

ACADEMIC LABOR IS A CLASS ISSUE: PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS CONFRONT THE EXPLOITATION OF CONTINGENT FACULTY

RAYMOND A. MAZUREK

Pennsylvania State University, Berks Campus

ABSTRACT

College teaching in the United States is rapidly becoming deprofessionalized. Only about 25% of college teachers in the United States are in tenured or tenure-track positions, while the other 75% of college faculty work in contingent jobs without hope of the job security traditionally associated with the academic profession. As the academic workforce has become dominated by a white-collar working class of skilled labor, professional organizations such as the Modern Language Association (MLA) and the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) have had a very mixed record in advocating for contingent faculty. For the most part, such organizations have done little beyond adopting statements about faculty workload. When insurgent movements within the CCCC—the national organization for writing teachers, among the most exploited faculty members in the United States—have called for more dramatic action, such as censuring institutions that exploit faculty or holding conferences that would promote organizing, the response of the CCCC has been to coopt these insurgencies and protect the interests of tenure-track faculty. In a deprofessionalized academic workforce, labor unions or other activist organizations are needed. Professional organizations are increasingly irrelevant—unless, like the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), they focus on workforce issues rather than on issues of relevance only to specialists.

INTRODUCTION

In the following pages, I will explore the response of professional organizations to the appalling changes in the academic workforce that have occurred in the relatively short period since I entered graduate school in the 1970s. Although academics are fond of assuming that practices that were instituted in their own lifetimes are “traditional,” profound changes in the academic workplace in the United States have occurred in the last several decades. While the average citizen might assume that college teachers are privileged workers, the vast majority of college teachers in the United States are now without the protection of tenure. Using data from the U.S. Department of Education, the Coalition on the Academic Workforce (CAW) (2012: 1) estimates that “of the nearly 1.8 million faculty members and instructors who made up the 2009 instructional workforce in degree-granting two- and four-year institutions of higher education in the United States, more than 1.3 million (75.5%) were employed in contingent positions off the tenure track, either as part-time or adjunct faculty members, full-time non-tenure-track faculty members, or graduate student teaching assistants.” The same report notes that contingent faculty with part-time positions comprise “almost half the entire higher education faculty in the United States” (Coalition on the Academic Workforce, 2012: 2). For these part-time faculty members, the average salary in 2010 was \$2,700 per course. Moreover, part-time employment is not necessarily temporary; of the thousands of part-time faculty members surveyed, more than half had been teaching part-time for more than six years. Nor is part-time employment really all that “part-time” except in regard to salary; almost half of the “part-time” faculty CAW surveyed in the fall term of 2010 were teaching three or more courses (Coalition on the Academic Workforce, 2012; see also American Federation of Teachers, 2009).

The increased dependence on part-time faculty has come about for many reasons. The Great Recession has certainly compounded the problem; however, it is clear that academic institutions are going through a long-term shift toward contingent employment, parallel to the shift that is occurring in the economy at large, and that this trend predates the recession by many years (Schrecker, 2010). One reason for this shift is that teaching, whatever official Web sites might say, is not as high a priority in most universities as one might suppose. At least it is not a priority when it comes to funding. As Benjamin Ginsburg notes in his 2011 book, *The fall of the faculty*, from 1947 to 1995 (the last year full data were available, according to Ginsburg), “overall university spending increased 148 percent. Administrative spending, though increased by a whopping 235 percent. Instructional spending, by contrast, increased only 128 percent, 20 points less than the overall rate of spending increase” (Ginsburg, 2011: 32–33). Teaching is a line item on which universities have been saving money for a long time. Whether the reliance on a majority part-time teaching workforce is, as Jennifer Washburn argues in *University Inc.*, “part of a conscious administrative strategy to lower the cost of instruction and

eliminate tenure” (Washburn, 2005: 204), or whether it is an unconscious effect of a decision-making process in which the preservation of a tenured teaching faculty is consistently one of the lowest priorities, the result is the same.

At institutions that serve working-class students, the percentage of contingent faculty is especially high, but prestigious private universities are also very dependent on adjuncts. Thus, at CUNY, with its large working-class enrollment, 50–60% of all classes were taught by adjuncts as of 2008, although the numbers have been as high as 70% (Dawson & Lewis, 2008). At private NYU, the site of a much publicized strike to maintain graduate student union recognition in 2005–2006, the numbers are even higher. Although NYU strives to be a top international university, less than 23% of its courses are taught by tenure-line faculty, and in the 10 departments that do the most teaching, that number is a meager 13% (Schrecker, 2008). In an article I published in 2009, I referred to the new university, taught primarily by part-time faculty, as the “box store university” (Mazurek, 2009). The NYU example shows that the “box store” isn’t just for the working class anymore.

For the most part, tenured faculty have been apathetic toward the changes that have occurred in the academic workplace. Similarly, professional organizations such as the Modern Language Association (MLA), the American Historical Association (AHA), and the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) have had a very mixed record in advocating for contingent faculty. As Cary Nelson and Stephen Watt pointedly put it in 1999, “fiddling while Rome burned, disciplinary organizations have for years promoted individual faculty careers while their participatory departments became increasingly exploitative places to work” (Nelson & Watt, 1999: 109). Although by the end of the 1990s most disciplinary associations in the beleaguered humanities and social sciences did begin to formally recognize the seriousness of the issue, for the most part, such organizations have done little beyond adopting statements about faculty workload that do not have much effect. The Coalition on the Academic Workforce was founded to advocate for contingent faculty in 1997; it now lists 26 member organizations, including the AAUP, several unions (including the American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association), and many professional organizations, all of them in the humanities, arts, and social sciences. Twelve of these organizations list policy statements on contingent faculty, workload, and equity on the CAW Web site.

The purpose of professional organizations is, as their name suggests, the promotion of professionalism, and as such, they are increasingly irrelevant to the lives of most college teachers. For what we are witnessing is a massive deprofessionalization of the academic workforce, especially in the arts, humanities, and social sciences, but also in other areas that are teaching-intensive. The academic workplace is heavily stratified, so much so that it no longer makes sense to assume that college teachers are unambiguously members of the professional class. The faculty who teach part-time in the “box store university” are part of the new class

of deprofessionalized, highly educated white-collar workers that constitute a key sector in the new economy—what Joe Berry called in his 2005 book, *Reclaiming the ivory tower*, a new white-collar working class of skilled labor. Other scholars, such as Michael Zweig, claim that part-time academic jobs at the college level are still middle-class jobs, however deprofessionalized, because of the degree of workplace autonomy they maintain. In his influential book, *The working class majority: America's best kept secret*, Zweig (2012) notes the widening fissure within the professional class, many of whose members are losing autonomy, salary, and status. However, because Zweig defines the working class as those who experience little power or autonomy in the workplace, he classifies most part-time college teachers, who usually maintain considerable autonomy in the classroom, as middle class. Although I very much admire Zweig's work, and I believe that his basic definition of class as power is sound, I cannot agree with his argument about the class status of academics. The new class of part-time faculty should be considered part of the white-collar working class, because the differences of power between part-time faculty and the disappearing class of tenured faculty are simply too vast, especially in fields dominated by part-time teaching, such as rhetoric and composition. In addition, the extremely low pay and lack of benefits of part-time faculty cannot be simply ignored in the analysis of class exclusively in terms of power.

However, regardless of whether one agrees with Berry or Zweig, classifying most contingent faculty as working class or middle class, it remains true that contingent faculty have lost class status as academic jobs have changed. The actions of professional organizations reflect, however slowly, the class fissure and conflict that have opened up in the academic workplace.

FACULTY STRATIFICATION: THE EXAMPLE OF RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION

Despite the apathy of most traditional faculty, however, the response of some faculty members—tenured, untenured, part-time, whatever—has persistently been resistance. I want to look at two examples of insurgencies within the field of rhetoric and composition and, specifically, the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC), the major professional organization in rhetoric and composition. The field of rhetoric and composition is especially interesting in regard to contingent faculty, for this field has a long history of dependence on faculty outside the tenure track. I was active within the CCCC for 15 years, roughly from 1990 to 2005. Having received a PhD in American studies with a concentration in American literature, I found that most of my job opportunities were in rhetoric and composition, and although I eventually was able to teach in and administer a degree program in American studies, the job in which I initially received tenure was defined by composition. I taught some courses in American literature and American studies, but I taught more courses in freshmen

writing, technical writing, and business writing, and I “mentored” (and in fact supervised) part-time faculty. As a working-class academic whose father worked in a nonunionized factory when I was growing up, I was eager and willing to do any reasonable job that needed to be done, regardless of how well it fit my formal training. My story is hardly unique; ever since the job market in English collapsed in the United States in the 1970s, composition has been the bread-and-butter for younger PhDs in most areas of English.

As historians of the field such as Jim Berlin (1987) have noted, rhetoric and comp has always been an outcast field within the humanities, and English departments, responsible for many sections of composition, were often highly stratified (thus, it is not surprising that English has also produced some of the most radical analysts of academia as a profession: think of Cary Nelson, Richard Ohmann, Michael Berube, and Ira Shor). But in the expansion of colleges and universities in the postwar years, even lowly rhetoric and composition began to assert itself as a profession, and thus the Conference on College Composition and Communication was founded in 1949. In the 1960s and 1970s, composition emerged as a field, and many experimental and radical versions of writing instruction (some of them forgotten) lent a degree of excitement to writing instruction in these decades. With its connection to those perceived as underprepared, composition also became a focal point for teachers committed to teaching minority and working-class students, whose often impoverished educational backgrounds exiled them to the margins. But as the job market in the humanities collapsed at the end of the Vietnam War, composition paradoxically became wealthy, at least for some of those who managed and administered the growing numbers of writing courses perceived as necessary in introducing students to academic writing and serving the needs of the truly wealthy departments in business and engineering. A specialty in rhetoric and composition became, for a time at least, the one almost-sure-bet to job security in the humanities.

As Marc Bousquet (2008) has argued in *How the university works: Higher education and the low-wage nation*, this occurred because rhetoric faculty members were being hired as lower-level management—as directors of freshmen composition and technical writing, trainers and supervisors of the multitudes of contingent faculty who staffed the courses. According to Bousquet, tenure-line composition faculty developed a split consciousness—on the one hand, they felt compelled to try to act as “heroic WPAs” (writing program administrators), seeking justice for the contingent faculty who worked for them; on the other hand, they were, objectively speaking, lower level administrators, perpetrators of an unjust system that could be confronted only by the organization and recognition of contingent faculty, who needed to challenge the system that produced their own poor working conditions—sometimes by challenging well-meaning but paternalistic WPAs (Bousquet, 2008).

The experience of the CCCC in advocating for contingent faculty reflects a similarly split personality, for as a professional organization it is ostensibly the

professional home for teachers of writing; in fact, like other professional organizations, it exists primarily to promote the professional status of tenure-line professionals. In many respects, contingent faculty in rhetoric have no professional home: they are not treated as professionals at their institutions, and the CCCC as an organization—despite the efforts of many committed activists in its ranks—has demonstrated that it has only a limited interest in advocating for them.

THE 1987 WYOMING RESOLUTION

One of the landmark statements in the advocacy for equity for contingent faculty is the 1987 Wyoming Resolution, which emerged in an unusual moment of solidarity at the 1986 Wyoming Conference on English. Held annually in the summer, the Wyoming Conference was a relatively egalitarian professional meeting, in which part-time faculty, graduate students, and established professors in the field of rhetoric and composition participated.

Partly because well-known figures such as the late James Sledd of the University of Texas at Austin addressed the issue of equity when they read papers, and partly because the conference circulated mimeographed anonymous comments on each day's proceedings, allowing everyone a voice, the conference became focused on the unequal conditions of the profession which made the business-as-usual of a professional meeting seem irrelevant. Some class hostility emerged, as compositionists' resentments toward literature faculty and part-time faculty's feelings of oppression by tenured faculty were voiced, but a collective response resulted. Three conference attendees (Sharon Crowley, Frank Lentricchia, and Linda Robertson) were charged with drafting and circulating a statement at the CCCC, which was adopted as the Wyoming Resolution in 1987.

The resolution charged the Executive Committee of the CCCC with the following:

1. To formulate, after appropriate consultations with post-secondary teachers of writing, appropriate standards for salary levels and working conditions of post-secondary teaching of writing.
2. To establish a grievance procedure for hearing grievances brought by post-secondary teachers of writing—either singly or collectively—against institutional non-compliance with these standards and expectations.
3. To establish a feature of acting upon a finding of non-compliance; specifically, to issue a letter of censure to an individual institution's administration, Board of Regents or Trustees, State legislators (where pertinent), and to publicize the finding to the public-at-large, the educational community, and our membership. (McDonald & Schell, 2011: 366–367)

As James McDonald and Eileen Schell (2011) report, the CCCC committee charged with implementing the resolution focused on developing standards that were flexible enough to be adaptable to different institutions and abandoned the

grievance and censure procedures. There were many reasons for this, including the sense that censure by the AAUP over violations of academic freedom had frequently accomplished very little, as well as the fear that grievance and censure procedures “would require staffing and legal expenditures that are currently beyond the scope of the organization” (McDonald & Schell, 2011: 370). As McDonald and Schell (2011: 370) note, these changes “took the teeth out of the Wyoming Resolution.” Collectively, the CCCC went to the brink of taking real risks in the pursuit of change for the majority of writing teachers, looked over the edge, and decided to retreat.

When the Statement of Principles and Standards for the Postsecondary Teaching of Writing was adopted in 1989, it presented a model that saw the tenure track as the solution to the abuse and exploitation of writing faculty. It called for no more than 10% of courses to be taught by part-time faculty, who would be provided with salaries comparable to the per course rate for full-time faculty, along with benefits, office space, and other support (Conference on College Composition and Communication, 1989). The statement argued for the value of professional expertise in the teaching of writing. Seeing the tenure track as it existed in the early 1990s as the solution, the statement “addresses composition scholars’ desire for recognition by calling for English departments to acknowledge the legitimacy of their scholarship in tenure decisions” (McDonald & Schell, 2011: 370). Many composition faculty members welcomed the statement as a step forward that would lead to many other steps, some of them small, on the local level that would improve the state of composition teaching (Wyche-Smith & Rose, 1990). Nevertheless, many part-time faculty members resented the way the Statement of Principles and Standards focused on the needs of tenure-track faculty. Some feared that the implementation of the statement would lead to a loss of jobs or push faculty into tenure-line positions, with publication expectations, that they did not desire. Jeanne Gunner (1993: 117) objected to the way the statement transformed a resolution “about improving real people’s working lives” into a document that “is about standardizing the profession and improving the status of only certain composition/rhetoric professionals” (Gunner, 1993: 117). Gunner suggests that the expertise of composition teachers who do not publish is devalued by the CCCC statement, which encourages the CCCC to become a stratified group modeled on the MLA. James Sledd (1991) is even more outspoken in his denunciation of the way the Wyoming Resolution was transformed. Denouncing the way the exploitation of part-time faculty had been ignored during the 50 or so years that he had taught in English departments at major universities, Sledd argues that the CCCC statement empowers only those he calls “boss compositionists” (Sledd, 1991: 275), the new composition elite who imitate the literary scholars of the MLA in “their contempt for the real teachers of Composition” (Sledd, 1991: 275). Sledd’s analysis prefigures Bousquet’s in its claim that the class divisions within rhetoric and composition are as strong as those between composition and literary study. Similarly, members of the California

State University system who were involved in the day-to-day confrontation with class differences were critical of the way the statement turned the collective bargaining gains they had won, “inspired at least in part by the Wyoming Resolution” (McDonald & Schell, 2011: 372), for faculty outside the tenure system, into a violation of the CCCC’s principles and standards, which focused on the need for tenure. In defense of the authors of the CCCC statement, it might be pointed out that they were cognizant that tenure had served as the main defense of academic freedom and faculty working conditions for decades, as the AAUP standards on academic freedom and tenure had become widely accepted in American colleges and universities after the Second World War. But they were less aware that, as the undermining of tenure had become widespread, additional protections were necessary for the contingent majority.

Such protection for the new majority might be provided more effectively by labor organizing than by tenure. As McDonald and Schell (2011: 374) argue, “the Wyoming Resolution contributed in a small way to a growing interest among those in our field in labor organizing and unionization.” Admittedly, a number of limited gains have been won in response to the Wyoming Resolution and the CCCC statement, such as the improvement in the situation of some non-tenure-track composition professionals (Trainor & Godley, 1998). At my own campus, a small branch campus of Penn State, resolutions in the faculty Senate passed between 1999 and 2003, inspired in part by the CCCC resolution, helped win small salary gains for adjunct faculty (although these were much smaller than faculty had hoped to see). Moreover, as Schell (2004) argues in “Toward a new labor movement in higher education,” improvements in the working conditions of contingent faculty can be very tenuous if they are not enforced by the legal and contractual support made possible through unionization.

THE 2003 LABOR RESOLUTION

The road to unionization is a long and difficult one, even in those states where it is not prohibited by so-called “right to work” laws. However, what happened to the Wyoming Resolution also points to the limitations of professional organizations as a means to true reform in the pursuit of faculty equity. The eerie thing about the way the Wyoming Resolution was coopted by the inertia of professionalism is that it happened twice, being reenacted in the CCCC Labor Resolution in 2003.

Originating in the Working Class Studies Special Interest Group of the CCCC in 2002, the Labor Resolution, as it was informally called, was passed in March, 2003. I played a part in the original discussions and promotion of the resolution. Although it originated in the Working Class Special Interest Group, it was officially moved by 15 members of the CCCC, who included some of the most prestigious members of the organization, including some, such as Crowley and

Robertson, who had been deeply involved in the controversial Wyoming Resolution years earlier.

The Labor Resolution referred to both the 1987 Wyoming Resolution and the 1989 Statement of Principles and Standards, as well as updating the situation of part-time faculty. After bringing together familiar lists of figures and reasserting, in similar language, the main points of the 1987 and 1989 CCCC documents the resolution moved on to its most important point: the creation and budgeting of “a permanent Academic Quality Commission ” which would perform the following functions:

- a. Research writing programs meeting the standards cited above for learning conditions.
- b. Acknowledge and recognize publicly such programs in all CCCC venues.
- c. Propose sessions at the annual convention on concerns raised by CCCC members, caucuses, SIGs, coalitions, and workshops relative to teaching and learning conditions.
- d. Research ongoing campus efforts for high-quality teaching conditions and disseminate an online directory and database of such information.
- e. Seek to co-sponsor with other professional associations (e.g., Modern Language Association, American Historical Association, American Association of University Professors) and groups (e.g., the Coalition of Contingent Academic Labor) a series of regional conferences addressing standards supporting high-quality professional instruction. (Conference on College Composition and Communication, 2003).

It was the last part—the series of regional conferences—that proved the most controversial. In earlier discussions, the Academic Quality Commission had always been referred to as the Labor Commission (at some fairly late point when the resolution was circulated among those who would formally move it, the description of it as a “Labor Commission” changed), and its purpose had been to sponsor regional conferences that would both publicize adjunct abuse and hold workshops on organizing. In the minds of those of us in the Working Class Special Interest Group who circulated the statement, it was always a commission related to academic labor. As such, what we imagined was a series of conferences that would use the “bully pulpit” provided by our academic organization in a serious way, not by making the situation of marginalized academic workers an afterthought or footnote to the main action, which, at the CCCC as at other academic conferences, focuses on research and publication. Instead, we would use the CCCC to bring together writing teachers from across the United States (regional conferences were proposed on the premise that part-time faculty rarely travel to national conferences), along with tenure-line composition professors and union representatives. What we envisioned might be thought of as a series of Wyoming conferences on the working conditions of writing teachers, with the hope that, by stirring the pot in a serious way, some progress would be made. The originators of the Labor

Resolution were activists; some of us had been active in social movements since the 1960s, and our desire was an end to the business as usual that relegated workplace issues to secondary importance.

The executive committee of the CCCC, however, showed little interest in supporting the commission. According to an e-mail from Ira Shor, who initially chaired the commission, “the CCCC executive committee began sabotaging the activist intentions of the resolution immediately,” providing no funds. Members who joined the commission had to pay their own way to a meeting at his house in New Jersey, where two of them slept. The executive committee would not fund a special conference on adjunct abuse that would include discussions of labor organizing; a CCCC lawyer warned Shor that such a conference was beyond the scope of the CCCC as an organization, which feared lawsuits.

Shor resigned, and today, references to the Academic Quality Commission are hard to find on the CCCC Web site, although the commission does linger on, continuing to research the problems of contingent faculty in writing programs and searching for a meaningful way to influence the accreditation process (Peckham & Hammer, 2011). While some of the legal concerns that the CCCC leadership had may have been real, the extreme timidity that the CCCC showed by 2003 seems far removed from the spirit of the Wyoming Resolution—or the egalitarian spirit that rhetoric and composition as a field once had. If most writing instructors are contingent faculty members who work under poor conditions with meager pay, and if the CCCC has little interest in taking risks to fight those conditions, for whom does CCCC exist?

Ironically, the organization in English studies that shows the greatest concern for the situation of part-time faculty is the Modern Language Association (MLA). As a bastion of traditional scholarship, elite literary theory, and literature faculty from the prestigious colleges and universities, the MLA once seemed uninterested in the situation of contingent composition faculty at the bottom of the academic hierarchy (although the MLA has experienced several notable insurgencies of its own, the most famous during the Vietnam War). Today, however, one finds the issue of contingent faculty given special attention. In the summer of 2012, the MLA’s homepage prominently displayed links to the Coalition on the Academic Workforce, to its Academic Workforce Advocacy Kit, and to its new Academic Workforce Data Center. Through this data center, information on the percentages of tenure-line, non-tenure-track full-time, and part-time faculty can be found for most colleges and universities throughout the United States. No such prominence is given to the issue of contingent faculty on the CCCC Web site.

CONCLUSION: RESPONDING TO CLASS DIVISION WITHIN THE ACADEMIC WORKFORCE

The difference between the MLA and the CCCC does not mean that members of the CCCC are somehow less ethical in their approach to the academic workforce: it

reflects the real class conflicts in the academic workplace. The CCCC has succeeded in getting the foreman's job for many of its members. The standard entry-level position in rhetoric and composition is as supervisor of part-time faculty (and there are other entry-level positions for those with expertise in technical and business writing). Meanwhile, scholars in English who have not specialized in rhetoric are more likely to land in the non-tenure-track workforce; the opportunities that I experienced an academic generation ago have dried up for non-rhetoric specialists. Scholars in composition are no less ethical (and no more ethical) than other academics; like most academics, their actions usually reflect their narrow class interests. However, for those who seek real change, there are broader interests to consider. As key institutions in the knowledge economy of the United States, colleges and universities could be significant sites for white-collar workforce organizing.

The example of the CCCC shows that most academics in the humanities are following an outdated model in the way they support professional organizations. Professional organizations that advance a specialized academic field, providing venues for research, scholarship, and networking, are relevant to the building of individual careers and the fostering of middle-class professionalism. However, as academic professions are being undermined by labor practices in which most members of the field are not treated as professionals, such organizations are becoming increasingly irrelevant. Sadly, the CCCC has become another MLA. Long scorned by most English professors for its elitism and its star system, and despised because most of us encounter it only when looking for a job, the MLA was especially resented by teachers of rhetoric and composition, who did not feel that they belonged at the MLA. But in the early 21st century, the CCCC has come to represent the same values that most CCCC members resented in the MLA. The MLA, meanwhile, has become more radical in its embrace of the cause of part-time faculty, and for good reason, based in the realities of class: those with degrees in literature are not as well qualified as scholars in rhetoric to become managers in the increasingly oppressive corporate university.

Academics interested in organizing for meaningful workplace change need to consider other models than those provided by the increasingly outdated professional associations. These models may be provided by umbrella organizations, such as the Coalition on the Academic Workforce (CAW), mentioned above, by labor unions, or by a hybrid organization such as the American Association of University Professors (AAUP). As Nelson and Watt suggested in 1999, the AAUP is a much more relevant organization for the protection of the academic profession than are disciplinary organizations. The AAUP codified the standards for the tenure process and academic freedom that most universities follow today, and through its advocacy for contingent faculty and its union organizing is actively engaged in attempting to protect the rights of those without tenure. In addition, the AAUP organizes "advocacy chapters," organizations of faculty at colleges and universities that, although they do not engage in collective

bargaining, do advocate for faculty and attempt to unite faculty across disciplines. However, AAUP membership declined from the 1970s through the 1990s at precisely the moment when its advocacy work was most needed. One of the major reasons for this decline was the rise of professionalism, in the bad sense of the word, among faculty. As Nelson and Watt (1999: 54) put it, “an increasingly career-oriented and entrepreneurial professoriate have assumed their major loyalties were to personal advancement and their academic discipline. New faculty members in the 1960s often thought joining the AAUP was one of the first things they should do when receiving their PhD or arriving on campus. Now few think of it unless they are told.” But as academic fields come to be dominated by a new white-collar working class, it may be the disciplinary organizations that will decline. Faculty who are hard pressed by the increased corporatization of the university—with more limited opportunities for shared governance even for tenured faculty—might seek opportunities for uniting, for working together as activists even if they do not form a formal collective bargaining unit. Despite the protection of tenure, the courts have now ruled that individual faculty members can be disciplined for speaking out about administrative arrogance and unjust working conditions, as in the *Hong* decision, where the disciplining of Juan Hong, a full professor in engineering, by the University of California was upheld by a federal court (*Hong v. Grant*, 2010). The *Hong* decision and the Supreme Court decision upon which it was based, *Garcetti v. Ceballos* (2006), seem to call into question the traditional idea that tenure protects individual faculty members when they speak out about workplace practices (Shrecker, 2010). However, such additional protection may be provided by a faculty organization—whether it is a formal collective bargaining unit or an activist AAUP chapter.

To speculate a little, it is likely that insurgency will be (and should be) a more frequent response by disenfranchised academics in the future. Only a few graduate student strikes, such as the NYU strike, have received national prominence, but more examples of such insurgency, more strikes and more creative responses such as the Wyoming Resolution, will probably occur in the future. The University of Michigan saw a successful strike by its lecturers’ union (the Lecturers’ Employee Organization, or LEO) in 2004 (Go, 2004). Contingent faculty at other institutions have sometimes found that they have had success in raising salaries merely by raising the possibility of unionization (van Bergen, 2012). At some institutions, faculty members are limited by “right to work” laws prohibiting unionization; at others, full-time faculty members at private universities are prevented by the Supreme Court’s *NLRB v. Yeshiva University* (1980) decision. Despite these obstacles, in the 21st century, the demonstrations in Madison, Wisconsin, in 2012 and the Occupy Movement, organized over the Internet, may be harbingers of things to come. Just as Walmart workers have begun using the Internet to organize labor actions that are not officially sanctioned by recognized unions, contingent faculty may take similar steps. Even without a formal “union,” there are opportunities for “uniting,” albeit different possibilities to fit different contexts.

However, it seems unlikely that traditional professional organizations, with their promotion of narrow professional interests, will provide such opportunities. In class conflict, the working class does not always win, but neither can it always be silenced.

REFERENCES

- American Federation of Teachers. 2009. American academic: The state of the higher education workforce 1997–2007. Retrieved from http://www.aft.org/pdfs/highered/aa_highedworkforce0209.pdf, December 2012.
- Berlin, J. 1987. *Rhetoric and reality: Writing instruction in American colleges, 1900–1985*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Berry, J. 2005. *Reclaiming the ivory tower: Organizing adjuncts to change higher education*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Bousquet, M. 2008. *How the university works: Higher education and the low-wage nation*. New York: New York University Press.
- Coalition on the Academic Workforce. 2012. A portrait of part-time faculty members: A summary of findings on part-time faculty respondents to the Coalition on the Academic Workforce survey of contingent faculty members and instructors. Retrieved from http://www.academicworkforce.org/CAW_portrait_2012.pdf, December 2012.
- Conference on College Composition and Communication. 1989. Statement of principles and standards for the postsecondary teaching of writing. *College Composition and Communication*, 40: 329–336.
- Conference on College Composition and Communication. 2003. 2003 CCCC Resolutions. Retrieved from <http://www.ncte.org/cccc/resolutions/2003>, December 2012.
- Dawson, A., & Lewis, P. 2008. New York: Academic labor town? In M. Krause, M. Nolan, M. Palm, & A. Ross (Eds.), *The university against itself: The NYU strike and the future of the academic workplace*: 15–29. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Garcetti v. Ceballos*. 2006. 547 US 410.
- Ginsburg, Benjamin. 2011. *The fall of the faculty: The rise of the all-administrative university and why it matters*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Go, A. 2004. Lecturers, “U” make deal. *The Michigan Daily*, April 18.
- Gunner, J. 1993. The fate of the Wyoming Resolution: A history of professional seduction. In S. I. Fontaine & S. Hunter (Eds.), *Writing ourselves into the story: Unheard voices from composition studies*: 107–122. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Hong v. Grant*. 2010. 403 Fed. Appdx. 236.
- Mazurek, R. A. 2009. Work and class in the box store university: Autobiographies of working-class academics. *College Literature*, 36: 147–178.
- McDonald, J. C., & Schell, E. 2011. The spirit and influence of the Wyoming Resolution: Looking back to look forward. *College English*, 73:360–378.
- Nelson, C., & Watt, S. 1999. *Academic keywords: A devil’s dictionary for higher education*. New York: Routledge.
- NLRB v. Yeshiva University*. 1980. 444 US 672.
- Peckham, I., & Hammer, B. 2011. The state of contingency: A report from the CCCC Committee on Part-Time, Adjunct, or Contingent Labor. *Teaching English in the Two-Year College*, 38: A7–A12.

- Schell, E.E. 2004. Toward a new labor movement in higher education: Contingent labor and organizing for change. In M. Bousquet, T. Scott, & L. Prascondola (Eds.) **Tenured bosses and disposable teachers: Writing instruction and the managed university:** 100–110. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Schrecker, E. 2008. Academic freedom in the age of casualization. In M. Krause, M. Nolan, M. Palm, & A. Ross (Eds.), *The university against itself: The NYU strike and the future of the academic workplace:* 30–42. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Schrecker, E. 2010. *The lost soul of higher education: Corporatization, the assault on academic freedom, and the end of the American university.* New York: The New Press.
- Sledd, J. 1991. Why the Wyoming Resolution had to be emasculated: A history and a Quixoticism. *Journal of Advanced Composition*, 11: 269–281.
- Trainor, J. S., & Godley, G. 1998. After Wyoming: Labor practices in two university writing programs. *College Composition and Communication*, 50: 153–181.
- Van Bergen, J. 2012. Adjunct faculty at St. Joseph's University take steps toward organizing. *Philadelphia Inquirer*, November 13.
- Washburn, J. 2005. *University, Inc.: The corporate corruption of higher education.* New York: Basic Books.
- Wyche-Smith, S., & Rose, S. K. 1990. One hundred ways to make the Wyoming Resolution a reality: A guide to personal and political action. *College Composition and Communication*, 41: 318–324.
- Zweig, M. 2012. *The working class majority: America's best kept secret.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Direct reprint requests to:

Raymond A. Mazurek
English Department
Penn State, Berks Campus
P.O. Box 7009
Reading, PA 19610-6009
e-mail: ram2@psu.edu