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All over the country, adjuncts
are standing up for their rights.

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Adjuncts Motivate Us.
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National Adjuncts Walk-Out Day, Feb. 25 UI and BSU Join Faculty Across the Nation

Read IFT "white paper" on this issue at www.idaho-aft.org/contingents.htm.

Thousands of part-time higher education instructors walked off their jobs on Feb. 25. (The date chosen fortuitously coincided with Paterson Silk Strike 102 years ago.) In 1969 70 percent of faculty were full-time, but now only 30 percent are.

"Contingent" faculty (adjuncts, lecturers, and graduate students) now teach about two-thirds of the nation's classes at low pay, with no job security and little or no benefits. At the City University of New York adjuncts teach 59 percent of the courses, but earn only 29-38 percent of what full-time faculty are paid.

Adjuncts at Temple University starting their action on Feb. 24. A majority of them had just signed cards for AFT union representation, and Temple administrators had blocked their efforts. Part-time faculty at Temple are paid \$1,300 per credit hour with no benefits.

Part-time faculty at the University of Idaho, Boise State, Seattle University (where hundreds lined the campus streets), University of Arizona, Ohio State, University of Maryland, several New Jersey campuses, Boston College, University of Nevada system, Cleveland State, Central New Mexico Community College, Syracuse University, most of the campuses in San Diego, many University of California campuses, and many others participated in action of one form or other.

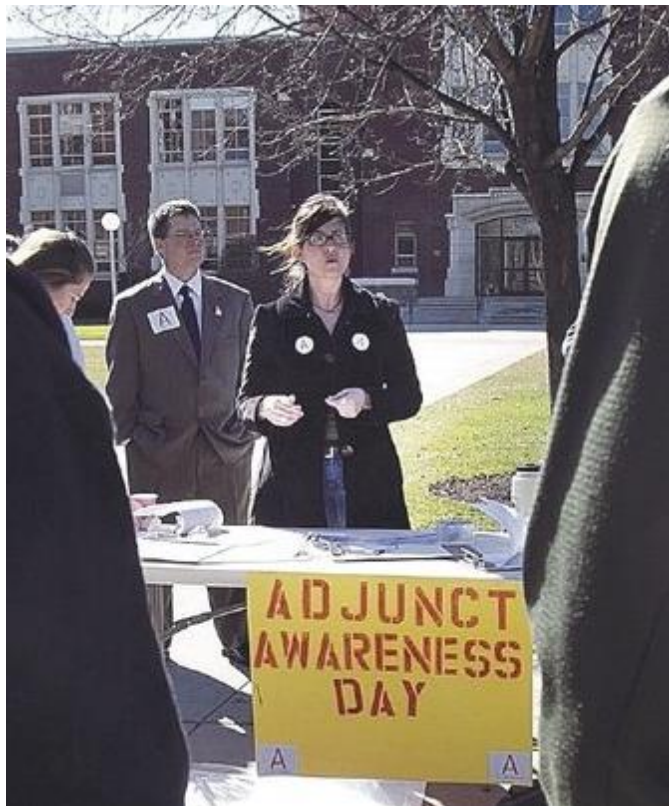
Instead of walk-outs (some union contracts ban them), faculty staged teach-ins, where instructors will use class time to talk about their dire working conditions. Some, such as UI faculty, did "grade-ins," where contingent faculty will gather to grade papers en masse. This action symbolizes the fact that many adjuncts do not have offices.

Many full-time faculty, including some at UI and BSU, also participated in National Adjunct Walk-Out Day. Nancy Leong, associate professor of law at the University of Denver, states: "Those of us who are tenured and tenure-track faculty should care in an even more immediate way, as the fate of the adjunct is intimately tied with the fate and shape of our own institutions."

Editor's Note: We thank our fellow unionists in the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) for their yeoman efforts in organizing the protest on the BSU campus.

Adjuncts Now Organizing at BSU

by Dana Hathaway, BSU philosophy department



Dana Hathaway, Katherine Jones photo

Adjuncts are organizing at universities and colleges across the country, and Boise State is no exception. Over the last 20 years, part-time, contingent faculty has become the new faculty majority.

Data from the US Department of Education finds the nationwide average to be approximately 75% of faculty. At Boise State, the estimates range from 47%-60%. If we care about the future of higher education, we ought to take notice: faculty, students, parents, community leaders, and anyone with an interest in quality higher education.

There was a time when adjuncts were the minority faculty: retired professors and professionals or active businesspersons wanting to teach a class now and then. Hiring part-time instructors is in fact necessary, as extra sections are added based on changing enrollment. Adjuncts were meant to be, as the word suggests, *supplementary* to full-time faculty based on this need.

What *is* the appropriate balance of part-time, contingent faculty, and tenured, tenure-eligible, and non-

tenured full-time faculty? As a philosophy instructor, I would suggest that we consult Aristotle on the proper mean between extremes. What is a balance that would be *virtuous*—in the best interests of educators, learners, and tax payers? This is a question that must be sincerely asked, thoughtfully contemplated, and answered to the best of our collective abilities.

The adjunctification of higher education is a two-pronged issue, at least. This is about quality education as much as it is an issue of labor conditions.

Governor Easley of North Carolina has coined the phrase: “Teacher working conditions are student learning conditions.” That is exactly right. The future of quality higher education is at risk if current trends continue. The majority of college teaching faculty should not be part-time instructors. *Of course* the budget is limited. All budgets are, that’s what a budget *is*: limits on spending and a specific allocation of funds.

If we value quality education, we must necessarily value instruction, and this requires just compensation and fair treatment. Students are not well-served with a perpetual over-reliance on part-time, contingent faculty, faculty who are, by their very status, undervalued and marginalized. It is not enough to say that adjuncts are valued and appreciated; it must also be demonstrated with a living wage.

If we are to take seriously Boise State’s “commitment to excellence,” the conditions of teaching and learning must reflect that commitment. Students deserve better: the majority of teachers must be able to give 100% of their professional attention to the task of teaching courses and mentoring students. Our adjuncts deserve better; they must be supported in doing their job with intellectual integrity *and* to be paid a living wage.

Boise State has taken steps in the last few years to provide adjunct faculty with necessary resources, but I ask you: where is the Adjunct Commission now? Let’s talk about the numbers. How bad is it? An Adjunct Instructor at Boise State teaching a 3/3 schedule (just under full-time at .75) earns an annual salary of approximately \$17,000 with no benefits. Adjuncts teach approximately 50% of the total course load. Those are the numbers, in brief. Compare this to the starting salary of \$36,000 for a

full-time K-12 teacher in Idaho with an advanced degree, and \$38,000 for a Lecturer at Boise State teaching 4/4. If an adjunct received a similar rate of pay (based on similar duties and similar qualifications) teaching a 3/3 schedule, they would receive approximately \$28,000 annually. Still wildly low for a college instructor at just below full-time, yet within range of relative fairness and far better than a mere \$17,000.

Adjuncting is not intended to be a full-time career, so says Marty Schimpf, in a 2014 Boise Weekly article entitled, "Low Pay, High Education: How Adjuncts Carry Boise State University." For many adjuncts, however, it is indeed just that, and this is widely known. There are many adjuncts who teach a near full load and have done so for decades (or a full-time 4/4 schedule before the policy change).

They are not doing it as a side job or while in retirement; they desire a living wage with benefits and there are plenty of courses to go around. If the University prides itself on how fantastic it is that they can pull in so many professionals from the metropolis to teach an extra course now and then (the illusory image of "the adjunct"), well, how

many adjuncts really fit this profile? And how many are trying to scrape together a living teaching at one or multiple colleges?

Adjuncts are the new cheap labor: very low wages compared with their colleagues doing the same or similar work; and, flexible-- hire and let go every 10-15 weeks. It is, insists Schimpf, the most economical way of expanding. With adjuncts as a faculty majority, this is shameful. The truth is, we are addicted to adjuncts, and the overuse of their labor rises to the level of abuse. It is time to rethink the model.

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Increasing Salaries and Benefits**

Members of the American Federation of Teachers receive a \$1,000,000 professional and legal liability policy, access to legal and moral support, and national/state AFT publications. For application forms please go to www.idaho-aft.org/IftDues.htm.
