

## **Negotiating Bulletin #6**

### **Rider is the Exceptional, Not the Typical**

When the administration points out that Rider is no longer ‘typical’ in its treatment of faculty, the AAUP does not shrink from this characterization; we embrace it. We have not labored for forty years to be ‘typical;’ we have labored to be extraordinary. We have not labored to be mediocre; we have labored to be superior. As a consequence of the AAUP’s long-term goal to improve the conditions of employment we have recruited an outstanding faculty that provides an extraordinary education to our students.

In this bulletin we explore the means by which we built one element of that extraordinary faculty—the adjunct faculty—and what will happen to that element under the administration’s proposal.

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A recent Congressional Staff Report notes the dismal working conditions ‘typical’ of contingent faculty throughout the country (<http://democrats.edworkforce.house.gov/sites/democrats.edworkforce.house.gov/files/documents/1.24.14-AdjunctEforumReport.pdf>).

(C)ontingent faculty earn low salaries with few or no benefits, are forced to carry on harried schedules to make ends meet, have no clear path for career growth, and enjoy little to no job security.

At Rider we have made concerted efforts to go in a different direction. In their article “Making Adjuncts Part of the ‘Family’” ([http://www.aahea.org/aahea/articles/sept2000\\_2.htm](http://www.aahea.org/aahea/articles/sept2000_2.htm)) former Provost Phyllis Frakt and Associate Provost Jim Castagnera discuss the means by which the administration and union worked cooperatively to develop better conditions for our adjunct faculty. They reach the following conclusion.

It is in the interest of colleges and universities to devise ways of encouraging adjuncts to offer the best classroom instruction. The three-tiered model established at Rider University provides incentives for regular evaluation of adjunct teaching and rewards good teachers with more

predictable and stable teaching assignments. In this way, adjunct faculty are more fully included as part of the campus scene.

Joan Mazzotti, then Chair of the Rider Board of Trustees, concurred, stating that “our new model should increase fairness in adjunct hiring and assignment of adjunct workload, while providing the university with better classroom instruction.”

What is the essence of those improved conditions for adjuncts?

- We created adjunct seniority statuses. Priority and Preferred adjuncts have a level of job security superior to that of all competing institutions as well as the possibility of benefits.
- We increased adjunct compensation. Rider moved from one of the lowest pay scales to the second highest minimum per course in New Jersey, which allows us to choose our faculty from among the most qualified in the pool.

There can be no doubt that these ‘atypical’ conditions help us attract and retain our talented, loyal cadre of excellent adjunct colleagues.

### **Administration Proposal to Eliminate Adjunct Seniority Status**

Under the administration’s proposal Priority and Preferred statuses disappear, along with the advantages touted by Mazzotti, Frakt, and Castagnera. These are some of the consequences.

- If you have been working towards Preferred status, you will never be able to achieve it nor the job security it provided.
- If you are a Preferred adjunct working towards Priority status, you will never be able to achieve it, nor will you be able to enjoy its benefits and higher level of job security.
- If you currently hold Priority status, you will pay approximately \$3600 a year for medical insurance.
- If you currently hold Priority status, you will no longer be reimbursed for giving a paper at professional conferences.

### **Administration Proposal to Drastically Reduce Adjunct Compensation**

Under the administration’s proposal newly hired adjunct will earn \$1400 per

course less than the present minimum rates. This new rate—\$2800 per course with no increases during the life of the contract—will provide the administration with a tremendous economic incentive to non-reappoint current adjuncts and replace them with new, cheaper faculty. (The administration has the legal right to replace you if you don't hold one of the seniority statuses.) Moreover, the new rate virtually guarantees that future colleagues will come from the bottom of the pool of available candidates; the best faculty will take positions elsewhere that pay nearly twice the rate.

The administration proposal would allow current adjuncts to retain their seniority status, but can we assume they wouldn't try to take that away next time? Even if they choose not to, the administration knows that Priority and Preferred status faculty will leave over time, to be replaced by the cheaper, more desperate labor force that is 'typical' of higher education. During the interim morale will plummet as people work side by side under vastly different conditions.

Can anyone imagine that treating people so poorly will produce a dedicated, loyal faculty? We believe that the administration's attempt to make Rider conform to what is 'typical' in higher education will destroy forty years of progress that helped lift us from obscurity to the level of respect we now enjoy.

The AAUP believes the best plan is to keep the advantages we worked together to achieve and build on that success. In fact, we feel that there is still a great deal of work that must be done to further improve the conditions of our adjunct colleagues.

Some adjuncts might wonder if the administration's proposal to create full-time, non-tenure-track faculty could be one such way to improve their conditions. Unfortunately, this is not the case. The administration is not looking to pay anyone more, only less. Their new contingent positions would replace full-time, tenure-track faculty. If adjuncts are affected, it will be to lose opportunities because the full-time contingents will be required to teach more courses than current tenure-track or tenured faculty. The AAUP believes that any adjunct who receives a full-time job at Rider deserves a tenure-track job with privileges identical to those currently enjoyed by all our full-time members.

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During the August 28<sup>th</sup> AAUP meeting we will fully brief you on these issues as well as the current state of negotiations. It is vital that all faculty—both full- and part-time—attend this meeting. It is important that the administration see that we are united and prepared to undertake any actions necessary to maintain the quality we have worked so hard to achieve.