than six percent of private-sector academic institutions are unionized." State laws govern union rights for public employees. Because part-time workers, such as adjuncts, do not have the same degree of authority, in most cases the Yeshiva decision does not apply to adjunct organizing. See R. H. Metchick and P. Singh, "Yeshiva and Faculty Unionization in Higher Education," *Labor Studies Journal* 28, no. 4 (2004): 45–65.

"We are teachers, hear us roar": Contingent Faculty Author an Activist Culture

by Marc Bousquet

> Basically, I just want to say to your President, the Board, that the stories I've heard tonight baffle me. [voice breaking] I have a personal story, but I'm not going to share it with you because you've heard enough personal stories. I had no idea this problem was an issue. I talked about it with my (student council) president. She had no idea. We students rely on teachers. We rely on them being there. We rely on their service—and they provide it! I've had part-time teachers, many part-time teachers. I'm in a professional/technical program, and they give you service. They put in more hours than they ever get paid for. Twelve-thousand-dollars makes me sick! Oh-my-gosh.
>
> I—I didn't even know how to react to that. Teachers going from one campus to the other? Four and five different colleges? What is this country coming to? Where is this school— I know it's not just at PCC, I know it's across the nation—but it starts at one school. We can, we can start a trend for other schools. We can make a difference. I mean—[applause] Just think about, think about everything you've heard tonight, because—it made a difference to me.
>
> —Melanie Serrou, student, addressing an administrative hearing on contingent faculty pay at Portland Community College, October 2005

> Administrator: Please allow me to introduce myself, I'm a man of wealth and taste. I go by many names. Doctor, Boss, Sir, Chairman, Gentleman, Scholar, Dean, Pillar of the Community, Cheap Bastard, but you can call me the Administrator.
>
> —Joe Camhi, "Screw U, a play in one act" performed at Portland Community College

Because the mission of higher education is under assault from so many different directions, there are many ways of understanding what we mean when we speak of the "corporatization" of the university. One valuable approach focuses on the ways campuses actually relate to business and industry in quest of revenue enhancement or "cost containment": apparel sales; sports marketing; corporate-financed research, curriculum, endowment and building; job training; direct financial investment via portfolios, pensions, and cooperative venture; the production and enclosure of

intellectual property; the selection of vendors for books, information technology, soda pop and construction; the purchase and provision of nonstandard labor, and so forth. Through these activities, most individual campuses and all of the various "independent" or "self-governing" institutions of the profession are "commercialized," inextricably implicated in profoundly capitalist objectives, however "nonprofit" their missions. Included in this line of analysis are diverse bedfellows. Its unabashed right wing comprises those celebrating commercialization, especially the seventeen-billion-dollar-a-year for-profit education industry itself. The left wing of this approach is led by *Campus, Inc.* and *University, Inc.*, respectively Geoffrey White's scathing collection of exposés of "corporate power in the ivory tower," and Jennifer Washburn's monograph on the "corporate corruption of higher education."[1] There is also a "center" to this discourse, comprised of such widely read recent efforts by prominent university administrators like the former Harvard president Derek Bok (*Universities and the Marketplace*) and the acting Dean of Berkeley's Goldman School of Public Policy, David Kirp (*Shakespeare, Einstein and the Bottom Line*), who claim no alternative to "partnership" with business and "making peace with the marketplace."[2] It is distressing more than a few unions of the tenure-stream faculty have adopted a position similar to those of Bok and Kirp, accepting the necessity of "partnership" with corporate enterprise and adopting the protection of tenure-stream faculty "rights to intellectual property" as a higher priority than, for instance, addressing the installation of a radically multi-tiered workforce.

An important alternative understanding of the transformation of the university focuses not on commercialization, but on organizational culture. Among the best-known examples of this approach include Bill Reading's study of the ideology of "excellence," in connection with the active effort by university administrations to transform institutional culture, and Slaughter, Rhoades, and Leslie's examinations of "academic capitalism," the phenomenon through which university management both encourage and command faculty to engage in market behaviors (competition, entrepreneurship, profit-motivated curiosity, etc).[3] In both cases, the particular merit of the projects is the sense of agency: the tracked changes in the academic workplace come about in consequence of clearly understood and clearly intended managerial, corporate, and political initiatives with the explicit intention of inducing the faculty to relinquish certain values and practices and adopt a new organizational culture carefully crafted by management.

The "organizational culture" approach avoids the "victim of history" narrative popularized by Bok and Kirp, in which there is "no alternative" to commercialization. It also sees "the university" as a complex and contradictory place, by contrast to the vestal-virgin or ivory tower tropes dominating such accounts.[4] At least since the early 1970s, when Clark Kerr theorized the "multiversity" and Reisman chronicled the rise of "student power" over "faculty dominance," it has been extremely useful to view the academy as a complex organization hosting multiple, generally competing, institutional groups, each with its own evolving culture, and, further, to see cultural change as related to the struggle between the groups—i.e. to see the vigor of 1960s student culture, for instance, as closely connected to the rise of "student power" on campus and elsewhere.[5] Most studies follow the lead of 1970s scholarship

in considering the nature of at least three increasingly distinct cultures—faculty, student, administration. With the increasing economic segmentation of higher education, and the long period of political reaction beginning circa 1980, the sense of a vital "student" culture is generally absent from U.S. mass culture and scholarly literature alike (with the exception of the graduate-employee labor movement, of which I've written elsewhere). For similar reasons, the sense of a "faculty culture" has been undermined: currently the traditional figure of the tenure-track professor is a small minority of the instructional force in U.S. higher education, amounting to as little as 25 percent of the total.[6] As a result, investigating "faculty culture" means investigating the multiple subcultures of the persons doing the work formerly done by the tenured and tenure track faculty: part-time pieceworkers, graduate-student employees, undergraduate tutors, full-time non-tenure-track instructors.

Even as the 1970s sense of strong faculty and student cultures has dissipated, management culture has moved in the other direction entirely—becoming ever more internally consistent and cohesive. The culture of university management has the power and—crucially—the intention to remake competing campus cultures in its own image. In fact, the extent to which we increasingly see campus administrations as dominant over other campus groups has much to do with what we see as the success of administrative culture, for its capacity to transmit its values and norms to other groups. Since the 1960s faculty have certainly organized—with greater and lesser success, depending on immense variables—but campus administrations have in the same period enjoyed a massively increasing sense of solidarity.[7] This managerial solidarity has grown by leaps and bounds, and is very much a *culture of solidarity* in which university management sees itself as a culture apart and against faculty, or if not "against" the faculty per se, at least against the set of attitudes, behaviors and norms felt to describe traditional "faculty culture," including the values and practices associated with relative autonomy over the direction of research and practices of teaching.

In large part, the self-recognition by management of an emerging culture of its own flowed from the extent to which university administration through the 1970s increasingly took traditional faculty beliefs and practices as an object of study. Informed by trends in corporate management, the "educational leadership" discourse increasingly zeroed in on what Chaffee and Tierney dubbed "the cultural drama of organizational life."[8] Management theory turned from the human-resources model (ie, of developing individuals) to one featuring organizational culture ("the underlying cultural norms that frame daily life at the college") as the root of most managerial problems (ie, as an obstacle to "organizational change").[9] This phase of management theory—the "leadership" discourse—also saw organizational culture as the wellspring of all possibilities. As the new crop of "institutional leaders" saw it, transforming institutional culture could accelerate change, reduce opposition, sweepingly create in individuals the desire to change themselves to greater conformity with institutional "mission."

If this sounds like Foucault goes to business school, it should. In adopting a management theory founded on the dissemination of a carefully designed organizational culture, campus administrations simply aped most U.S. corporate management

in becoming cultural materialists more wholeheartedly than the faculty of most humanities departments.

Rather than the dedicated cultivators of "human resources," administrators now envisioned themselves as an intellectual vanguard—as the institution's meta culture, the "change agents" whose change agency was expressed through cultural invention, whose "leadership strategies" were aimed primarily at transformations in "collegiate culture."[10] Plainly put, higher education administration pervasively and self-consciously seeks control of the institution by seeking to retool the values and practices that comprise faculty and student culture. And they have succeeded wildly. To a certain extent, the left wing of the cultural approach to the corporatization of the university (the critical study of "academic capitalism") simply provides an assessment of the extent to which the right wing has accomplished its overt agenda. Tenure-stream faculty readily engage directly in the commercialization of research, the enclosure of intellectual property, market behavior such as competition for scraps of "merit pay" rather than a collective demand to keep up with the cost of living, an increasingly managerial role over other campus workers in connection with the continual downsizing and deskilling of traditional faculty work, and so forth. And as they do, we are seeing them embrace exactly the "culture of quality" and "pursuit of excellence" that the administration has intentionally designed for them.

The core question begged by management's wildly successful social engineering of faculty culture is this: under current conditions, to what extent do tenure-track faculty represent the possibility of an opposition, a counterculture? With the seeming acceptance among the tenure-stream faculty of academic-capitalist values and behaviors, and acquiescence to an increasingly managerial role with respect to the contingent, there is little evidence of anything that resembles an "oppositional culture." Indeed, it has become increasingly difficult to speak of anything resembling "faculty culture" apart from the competitive, marketized, "high-performance" habitus designed for them by management. The very idea of a tenure-stream faculty culture owned by the faculty reeks of nostalgia. One study of this question regarding community college faculties in the United States and Canada concluded that despite evidence of antagonism between the faculty and administrations on individual issues, and a degree of concrete opposition located in faculty unions, tenure-stream faculty were generally subject to a profound "corporatization of the self" that produced a pervasive "environment of employee compliance with institutional purposes" founded in management's success at fostering a primary identification with the employing institution "over and above" an alternative affiliation with, for instance, one's discipline, any sense of a separate faculty culture, or even the union.[11] Of course there are exceptions—self-consciously militant faculties, as on some campuses at the City University of New York, for instance. But even most collective-bargaining faculties have not even addressed such core issues of administrative control of the workplace as the massive creation, over the past twenty years, of a majority contingent workforce.

On the face of it, it would seem even more difficult to speak of a "culture" of the contingent faculty. This is a group whose precarious position is overwhelmingly designed to disable solidarity, face-to-face encounters, and the emergence of a sense of common culture and communal interest. Additionally, adjunct faculty face not

only the employer as a challenge when organizing, but also other workers, including tenure-stream faculty and their unions who, as Keith Hoeller points out, have in many cases bargained the multi-tier system of academic labor into existence.[12] It is a group whose purchase on the term "faculty" itself is precarious, as Joe Berry has underlined: "Every time [a tenure-track faculty member] or administrator uses the word 'faculty' to refer only to the full time tenure track faculty, one more piece of grit is ground into the eye of any contingent within earshot."[13]

The plays, films, testimony, and propaganda of contingent faculty are signs of a resurgent labor culture in higher education. More than signs, they are components of a faculty culture in transition, active contributions to a culture war with management, each event an element in the struggle over the meaning of the language that structures our working lives—terms like "faculty," "fairness," "part-time," and "quality." On a Washington campus, activists sold full-time and part-time cookies, with the part-time cookies identical to full-time cookies—except that they cost at least 50 percent less. In California, COCAL (Coalition and Contingent of Academic Labor) activists dressed as "freeway fliers" disrupted public spaces and distributed "scholar dollars," valued illustratively at the 37 cents paid contingent faculty for the same work performed by the tenured faculty.[14] One of the street theater pieces performed at Oregon's Portland Community College with the intention of "organizing the community" as well as the work force involved asking real adjunct faculty (wearing a sign "AD-JUNKED FACULTY") to schedule their office hours at an outdoor trash can (labeled "AD-JUNKED FACULTY OFFICE"). (Guerilla theater appears to be an established feature of the union culture in Portland, where union janitors protested their intended replacement by convict labor by performing their jobs in black-and-white striped uniforms on the steps of county buildings, and where 100 protestors dressed as bananas occupied a Safeway grocery store to dramatize the efforts by Del Monte to break one of its unions in Guatemala.)[15]

Also scripted for the Portland Community College events, Joe Camhi's "Screw U" (cited above) introduces an archetypal administrator, costumed in business suit and horns, employing quotations from the Rolling Stones' "Sympathy for the Devil." Camhi's managerial fiend engages in a classic "Modern Times"-style illustration of managerial speed-up of the work process, first demonstrating the administration's view of the proper (i.e., negligible) time investment in preparing for a class or responding to student work, then barking "hurry!" and "shift gears!" at a hapless contingent faculty member with a moderately slower-paced idea of "quality" in the educational process. The curricular demands that "total-quality" management places on an overstressed contingent faculty quickly push the meaning of "academic specialty" into the realm of the absurd, with Camhi's Administrator continuously interrupting the Adjunct's lecture with a sequence of syllabi for a dozen classes with eight different specializations. "How many damned classes am I teaching?" the "part-time" Adjunct finally explodes in protest. "How many classes do full-time faculty teach?" The truth of the Administrator's answer—that "full-time" faculty often teach just two or three classes—is an extraordinary moment in the skit, one that de-familiarizes the part-time/full-time distinction even for those who "know" why part-time teaching can involve much more than a full-time load. It's an absurd moment in the narrow, technical sense

Figure 1. Cartoon courtesy of the artist, John Kloss.

of literary absurdity: the dizzying contingency of the Adjunct's existence, structured by language and policy continuously available to radical evacuation by the administration, becomes, for a moment, a window into the common condition, fast capitalism's permanently temporary structure of feeling.

The confrontational dimension of Camhi's skit—casting the Administration as a horned Devil—is a common thread in the organizing culture of contingent faculty. Julie Ivey's song parody, "We are Teachers!" rewrites Helen Reddy's "I am Woman" by way of The Who with an emphasis upon collective defiance: "hear us roar. . . . No one's ever gonna make us beg or crawl again!"[16] And the image of faculty "begging" and "crawling" before administration has its effect, not only on the faculty but students, for whom the notion of faculty as authority is a core belief. Among the most compelling of the contingent-faculty productions are the images penned by John Kloss, adjunct instructor at several California campuses, and editorial cartoonist for the *Sacramento News and Review*. A member of the California Federation of Teachers (AFT), Kloss has gone on record noting the union's failure to fully address the concerns of its contingent membership. His images for COCAL/Campus Equity Week display a command of diverse graphic styles, sometimes recalling elements of the IWW graphic tradition. This is particularly the case with his "107 Campuses—An Amazing Circus!" which features a huge and menacing tiger encompassing 85 percent of the horizontal visual field. Labeled "2/3 of Instructors are PART-TIME!" the snarling cat leaps through a flaming hoop labeled "FINANCIAL EXPLOITATION," but arches its head and shoulders in the direction of the ringmaster, who bears on hat and cape the legend "THE CHANCELLOR." (See Figure 1.)[17]

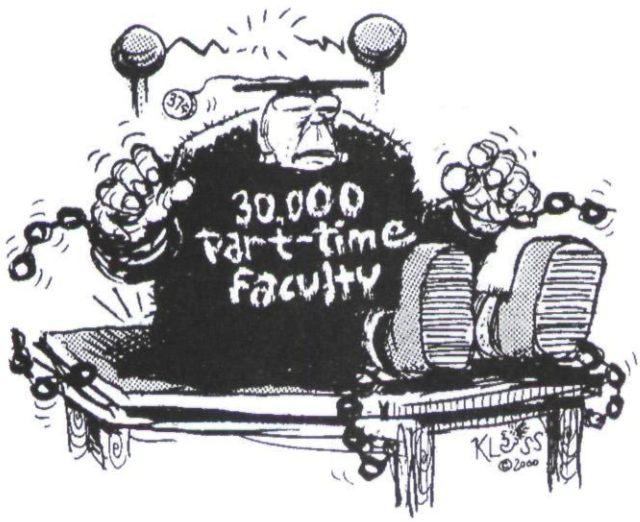

Figure 2. Cartoon courtesy of the artist, John Kloss.

Recalling the Wobblies' use of the "black cat" symbol for direct action against the employer in the workplace (especially sabotage), Kloss's tiger unmistakably voices the militant strain of contingent faculty culture. The cat is an agent—trained to perform management's tricks, but whose training has eroded to the margins of compliance—a powerful agent on the cusp of realizing that bones labeled "summer classes" and tins of cat food (suggesting the contingent faculty domestic food budget) are hardly sufficient inducements to continued obedience. Kloss's other militant images are equally striking. His "It's Alive!" (Figure 2) features a version of Frankenstein's monster in academic robes, square-headed under a mortarboard, labeled "30,000 Part-time Faculty," (of the California community college system), coming to life and snapping its chains while electricity courses through the air. It is a quintessentially romantic trope: the monstrous agency of the contingent awaits only the coming-to-life of militant self-consciousness, and also recalls numerous IWW images of the sleeping giant awakening to agency. (See Figure 2.)

Drawn in a deceptively innocuous style different from much of his other work, it takes a minute to realize that Kloss's "Part-Time Instructor/Full-Time Activist!" bears perhaps the most overtly militant message of all: featuring a clean-cut student in robes and mortarboard this time, but with his clenched fist emerging from the frame, bearing a "class ring" with the legend "CLASH OF 2000." Less busy than Kloss's other work, this sketch draws together the "CLASH" with just two other typographic elements, a diploma case labeled "PAY EQUITY" and the ubiquitous "37 cents" logo (from the "scholar dollar"). Here, as elsewhere, the target of contingent faculty culture is the culture of academia itself, and the oppressive, silencing, norms of "collegiality," ubiquitous faith in meritocracy, and so on: the "CLASH of 2000" is as much a clash with the beliefs and institutions of the tenure stream faculty as it is with the administration. (See Figure 3.)

Figure 3. Drawing courtesy of the artist, John Kloss.

The project of creating a contingent faculty culture involves transforming the contingent faculty culture that is already there. Kloss's "Misadventures of a Freeway Flyer" targets the self-conception of the contingent faculty: showing the "freeway flier" as a chicken who is the victim of his own beliefs: "I'm s-o-o Smart! I teach at 5 caw-caw-cawlleges!" he crows, pulling open academic robes to show a joke superhero's logo ("PT," for part-time). Above a landscape littered with the "flyer's" broken-down car (labeled "OFFICE") and the state capitol, from which snores pour forth, Kloss's editorial comment is written in the sky: "Yes. . . . It's the loyal fowl that saves the day for college deans but loses his shirt at the end of the month!" (See Figure 4.)

Graduating from guerilla performer to guerilla filmmaker, Santa Monica College contingent faculty activist Linda Janakos created *Teachers on Wheels*. Her film illustrates the 14-hour workdays of the full-time part-timers to build militance in the community. One of her film's more memorable shots shows 45,000 petition signatures painstakingly collected and presented to then-governor Gray Davis subsequently dumped in a trash can.

One of the core techniques of contributors to an activist culture for contingent faculty is rewriting the given tropes of identity, most of which are pejorative: the "invisible" faculty, "freeway flyers," a "lost generation" who figure in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and the *Washington Post* as victims of history.[18] That is, if the contingent faculty are indeed "invisible" despite their status as the overwhelming majority of the faculty workforce. Increasingly the contingent faculty are seizing upon—and recolonizing the meaning of—the tropes of invisibility, victimhood, and

Figure 4. Cartoon courtesy of the artist, John Kloss.

loss to become visible, to become agents in history, and make gains, as in Michael Dubson's collection of contingent faculty experiences, *Ghosts in the Classroom* and in such widely read weblogs as *Invisible Adjunct*. As Dubson writes of his experience of collecting "adjunct horror stories," even in the context of his own project—which is an attempt to tap into "the power of adjuncts sharing their stories with each other, bonding by offering support and solidarity, creating a text that we can use to cry over or fight with"—the project of coming to consciousness is a continuously renewed challenge: as he was editing the stories comprising his book, he says, "I kept thinking, 'These poor people. These poor people.' But these people were me."[19] In connection with the release of Dubson's book at COCAL IV here in San Jose, faculty dressed as ghosts haunted the campus.

Do these skits, cartoons, films, weblogs, moments of witness and guerilla theater pieces "work"? What do we mean by that question? Their effectiveness has to be seen in the context of building a culture of opposition—of "naming the enemy," of raising the consciousness of those who work, and reaching the sensibilities of those potentially in alliance, such as students, parents, legislators and tenure-stream faculty. At Oregon's Portland Community College, where Camhi's administrator-as-devil skit was performed, student and community consciousness was abruptly and permanently raised, as the unmistakably shocked tones of the recorded testimony from Melanie Serrou (above) and other students indicates. Serrou: "Twelve-thousand-dollars makes me sick! Oh-my-gosh. I—I didn't even know how to react to that. Teachers going from one campus to the other? Four and five different colleges? What is this country coming to?" In the aftermath of this realization Serrou went to work as a legislative assistant for the union.

The militant strain of contingent faculty culture is having an impact on the culture of the tenured, and their unions. Historically, the history of the relationship between contingent faculty and the unions of tenure-stream faculty serving directly as their bargaining agents is checkered; often enough the unions of the tenured have collaborated with management in the creation of multiple tiers of employment.[20]

For many of the same reasons, graduate employees have historically elected to work with representatives outside of the three unions that together represent nearly all organized tenure-stream faculty (AFT, NEA, AAUP), instead working with representation as diverse as CWA, AFSCME, SEIU, and, notably, UAW.[21]

But that is changing. Now the major bargaining agents in higher education are increasingly eager to organize the contingent—not least because they are the majority of faculty, and because there are far fewer legal barriers than is the case with graduate employees or tenure-stream faculty on private campuses. Nonetheless a major part of the shifting priority is due to the agency of the contingent themselves in authoring an activist culture that has pervaded the higher education establishment, the disciplinary associations, faculty senates, and the myriad forms of organization dominated by the tenured and tenure-track. The sense of the angry and increasingly organized contingent faculty as the specters haunting the academic status quo has been seized as a trope by the major institutions of faculty labor: by 2005, the AAUP organizing kits included instructions for campus contingent-faculty "ghost rallies." Steadily over the past several years the culture and commitments of contingent faculty have pervaded the literature of the major higher-ed unions—the articles, analysis, autobiographical accounts, organizing tips and bargaining strategies of the organized and organizing. Of at least equal import, the culture of the contingent is reaching the communities served by their campuses with a compelling vision of an other-than-corporate culture informing the university. If any group on the campus is asking the pressing questions of the moment, it is the contingent faculty: as Linda Janakos's skit has it, the university president can make commercials, but the contingent faculty captures the community by asking the right question: "Oh Equity, Oh Equity, wherefore art thou Equity?"

Notes

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3. Bill Readings, *The University in Ruins* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996) and Gary Rhoades and Sheila Slaughter, *Academic Capitalism and the New Economy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004).
4. See Christopher Newfield's account in his review of Bok and Kirp, "Jurassic U: The State of University-Industry Relations," *Social Text* 79, no. 22.2 (Summer 2004): 37–66. Also see Newfield's *Ivy and Industry: Business and the Making of the American University, 1880–1980* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004).

5. Clark Kerr, *The Uses of the University*, 5th Edition (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001) and David Reisman, *On Higher Education* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1981).
6. Exclusive of the over 200,000 graduate student employees, the AAUP estimates that 65 percent of all faculty appointments are part-time and nontenurable: American Association of University Professors, "Contingent Faculty Appointments," January 2006, http://www.aaup.org/Issues/Contingent/index.htm (accessed June 5, 2006). Ben Johnson and Tom McCarthy find that graduate student employees account for another 18 percent of the higher education workforce, pushing the number of tenure-stream appoints to below 25 percent: "Casual Labor and the Future of the Academy," *Thought and Action: The NEA Higher Education Journal*, Summer 2000: 107–117.
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8. E. E. Chaffee, William G. Tierney, Peter T. Ewell, and Jack Y. Krakower, *Collegiate culture and leadership strategies* (New York: American Council of Education, 1988).
9. Chaffee and Tierney, 37.
10. In addition to Chaffee and Tierney, see John C. Smart, et al. "The Roles of Institutional Cultures and Decision Approaches in Promoting Organizational Effectiveness in Two-Year Colleges," *The Journal of Higher Education* 68 (May/June 1997): 256–81.
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12. Scott Heller, "The Expected Turnaround in the Faculty Job Market May Come Too Late for 'Lost Generation' of Scholars," *Chronicle of Higher Education* (May 13, 1990) and Doug Collins, "Second-Class Treatment for Adjuncts in Faculty Unions," *Chronicle of Higher Education* (December 16, 2005), http://www.chronicle.com (accessed February 1, 2006).
13. Joseph Berry, "Contingent Faculty in Higher Education: An Organizing Strategy and Chicago Area Proposal" (PhD dissertation, Union Institute, 2002), 87. http://www.cewaction.org (accessed February 1, 2006).
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16. Joe Camhi, "Screw U., A Play in One Act," n.d., http://www.cewaction.org (February 1, 2006)
17. I wish to thank John Kloss and all of the California COCAL activists for the work they have made freely available to other activists and scholars.
18. Judith Gappa and David Leslie, *The Invisible Faculty* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1993); Heller, *op. cit.*
19. Michael Dubson, *Ghosts in the Classroom: Stories of College Adjunct Faculty—and the Price We All Pay* (Camel's Back Books, 2001); "The Invisible Adjunct"(Weblog), http://www.invisibleadjunct.com (accessed February 1, 2006).
20. Vincent Tirelli, "Adjuncts and More Adjuncts," *Social Text* 51 (summer 1997): 75-89.
21. The American Federation of Teachers, National Education Association, American Association of University Professors, Communication Workers of America, American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, Service Employees International Union, and the United Auto Workers.

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