
CUNY Adjunct Alert

Vol. 1, No. 5

February 1998

Produced by *CUNY Adjuncts Unite!*
33 W 42nd St. NYC, NY 10036 room 400 212/642-2143

Office Hours Demonstration

The day has come! On Friday, Feb. 13 at noon the *CUNY Adjuncts Unite!* Office Hours campaign will culminate in a demonstration and press conference at CUNY Central (535 East 80th St.). At that time we will be turning in hundreds of signed time sheets demanding pay for office hours worked during the Fall semester. As most of us know, adjuncts at CUNY are not paid to hold office hours but most do so anyway because of their professional commitment and moral obligation to their students. How can we raise standards at CUNY if over half of the faculty are not available to meet with students? It's time that the CUNY administration acknowledge the importance of out-of-class contact for the educational experience of students and faculty. If you still haven't sent in your time sheet, please do. They can be obtained from your campus rep. on the back or give us a call. Everyone is strongly encouraged to attend this important demonstration, and to bring along as many supporters as possible.

Unemployment Insurance and You

Here's the deal on collecting unemployment insurance as an adjunct in CUNY: If you're not registered as a graduate student, and you worked any twenty-six of the past fifty-two weeks, you're probably eligible for unemployment insurance whenever you're not working, including summers and winters between semesters.

If you qualify, you are entitled to half of your average weekly salary for the past year. As an adjunct you're paid by the contact hour, so you don't water down your salary average by including weeks you graded papers, or prepared syllabii, but were not being paid. If you were paid to grade assessment tests (e.g. Math, Reading, Writing) or to do work that occupied only part of a week, you may still be eligible for partial benefits for that week.

Unfortunately, however, for graduate students CUNY maintains an outrageous anti-employee position. If you are registered in any graduate school, you are arguably ineligible for unemployment insurance since there is a New York State law specifically excluding students who are working "for the institution they attend." Some CUNY students have argued in court that attending the Graduate Center and teaching at one of the campuses does not constitute working for the institution they attend. They have lost. In fact, even if you're a graduate student at Columbia and working in CUNY the law has been interpreted such that you're ineligible, according to Dr. Susan Prager, PSC Vice President for Part-time Personnel. If you claim benefits anyway, flouting this inequitable law, you may go undetected by CUNY. Or CUNY may go after you years later in an effort to reclaim their money. Most companies don't care how many employees claim unemployment since

they contribute to an insurance fund which covers all claimants. But CUNY has opted to insure itself. In other words, CUNY pays your benefits from its own funds, giving it a strong incentive to contest claims. It should be noted that there are many other general requirements for unemployment insurance eligibility. Go to the unemployment office during your first week out of work, and plan to spend many hours there learning the rules.

Caucus Alert! This past Fall the nascent People-of-Color Caucus formed and began meeting. For information on this group devoted to investigating and resolving many of the issues concerning CUNY's large non-white community, such as faculty and HEO hiring practices, please contact Randy Punter (718/262-2238).

Organizing the Undergrads

As our organizing efforts begin to pick up some serious momentum, it becomes even more imperative that we extend the scope of our activities. The time has come that we begin actively educating and organizing the massive CUNY undergraduate community (students and their families numbering in the hundreds of thousands) about the adjunct issues which directly concern their education. And it is time we engage the support of this community for our concerns and activities. We need to do this for a number of

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Organizing the Undergrads cont'd

reasons. First, we want to avoid any future conflicts should we opt to engage in job actions. Second, the critical mass achieved by such an organization would give us all (undergrads, grads, and adjuncts) considerably more leverage in negotiating our demands. Third, it would create an atmosphere supportive of activism.

The CAU is beginning to contact undergraduate student leaders, student newspapers, and activist organizations at the campuses in an effort to commence this campaign. We encourage adjuncts on the campuses to do the same. And to spread the word. In class, where appropriate. Everywhere else, whenever possible. Talk to the students, tell them what's going on, and explain how what effects us effects them. Ultimately, they'll listen. If they listen, we all win.

**Come to the Next Meeting of
CUNY Adjuncts Unite!
Friday, Feb. 20th 3pm Rm. 400
CUNY Graduate Center
25 W 43rd Street**

Letter to the Editor

[edited to fit allotted space]

To the Editor:

I feel strongly that the issue of requiring adjuncts to attend meetings (at least 3 a semester in the case of one community college ESL dept.) and implying that they should attend 1 or 2 others (without pay) as well as participate with vocabulary lists, written questions for meetings, etc. needs to be addressed. There has been an attitude taken by some that if a workshop isn't taken (even if there is payment) it will be frowned upon and may hurt you in regard to future employment at that branch of CUNY, especially if the workshop is given by the coordinator. This probably exists elsewhere and is done to intimidate adjuncts into assisting course leaders or coordinators in getting promotions or tenure. No adjunct should feel he or she must do extra work, beyond teaching, and perhaps attending one necessary meeting, to keep employment. *-Name and campus withheld.*

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Adjunct Forum & Letters to the Editor

The "Adjunct Forum" is dedicated to the public debate of issues concerning the CUNY adjunct. Letters to the editor may cover any subject germane to CUNY adjuncts. All letters must be typewritten, signed, and between 100-250 words. Letters may be edited to fit the allotted space. Please send in your response to the following question for inclusion in an upcoming issue: **What unpaid non-teaching demands have been made on your time, such as meetings, workshops, and committee work? And what are your feelings about these demands?**

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Conference Alert! The 2nd Annual National Congress of Part-time, Adjunct, Graduate Assistant, and Non-tenure Track Faculty Conference will take place on April 3 & 4 at the CUNY Graduate Center. Stay tuned for details. Or contact Vinny Tirelli for further info (212/642-2143).

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Adjunct Alert On File--Reminder & Update

If you are not receiving your copy of *Adjunct Alert* in your campus mailbox please notify your CAU! campus contact person, or the editors directly. In case you have missed an issue, here is an index of past articles:

- Sept. 1997:** CUNY Adjuncts Unite Formed
Pay for Office Hours
Why to Join the Union
Adjunct Pay Delay
- Oct. 1997:** Adjunct Pay Delay Follow-up
Office Hours/Time Sheet Campaign
Agency Shop for Adjunct Faculty
Contract Negotiations/Demands
- Nov. 1997:** Adjuncts and Social Security Tax
Union Voting Privileges for PSC VP's
City-wide Adjunct Organizing
Adjunct Handbook in Preparation
- Dec. 1997:** Office Hours Campaign Update
GTF Information
Adjunct Forum Response/Agency Fee
- Upcoming:** PSC Health Benefits/Welfare Fund Info
Demonstration Report
Research Foundation & the union
and much more!

For back issues, please contact the CAU at 212/642-2143. Or check our web site at www.soc.qc.edu/adjunct.