingency affects us all. The idea that tenure means security is rapidly being exposed as anachronistic, if not mythical. This reality should translate into a united cause—contingency as an issue that involves the faculty at large. (Chapter 14)

And it is the idea of pursuing a "united cause" that percolates across chapters, with some authors exploring unionization and collectivization (see Layden and Donhardt, Lalicker and Lynch-Biniek, Heifferon and Nardo among others) while others seek department-level changes by committee or group. Lalicker and Lynch-Biniek argue in their essay that the way toward labor justice is through supporting "a culture of equal sharing" (Chapter 6). Inspired by union activist Joe Berry, they argue that "we have to act like unions even when we're not legally organized in unions."

THE LOCATIONS OF WRITING

This collection also gives us cause to consider where a writing program and its contingent faculty might be located institutionally and professionally. How does a university or college's institutional mission and status influence the labor structures and delivery of writing instruction? What are the institutional spaces allotted to writing programs and those who teach in them? How are writing centers, writing across the curriculum programs, online programs, independent writing programs outside of English departments, and English departments spaces for the work of writing instruction and writing-oriented scholarship, spaces that may marginalize and make our labor invisible, and yet also spaces we can ap-

propriate for organizing to improve labor conditions? Moreover, what do those spaces say about the politics of labor on our campuses?

Michelle LaFrance and Anicca Cox offer a fascinating look at how material spaces in writing programs—in the form of architecture, office space, classrooms, hallways, and other locations—"are the material manifestations of our institutional discourses" (Chapter 18). LaFrance and Cox ask readers to consider how spaces of marginalization and invisibility can be spaces to launch both concrete resistance and the resistance of critical consciousness, arguing that "[i]n Composition, we have long known that our marginalization as a field also allows us to imagine a different form of resistance—this most often takes the form of a critical consciousness shared by many members of the field."

Michael Murphy succinctly brings that critical consciousness to bear on the problem of automation in writing instruction: the rise of tutoring and writing assessment provided by educational software and remote tutoring/paper grading services. He argues that in our advocacy efforts we must account for ways that "writing and reading aren't language processing. Both require *a transaction between human minds*—even in solitary texts, when writers struggle to articulate and refine ideas for themselves, or in most machine code, since most applications are of course written to be experienced ultimately by human users" (Chapter 5). While he argues for ways to address the complexity of what we do as writing teachers to stave off the so-called easy labor and money-saving solutions offered by automated/online assessment and tutoring services, he also argues for addressing how we understand and promote the scholarship and intellectual work that teaching-intensive faculty can provide. Through describing and assessing the potential of a certificate program for community college faculty, he asks readers to consider what it means to make places in our field to value and promote the knowledge-making of "both scholar-teachers and teacher-rhetors."

QUESTION POSING: BODIES AND BUDGETS

As I read through this volume several times over roughly a year-long period, I found that the rich institutional cases, organizing strategies, and insights provided by each chapter raised as many questions as they answered, and that is a strength throughout the volume. I found myself wondering about and wanting to know more about how contingency is tied to the intersectional identities of contingent faculty and the "vulnerable student" bodies that Kahn, Lalicker, and Lynch-Biniek reference. How is contingency tied to the bodies of workers and students that are marked as non-normative and different? In a globalized economy, white women, women of color, and men of color, working class men and women (see Dew), people living with disabilities, and queer and trans people

are often treated as an exploitable and expendable workforce; how does higher education mirror that exploitation?

Contingent Faculty Bodies

We know that multiple studies show a clear connection between gender and contingency, which is an undercurrent throughout these articles (see Fels; Maisto et al.). In the NCES data from 2009, "[o]f part-time faculty respondents who provided information about their gender, 61.9 percent were women, as compared with 51.6 percent in the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) 2009 Fall Staff Survey (Table 2)" (7). Moreover, the Modern Language Association (MLA) report *Education in the Balance: A Report on the Academic Workforce in English*, which drew on data from the National Survey of Post-secondary Faculty, found that in English studies, women continue to represent more than 60 percent of the faculty in non-tenure-track positions, both full- and part-time" (4-5). In her chapter, Dawn Fels, reminds us that writing center directors are predominantly female, citing two sources (Healy et al.) that place the rate at an estimated 73 to 74 percent (Chapter 8).

As I argued in *Gypsy Academics: Gender, Contingent Labor, and Writing Instruction*, women are often thought to "choose" contingent work for the flexibility it affords. In fact, many institutions feel it is acceptable to hire large numbers of women at the contingent ranks because it is still assumed that they have male partners who are supporting them financially, a dubious claim in a society where half of all marriages end in divorce and where many adult women are single. Women are also thought to find contingent work to be more flexible than full-time work when they have young children to raise, even as the conditions and costs of that flexibility in the long run may remain underexplored: the so-called on and off ramps of part-time work for women and the long-term costs to their overall financial health and retirement savings. It is also still the case that women are thought to be particularly good at delivering the kind of care work associated with teaching writing or providing language instruction: painstakingly poring over drafts and making comments, tutoring and administering writing centers and writing programs, holding one-on-one conferences, offering informal advising and support for students struggling with writing and with adjusting to the higher education environment, especially first-generation college students, students of color, international students, and women students. Writing instructors and non-tenure-track administrators thus often occupy a locus of "care work," as pointed out in several essays in this volume.

Along with considerations of gender, we need to think through questions of race, age, ability, and sexuality as we consider who is contingent in our field.

For instance, Tressie McMillan Cottom argues in *Slate*, being "contingent" is a hardly new phenomenon for black faculty members in higher education. She cites the AAUP report that shows that the proportion of African American faculty members in non-tenure-track positions is 15.2 percent whereas whites are 9.6 percent, to a difference of 50 percent. She also cites a 2009 article from the *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* that if current rates of hiring and promotion of black Ph.D.s remained steady, it would take over 150 years for African American faculty to reach proportional numbers with the larger societal population of African Americans: "If you leave out the high proportion of black Ph.D.s working in historically black colleges and universities, black full-time faculty in the U.S. barely clears 4 percent." McMillan Cottom points out that professional organizations addressing labor conditions have been late to addressing the adjunctification and ghettoization of black faculty, especially when we consider that black students and faculty have been involved in "protesting the ghettofication of black scholars in adjunct roles for almost 20 years," citing actions such as the one in 1968 where "black students took over an administration building at Columbia; among their demands was a call for more tenured black faculty."

Thus, we need to make sure that histories of anti-racist struggle and solidarity are included in our analyses of the contingent labor movement: the stories of black faculty who were hired as tenure-track, but denied tenure, and shuffled into non-tenure track roles; the stories of women of color working off the tenure-track who have dealt with structural harassment, disrespect, and questions about their competency (see also Gabriella Gutiérrez y Muhs Yolanda Flores Niemann, Carmen G. González, Angela P. Harris). Accounting for the material bodies of contingent workers and histories of discrimination and struggle will make our organizing work richer and more accountable to historic patterns of discrimination and exclusion and also reveal ways that organizing strategies can break down if questions of white privilege and bodily difference are not addressed.

Student Bodies

As we consider the identities, bodies, and histories of discrimination that specific contingent faculty have faced, we also need to consider how to include the bodies and perspectives of students in the struggle for labor justice in higher education. Kahn, Lalicker, and Lynch-Biniek mention vulnerable students in the introduction to this volume, and it is clear that our students are increasingly contingent workers and contingent students as well. Many of our students are saddled with student loan debt that they will not be able to repay for many years if at all; many are working one or more part-time positions while taking classes,

taking online courses to fit in a degree around family life and working life, often unable to complete their degrees in a timely fashion because the classes they want have been cut or because they don't have access to faculty who can advise or mentor them through their degree programs.

Recognizing that contingency is often a common denominator between teachers and students, international movements like Campus Equity Week have historically encouraged contingent faculty and tenure-track allies to include their students, both graduate and undergraduate, in their advocacy efforts. Across the country and on my own campus, students, both graduate and undergraduate, have rallied with contingent faculty, have assisted with and have spoken at teach-ins about how contingency impacts their teachers and them. On some campuses, students have walked out of classrooms on National Adjunct Walkout Day to protest and organize around contingent labor issues. Thus, how we locate students in narratives of labor transformation and reform is also significant—how they can be agents of change in this fight for labor justice in higher education since teachers' working conditions affect them directly.

Bodies of Administrative Leadership and Budgets

In addition, leaders of higher education must be addressed in the movement to organize against contingency. Department culture matters a great deal with respect to addressing labor conditions, but we have to look at the leaders above the departmental level and hold them accountable for the situation of contingency and the undercutting of instructional budgets. Our organizing efforts must include targeted interactions and questions posed to deans, provosts, vice presidents, chief financial officers, boards of trustees, university chancellors, presidents, state-level higher education boards and committees, state legislators, and others with respect to the decisions they make about the allocation of university budgets. Where does the money go that students and their parents put into higher education through tuition monies? What about the money taxpayers put into public higher education through their taxes? How are university budgets being configured, and what transparency is there about the money being allocated toward instruction and faculty positions of all ranks? Why are instructional budgets so flat or diminishing even as the leaders of colleges and universities authorize university budgets to be spent on a growing array of administrative positions? And what about the university and college expenditures for real estate, gleaming new buildings and recreational centers, special non-academic programs and endeavors, sports teams, and lavish salaries for coaches and upper-level administrators? Where is the accountability for diminishing instructional budgets in the face of these expenditures? These questions must be at the

heart of our organizing strategies for they address the larger economic decisions behind higher education funding.

In recent years, scholars, national organizations and groups like the Delta Cost Project have begun to examine how universities are allocating and spending their precious budgetary resources, especially with respect to the rising costs of administration. As political science professor Benjamin Ginsberg summarizes in his seminal *Washington Monthly* article "The Administrators Ate My Tuition," in "1975, colleges employed one administrator for every eighty-four students and one professional staffer—admissions officers, information technology specialists, and the like—for every fifty students"; by 2005, the administrator to student ratio went to "one administrator for every sixty-eight students" and one professional staffer "for every twenty-one students" (2011).

This is a significant boost in the number of non-instructional staff in higher education, yet numbers vary based on institutional type. Drawing on two decades of data from the U.S. Department of Education's Integrated Postsecondary Education database, Donna Desrochers and Rita Kirshstein, writing for the Delta Cost Project,[1] find that public institutions experienced slow growth in hiring in the first decade of 2000 compared to their hiring trends in the 1990s because the "recent expansion in new positions largely mirrored rising enrollments as the Millennial Generation entered college" (2). Public research universities and community colleges saw decreases in the hiring of staff, with "sixteen fewer staff per 1,000 full-time equivalent (FTE) students compared with 2000, while the number of staff per student at public master's and bachelor's colleges remained unchanged" (2). Private colleges, however, were a different matter and experienced significant hiring increases: "Private institutions employed, on average, fifteen to twenty-six additional workers per 1,000 FTE students between 2000 and 2012. And even during the Great Recession, many public and private colleges kept hiring in response to the uptick in new students" (3), even as they reduced or flat-lined instructional budgets (2).

As Desrochers and Kirshstein indicate, professional staff positions, such as business analysts, human resources personnel, and admissions staffers, "grew twice as fast as executive and managerial positions at public non-research institutions between 2000 and 2012, and outpaced enrollment growth" (3). This trend, in particular, demonstrates that colleges and universities are directing their dollars toward "noninstructional student services, not just business support" (3). The report indicates that across all institutional types, the "wage and salary ex-

1 The Delta Cost Project draws on data connected to employment changes and patterns, administrative costs, and the recession's impact on higher education staffing (IPEDS) (1-2). They also address how these patterns affect "total compensation, institutional spending patterns, and ultimately tuitions" (1).

penditures for student services (per FTE staff) were the fastest growing salary expense in many types of institutions between 2002 and 2012" (3). As these numbers rose, the faculty and staff per administrator ratio dropped "by roughly 40 percent in most types of four-year colleges and universities between 1990 and 2012, and now averages 2.5 or fewer faculty and staff per administrator" (3). Faculty salaries have largely stayed flat for almost a decade; however, "additional savings from shifting to part-time instructors have not been enough to offset the costs associated with continued hiring and rising benefits expenditures" (4). The report concludes that these changes "represent long-standing trends" (13), and that the hiring and support of administrative positions have taken precedence over instructional positions, something that many of us have noted in our workplaces. In our arguments about contingency, how can we connect administrative costs to contingency and the rising tide of student debt? These questions and more must be at the forefront of our efforts to organize against contingency, for they address the core questions of value behind higher education budgets.

CONCLUSION

Finally, this volume underscores that we are at a significant juncture in higher education and that we must take action to achieve a more just workplace. If we want to preserve the instructional base of university education and student learning and create more just workplaces, we must act now to ensure productive working conditions and learning conditions for all involved in higher education. This volume will take us farther down the road toward meeting that goal.

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