



**Coalition on the  
Academic Workforce**

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**One Faculty Serving All Students**

An Issue Brief by the  
*Coalition on the Academic Workforce*

February 2010

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## About the Coalition on the Academic Workforce

The Coalition on the Academic Workforce (CAW) is a group of higher education associations, disciplinary associations, and faculty organizations committed to working on the issues associated with the deteriorating faculty working conditions and their effect on the success of college and university students in the United States. Specifically, CAW's purpose is to

collect and disseminate information on the use and treatment of faculty members serving full- and part-time off the tenure track and the implications for students, parents, faculty members, and institutions;

articulate and clarify differences in the extent and consequences of changes in the faculty within and among the various academic disciplines and fields of study;

evaluate both short-term and long-term consequences of changes in the academic workforce for society and the public good;

identify and promote strategies for solving the problems created by inappropriate use and exploitation of part-time, adjunct, and similar faculty appointments; and

promote conditions by which all faculty members, including full- and part-time faculty members serving off the tenure track, can strengthen their teaching and scholarship, better serve their students, and advance their professional careers.

## One Faculty Serving All Students

Over the last forty years, there has been a dramatic shift in the instructional staff at US colleges and universities. Increasingly, institutions of higher education have hired faculty members who are not on the tenure-track and, in large part, are hired in part-time positions (see app. for more detailed data on these trends). In 1970 faculty members in part-time positions represented only 22.0% of all faculty members teaching in US colleges and universities; in 2007 they represented 48.7%. Of faculty members who are full-time, well over a third do not have access to tenure. When graduate teaching assistants are included in the calculations, barely one-quarter of the instructional staff are full-time and have access to tenure. The shift toward a more contingent workforce is occurring at all types of institutions in both the public and private sectors.

*All college and university teachers, whether in full- or part-time positions, on or off the tenure track, need to see themselves as members of one faculty working together to provide a quality education to all students.*

These trends are exacerbated in times of economic downturn, since higher education often suffers the most serious budgetary cuts at the state level while also experiencing increases in student enrollment. In such downturns, two trends emerge. Some institutions increase their hiring of contingent faculty members to cover enrollment growth. Others reduce the number, resulting in increased class size and workload for full-time faculty members. In either scenario, open full-time tenure-track faculty positions go

unfilled and often remain unfilled after the economic environment improves. As a result, higher education becomes even more reliant on a teaching force that is predominantly contingent.

No matter the conditions, full- and part-time faculty members teaching off the tenure track are professionals who make indispensable contributions to their institutions. They are committed educators who often serve institutions for significant periods of time. A third of full- and part-time faculty members teaching off the tenure track in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences have been in their current teaching position longer than six years; a fifth or more have held their current position longer than ten years.

These faculty members effectively function as permanent members of the staff at their colleges and universities, yet institutions often perpetuate outdated personnel and compensation policies that assume non-tenure-track faculty members are short-term employees who will make up only a small proportion of the faculty.

Despite their permanence and vital contributions, full- and part-time non-tenure-track faculty members are often shortchanged by colleges and universities—in hiring, salaries, office space and equipment, as well as opportunities for review of job performance and professional development and advancement as both teachers and scholars.

### **CAW Principles**

CAW member organizations have independent policy statements about the treatment of faculty members who serve in contingent positions and about the declining number of full-time tenured and tenure-track faculty members. As a coalition, however, we believe that the current trend has reached a precarious level and that all higher education stakeholders must work together to address this trend immediately. To that end we declare the following principles:

All faculty members need to receive compensation and institutional support and recognition commensurate with their status as professionals.

All faculty members should be aware of the recommended standards and guidelines for the academic workforce issued by their professional associations and faculty organizations.

All faculty members should have access to key information on academic staffing in their departments and institutions and use this information—along with recommended targets for staffing, contracts, compensation, and working conditions—to advocate for change.

All long-term faculty members need to be fully enfranchised to participate in the work and life of the department and institution.

## **Compensation and Institutional Support**

*All faculty members need to receive compensation and institutional support and recognition commensurate with their status as professionals.*

Institutions should establish minimum levels of per-course compensation for all faculty members serving off the tenure track that are equitable to those of tenure-track faculty members so that all faculty members have the support necessary to devote the time and effort required to teach college-level courses. To ensure fairness and transparency, compensation levels should be a matter of public record.

All faculty members who teach 50% or more of a full teaching load should have access to health and retirement benefits through the institution.

Institutions should compensate all faculty members for work outside of the classroom, including student advising, committees, and other service work.

All faculty members should get regular support for professional development in regard to teaching skills, new course creation, scholarship, and occupational promotion.

All faculty members should have access to administrative and technical support from the department and institution.

## **Association and Organizational Standards and Guidelines**

*All faculty members should be aware of the recommended standards and guidelines for the academic workforce issued by their professional associations and faculty organizations.*

We offer here key principles to supplement the specific guidelines of CAW member organizations.

The number of tenure lines should be sufficient to cover courses in the upper-division undergraduate and graduate curricula and to ensure an appropriate presence of tenured and tenure-track faculty members in the lower division. Full- and part-time faculty members teaching off the tenure track should also be eligible to teach upper-division undergraduate and graduate curricula when they are qualified and can contribute to their respective programs.

Departments and institutions should set appropriate staffing-level targets and develop plans for moving toward those goals.

Those goals should work toward ensuring program continuity and helping students succeed in and out of class and be developed with input from faculty members as well as department chairs and administrators.

As departments work toward these goals, they should ensure that the percentage of course sections taught by full-time faculty members does not drop below the majority of the course sections a department offers in any given semester.

### **Departmental and Institutional Advocacy**

*All faculty members should have access to key information on academic staffing in their departments and at their institutions and use this information—along with recommended targets for staffing, contracts, compensation, and working conditions—to advocate for change.*

Institutions, in collaboration with all stakeholders, should collect and readily provide information about academic staffing. At the same time, administrators, department chairs, and individual faculty members can actively work to get a clearer picture of the academic workforce on their own campuses. They should

know the population of undergraduate and (where applicable) graduate students who complete courses in departments and the allocation of teachers in different employment categories across all levels of the curriculum;

be aware of the policies and procedures departments and institutions follow when hiring faculty members in the different contract categories and the policies for salary increases and benefits, professional review, development, and advancement that apply to faculty members in each category;

understand the contractual arrangements of faculty members teaching in various types of full- and part-time non-tenure-track positions and the number of years individuals in the various contract categories have been in their positions; and

be willing to share findings and collaborate in efforts to develop anonymous profiles of staffing patterns in departments and colleges that take into account different local and institutional circumstances.

### **Participation in Institutional and Departmental Decision-Making**

*All long-term faculty members need to be fully enfranchised to participate in the work and life of the department and institution.*

Institutional contracts and personnel policies need to distinguish full- and part-time faculty members who teach off the tenure track on a long-term basis and have regular and substantial interactions with their department and institution from those employed on short-term, occasional contracts; only the latter can reasonably be regarded as contingent

Non-tenure-track faculty members should be included in curriculum planning, student advising, and other aspects of college life fundamental to sustaining good learning environments and positive departmental cultures.

Non-tenure-track faculty members (including those teaching part-time) who are actually permanent members of their departments should be hired, evaluated, and renewed in a professional manner.

## Conclusion

There is much debate about the current state and future of higher education in the United States. A major focus of that debate is whether the system we now have is helping enough students attain their goals, which may be an academic degree, employment, retraining, or the advancement of knowledge. That debate must include the very people most responsible for helping students achieve their goals: the faculty. If we are to maintain a world-class system of higher education and help all students achieve success, we must have a strong faculty with the support necessary to carry out its professional responsibilities.

For more federal data on the academic workforce, please see the figures included in the appendix. For more information about what you can do, please go to the CAW Web site ([www.academicworkforce.org](http://www.academicworkforce.org)).

*When all teachers are appropriately compensated and are active participants in curriculum planning, student advising, and campus life, then learning flourishes and student retention and completion rates increase.*

## Statement Signatories

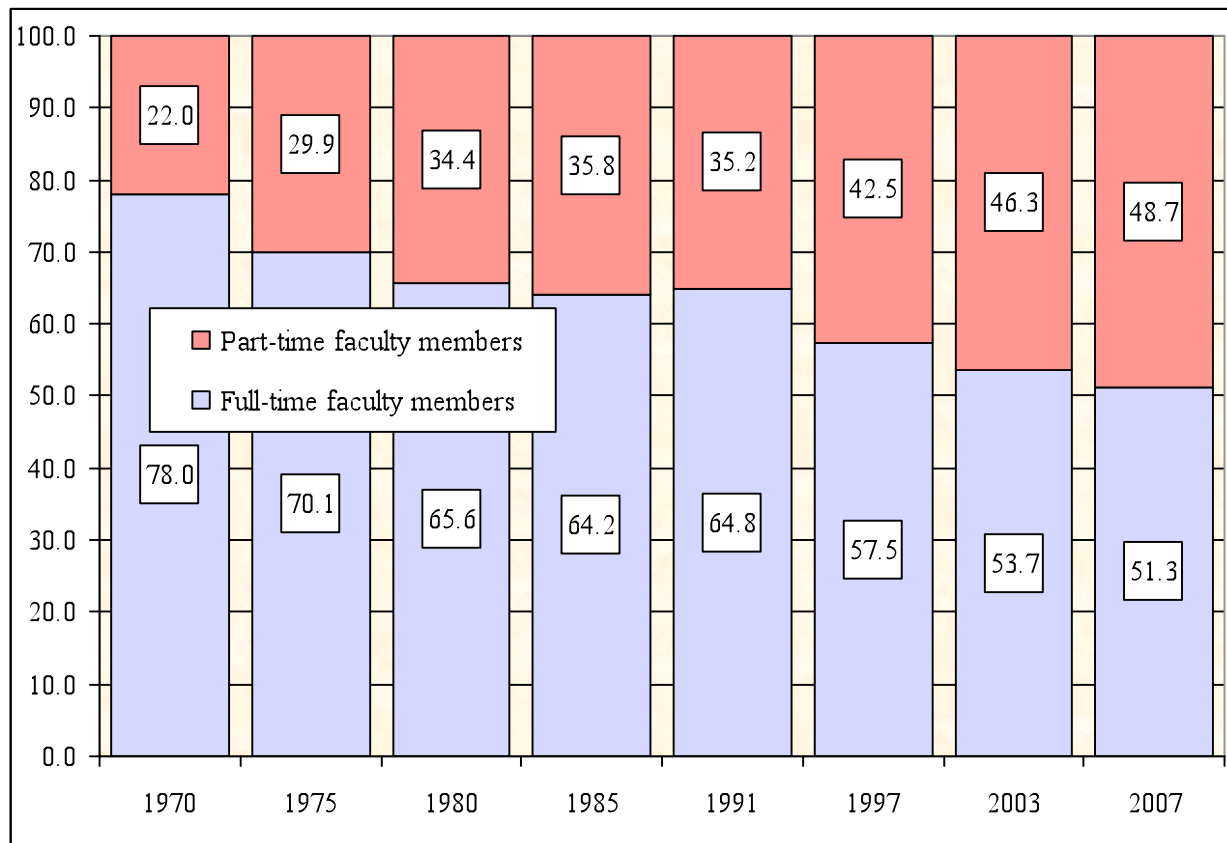
To date, the following CAW member organizations are signatories of this statement:

American Academy of Religion  
American Anthropological Association  
American Comparative Literature Association  
American Federation of Teachers  
American Historical Association  
American Philosophical Association  
American Studies Association  
College Art Association  
Community College Humanities Association  
Conference on College Composition and Communication  
Linguistic Society of America  
Modern Language Association  
National Council of Teachers of English  
Organization of American Historians  
Society of Biblical Literature  
Society of Cinema and Media Studies  
Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc.

Appendix:  
Federal Data on Instructional Staffing

In 1970, part-time faculty members represented only 22.0% of all faculty members teaching in US colleges and universities. By 2007 the percentage of part-timers had increased to 48.7% of faculty members in all institutions (fig. 1). In four-year institutions the percentage of part-time teachers in 2007 was 41.2%.

Fig 1. Percentage of Part-Time and Full-Time Faculty Members, 1970–2007



Source: Tables 246 and 248, *Digest of Education Statistics: 2008*

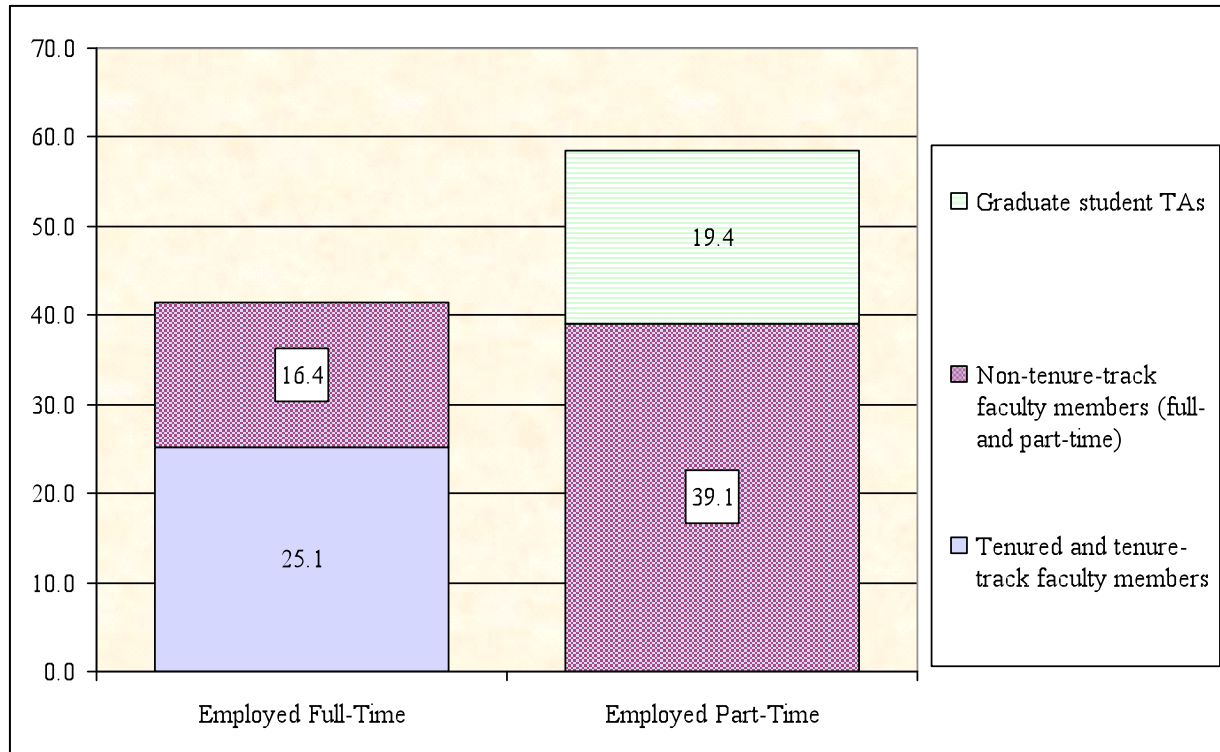
Yet these statistics do not tell the entire story about the instructional workforce. To get a full picture of how contingent the workforce has become, one needs to take into account full-time faculty members off the tenure track, a steadily growing group that now represent over 15% of the instructional workforce.

One must also account for graduate teaching assistants (TAs). When TAs are included, almost three-fifths of the teaching corps in higher education taught part-time in 2007—58.5% in all institutions (55.9% in four-year institutions). As seen in figure 2, graduate student TAs accounted for 19.4% of teachers in higher education in 2007 (25.0% in four-year institutions); full-time tenured and tenure-track faculty members made up only 25.1% (27.5% in four-year institutions). Thus close to 75% of the instructional workforce was made up of non-tenure-track faculty members and graduate employees in 2007 (fig. 3).

Furthermore, looking at the changes in these categories since 1995, we see clearly the greatest decline in the full-time tenure-track faculty and the most significant growth in the part-time faculty. Excluding graduate student TAs, in 2007 less than one-third of all faculty members—31.1%—were professors in full-time tenured or tenure-track positions, compared with 42.3% in 1995 (fig. 4). In four-year institutions the figure is 36.7%, compared with 51.3% in 1995.



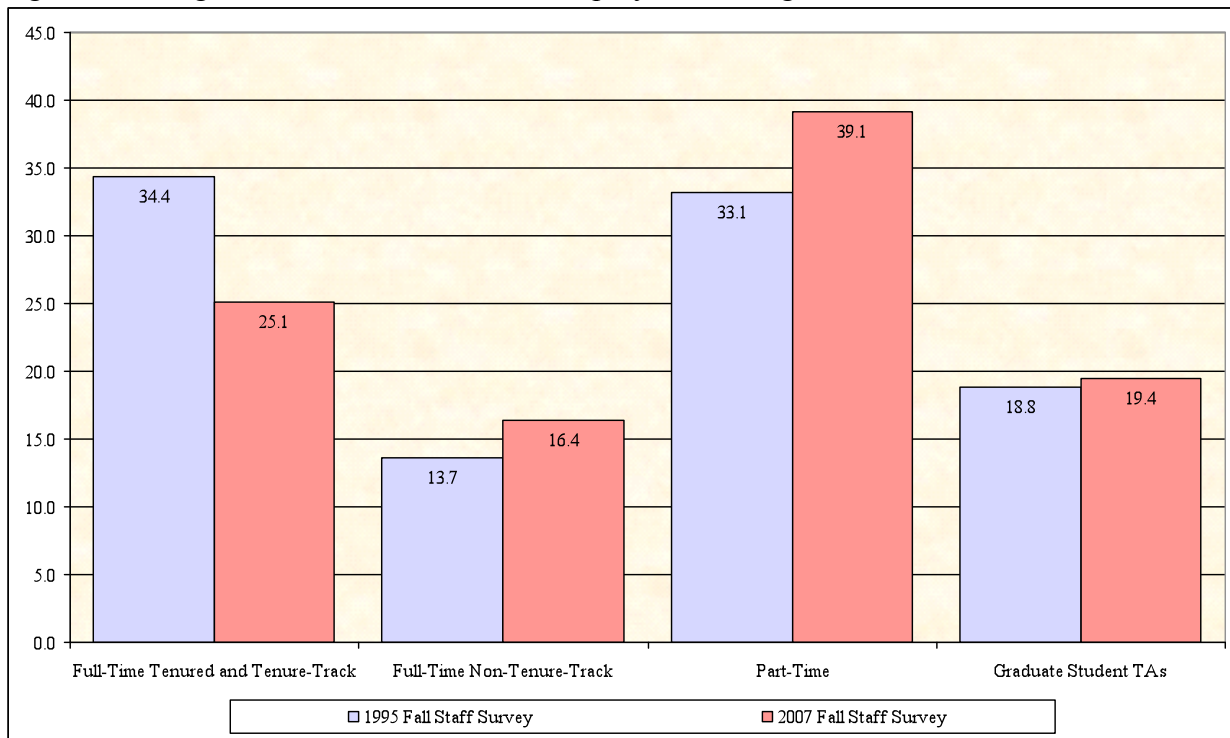
Fig. 2. Percentage of Teachers Employed in Full- and Part-Time Positions On and Off the Tenure Track, 2007



Source: 1995 and 2007 Fall Staff Surveys, IPEDS

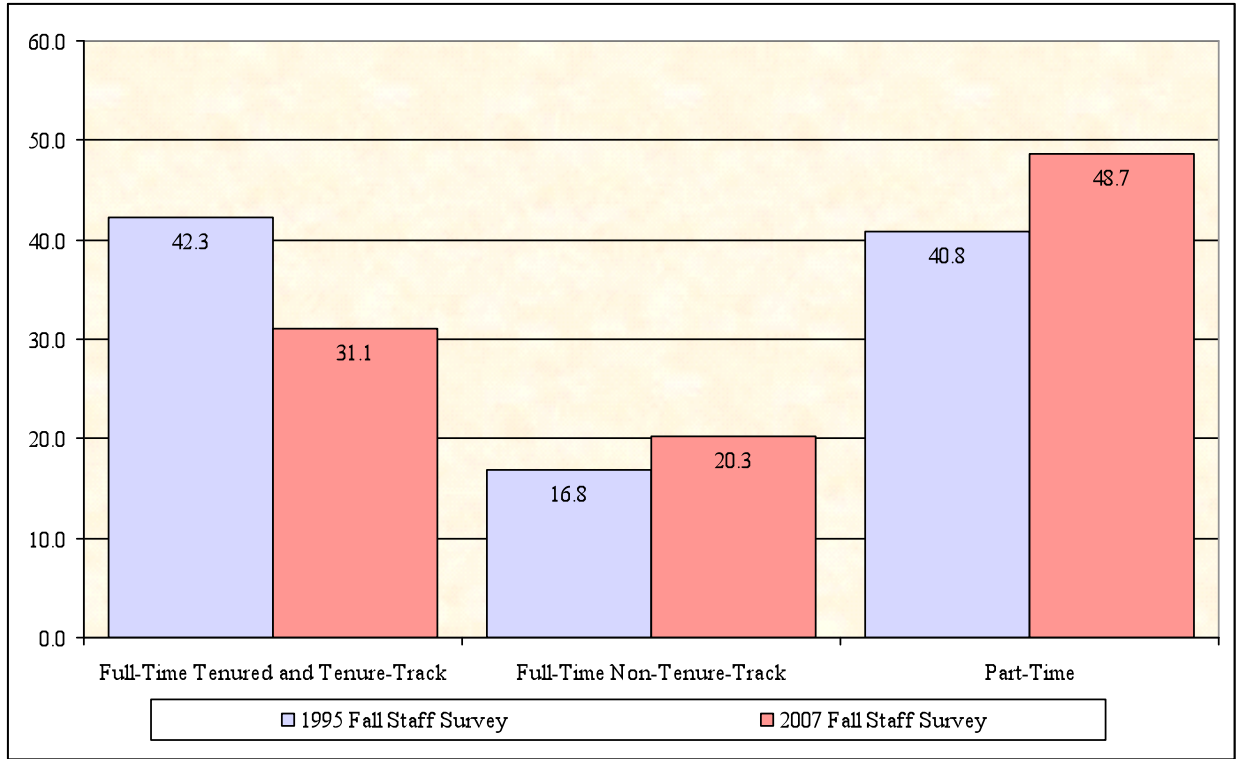
Note: The part-time non-tenure-track faculty figure is an estimate because the Fall Staff Survey does not disaggregate the small percentage of tenured and tenure-track faculty members who are employed part-time from other part-time faculty members.

Fig 3. Percentage of Teachers in Different Employment Categories, 1995 and 2007



Source: 1995 and 2007 Fall Staff Surveys, IPEDS

Fig. 4. Percentage of Faculty Members in Different Employment Categories, 1995 and 2007



Source: 1995 and 2007 Fall Staff Surveys, IPEDS