



# **Stronger** *Together*



*A Union of Professionals*

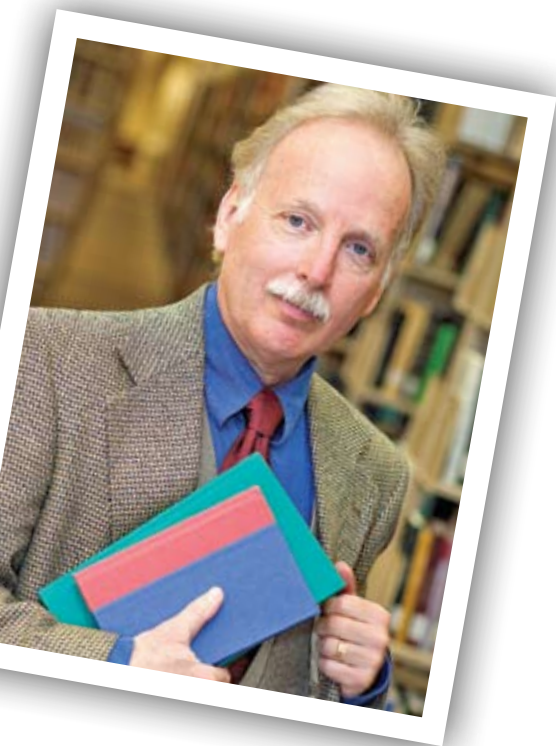
**AFT Higher Education**

**A** COMBINATION OF destructive trends in higher education—shrinking state budgets, stagnant student aid, the growth of corporate-style management, the overuse and exploitation of contingent faculty, increasing workloads and attacks on academic freedom—is weakening the educational integrity and professionalism of American colleges and universities.

About three-quarters of the instructional workforce today is made up of contingent faculty who teach more than half of all undergraduate courses in the United States.

**COMBINED, THESE TRENDS** have placed the higher education workforce under siege.

- Full-time tenured faculty members face increasingly heavy teaching loads and larger class sizes. As state funding decreases and the ranks of tenured faculty members are depleted, tenured faculty are expected to do more committee work, more curriculum development, more student advisement, more service and more scholarship.
- Contingent faculty members, particularly part-time faculty, usually are severely underpaid and denied equitable access to benefits and pensions. Part-time faculty members may need to run from job to job to cobble together a living. They generally are not invited (or paid) to participate on academic committees and often are denied the most basic professional supports, such as an office in which to meet students.



- More often than not, graduate employees are not paid a living wage for the classes they teach and do not receive a professional level of benefits. Increasingly, they are expected to take on heavy teaching loads with inadequate professional support or mentorship.
- Professional and classified staff members are encountering higher workloads, little job security and inadequate access to promotions; these workers also are highly vulnerable to supervisory misconduct.

**THESE FACTORS SHOULD** bring the workforce together to fight for better wages and professional working conditions. But in a perverse way, these conditions sometimes make individuals in each part of the workforce feel so burdened that they blame their colleagues rather than the lack of college funding and administrative actions.

**THE FACT IS THAT EVERYONE** is working hard, too hard, and that no part of the workforce has a premium on trouble in the underfunded, corporatized university. We must not allow ourselves to retreat into our own corners and view progress for the other guy as a loss for “our” side. We have to stand together—stronger together—or we will be caught in a storm we can’t control.

**WE CANNOT AFFORD** to allow those who want to impose corporate-style management on higher education to sow discord by pitting various segments of the campus workforce against one another. And we cannot allow the continued exploitation—through low-paid, insecure jobs—of any group of higher education employees; nor can we allow the threats to our principles of shared governance and academic freedom. Institutional decision-making should be shared by the community of faculty, staff, students and administrators that comprises an institution.

# what's *at stake?*



## Our Profession

**FACULTY AND STAFF MEMBERS** are viewed today as service providers rather than as valued professionals and public intellectuals. If colleges and universities continue to shift instructional labor to a system of “pay per course” in which faculty members are denied a long-term institutional investment, our colleges and universities will cease to be communities of scholars and, instead, become labor markets of interchangeable employees—many of whom are paid low wages for the professional work they do. Not only is this unfair to the employees whose work is undervalued, it also sends a message to students and the public that higher education is little more than a service to be rendered as cheaply as possible.

**THIS RACE TO THE BOTTOM**—both from an economic and intellectual community perspective—will lead to the permanent de-professionalization of college and university instruction. And unless we all—those who hold full-time, stable positions and those who work in the most casual and exploited positions—work together to confront these trends, we are complicit partners in the undermining of our profession.

We cannot afford to allow various segments of the campus workforce to be pitted against one another.



# Teaching and Research

**THE CURRENT STAFFING MODEL** in higher education weakens the two fundamental functions of the academy: teaching and research. By reducing the number of full-time faculty and by employing contingent faculty members in underpaid positions with no job security, institutions have limited the amount of time, scholarship and collaboration necessary to develop college curriculum and course design.

**TOO OFTEN, CONTINGENT FACULTY** are forced to deliver course content that they have had no role in constructing, or they are required to serve as unpaid volunteers to develop course content and to bring the curriculum to life for their students. And in virtually every circumstance, contingent faculty members have few protections when it comes to either job security or their academic freedom.



**INSTITUTIONS ALSO ARE ELIMINATING**—slowly and systematically—the ability of faculty members to conduct independent research, which has been so crucial to the health and well-being of our country and the world. At a time when higher education in the United States should be leading the development of new knowledge and technologies, instead we are seeing a reduction in the number of faculty members who are supported to conduct research. And contingent faculty who want to stay current in their field and who want to conduct research are forced to do so independently and without compensation.

## Shared Governance

**INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION** traditionally have employed a system of shared governance in which faculty and staff are included in institutional decision-making, particularly, but not limited to, matters related to the academic functions of a college or university. This arrangement preserves the academic integrity and educational missions of colleges and universities, and upholds the principles of academic freedom and democratic practice.

**THE EROSION OF** the instructional workforce undermines faculty voice in institutional decision-making as the number of full-time faculty continues to shrink and contingent faculty routinely are excluded from shared governance.

We cannot allow the continued exploitation of any group of higher education employees.

# Unions Must Take the Lead

**WE MAY ATTRACT ALLIES** in the administration and among policy-makers. But in the first instance, only our unions have the power, the structure and the will to take a stand to ensure a higher education workforce that is built on good, stable and secure jobs, and on the concept of equal pay for equal work. We cannot allow the continued marginalization of more and more of the higher education workforce.

**ONLY OUR UNIONS** can fight effectively for the inclusion of all faculty and staff in the academic decision-making and governance of an institution, rather than a disaggregated workforce designed to carry out the directives of a centralized administration.

**ONLY OUR UNIONS** can work to ensure that education and student success remain the focus of the higher education enterprise, rather than turning our colleges and universities into “production centers.”

**OUR EFFORTS TO TURN THINGS AROUND**, however, will take a significant commitment by all of us and we will not succeed in reaching our common goals unless we commit to working together.

**IF WE DO NOT RECOGNIZE** that we are stronger together and that the common good of all faculty and staff far outweighs our differences, we forfeit our collective power to shape institutions of higher education for future generations.

This race to the bottom will lead to the permanent de-professionalization of college and university instruction.



## For a Better Future

**WE NEED TO DO** what unions are designed to do best: use our collective power to improve working conditions for everyone, particularly for those who are most exploited. Improving working conditions for all means:

- Tenured and tenure-track faculty must fight for parity pay, benefits, job security and career ladders for contingent faculty. Not only is this the fair thing to do, but it also will improve working conditions for all faculty in the long run. If we fail to stand together, we are sure to witness the continued de-professionalization of the workforce.

- Contingent faculty must be willing to work with their tenured colleagues and recognize that workload issues—from increased pressure to produce new research to committee and service work assignments—are on the rise. If we fail to stand together, we will continue to undermine the concept that a permanent faculty workforce is a beneficial goal.
- All faculty need to recognize that professional staff are colleagues who need recognition and respect as equal partners in the education enterprise. At the same time, staff must recognize that the faculty voice is being eroded. If we fail to stand together, the alternative is to cede all decision-making to college administrators.
- Our unions need to be structured in ways that give voice to all constituencies. Our unions should exemplify the principles that we want to see in the institutions where we work. If we cannot first establish collegiality within our own unions, it will be impossible to work in solidarity to promote our priorities in the institutions where we work, or at the state or national levels.
- We pursue the goal of organizing so that every worker at every institution is a union member—whether in our own union or in another union on campus. Further, we must build coalitions with other labor organizations on campus. If we do not work in a concerted and swift fashion, we will not have the power and the voice to move our agenda forward.
- Bargaining proposals and platforms should strive for systemic reform for all employees, and contract campaigns should mobilize all employees around the whole contract.

## We're Here To Help

**AFT HIGHER EDUCATION** can provide you with resources:

- Assistance with a contract campaign
- Help with rethinking your local union structures and operations
- Support on a public education or legislative campaign
- Resources and information for holding internal union meetings to bring the principles of Stronger Together to your local

E-mail us at [highered@aft.org](mailto:highered@aft.org)  
or call 202/879-4426.





Solidarity must  
be our priority.  
We are stronger  
together.

CK FACULTY ▪ FULL-TIME NON  
TIME FACULTY ▪ ADJUNCT FACULTY ▪ A  
GRADUATE EMPLOYEES ▪ PROFESSIONAL STAFF  
STAFF ▪ TENURED FACULTY ▪ TENURE-TRACK  
L-TIME NONTENURE TRACK FACULTY ▪ PART-T  
ADJUNCT FACULTY ▪ CONTINGENT FACULTY ▪  
YEEES ▪ PROFESSIONAL STAFF ▪ CLASSIFIED ST  
O FACULTY ▪ TENURE-TRACK FACULTY ▪ FULL-  
RE TRACK FACULTY ▪ PART-TIME FACULTY ▪ A  
CONTINGENT FACULTY ▪ GRADUATE EMPLO  
ONAL STAFF ▪ CLASSIFIED STAFF ▪ TENURED  
TRACK FACULTY ▪ FULL-TIME NONTENURE TR  
PART-TIME FACULTY ▪ ADJUNCT FACULTY ▪ CO  
GRADUATE EMPLOYEES ▪ PROFESSIONAL S  
ED STAFF ▪ TENURED FACULTY ▪ TENURE-TR  
FULL-TIME NONTENURE TRACK FACULTY ▪ PA  
Y ▪ ADJUNCT FACULTY ▪ CONTINGENT FACUL  
EMPLOYEES ▪ PROFESSIONAL STAFF ▪ CLASSIF  
RED FACULTY ▪ TENURE-TRACK FACULTY ▪ F  
ENURE TRACK FACULTY ▪ PART-TIME FACULTY  
TY ▪ CONTINGENT FACULTY ▪ GRADUATE EM  
SSIONAL STAFF ▪ CLASSIFIED STAFF ▪ TENUR  
RE-TRACK FACULTY ▪ FULL-TIME NONTENURE  
PART-TIME FACULTY ▪ ADJUNCT FACULTY ▪  
SSIFIED STAFF ▪ TENURED FACULTY ▪ TENUR  
Y ▪ FULL-TIME NONTENURE TRACK FACULTY ▪  
ENURED FACULTY ▪ TENURE-TRACK FACULTY ▪  
NONTENURE TRACK FACULTY ▪ PART-TIME FACU  
CULTY ▪ CONTINGENT FACULTY ▪ GRADUATE  
ROFESSIONAL STAFF ▪ CLASSIFIED STAFF ▪ TEN  
ENURE-TRACK FACULTY ▪ FULL-TIME NONTEN  
LTY ▪ PART-TIME FACULTY ▪ ADJUNCT FACUL  
ACULTY ▪ GRADUATE EMPLOYEES ▪ PROFESS  
CLASSIFIED STAFF ▪ TENURED FACULTY ▪ TEN  
ULTY ▪ FULL-TIME NONTENURE TRACK FACUL  
FACULTY ▪ ADJUNCT FACULTY ▪ CONTINGEN  
ATE EMPLOYEES ▪ PROFESSIONAL STAFF ▪ CH  
▪ TENURED FACULTY ▪ TENURE-TRACK FACU  
NONTENURE TRACK FACULTY ▪ PART-TIME F  
CONTINGENT FACULTY ▪ GRADU  
STAFF





*A Union of Professionals*

American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO  
555 New Jersey Ave. N.W.  
Washington, DC 20001  
202/879-4400  
[www.aft.org](http://www.aft.org)

Item no. 36-09005