



# SMC Hourly Advocate

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## A Tipping Point

By Martin Goldstein

When opinions on some large social issue go from minority to majority status, we call it a tipping point, and we seem to be reaching one in the area of contingent faculty, those we know here at SMC as part-timers. Part-time rights, pay equity, job security et al have been issues for as long as any of us can remember – the enabling legislation, if you will, was passed in 1968 – and change here has been a long time coming.

But suddenly, it is here and now. Last legislative session part-time activists tried and failed to get a tiny piece of remedial legislation passed regarding the infamous 60% Law, the linchpin of that '68 legislation. We couldn't get it out of committee. Yet right now, in April of 2007, there are four major legislative initiatives already introduced as bills in the assembly, backed by all the major academic unions, all designed to deal expressly with the issue of contingent labor. Suddenly, we're on the table.

CFT/AFT, CPFA, FACCC, CTA, NEA, AAUP, and others are all supporting major legislative initiatives designed to address this 40 year-old problem, and out of all of these bills – and the Community College Initiative – it is possible that a workable solution to this problem could be found in the next few years. I think that's progress.

Only a major cultural mind-set change, i.e. a tipping point, could bring this about. It is no longer appropriate to dismiss contingent faculty and their concerns. I'd like to think this is because there is a new appreciation for the value of education, and I think the public at large does feel this way, especially about the community college's. But this current flurry of activity I suspect has more pragmatic roots.

It is, I think, the result of internal union pressure, part-timers in all those unions pushing their own leaders to address this issue, and leaders themselves realizing that they were in grave danger of losing their relevance, indeed existence, if the spread of contingency is not beaten back. What matters now is that they're doing it, and what will matter in the future are the resources they will put into really making it happen. Talk, like part-time labor, is cheap.

### *FACEing facts*

AB1343 (Mendoza), also known as the Faculty and College Excellence Act (FACE), is sponsored by the CCC of CFT, as part of a national AFT agenda. It is further supported by CFA, which is primarily a CSU union, and it is written to cover both systems.

Its main intention is to make all districts live up to the 75/25 ratio of full-time to part-time instruction, something that was supposed to have happened under 1988's AB 1725, but clearly hasn't. This is inarguably a good idea. It even further defines that ratio as "per department" as well as "per campus" which is even better.

Further, in hiring these new full-time teachers, the bill also suggests "preferential consideration" for part-timers in getting some of those full-time jobs, which is also good. It further mandates that all part-timers have pro rata pay, and due process protections that sound a lot like tenure, or at least, reasonable job security. Further all part-timers would get the same medical benefits as full-timers at a 40% load.

All of these changes are mandated to happen over six years, starting in 2008-09 and ending in 2014-15, with some increases mandated at

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# Part-Time Committee Meets with Trustees

By Becka Curtis  
Co-Chair FA Part-time Committee

Before spring break, the Part-time Committee members met with two members of the Board of Trustees of SMC: Chair Susan Aminoff, and Trustee Louise Jaffe. With part-timers identifying pay equity, office hours, and health benefits as crucial issues in the recent Faculty Association survey, part-time leadership wanted to meet with the trustees to relay and reinforce these concerns.

Present at the meeting were Melissa Michelson, recent past member of the FA negotiating council; Launa Nelson, Co-chair of the FA Part-Time Committee; Michael Strathearn, Co-chair of the Academic Senate Part-Time Committee, and committee chair for the FA College Environment Committee; Bill Price, member of the Strategic Planning Task Force and a past member of the negotiating team; Martin Goldstein, Editor of the Hourly Advocate and Political Director for the SMCFA, and myself.

We discussed the need to begin a conversation regarding pay equity for all part-time faculty. Since the budget crisis of 2003, little discussion and no movement regarding equity has taken place on this campus. We believe the time is right to start the process of moving towards full pay equity.

It was noted that legislation introduced this year by the CFT has already proposed a plan to reach full equity via incremental movements over five years, and that other community colleges, such as San Francisco City College, have already reached 90% parity. Why not here? We also discussed the possibility for paid office hours for all part-time faculty as a step towards both equal pay and equal professional responsibilities – and respect - for all faculty.

The trustees were very attentive, and asked a lot of questions. I believe they are very sympathetic to our concerns, but made no promises. These are issues for the negotiating team, but what is of paramount importance is to begin the conversation across the campus. We will be

meeting with other Trustees soon to keep spreading the word.

About a week after this meeting, a few of us met with Trustee David Finkel, and found him to be very attentive to and supportive of our concerns.

## Report from the CFT Convention

By Martin Goldstein

The CFT Convention, March 16-18, was held in downtown Los Angeles, and we attended the part-time breakfast on Sunday morning, before driving up the PCH to Malibu for the Fran Pavley brunch at Duke's on the Beach. The things we do for the cause.

The CFT represents primarily K-12 teachers, along with some Community College teachers, notably LACCD, led by the redoubtable Carl Friedlander, who attended the part-



*Carl Friedlander was elected head of the Community College Council of CFT*

time breakfast at 7:30 AM that Sunday morning. He had just been elected head of the Community College Council (CCC) of the CFT, a post formally held by Marty Hittelman, who won

the leadership of the entire California CFT, the first time a community college person has done that.

Further, among the Vice Presidents elected, Mona Field is a trustee of the LACCD as well as a community college teacher at Glendale, and she will be Carl's direct connection to the part-time movement. In sum, a lot of attention is being paid to part-time issues with the CFT, and those who are paying attention to them are becoming more powerful and influential there.

This is a good thing.

### ***A Tipping Point continued.***

a 20% per year rate. This would represent the effective “regularization” of part-timers, making them truly equivalent to full-timers in all significant ways, other than load. Here, this bill is silent on changing the 60% Law, so you still could not teach more than that on one campus, but with pay equity, you could more easily achieve a full-time load (and salary) among two or more colleges, as is true in the British Columbia system.

### ***AB 591 – the part-timers bill***

This bill, sponsored by long-time legislator Mervyn Dymally, was the first off the blocks, and to some degree forced the issue for all the other bills. It came directly from part-time faculty activists rather than through a union, committees, etc., and looks at the problem from the perspective of currently employed long term part-timers who are the heart of the part-time movement in California and nationwide.

The bill would do away with the 60% limitation entirely, and requires pro rata pay and medical benefits for any part-time faculty member working more than a 40% load. But in being silent on due process job protection, it would suggest the non-tenured, but fairly paid, fully employed and benefited CSU teacher as a model; this is better than the current exploited CCC part-timer, but not as good as a tenured or tenure track full-timer.

Similar to but stronger than the CFT bill, this one requires that at least 50% of new full-time positions on a campus be filled with veteran part-timers already teaching at the college. And while it differs by not discussing the 75/25 ratio, if there is no longer an economic benefit to hiring part-timers, districts would naturally hire full-timers since they do much more of the extra work of governance, senate, and other non-classroom tasks. In any case 75/25 already is the law, and has been for almost 20 years; the problem is enforcing it. Thus this and the FACE legislation are largely working towards the same end: 75/25 and the regularization of remaining part-time faculty, consonant and compatible goals.

### ***CTA, NEA, AAUP, etc.***

AB 1305 (Calderon), sponsored by the California Teachers Association (CTA) requires that all

CC’s reach the 75/25 ratio of FT/PT teaching hours by December 31, 2010, and AB 906 (Eng), also sponsored by CTA, requires compliance with the 50% law, which mandates that 50% of all district expenses spent on education be allocated to teachers salaries.

The NEA recently stepped in with a position statement opposed to the increasing contingency of academic employment, and while late to the party, is starting to take the problem seriously. And the AAUP has been in solid support of contingent faculty rights for the last few years, and has recently hired a major CSU faculty activist, Craig Flanery, for its California office. In sum, there is a sudden amount of attention being focused right now on both professionalizing the part-timers and creating more full-time teaching positions in the community colleges and CSU’s. The problem of course is how to pay for it. And realistically, there is no solution now, which is why none of these bills will become law this session, or ever, unless a funding mechanism, perhaps tied to new money in the CCI, is included.

But that’s for next year. Right now we’re compiling our wish list for an omnibus community college contingent faculty reform act, and when we figure out what all that would cost, and figure out what if anything we have to spend, then we’ll negotiate.

It could be worse. We could be ignored for another forty years – but somehow, I don’t think that’s going to happen.

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# Part-time Retirement Options

By Martin Goldstein

As a result of the last negotiations, the options for part-time retirement plans have expanded to now include a STRS Cash Balance (CB) plan, and those who are currently in LARISA (MetLife) will be automatically placed into that plan unless they specifically choose not to be. This has raised a bit of concern among many part-timers, and after reading this article, it would be wise of those still unsure of their choice to attend the STRS CB Benefit Program workshop on Thursday, April 19, in Business 111, from 3:30 to 4:30.

Essentially there are three retirement plans now available for part-timers here at SMC. For those who have been or expect to be employed as faculty in the community college system for a long period of time, the STRS Defined Benefit (DB) plan is the most comprehensive and beneficial plan. It is also the most costly, with the employee paying 8% of their salary, and the District contributing 8.25%. This plan has been discussed at length in previous *Advocate* articles, as well as STRS seminars, and if you're in it, and want to stay in it, you simply have to do nothing—maybe.

If you're not in it and are considering it, you should discuss it with a financial advisor, or with a member of the FA such as Kathryn Sucher or myself to see if it makes sense. ***However, if you have recently been placed involuntarily in DB early last year, and wish to stay in it – you MUST submit a form to HR stating that you choose to stay in it or else you will be taken out of it and placed back into the MetLife plan you were in before!***

**If you are in LARISA (MetLife), you will automatically be placed into the STRS Cash Balance plan, unless you specifically elect, through a form CB 533 (Election/Notification Form) not to be.** While we cannot recommend one plan over the other, we can say that the STRS Cash Balance plan was specifically designed for part-timers, and has many advantages

over the existing LARISA plan, which is essentially being phased out. If you elect to stay in LARISA now, you can switch at any time later to either the CB plan, or the more comprehensive (and costly) DB plan, which does require vesting through five years of full time equivalent work.

Further details on all plans and the Q&A that came with your notification will be reposted on the smcfa.org website. This is a complex and important decision for part-timers, and it will serve you well to research it and discuss it before you make any long-term decisions. It's your retirement, and you need to choose wisely.

## STRS Part-time Workshop

Thursday, April 19

Business 111

3:30 - 4:30 pm