Ft Connect

NEWSLETTER OF THE WESTCHESTER COMMUNITY COLLEGE FEDERATION OF TEACHERS / Nº 10 / OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2018

eq·ui·ty
/ˈekwədē/

noun

1. the quality of being fair and impartial.
   "equity of treatment"
   synonyms: fairness, justness, impartiality, egalitarianism; More
2. the value of the shares issued by a company.
   "he owns 62% of the group's equity"
   synonyms: value, worth; More

IMAGINING EQUITY

Since 2001, Campus Equity Week has been marked at colleges across North America by activities intended to educate campus communities, the public, and policymakers about issues of quality and equality in higher education, including the low pay, lack of job security, and unfair working conditions of part-time faculty. Occurring in late October, CEW is supported by the American Federation of Teachers, National Education Association, United University Professions, and other national and regional faculty organizations.

One such group is COCAL, the Coalition of Contingent Academic Labor, which held its thirteenth international conference in San Jose, CA, in August. WCCFT was ably represented by Kimberly Mallory (English) and Gretchen Sancher (Math), chair of our Adjunct Committee. Reporting to the Executive Board, Gretchen recalled a much-discussed Gallup Poll showing that "The most significant long-term impact on students is their relationship with professors. Yet adjuncts teach most of the courses, and we are the most disengaged employees in the public sector. We pay a psychological price to stand up and imitate professors without any backing whatsoever."

Gretchen described three ideas for countering such disengagement:

1) "Relatedness: We need to build community and allow adjuncts a voice" through newsletters and other communication tools;

2) "Autonomy: we have to listen to each other and feel respected";

3) "Competence: We need to feel that we are capable of doing this job and that others know it."

"In the U.S., Canada, and Mexico," Gretchen continued, "there are unions that have successfully involved lots of adjuncts and connected full-timers and part-timers by organizing around pay equity, adjunct office hours, paid benefits, and other powerful ideas."

Kimberly attended communications-oriented workshops "because someday we may want to organize a campaign to garner media attention." One hands-on session discussed soundbites and press releases. "What would you say to reporters if you had only nine seconds to explain adjunct life? Do people really understand that we are the highly educated working poor?"

"Sometimes we think it's them against us, full-timers against adjuncts," Kimberly said, "but at CoCal, it was 'We are all in this together.' Adjuncts care just as much about our students. It's just that there needs to be much more awareness around the need for equity."

Last spring, the WCCFT Negotiating Team asked part-time colleagues to participate in a survey to determine their needs and priorities. Nearly two hundred responded. Their answers to survey questions and their open-ended comments may be found at http://www.sunywccft.org/2018/09/spring-2018-adjunct-survey/

PART 2 WCCFT SUPPORTS PROFESSIONAL GROWTH OF ALL FACULTY

WCCFT does far more than negotiate contracts. The Faculty Development (FD) Fund, for example, supports the professional growth of both full-time and part-time colleagues. Last year, thirty-five faculty received FD reimbursement. Some of their experiences were reported in the September FTCONNECT, and we are pleased to continue the reports here.

FD Recipients Jim Werner and Kamil Hamaou

LAURIE COREY (Psychology): My FD grant enabled me to participate in a two-day intensive workshop on new techniques in couples' therapy. The most meaningful learning often results from interactions with other professionals sharing the experience, as well as from the presentations, and that was true this time, too. I shared these new ideas with my students during the 2017-18 academic year. The techniques taught have also been useful in my personal interactions with students and perhaps have helped students in their everyday lives as well.

ELIZABETH GAFFNEY (English): Thanks to travel funds from the WCCFT, I attended the Newburyport (MA) Literary Festival in April 2017. "Breakfast with the Poets" was a highlight for me. About twenty practicing poets gathered for an early meal to discuss craft. The teachers among us talked pedagogy and exchanged ideas. What made it possible for me to attend this conference was taking Amtrak to Boston. This gave me the time to read my students' end-of-term research papers.

KAMIL HAMAOUI (Psychology): WCCFT funding enabled me to present my research at the Association for Psychological Science 29th Annual Convention in Boston. My paper compared effects of different types of review quizzing on long-term learning. I also presented at a Society for the Teaching of Psychology (STP) Institute poster session and networked with psychology professors from colleges throughout the United States. I was invited by the editor of E-xcellence in Teaching, an STP teaching blog, to write an essay on my research, which was published in 2018.

DANIELLE NERKO (Chemistry): I actually used my faculty development funds last year to help defray tuition and fees while finishing up my Ph.D. at Stony Brook University. I successfully defended my dissertation in August 2017.

JOE SGAMMATO (English): I present papers at one or more conferences per year. Since transportation, lodging, and registration expenses for these meetings are self-funded, I of course appreciate any available monetary help. I'm grateful to WCCFT for their contributions to my scholarly activities the last several years.

PAUL SIEGEL (Psychology): I am using WCCFT funding to conduct an fMRI study of a new treatment for Post-traumatic Stress Disorder in veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan. PTSD has become a hallmark of severe impairment in U.S. combat vets, highly associated with depression, suicide, and major

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Message from the President

Mel Bienenfeld

I'm heartened to see more and more members stepping up to play expanded roles in our union's work. I feel optimistic about preparing to put the local's leadership in new, energetic hands as I and others prepare to retire.

In recent weeks, members voted overwhelmingly to ratify our new contract and elected two new Executive Board members, Ellen Zendman and Frank Maddalena, to fill vacancies. As we welcome Ellen and Frank, I recall all six enthusiastic, well-qualified candidates who ran for these positions and presented candidate statements to the October 3 meeting. They are a strong indication that when it is time to elect an entirely new board next April, we are very likely to find the new leaders we need!

Meeting attendees also got to see a reenergized Adjunct Committee, under the leadership of Gretchen Sancher and Gwen Roundtree. With the involvement of people like our Adjunct Award winner Kimberly Mallory and the able assistance of New Member Chair Ginny Falcone, the committee is planning a set of activities which can increase adjunct awareness of their common conditions and ability to improve things. The committee will also help build solidarity between part-time and full-time faculty members.

I want to give a shout-out to Jim Werner, who took over the role of Grievance Chair. Jim's conscientiousness, attention to detail, empathy, intelligence, and judicious manner have already allowed us to resolve several issues satisfactorily. We will be in good hands going forward on the grievance front.

With all our recent increased member involvement, I know we will have a great team.

In solidarity, Mel

CONTRACT CORNER

Judy Langer, Vice-President

As you read this, our 2018-19 contract is on its journey through ratification/approval by WCCFT members, college trustees, county legislators, and the county executive, and then back to the WCC payroll office to deposit retroactive pay directly into our bank accounts. In the interim, we will be electing a new negotiating team and creating our next set of proposals to present to Administration. Negotiating the next contract presents both challenges and opportunities, and I encourage you to think outside the box. We will, of course, negotiate for higher pay and to hold the line on health care costs. But beyond that, what else do we want in our next contract?

Since I will not have a seat at the next bargaining table, I thought I would share my experience and research beyond this campus. The following questions and others need to be explored:

- Is there a way to better safeguard tenure?
- Is there a way to increase the number of full-time faculty?
- Is there a way for part-time colleagues to feel respected by both Administration and full-time faculty?
- Is there a way for adjuncts to reach pay equity?
- Is there a way to provide professionally appropriate workspace outside the classroom for the hundreds of part-time instructors?
- Is there a way to limit the number of administrators?
- Is there a way to get more counseling for our students?
- Is there a way to prevent students from secretly recording faculty without our permission?
- Is there a way to forbid faculty surveillance without written permission from the faculty member? Is there a way to deal with health and safety issues in a more effective, time-sensitive manner?

What can you do? If you are unable to commit time to the negotiating team, you still can tell us what you know about other contracts or share your current concerns and future aspirations. It is the contract that protects us all. Let's work together for a good one.

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WCCFT SUPPORTS PROFESSIONAL GROWTH OF ALL FACULTY

PART 2

medical conditions. Averse to confronting traumatic memories, the majority do not seek treatment. I have developed a treatment using very brief exposure (VBE~.02 seconds) to pictures representing a person's fears (e.g. combat scenes) to desensitize the brain's fear circuitry and reduce symptoms without inducing further emotional distress.

EVA SUCHOW (Health): The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics annual meeting helps me keep up with current nutrition and exercise recommendations. Top experts speak about topics such as physical performance, nutrition, and disease prevention. I attended several talks, including Managing Cardiovascular Disease Risk, Recommending Supplements, and Communicating Nutrition Information. I teach Health and Fitness for Life and am a Certified Dietitian/Nutritionist and a Certified Exercise Instructor, so continuing education is essential to maintain my certifications and bring the latest scientific information to my students.

JIM WERNER (English): With FD funding, I attended the Two-Year College Association Northeast Conference in Hartford, which included a panel from our own colleagues Paula Rubenstein and Brian Centrone. I also was able to attend (with Meralee Silverman and Patti Sehulster) the Conference on Acceleration in Developmental Education in Baltimore, gaining invaluable guidance on acceleration and integrating reading and writing. Finally, I participated in my first Summer Seminar with the MLA Association of Departments of English, which provided much-appreciated insight and support from other English Chairs for this "newbie."

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT ENROLLMENT FORMS ARE AVAILABLE for activities between Sept. 1, 2017, and Aug. 31, 2018. Eligible part-time faculty may apply for up to $750. Guidelines for eligibility are on the forms. The deadline for adjuncts is Oct. 31.

PART-TIME FACULTY FORM

JOIN WCCFT!

SUPPORT YOUR FACULTY UNION!

ENROLL ONLINE AT HTTP://WWW.SUNYWCCFT.ORG/MEMBERSHIP-FORM/
UNSURE OF YOUR MEMBERSHIP STATUS? CONTACT ROWANLWCCFT@GMAIL.COM

UPCOMING EVENTS

MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS TEC 107
Nov. 7, Dec. 5

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETINGS
Oct 17, 31, Nov 13, 29, Dec 13

NYSUT REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY
Oct 19-21, Cooperstown, NY

FT Connect strives to keep you informed about significant events affecting you as a WCC faculty member, to advocate for your rights, and to provide a forum for your views. Please send your feedback, ideas for articles, or letters to richardcwccft@gmail.com.

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2018-2019

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