

P-fac NEWS

Serving the Part-time teaching community at Columbia College

Fall, 2002

Welcome New Instructors

We are the Part Time Faculty Association at Columbia (P-fac) – the union which represents most part-timers in the college.

We won't officially represent you until the beginning of your second semester of teaching at Columbia, when you enter the bargaining unit. At that time you will begin receiving the union-negotiated rates of pay described below, along with the other benefits of our current contract.

At the moment, though, we'd like to invite you to look through the features of the contract – and to contact us with any questions or concerns you may have at this point. Our office is Room 613 in the Congress Building. There will be someone there from 10:00 - 3:00 Monday through Thursday. The number is 7485 if you're calling from within Columbia, and 312-344-7485 from an outside phone.

One more thing. You can do us, and yourself, a great favor by filling out an application for membership in the union now (it won't be activated till next semester), and especially checking off the box for dues deduction. You will have to pay dues (or a representation fee) in any case, and having the fee deducted from your paycheck will greatly simplify life for all of us.

Thanks!

SPECIAL NEWSLETTER FOR NEW FACULTY

Reproduced below are some articles from the newsletter last spring, explaining and assessing the new contract. We thought they would be helpful in helping to orient new faculty.

NEW CONTRACT!

A new contract has been agreed upon by the negotiating teams for P-fac and the administration of the college. At about the same time you get this newsletter, if you are a member of the union you will have received a letter and a ballot for your vote on the proposed new contract. Our steering committee has recommended unanimously that the contract be approved. What follows is an outline (substantially the same as that enclosed with the ballot) and an analysis of the major new provisions of this contract. If you want to examine the actual contract, it is posted on the P-fac web site (WWW.PFAC.ORG) and several copies are on reserve in the Columbia library. Copies also are, or will soon be, available in departmental offices. There may be some slight changes in final language due to lawyers, but this is the contract as agreed to by the negotiating teams.

COMPENSATION

The new salary schedule (numbers show compensation for a 3-credit course):

Credits Taught	2002/03*	03/04	04/05	05/06
UM** – 21	2400	2600	2800	3000
22-45	2700	2900	3100	3300
46-72	3000	3200	3400	3600
73-111	3200	3400	3600	3800
112-139	3500	3700	3900	4100
140+	3700	3900	4100	4300

*February 2002 through January 2003

**[Bargaining] Unit Membership

This pay scale will be retroactive to the beginning of this semester (provided the contract is approved by the union membership and by Columbia's Board of Trustees).

SUMMER TEACHING, beginning this summer, will now count towards credit hour accrual.

COURSE LIMIT: The limitation on courses, or credit hours, which can be taught per semester per instructor moves up to a 9-credit hour maximum.

INTERRUPTION OF SERVICE: The amount of time a bargaining unit member may be gone and then return to teaching at Columbia, without credit-hour accrual returning to zero, goes up to three consecutive semesters, excluding summers.

COURSE DESIGN: A part-time faculty member and department chair may determine compensation for new course design, subject to general guidelines.

COMMITTEE WORK: Part-time faculty covered by the

contract will receive \$50 for attending any regular college or department committee meetings (except for College Council meetings or Council committee meetings and Presidential search committee meetings).

INSTRUCTIONAL CONTINUITY (all of the following apply for those who've taught 51 or more credit hours) An instructor whose course(s) is dropped from the schedule, cancelled for lack of enrollment, or significantly altered in definition, is entitled to timely notification, and the department is to pursue other opportunities for that instructor to continue teaching. A related provision provides for due process protections for faculty whose behavior is in question. Instructors whose teaching is unsatisfactory are to be formally notified, and given an opportunity to correct any deficiency. (This is known as remediation.) Instructors who have lost an assigned course due to low enrollment or being "bumped" by a full-timer, may "bump" another part-timer who has taught at Columbia fewer than two semesters, subject to certain restrictions.

CONTRACT ADMINISTRATION: The college will budget \$24,000 per year for compensation for up to four elected officers of the union who will staff the **P-fac** office to administer the contract.

SICK DAYS: Part-time faculty covered by the contract may be compensated for up to one class per course per semester which is missed due to sickness or a family emergency, provided they notify the department chair ahead of the class.

REVIEW: New provisions of the contract may be reviewed by the union and administration at 18 and 30 months from its beginning if problems of process emerge and require clarification or revision.

LENGTH OF CONTRACT: This is a four-year contract, from February 2002 through January 2006.

The Contract: An Assessment

by Christopher Thale and John Stevenson

The salary scale (once again) is the best point in this contract. **P-fac**'s negotiating team had a lengthy list of member concerns, but this was the one on which there were the strongest feelings, and on which the most clear-cut sort of advance was possible. There are significant raises for all who are covered by the contract. The number of steps in the salary scale has been trimmed, which means that experienced teachers can reach the top more quickly. Five years ago, before the Part-time Faculty Association at Columbia was "bargaining agent" for Columbia's part-timers, we proposed a \$3,000 per (3-credit) course minimum, with pay rising according to qualifications from there. We knew justice demanded such a scale, but it seemed unattainable. By 2005 it will be attained. Although this is still not parity, and talented people are still being discriminated against by virtue of part-time status, this is a very important achievement. Modest gains in compensating instructors who work on committees or design courses begin what we hope will be a move towards eliminating other forms of discrimination.

Lose a class? Several clauses require timely notification if classes are cut from the schedule, cancelled, or significantly redefined; the college has to make "every effort ... to find another class," "explore" the possibility of teaching another class, or make "a reasonable effort" to find an alternative. This kind of language calls for a good-faith effort to keep instructors at work, an effort that's in the interest of the college (which needs experienced people) and the instructors (who need work). One might prefer more ironclad language, but if a coordinator or chair utterly ignores these provisions, the instructor can file a grievance. The main effect here is likely to be a heightened awareness of the need to schedule carefully and to take a large view of the consequences of chopping classes. This provision applies only to members who have taught 51 credits, a concession to the college's concern about how this would work. But it's likely that a change in consciousness will benefit part-time instructors in general.

Many unions negotiate contracts that provide for course

release for officers, who have a great deal of work to get done, and with this contract we now have this, along with an agreement that we will staff the **P-fac** office to administer the contract from our side and to field questions from part-timers. **P-fac** steering committee members are generally able to answer these questions accurately and usefully, and this provision will help keep body and soul together for people who do in fact provide service to both part-time faculty and the college. (There will be someone in the office from 10am-3pm MWThF.)

The two-course limit was a maddening feature of the last contract, and a source of justifiable anger of part-time faculty. Years ago, a rule on the books limited teachers to two courses. The rule was honored in a few departments, but most did not. Three years ago, we were told that putting this two-course limit in the contract was no more than a formality. Once the contract had been agreed to, though, **P-fac** got blamed for the dean's crackdown on "excess" courses. This provision in the new contract ought to remedy that problem. (It doesn't guarantee that you'll get three, of course – that's up to the departments.)

This contract makes one key change with respect to governance, namely payment for serving on many committees. The goal of full integration of part-timer faculty into decision-making has proven hard to reach not only because most part-timers have multiple professional commitments but because participation in governance neither helps their careers nor lines their pockets. (Compare full-time faculty, who are expected to participate in order to earn their salaries, and are often already physically present in the South Loop when meetings take place.) College council meetings are not covered, nor Presidential search committees. But ad hoc college committees are included, as are search committees and department committees.

Sick leave (also available for personal emergencies) is now available, provided you call in ahead of time. Although this was often given on an informal basis, in other cases instructors were docked a day's pay if sick, and so it is good to have this in writing. At the same time, this provision points to one of the most important holes in this contract – there's nothing for health insurance. The basic reason is that it has proved impossible to find a decent group plan covering part-time teachers. If the college paid the entire cost – even for teachers who teach only one course, even for people who have other insurance – then insurance companies would offer good (group) rates. But the cost to the college would be very large. If part-time instructors pay some of the costs out of pocket, they have to be offered the option of not joining the plan; but then insurers will jack up premium costs, figuring that many of those willing to pay to opt in have significant health problems. If we're going to find health insurance for part-time teachers we're probably going to have to get together with part-time teachers throughout the Chicago region, and we'll need to provide pro-rated coverage from multiple employers.

The contract covers four years rather than the more usual three. A shorter contract would be preferable from our standpoint; the college wants predictability for as long a period as possible, and this was a concession on our part in order to make gains in other areas.

P-fac NEWS

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