



Briefing Paper: Collective Bargaining for Contingent Faculty at Public, 4-Year Colleges

Support Contingent Faculty Collective Bargaining Rights

Who are the Contingent Faculty Members?

- Contingent faculty are part- and full-time instructors and researchers who lack permanent contracts, and the job stability and academic freedom provided to their tenured colleagues who do similar work. They teach crucial skills such as writing, foreign languages, statistics, and basic computing. In the USM, contingent faculty are over half of all instructors and a majority of all faculty. On some campuses, they are almost 70% of the teaching faculty.
- The number of contingent faculty teaching at our 4-year institutions has increased steadily. Since 2014, the number of contingent faculty at the state's flagship institution has grown 19.3 percent. The number of full-time faculty positions has declined by 6.9 percent during that same timeframe.

What are the working conditions for Contingent Faculty?

- Pay and other working conditions for contingent faculty are highly variable across institutions, schools, colleges, and even departments. Contingent faculty are paid on a per course basis, and with a full teaching load, make \$16 to \$32K per year. Many full-time instructors, as well as *all* part-time instructors, lack access to health care and other benefits, and there is no standard definition of what constitutes a full-time, benefits-eligible position. Most contingent faculty are denied COLA and merit pay.
- Contingent faculty face job insecurity that depletes their morale and undermines their ability to plan for the future or earn a living wage in the present. This situation is especially true during economic downturns, when they fear job loss. Non-tenure-track research faculty do cutting edge work and bring millions of research dollars to our universities, but know that if they lose funding, they are out of a job.
 - Instructors who get teaching assignments just weeks or days before the start of classes, have less time to plan or receive training directed at ensuring campus health and safety. Faculty members are often the first to identify when a student needs academic health or faces a mental health challenge.
- Contingent faculty are rarely given the same support as tenure-track faculty. They are denied access to faculty due-process rights and academic freedom, thereby stifling their ability to teach challenging material. They have no protection from retaliation. Many contingent faculty members lack individual, private offices to discuss sensitive topics with students and are often not provided up-to-date computers and other equipment.

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What avenues do contingent faculty have to resolve their concerns?

- In 2010, the Maryland State Legislature approved a “Meet and Confer” process for USM Adjunct Faculty (less the 50% FTE) and Graduate Assistants, but this has been implemented only sporadically or not at all.
- Contingent faculty at the state Community Colleges, many of whom have the same qualifications as USM faculty and indeed teach the same courses, were recently granted the right to collective bargaining. It should be a right granted to all workers in higher ed in Maryland as well.



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