



PART TIME LECTURER FACULTY CHAPTER

RUTGERS COUNCIL OF AAUP-AFT CHAPTERS • DECEMBER 2008

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President's Message

Now that Barack Obama has been elected President, it seems likely that significant reforms in our healthcare system will be on the agenda for the next session of Congress. Even though we spend more per capita in the U.S. for health care than any other developed country, 47 million Americans lack health insurance. Others have health insurance, but the benefits provided are inadequate or the cost of premiums is onerous. We have to make fundamental changes in our broken healthcare system.

As a union that represents members who are struggling to obtain and pay for decent health insurance, we need to be part of efforts to work toward universal health care and a more efficient, rational system. As various proposals for changing the system are put forward, we will be discussing with the membership how we can play a role in this process.

Currently, PTLs can buy into the New Jersey State Health Benefits Plan, which offers a comprehensive package of benefits at a relatively reasonable group rate for state and public employees. Unfortunately, there are PTLs who can't afford to buy into the plan, and some have no insurance at all.

We will not be able to change this situation in the short-run. We will be able to put the health insurance issue on the table when we negotiate with Rutgers again in 2010.

However, we have been meeting with Rutgers' management representatives since March 2008 regarding various options for employee-paid, supplemental medical benefits, disability insurance, and dental/prescription benefits. These so-called "voluntary" insurance programs – which are available to union members through the AFT's Benefit Program - can offer significant benefits to some PTLs. We are trying to persuade Rutgers to allow PTLs to pay for these programs through payroll deduction.

Our next meeting with Rutgers' management regarding this issue is December 17. We will update you on the outcome of the meeting.

I hope everybody has a happy and healthy holiday season.

In Solidarity,

Mike Slott

PTL, Labor Studies, SMLR, New Brunswick & President, PTLFC-AAUP-AFT at Rutgers University

Comparison: PTLs Before and After Unionization

Before the Union, prior to 1988	With the Union, 1988-2008
PTL salaries stagnated for almost 20 years	Most PTL salaries have more than quadrupled; every PTL receives a salary increase each semester
PTLs often learned indirectly and after the fact that they had not been reappointed	PTLs with 4 consecutive semesters of service must receive written notice of non-reappointment
PTLs had no recourse in the face of apparent unfair treatment	PTLs have access to a grievance procedure culminating in third party neutral arbitration, which is binding in cases concerning salary
PTLs could have the size of their courses doubled with no increase in pay	PTLs are eligible for compensation for over-size classes according to a set formula
Longtime PTLs found new hires being offered their courses first	A PTL with 12 semesters of service cannot be replaced by a PTL with less than 12 semesters under most conditions
Some PTLs received no written information before their appointment and often did not find out what they were teaching until the semester began	PTLs must receive written information about title, salary, period of appointment, course(s) assigned, approximate number of students, duties, etc. in advance; departments must make every effort to notify of reappointment 30 days ahead
Many PTLs had no office or access to phone, computer, copying, etc.	All PTLs must have a University space to meet students and access to phone, fax, computer, and printer consonant with departmental practice
Professional development for PTLs was a mystery	Bargaining unit PTLs may apply for awards annually through a PTL Professional Development Fund
PTLs did not have a guaranteed right to library privileges or to use recreation facilities; most PTLs were omitted from the faculty staff directory	PTLs receive ID cards, annual library privileges, access to recreation facilities and are listed in the Rutgers directory
PTLs had no access to health insurance, not even the option to enroll in an employee-paid program	PTLs have access (at their own expense) to the State Health Benefit Program at group rates

Know Your Collective Bargaining Agreement

There's more to the PTL Bargaining Agreement than the highlights listed in the before-and-after chart above. See for yourself at http://www.rutgersaaup.org/misc/PTL_07-11_Agreement.pdf.

The current negotiated minimum salaries for PTLs are \$1325 per credit; \$40 per hour for PALS; \$45 per hour for PALS Corporate; and \$1225 per class period for Academic Foundations Newark. All PTLs at or above the minimums are set to receive a 2.5% across-the-board increase in the Spring 2009 semester. Everyone should get some increase, either to the minimum or across-the-board, whichever is higher.

Also important to keep in mind, as Fall 2009 semester appointments approach, is the provision encouraging departments to give two-semester appointments, where possible.

If you have questions about provisions in the Collective Agreement or you would like to report a violation, please contact the Rutgers AAUP-AFT office, staff representative, Karen Thompson, at 732-964-1000.

PTL Representation in the University Senate Increases

This year Part-Time Lecturers have doubled their representation in the Rutgers University Senate. There are now two Senators from each campus representing PTLs and one Senator representing full-time non-tenure track faculty (often called “annuals”). These Senators include: Joe Markert (FT NTT, Business School-Organization Management, Newark); Richard Gomes (PTL, PALS, Newark); Karen Thompson (PTL, English, New Brunswick); Won-Jong Rhee (PTL, Biomedical Engineering, New Brunswick); and Nancy Ellis (PTL, Fine Arts, Camden). Last year the Senate passed a recommendation encouraging the conversion of part-time lecturer faculty to full-time non-tenure track positions. Rutgers President Richard L. McCormick said he “would encourage units to move in this direction” on a case-by-case basis, in his September 18th response to the report and recommendations on Charge S-0705. The full text of McCormick’s response is available on the University Senate website: <http://senate.rutgers.edu/rlmackcontingentfacultyproposalpart1.html>. Some progress has been made with at least 16 PTLs having been moved to full-time, non-tenure track positions this year.

Tuition Remission for PTLs Passed by the University Senate

On November 21, 2008, the University Senate passed a recommendation that University Regulations allow PTLs 50% tuition remission after they have taught 12 credits at Rutgers. The recommendation stipulates that registration would be allowed during the drop-add period (without late fees) in order not to take a seat from a full-paying student. The recommendation will be sent to the University President and then requires approval by the Board of Governors. We are optimistic that the recommendation will be accepted at these two levels. This is a huge accomplishment that took considerable time and effort. Karen Thompson, as a PTL Senator on the University Senate, prepared and submitted the charge. We owe significant thanks to co-chairs of the Senate committee (who are tenured faculty) who put the recommendation forward. When we return to the bargaining table in 2010, we will seek to build on this victory.

Summer Session Organizing Drive

Signing up more than 50% of the Summer and Winter Session teachers for union representation was the easy part—thanks to help from PTL and TA organizers. Now, our long overdue campaign to include Summer and Winter Sessions in collective bargaining has moved to the next stage of determining exactly which teachers will be represented by the union. The issue will be ultimately resolved by the Public Employment Relations Commission (PERC), the state agency that conducts union representation elections and determines who is a member of a union bargaining unit. The administration is attempting to exclude from union representation a substantial number of summer instructors, especially PTLs and graduate student employees. As the union, we consider this to be a union-busting tactic hiding behind legalistic argument. The union is standing firm in its position to include all instructors because 95% of those teaching are employed by the University during the regular academic year.

AFT Committee on Political Education (COPE)

In our 2007-2011 contract, Rutgers AAUP-AFT negotiated a new provision with Rutgers University administration which allows members of the union to authorize contributions to the AFT Committee on Political Education (COPE), the political action committee for the American Federation of Teachers. Voluntary contributions authorized by individual members through payroll deduction or one-time contributions by personal check to the new AFT COPE will enhance our political clout through financial contributions to support worthy candidates.

Click here for the AFT/COPE payroll authorization form: http://www.rutgersaaup.org/misc/COPE_explanation.pdf

If not yet a member, please join the PTLFC-AAUP-AFT! Dues explained on page 6.

[Use the application form in this newsletter or visit <http://www.rutgersaaup.org>, click on Join]

Part-Time Lecturer Profile



Chengwen Wang **Mathematics Department, Rutgers**

With two PhDs in mathematics and mathematical science, one from Rutgers and one from the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Beijing, Chengwen Wang is one of the most highly credentialed part-time lecturers at Rutgers University. He is a tenure-track Assistant Professor at Essex County College, an adjunct professor at Rutgers Newark, and an applications developer /software engineer in the corporate world. He has published more than a dozen papers in leading international journals in his field of research. Consequently, Chengwen brings a wealth of experience to his teaching. His students benefit from his wide-ranging background. As a representative to the Part-Time Lecturer Faculty Chapter-AAUP-AFT Executive Board, his PTL colleagues also benefit. Chengwen's service on the Executive Board demonstrates how a sharp mind and a kind heart contribute to positive

change. After more than 25 years teaching mathematics and computer science, he has helped thousands of students in China and the U.S. to become productive citizens. As researcher, award-winning teacher, conference organizer, public speaker, and union activist, Chengwen consistently uses his expertise to advance several communities—higher education, computer professionals, the Chinese-American community, and Rutgers University. He has chaired professional associations and parent-child education organizations as well as serving on PTLFC-AAUP-AFT committees.

Family is his first community. Family activities, such as ping-pong, badminton, and driving his two daughters to piano lessons, find their place between classes, meetings, and other professional activities. He combines intelligence with kindness, showing others an exemplary way to live. When asked about the importance of the PTLFC-AAUP-AFT union, Chengwen points out: "Part-time faculty often do the same work as full-time faculty but are more often over-looked and under-rewarded. By pointing that out, the union can bring equity to the situation and that benefits our students first and foremost."

Faculty and Staff Unions File PEOSHA Charges against Rutgers University **Health and Safety Experts Concerned with Lack of Emergency Preparedness**

Rutgers AAUP-AFT and Union of Rutgers Administrators (URA-AFT) have filed a complaint with the New Jersey Public Employees Occupational Safety and Health Administration (PEOSHA) because the University administration has not been forthcoming with written emergency action plans that include procedures for evacuation and reporting. The two sister unions do not feel that our members are adequately trained for effective response, some of whom are expected as part of their jobs to respond to emergencies or others who may simply be working on campus when an emergency arises. University administration said that they would not release the plans because they contain information that is highly sensitive. Instead, they direct employees to find information on the University's website. The union representatives heading up the health and safety effort, Amy Bahruth (Rutgers AAUP-AFT) and Joyce Sagi (URA-AFT), argue that the union did not ask for sensitive security information; the information on the website is scattered and inadequate; and perhaps even more important, health and safety training is not in place to make the information truly useful for employees. Joyce Sagi, who supervises safety and security officers at the RU residence halls, says that the unions want to work with the administration to understand the plans in place and to have appropriate training for union members. "We're not asking for tactical information. We don't want to know where the snipers are in the event of a shooting. All we want to do is to know what our people should do in an emergency," said Amy Bahruth.

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Contact information

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Staff Representative: Karen Thompson (English, New Brunswick); kgt@rci.rutgers.edu; union office 732-964-1000, ext. 21

Why join the union?

AAUP-AFT has tools that no other organization has to address PTL terms and conditions of employment. To claim these union tools at Rutgers, a Part-Time Lecturer must be a full dues-paying member. Eligibility begins in the second semester of teaching (unless you were full-time faculty or a TA/GA the previous semester in which case you are immediately eligible). Dues are 0.5% (.005) of the salary (\$21.15 a semester if your salary is \$4,230 a course) deducted in small amounts per paycheck. If you do not join, you will continue to pay a “representation fee” of 85% of dues. Switching to full membership costs just a little more—an inexpensive upgrade! Call our office to check on your membership status at 732-964-1000. You may be assuming you are a member when you are only a “rep fee” payer. Become a full union “citizen” able to vote and help make decisions that affect PTL working conditions at Rutgers University. Send the membership form to Rutgers AAUP-AFT, 11 Stone St, New Brunswick, NJ 08901 or FAX to 732-964-1032.

If not yet a full dues-paying member, please join the PTLFC-AAUP-AFT Today!

[Use the application form in this newsletter or visit <http://www.rutgersaaup.org>, click on Join]