

A brief history of FLCC G.R.A.D.E.: Why did we start the union?

We thought that this would be a good time to remind all Adjunct Faculty about why we unionized. Prior to 2006, we were not represented by any bargaining unit. After we joined NYSUT, the Full time faculty alliance and the professional staff followed with their own NYSUT locals.

A brief history:

In the Fall, 2005 semester, FLCC changed the payroll practice without adjunct input, since we had no voice, and went from 8 paychecks to 7 with the first scheduled to come at the end of the third or fourth week of work. In February, 2006, the first paycheck did not arrive as anticipated, and that meant that the first pay was 5 weeks into the start of the semester. There was no notice or consideration of how this affected adjunct faculty.

On January 30, 2006, the FLCC-GRADE organizing committee of Steve Duprey, Sue Bennett, and Robert Leopard, notified FLCC and Ontario County officials that they were beginning an organizing campaign in order to collectively bargain with the administration about our wages, benefits, and working conditions. Our salaries at that time were not on par with the pay given to Full-time faculty teaching overloads. For example:

- Sept 2003 \$656/contact hour
- Sept 2004 \$656/contact hour (no raise)
- Sept 2005 \$675/contact hour
- Sept 2006 \$675/contact hour (no raise)

Recognizing that Adjunct Faculty circumstances were (and continue to be) very diverse—some taught many classes, some had been at FLCC for years, others taught only occasionally, and still others were new to the college—Adjunct Faculty were asked to pull together for the common good.

The required number of adjuncts responded positively, and the first elections were held at the fall meeting, 2006. Our first contract was negotiated and ratified in December, 2007 to go into effect from 1/08-8/10. Our second contract was ratified in 2/2010 for 9/2010-8/2013. We currently have two pay levels (\$855/880 per contact hour) based on semesters taught, and the top rate equals the Full-time faculty overload rate. We have an active Labor Relations committee with administration to deal with issues that affect Adjunct Faculty. You have a voice at FLCC, which was sorely lacking prior to 2006. We can't fix everything, but there have been improvements.

The Evolving Role of the Adjunct—commentary by Holger Stave, Treasurer: We thought that these comments are particularly relevant to our issues! We gave this to Dr. Topping.

The Evolving role of the Adjunct.

The original concept of the Adjunct was that institutions of higher learning could augment their instructional staff by recruiting talented, experienced individuals from the workplace and ask them to instruct courses in their disciplines. Individuals accepted this in addition to their regular, full-time job as a great experience and a little extra cash. This concept is still very common and a great asset.

However, as colleges and universities discovered that Adjunct Faculty cost less, usually demand little, and in many places are able to function with minimal communication with

their departments, the practice became very focused on saving money. As more and more courses were developed for the Adjuncts to teach, and many Full-time Faculty taught classes were relinquished to Adjuncts as Full-time Faculty retired or left, the market began to change.

Suddenly there were classes that needed to be taught by Adjunct Faculty during the day. As the demand for the day-time available Adjunct Faculty grew, an entirely new Adjunct developed: The "Full-time" Adjunct.

In order for many Adjunct Faculty to be able to teach during the day, they need to teach enough classes to make this job their primary income, supplemented by some other part-time jobs that could be scheduled or facilitated around the daytime class schedule. This becomes a very precarious balancing act, in that there are no guarantees of employment as an Adjunct, yet the load needs to be substantial in order to fulfill income needs. Most part-time jobs these days do not cooperate willingly with a lot of schedule changes and adjustments.

If suddenly the teaching hours of these "Full-time" Adjuncts are cut, very few will have any choice but to find a full-time job elsewhere and consequently will be unable to teach daytime classes. This would be painful for both the institution as well as the Adjuncts. The "Full-time" Adjuncts are devoted to their subjects, care about their students, and more times than not put forth an extra measure of effort to produce a better product because they realize that they are teaching at the whim of their department heads. Therefore, if they do not teach up to the highest standards, they are dropped.

Replacing "Full-time" Adjunct Faculty with a greater number of Adjuncts disrupts continuity of content, and increases supervisory responsibilities and communications. It adds costs in supplies for teaching materials and instructor's manuals, increases the work-load on Human Resources for processing, record keeping, and payroll processing. Plus it compounds the already challenging parking situation.

All adjuncts are determined and focused on providing an excellent learning experience to the students, and many do so with very little support or communication from Full-time Faculty or even Department Heads. Mentoring programs can be excellent in maintaining communication and continuity, but they require additional time and commitment as well. Adjuncts are a fixture in the system now, changing with the times, adapting to new economic and functional changes. If treated as contributors and recognized as educators by everyone in the campus community, the students will benefit from the seamless support and rich environment of gifted teachers.