

On Friday November 8th (over zoom) we met with the representatives of the Council of Presidents (CoP) and put forward proposals to improve the work lives of our Part-Time/Adjunct/Contingent faculty. Part-Time Faculty (as they are identified in the contract) are central to our union and essential members of our campus communities. They are critical for the learning conditions of our students, and there is no way that our universities would function without them. In addition, better treatment of part-time faculty will increase retention and recruitment of part-time faculty, a time-consuming process for many chairs. Most importantly, however, there is a fundamental moral issue at stake: we are asking for basic rights, dignity, and respect, for a living wage, for healthcare and for employment security and stability. With the prospect of renewed attacks on higher education and labor unions on the horizon, we feel a strong moral duty to make sure that the most marginalized and under-served members of our union are put front and center.

**The MSCA Team had 5 proposals. You can find the full text of them all [here](#):**

1. **Immediate unit status.** Part-time faculty members would become unit members as soon as their employment begins, and would enjoy all the benefits of the contract. No more waiting a year – or never getting it because you only teach in the fall or spring and not both.
2. **Employment security.** Introducing the idea of a multi-year rolling contract. After 2 semesters of employment, you would be offered a two-year contract that would be extended every year. If the contract wasn't extended, the faculty member would have one more year on their current contract to prepare for the next steps.
3. **Healthcare and retirement benefits.** As we dug into the benefits of a rolling contract, we realized that for faculty teaching 6 or more credits (half time or above) with a rolling contract, they would qualify for state benefits. For those working less than half-time, we used the GIC Buy Out Program as a model (if you don't want GIC health insurance, you can get a monthly payment that is 25% of the cost of healthcare) to prorate the stipend that part-time faculty working under half time would get.
4. **Professional development funds.** Part-time faculty deserve support in the professional development and their teaching supplies. A pool of money (comparable in creation to what full time faculty get) would be available, and the stipend would vary based on how many credits someone was teaching. In addition (this would be for full-time faculty too) there would be no application process - people would just get the professional development funds.

The first 4 proposals didn't generate much of a response from the CoP's representatives at the table. This is to be expected - these first six sessions are about getting everything on the table and we don't start negotiating until session 7. But this last one did:

5. **Revisions to the 15% rule.** We recognize the need for some flexibility in hiring, as enrollments fluctuate, but we want part-time faculty to be treated fairly and with dignity and respect, and we know that many part-time faculty aspire to have a full-time job as a professor. While there are some faculty who are teaching one or two courses a year, to

supplement a full-time job elsewhere, and who do it because they love the classroom, many have the terminal degree in their field, and teaching part-time, often at multiple schools, is how they put together a living. Even as we improve the working lives of part-time faculty, we need to continue to ensure that full-time and tenure-track lines are preserved and remain the mainstay of faculty employment.

Our proposal to change the 15% rule seemingly confused the Council of Presidents' representatives at the table, because they asserted that with the improvements we proposed in proposals 1-4, there shouldn't be any restrictions on the number of part-time faculty. But we believe that when there are enough students and enough demand to keep offering classes semester after semester, the people teaching those classes should be treated as well as possible.

As we keep the 15% cap on the number of classes taught by part-time faculty, we are proposing some important changes (that will provide for more flexibility): we are making the 15% be across the university, rather than department by department. There would be no exception for small departments any more (many of which have been effectively capped at 5 full-time faculty). Since we don't want part-time faculty to be concentrated exclusively in a few departments, the 15% rule across the university is balanced with a proposed, second rule that each department is held to a maximum of 30% part-time faculty. Mass Art, in keeping with the current contract, has higher caps (20% overall, and 40% per department). *It's important to see the different caps and rules working with one another.* If it was just 15% across the university, then one department might have all the part-time faculty. If every department could go up to 30%, then it would be a 30% rule (which is **not** what we are proposing!).

### **Management had some proposals for us as well.**

These were all under the rubric of "Shared Leadership." You can look at [the proposals here](#). In general, Management is proposing changes to the chair position, seemingly to make the chair much more firmly on the administration side – though without any commensurate increase in release time or pay. The proposal creates a Dean's evaluation of chairs while increasing chairs' responsibilities (oversight over student learning outcomes, anonymous complaints, and the university's equity agenda). Essentially chairs will become more directed by (and accountable to) the Dean than to their faculty. *Join us on Saturday, November 16th, to see us present our proposals to lighten the burden of Department Chairs as well as increase compensation.*

Management also proposed changes to shared governance that provide stronger roles for the university President and Vice President within the process.