

Contingent Realities for Women:
National and Regional Trends

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Abstract:

Though professional organizations and educators have bemoaned the large proportion of part and full time contingent faculty members who teach in higher education for years, few have commented on the role that gender plays in the make-up of the contingent faculty body. Contingent, or adjunct, faculty, are faculty working outside of tenure appointments, and often with only a semester to semester contract -- the AAUP in its "Red Book" of *Policy Documents and Reports* defines "contingent faculty" as both part time and full time faculty "appointed off the tenure track"(98). Though statistics vary between the many organizations which have collected them, one thing is clear: contingent faculty outnumber those in the traditional category of full time tenure track or tenured faculty member. Disciplines which most rely on adjunct or contingent faculty to teach their courses tend to be those which are increasingly "feminized." Thus, the largest number of contingent faculty are female.

Like most states, Tennessee is increasingly reliant on adjunct faculty to teach courses. Payment per course varies from campus to campus, dependent on degree held and experience in some cases, and supplemented some times by travel stipends, which adjunct faculty must negotiate individually before employment begins. Contingent faculty do not receive regular raises like permanent employees are supposed to, and now, in Board of Regents institutions, are only to be termed "instructor," no matter the degree held. Contingent faculty activists at Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU), however, have devised and proposed a plan which allows contingent faculty to advance through 4 tiers after attaining certain levels of experience, from contract instructor to senior lecturer, with increasing pay and decreasing course loads. The state of Tennessee also formed an Adjunct Taskforce which, among other things, recommended that present maximum rates of compensation for contingent faculty per credit hour taught be made the minimum rates; that recommendation failed to be passed by the Tennessee Board of Regents in 2013, though.

Current trends in hiring continue the practice of engaging contingent faculty, and thus increasingly marginalize women. Ironically, this trend has been attributed to some of the very legislation meant to help women and minorities: the Equal Opportunity Act and Title IX (1972). In order to counter these inequities in all fields of higher education, affirmative action hiring should be continued, and women and minorities should be mentored at the undergraduate and graduate levels so they are informed about how to negotiate a salary and perks, whatever the position they are being hired for. Tenured and tenure track faculty need to be made aware of the conditions under which contingent faculty labor, and realize that, because contingent faculty teach the same students that they do, if these conditions are not constituted so as to elicit the best teaching from contingent faculty, the students that they share may be negatively affected. It would benefit everyone in higher education today to institute the kind of professional development plan for contingent faculty as proposed by those at MTSU, although the fact that it undermines tenure is indeed troubling. In addition, as the state of Tennessee has gone to a funding system that rewards retention and graduation rates, when it comes to faculty who receive little support and also have little reason to be loyal to their institution, students may not be retained. The California State University system has recently recognized this and has begun an initiative to open and hire for at least 700 tenure track positions, for which formerly contingent faculty have been hired.

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The issue of adjunct or contingent faculty has been receiving national attention for the past few years, as well it should. American colleges and universities have undergone a dramatic change in the last 20 years: full time tenured or tenure-track faculty positions have become increasingly scarce. According to an American Federation of Teachers (AFT) National survey conducted in March 2010, fully 47% of faculty are adjunct faculty, but because adjunct faculty usually teach many more courses than tenured or tenure track faculty, according to the same study, almost three quarters of undergraduate classes are taught by adjunct or contingent faculty. At my institution, Tennessee Technological University (TTU), the percentage of full time, tenure track (FT/TT) has gone from 61.1 % in 1995 to 43.1% in 2009. Yet at Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU), the fastest growing university in Tennessee, the increase has been less drastic: 42.5% of the faculty was FTT/TT in 1995 and 45.8 of faculty in 2009 was FTT/TT. (A spokesperson for MTSU quoted in a 2011 article claims that three quarters of the faculty at MTSU are tenured or tenure track – see Berrett). The 2012-13 “Annual Report on the Status of the Profession” in the 2013 March/April issue of *Academe* reports that “more than three of every four instructional staff positions (76 percent) are filled on a contingent basis” (8). The National Center for Education Statistics gives yet other statistics:

in fall 2009, degree-granting institutions—defined as postsecondary institutions that grant an associate's or higher degree and are eligible for Title IV federal financial aid programs—employed 1.4 million faculty members, including 0.7 million full-time and 0.7 million part-time faculty. . . . In addition, degree-granting institutions employed 0.3 million graduate assistants.

The March-April 2014 *Academe* reports that since 1971 “the number of part-time faculty members grew by 286 percent, more than tripling, while full-time non-tenure-track faculty ranks swelled by 259 percent” (8). Whatever set of statistics one goes by, the numbers clearly point to the reliance on contingent faculty in higher education today.

The negative implications of this change have been noted by many: the lack of guarantee of academic freedom for contingent faculty (perhaps the most important thing that tenure guarantees); inadequate compensation for those who have no expectation of permanent, full time employment; little or no opportunity for advancement beyond the oxymoronic permanent contingent instructor status; most often, no health insurance or other benefits that come with a tenure track or full time appointment.

The Gender Component

Although the issue of contingent faculty has received much attention, it has rarely been considered as a practice that involves a gender component (notable exceptions are Ivey; Finley; McMahon and Greene; Glazer-Raymo). Regardless of institutional type, women are 10 to 15 percent more likely than men to be in these positions (American Association of University Professors, “Inequities Persist”). More generally, as the American Association of University Professors reported in 2006, women occupy just over half -- 52.4 percent -- of all non-tenure-track positions (AAUP 22). According to Nelly Stromquist and James Purtilo, “By 2010, 62% of the contingent faculty were women.” The marginalization of women conspires to exploit female workers, consigning them to second class citizens. In academia, contingent faculty are generally shut out of shared governance, book ordering, private offices and sometimes any office at all, prime classroom space, retirement benefits and health insurance, as well as such perks as travel

money and other research support. According to the 2010 AFT survey of 500 contingent faculty,

Just 28 percent indicate that they receive health insurance on the job. Only 39 percent say they have retirement benefits through their employment. Even among those who receive health or retirement benefits, however, there are significant gaps in coverage. Unionized part-time/adjunct faculty members earn significantly more than their nonunion counterparts and are more likely to have some health and pension coverage. (AFT National Survey)

The lack of health insurance and benefits, as will be seen, hits women especially hard because over the course of their careers they are shown to earn less and to realize fewer opportunities for professional advancement.

In addition, fields in which women are more represented among adjunct faculty – business, English and fine arts – as well as those fields which, in the recent past, have shown the largest growth in numbers of adjunct faculty – education, social sciences and humanities – tend to be among the lower paid faculty on campuses. According to a 2007 National Education Association (NEA) study, the smallest increase in numbers of adjunct faculty occurred in the fields of business, natural sciences, and engineering – generally higher paid professions, and traditionally more male dominated professions. (See accompanying tables). *The NEA Higher Education Advocate* for March 2014 notes that pay is more equitable for women in two-year colleges because they “are more likely to pay faculty on a salary schedule based on education and experience while universities reflect market rates that tend to pay male-dominated areas such as engineering and business more than those associated with women, such as education and library science”

(8).

Why are women such a large part of adjunct faculty and what are the realities of their positions? This paper surveys both the literature on this topic and women's pay issues generally, as well as giving some information gleaned from a statewide adjunct faculty survey conducted in 2012 by the United Campus Workers and other adjunct activists at all higher education institutions in Tennessee. One problem is that, once women enter the adjunct faculty ranks, the possibility of advancing or successfully landing a tenure-track position becomes more difficult. Thus, the pay increases concomitant with rising through the ranks in a tenured or tenure track position are not possible.

Of course, women generally in every profession – even academia – earn less than men, and over an entire career this pay inequity can result in a loss of almost half a million dollars, according to the Center for the American Progress. Thus, thinking in terms of a long career and a long life (since women on average live longer than men), this pay discrepancy has far reaching effects for women. According to the American Progress Report:

Over a 40-year working career, the average woman loses \$431,000 as the result of the wage gap. The pay gap accumulates in no small part because initial pay matters: If a woman earns less in her first job, when she takes a new job and her new employer sets her pay scale, they will often base it on her pay history. The lifetime wage gap for a woman who did not finish high school is \$300,000, while the lifetime wage gap for a woman with at least a bachelor's degree is \$723,000. Making sure that young women understand the importance of negotiating for

good pay from day one should be a pressing policy concern and is included in the Paycheck Fairness Act. (Glynn and Powers)

The wage gap continues to grow as women age.

For working women between the ages of 25 to 29, the annual wage gap is \$1,702. In the last five years before retirement, however, the annual wage gap jumps to \$14,352. Even in retirement, the wage gap continues to haunt women. (Glynn and Powers)

As Lilly Ledbetter, the pioneering Goodyear employee who stood up to assert her right to equal pay with men after she found out about a significant pay disparity between herself and her male peers in management positions points out, a lesser pay means significantly less in retirement funds (Ledbetter).

There is no question that there is a disparity between what women and men are paid in academia. Every year, in the special March/April issue of *Academe*, the publication of the American Association of University Professors (always devoted to “The Economic State of the Profession”), an average comparative salary table by rank and gender for various universities is compiled with information provided by each institution. At virtually every rank men are paid more than women (although the salaries of men and women are more commensurate at the lower ranks like instructor and assistant professor than the higher, associate or full professor ranks). As John Curtis commented on the 2009-10 data:

women full-time faculty members earn less than their male colleagues at each of the traditional professorial ranks (professor, associate professor, and assistant professor), and overall in each institutional category (doctoral, master's,

baccalaureate, and associate). Although women are approaching salary parity with men at community colleges, even there women have a slight overall disadvantage. The overall salary disparity between men and women is the product of both rank and institutional location: Women are more likely to hold faculty positions at lower faculty ranks, and they make up a greater proportion of the faculty at the institutions that pay the lowest salaries.

The AAUP does not include contingent faculty pay in their state by state survey, because institutions are not required to report it -- partly because it is difficult for higher education organizations to systematically collect the data on contingent faculty (June and Newman). This omission skews statistics on gender equity with regard to salary, and obviates another important fact: contingent or adjunct faculty numbers should also include not only graduate student workers but also those in post-doctoral appointments, data for which are often not available in national database according to the 2013 *Academe* "Annual Report on the Economic Status of the Profession" (7). However, Joshua A. Boldt started a website where contingent faculty can share salary and other information at <http://adjunct.chronicle.com> (June and Newman). In addition, the AAUP helped to found the Coalition on the Academic Workforce (CAW), which includes other professional societies and organizations concerned about the increasing reliance on adjunct faculty in higher education. CAW released a survey entitled *A Portrait of Part-Time Faculty Members* in June 2012, and the March/April 2013 *Academe* includes a table reporting that survey data (10-11). The data assembled in the CAW report could not be included in the AAUP salary tables by institution for a number of reasons. The CAW survey is based on data provided by 29,000 individuals in Fall

2010, and thus is not provided directly by institutions like the other salary data, and numbers from the current year (2012-13) were also not available. Also, the CAW survey did not ask for information regarding faculty rank (i.e., instructor, assistant professor, etc.), and thus cannot be correlated with the other data collated per institution by the AAUP.

The Example of Tennessee

The problem of tracking adjunct pay is illustrated by the state of Tennessee. One might assume that by and large, at the contingent faculty level, those who teach on a per course basis make the same across the state – but they don't! From information on individual websites for these Tennessee state institutions, the following figures can be found: at Jackson State Community College, pay for part-time instructors in credit courses is \$550/credit hour; Columbia State offers \$475/ a credit hour with a travel stipend which may be negotiated at the time of hire for faculty traveling more than 80 miles each week to teach their classes. For “nine month faculty” the rate of compensation is \$2,500/ hour per credit hour in summer school classes at Memphis University. At Volunteer State University, a two year college, adjunct faculty are compensated according to degree and experience and they also get commensurate titles: a Professor with a Ph.D. compensation is \$600 per credit hour; for an Associate Professor, M.A. holder with 30 semester hours in the teaching field, ten years' teaching experience including five years at Vol State compensation is \$550/credit hour; for an Assistant Professor one must have an M.A. and five years' teaching experience or equivalent \$525/hour; an Instructor has the minimum criteria and gets \$475/credit hour. The Vice President of Academic Affairs may make limited exceptions to these

guidelines (Faculty Handbook, Vol State).

At Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) institutions, currently the maximum rate of compensation per credit hour is \$700. There is a 4 tiered system which starts at \$550/credit hour at Tier 1, \$600 at Tier 2; \$650 at Tier 3; and \$700 at Tier 4 (Faculty Handbook Tennessee Tech). Women may be at a particular disadvantage when it comes to negotiating for pay, perks, gas allowance and the like, because women are often not aware that they should demand a higher salary, better compensation or perks. Studies suggest that women are at a disadvantage because they have no confidence in their negotiating skills (Babcock and Laschever), among other things (see Cruthers, et al.). The TBR Taskforce on Adjunct Faculty, formed in 2011, made a recommendation in 2013 to make those compensation rates per hour be made the minimum, and each campus would set its own guidelines as to how the tiered system would be applied (Report, TBR Taskforce). However, this proposed increase in compensation was denied by the Tennessee Board of Regents in their June 2013 meeting.

The term “adjunct faculty” as defined by the TBR means “professional staff members of businesses, industries and other agencies and organizations who are appointed by institutions and schools on a part-time basis to carry out instructional, research or public service functions (TBR policy, qted. in the TTU Faculty Handbook). This definition does not fit most of the adjunct faculty teaching today. Many of the adjunct faculty surveyed by MTSU contingent faculty activists are teaching two or three courses at as many as three different schools (sometimes teaching as many as six or seven). Most of the ones surveyed are looking for a full time job because, in fact, they are not “adjuncts” in the sense that the Board of Regents defines them. They are looking

for a full time job because, of course, they have no other job than their adjunct teaching. What is the current situation with the Tennessee Board of Regents? The Board of Regents was finally persuaded to form the Task Force on Adjunct Faculty due to the pressure exerted by leaders in the state conference of the AAUP as well as adjunct activists from the United Campus Workers who all worked in collaboration to push for change.

Like MTSU, TTU has instituted "full time temporary" positions which provide benefits like insurance and retirement plans, but are limited to one to three year terms, and capped at six years. MTSU, though, did away with all term limitations on employment of contingent faculty around 2005. A term of seven years used to be considered to be "implied tenure" but that is no longer true at MTSU. In 2011, in fact, Dr. Paula Short issued a directive that Adjunct Faculty are not to be called anything other than "Instructor," no matter what degree they hold (Short), and long term full time instructors were immediately demoted from Professor to Lecturer. These changes immediately went into effect at TTU, but there was resistance at MTSU, and, as the *Chronicle on Higher Education* blog reported in Dec. 2011, MTSU was forced to back down on this policy change, temporarily, at least.

University administrators had sought contract amendments changing the adjuncts' titles from professors to lecturers, saying a Tennessee Board of Regents policy required them to do so. The American Association of University Professors condemned the administrators' move. The university now says it will honor the contracts for faculty already hired and establish a time frame for bringing their job titles into compliance with the regents' policy. (MTSU Eases

Timeline)

Contingent faculty of all classes – full time Lecturers as well as well as adjunct Instructors -- are most often denied any possibility of advancement under the current conception of “temporary” faculty. Not only is it contrary to our notions of the reward that higher education degrees should bring in academia (why shouldn't someone who has attained a Ph.D. be considered an "assistant professor"?) but the pay for adjunct faculty has remained static (with full time temporary instructors getting the small "cost of living" raises accorded to other state employees, but NOT adjunct faculty, who are not on such a contract). (This anti-intellectual attitude is apparent in the K-12 system, too, where June 21, 2013, Tennessee Educational Commissioner Kevin Huffman pushed the state to adopt a policy which eliminates pay increases for public school teachers based on years of service and earning of advanced degrees).

This is the reason that contingent activists at MTSU have proposed a 4 tier system of advancement for contingent faculty. Starting with the contract instructor with a load of 3/3, with a salary range of \$550-\$700 an hour; those within this “entry level” might progress to the next level, which would be full time temporary, who after two three-year terms with a 5/5 load and a minimum salary of \$32,000 might be considered for advancement to the next level; after two more three year terms a FTT would be eligible for Full Time Senior Lecturer status, with a 4/4 load, separate office space, and a minimum salary of \$48,000. This system will be discussed more fully below, but essentially it provides a framework for the possibility of advancement for contingent faculty, allowing one of adjunct status to progress according to a plan of “reviewable permanence” of adjunct status through a plan of full time, supported, reviewable

employment. Some comments from the adjunct and contingent faculty survey initiated by the United Campus Workers may be relevant here. (Some possibly identifying characteristics have been omitted by this writer to guarantee anonymity to those responding to the survey in case of retaliation). One woman with a Master's degree currently in a Ph.D. program is on a 3 year contract position with an annual salary and benefits commented: "after 3 years the position becomes adjunct." Another who has been a contingent faculty for years commented:

Basically someone in this position ends up progressively falling behind in terms of research and publishing when compared to people who are in tenure-track positions. The salaries are very unequal. And the differences increase over time, because you only get 1% or 2% of a salary that started much lower. Since there has been no job security beyond a yearly contract, I was not in a position to invest in a house either. When I began teaching as a lecturer, I thought that this experience would help lead to a tenure-track position here or somewhere else, but that has not happened. Every year I have sent out an average of 50 applications, which in itself is a time-consuming process. I could actually make more money teaching high school, which is what I did before I went to graduate school. However, I want to be able to use my degree, and I enjoy teaching [in my field].

I would like fair wages for level of expertise and work performed (I have written a book & articles, present regularly at conferences, have received external research funding, and I am a highly rated teacher). I would like my full time work to be recognized as such, and would like to receive the benefits due to

a full time worker. I would like a formal say in governance. (UCW Adjunct Faculty Survey)

Out of 41 respondents to the survey, 14 identified themselves as women. Higher wages, access to health insurance and other benefits, and a share in faculty governance were things that most of the contingent faculty who responded to the survey desired. One woman commented: "I love what I do, but if I wasn't married to a man who makes a decent living I wouldn't be able to take care of my kids or myself" (UCW Adjunct Faculty Survey). Another wrote "When I am willing and able to work, why should I have to rely on food stamps?" and asserted that "health insurance and other benefits are important things that people need. Lack of benefits and adequate pay means that people have to get these necessities elsewhere" (UCW Adjunct Faculty Survey).

As mentioned previously, the contingent activists at MTSU who collaborated with other adjunct and contingent faculty to develop and administer the UCW survey have also come up with an ambitious plan for a means by which contingent faculty could have opportunities for advancement. This involves 4 categories of "contingent faculty." The instructor in the first phase is categorized as a "Contract Instructor" (Middle Tennessee Contingency Plan). The teaching load would be 3/3 and remuneration would be per contact hour (\$550-\$700 per credit hour). The minimum degree earned would be a Master's degree. The second phase would be a "Full Time Temporary." This would be for a maximum of two three year terms and teaching load would be 5/5; pay would be \$32,000 at a minimum. Courses taught would be freshman and sophomore (1000-2000 level) courses for both Contract Instructor and Full Time Temporary. The third level is Full Time Lecturer and the maximum service would be for two three year terms.

Teaching load would be 5/4 and the FTL could teach 1000-3000 classes. Minimum salary would be \$35,000/year. Minimum qualification would be a Master's degree, but a terminal degree or ABD would be preferred. Finally, the Full Time Senior Lecturer would have no limits, but would be subject to yearly assessments and a five year intensive review. Minimum salary would be \$48,000/year and the minimum qualifications would be a terminal degree. Both Full Time Lecturers and Full Time Senior Lecturers would have private offices and would have expectations of department and professional service; national searches would be conducted for these positions. Thus, "contingent faculty could progress toward more permanent employment at MTSU" (Middle Tennessee Contingency Plan). A problem with this conception of a tiered permanent lectureship position is that it undermines tenure, opening up a career option for newly minted Ph.D.s who have yet to land a tenure track appointments. However, with the "New Faculty Majority" in academia already consisting of those in non-tenured positions, such a proposal represents a more ethical way to treat a vulnerable class of workers in the academy. As the major component of contingent faculty, exploitation of contingent faculty disproportionately affects women. This gender bias is unlikely to change, since "The preponderance of part-time faculty members teach in the humanities (44%) and professional fields (20.5%) (CAW 2012), areas that incorporate many women.

Unfortunately, administrative approval of the proposal to have a 4 tiered approach in hiring and retaining contingent faculty at MTSU has yet to be obtained, and a proposal by the Adjunct Faculty Taskforce of Tennessee to make the current maximum pay per credit hour the minimum was turned down, as aforementioned, by the Tennessee

Board of Regents. At present these matters remain under consideration at MTSU and other TBR institutions, with tentative signs emerging that policy changes are afoot.

Vulnerabilities of Women in the Academic Workforce

Fields which are hiring a lot of part time, contingent faculty tend to be those in which women are fairly well represented among the full time, tenured or tenure track faculty. In the humanities, most contingent faculty were hired in English literature in the year 2003, a field in which women comprised 66.5 percent of faculty (Finley). Fewer contingent faculty were hired in history and philosophy, where men outnumber women by more than two to one. In the social sciences, more contingent faculty are hired in psychology, where women comprise 51.9 percent of faculty, while the fewest were hired in economics and political science, where women represent only 14.3 percent and 15.9 percent of faculty, respectively (National Center for Education Statistics 2005; see accompanying graphs). So, the problem of female contingent faculty's low pay compounds the problem women already face, not just in academia, but in jobs across the board. Single women are more adversely affected by the wage gap than married women. Single women earn only 78.8 percent of what married women earn, and only 57 cents for every dollar that married males earn (National Center for Education Statistics).

When I bring up discrepancies in pay between men and women with most people, they are quick to offer explanations like "Women take time off for maternity leave and raising children." Such attitudes – linked to the assumption that women actually *prefer* the adjunct positions they are often consigned to in order to have children – "allow academics in tenure-track lines to contribute, implicitly or explicitly, to the structures that perpetuate inequitably tiered positions within a single department" (McMahon and

Green 19). Deidre McMahon and Ann Green report that one senior colleague, on finding out that one of them, expecting a new baby, assumed she would “ ‘of course’ be off the job market” (19). Some contingent faculty – perhaps retired; perhaps, indeed, not in a full time position but who find teaching stimulating; perhaps, occasionally parents with young children who *opt* to work part time – do prefer a part time schedule, but the truth is that today universities are exploiting the surplus of unemployed, highly educated workers to reduce costs, channeling them into contingent status for the convenience of maintaining an easily replaceable but dutifully adaptable faculty workforce. Assuming that women always want to or need to follow a “biological imperative” at all, and if they do have children are therefore incapable of full time work, is sexist and discriminatory, which should not need pointing out. In fact, according a recent article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, “Researchers say that academic women are more likely to be single, divorced, or childless than women who pursue other careers” (Patton). Women who do put off having children until finishing their doctorates sometimes do assume or even find that a tenure track position is so demanding that they actually *prefer* a contingent position, according to Margaret Betz in her article “Contingent Mother.” Yet, most women assume that a tenure track position will be amenable to childbearing, and most would agree that it should be. That this is often not so comes from, in Betz’s words, the fact that academia remains rooted in the notion of faculty members as “ ‘men with wives.’ “

The most comprehensive study of family issues in academia is *Do Babies Matter? Gender and Family in the Ivory Tower*, by Mary Ann Mason, et al., and it is important to consider how both pursuing an advanced degree and a tenure track job affect family

formation and child-bearing. But, in fact, it is not child-rearing or child-bearing that account for all of the discrepancies in pay between men and women, or even why women fill the majority of contingent positions. Studies have shown over and over that a large part of it is, purely and simply, discrimination against women. According to Sarah Jane Glynn and Audrey Powers,

More than 40 percent of the wage gap cannot be explained by occupation, work experience, race, or union membership. More than one-quarter of the wage gap is due to the different jobs that men and women hold, and about 10 percent is due to the fact that women are more likely to leave the workforce to provide unpaid care to family members. But even when controlling for gender and racial differences, 41 percent is unexplainable by measureable factors.

Even if women and men have the same background, the wage gap still exists, highlighting the fact that part of the discrepancy can be attributed to gender-based pay discrimination. Another exhaustive study by Judy Goldberg Dey and Catherine Hill, for the American Association of University Women, concluded that “A large portion of the gender pay gap is not explained by women’s choices or characteristics” (17).

Thus, perhaps as much as 50 percent of the gender gap may be accounted for by measurable factors like education, job experience, and hours of work, but, according to Live Your Dream.org, an organization devoted to giving women opportunities,

The remainder—called the residual—points to discrimination. Many of the causes for the gender wage gap interrelate and overlap, and point to this discrimination on a variety of fronts. At its root is the gender division of labor, which assumes that women’s primary involvement is in reproduction, unpaid

household work, caregiving and unequal power relations at home. . . . Such activities often restrict women's employment opportunities, mobility, educational attainment and skills development. During their lifetime, women spend more time on combined unpaid and paid. (Gender Wage Gap)

In 2007 the National Education Association reported that sixty seven per cent of faculty at public two-year institutions were non-tenure track, while public doctoral-granting institutions employed only 22 percent contingent faculty. Once again, though, the institutions which hire a lot of contingent faculty are more gender-imbalanced: at public doctoral-granting institutions, which employ the smallest number of contingent faculty, men outnumber women by about two to one. Conversely, at two-year institutions, where the greatest number of contingent positions exists, women compose about 63 percent of all faculty (National Education Association 2007).

Conclusion

Whether in academia or no, women generally know the demoralizing effect of lack of advancement. Audrey June and Jonah Newman point out that women, even in “tenure eligible or tenured positions are often asked to be ‘team players’ by performing administrative work that does not lead to promotion, institutional or professional recognition, or salary increases” (16). The kind of teaching that adjunct or contingent faculty do – like beginning composition classes, large general education classes, labs and the like – is extremely labor intensive (large amounts of student writing to correct, lab exercises to evaluate, a large number of students in general education classes, etc.), and breaking down the modest adjunct pay per hour of actual work most often reveals that contingent faculty members are grossly underpaid.

Even attempts to benefit the American worker in the end often penalize contingent faculty. For instance, The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (“Obamacare”) unintentionally works against adjuncts and contingents, who are now told by employers seeking to evade the costs incurred that they must limit their hours worked to under thirty hours a week, the number which would require their university employer to cover their health care. Among employers reportedly tracking this information in order to avoid having to pay health care benefits for adjuncts are “Youngstown State University, Stark State College, and the Community College of Allegheny County” (June); reportedly, community colleges in Tennessee are now doing this, too.

The salary statistics collected by the AAUP certainly indicate the existence of a glass ceiling women face in rising to the upper ranks. One of the most shocking things to me is the few number of women at TTU who are *full* professors: 25 female to 123 male full professors (which makes female full professors around 1/6 of all full professors and 20 percent of male full professors, a sad record for a public university) (AAUP, “Losing Focus”). Why are there so few female full professors in comparison to men? Why do women get paid less than men at every rank? Anecdotal evidence exists to show that women are not getting credit toward tenure because they are discouraged by a male Dean or Provost, or are discouraged from coming up for promotion by a chair; instead of being promoted to Associate Professor when granted tenure women are told not to put themselves up for promotion (as happened to me – though I did not follow the “advice”) or are denied promotion when they ask for it as part of tenure. This professional stymying of women can have long term consequences in terms of pay over a lifetime, as we have seen.

But as many commentators have noted, the more compelling source of women's inequality may more closely resemble a glass *wall* (Comer and Dollinger 1997; Finley 2009). A disproportionate number of female faculty members currently reside in contingent positions, where they are effectively cut off from even the *opportunity* to seek tenure promotion and associated pay increases. As economic factors ensure that contingent faculty positions will continue to dominate, the preponderance of women in these jobs will remain a prime source of professional limitation.

As we have seen, the long-term effect of low wages on women is pervasive. Those female contingent faculty who are not on full time contracts of one to three years lack health insurance. The Institute of Medicine (IOM) has published research which shows just one uninsured person in a family can have disastrous effects on the family's prospects. Women are more likely than men to be single parents: the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) has also found that if all children in the U.S. had health insurance not only would their immediate health be improved, but their long term prospects in life, not just in terms of health but in terms of prosperity, would be augmented. Women in particular benefit from preventive screenings or tests such as those for breast cancer, cervical cancer, AIDs testing, prenatal care, etc.; not only that, but the NAS has also proven that access to family planning improves not only the life of the individual, but also that of the family and benefits society as a whole. Women without access to health insurance are less likely to have affordable access to such benefits.

Trends in higher education and hiring in the U.S. make it likely that this lamentable situation will continue. Indeed, sometimes seemingly unrelated developments in higher

education practices have subtle effects on the status of contingent faculty. Recently, Colorado State and Harvard University caused a furor when they ran ads for tenure track faculty which stipulated that those whose degrees were over 3 years old need not apply. This is very unfair to those who have been languishing on the job market in contingent positions, or in other ancillary academic roles, because of lack of tenure track jobs. In 2005-6 there were 149 more new Ph.D.s than job ads for tenure track assistant professors in the field. By the 2009-10 academic year, the gap between new Ph.D.s and job openings reached 1,068. Yet, recent data from the MLA and the American Historical Association also show that the majority of newly hired tenure-track assistant professors in history, English, and foreign languages had earned their Ph.D.s within two years of being hired or less. Paradoxically, because more women and minorities have been graduated in the last 3 years perhaps these groups would benefit from this otherwise unfair hiring policy, but if academic departments continue to favor men, this effect will not be seen. In any case, limiting hires to those with Ph.D.s obtained within 3 years would continue to discriminate against contingent faculty.

One would think that, of all professions, higher education should be working to improve the economic position of women in society. Instead, academic institutions continue to promote policies which lead to exploitation of vulnerable workers, the majority of whom are women. Professions which are male dominated continue to be male dominated in the U.S., and little effort seems to be made to encourage women to enter these professions. Disciplines dominated by men (engineering, natural and social sciences, and business) hire fewer contingent faculty. If trends continue, the effect of more women in many contingent fields will contribute to the “feminization” of the job

of the contingent, and when a job is perceived as a “woman’s job” salaries become further depressed (Finley). Fewer men apply for those jobs which increasingly attract women, which means that salaries will never rise. University administrators must be more conscious of the effects of exploitation of contingent faculty, and both female and male faculty must help to mentor more female students and colleagues whose socialization processes and pressures handicap them when it comes to breaking into male-dominated fields like engineering and social sciences, and even, if once offered a tenure track job, to demanding a high salary, state of the art computer, or other concessions which would benefit them in advancing their careers. As women advance in academia, they may also be subject to pressures by administrators to delay tenure or promotion, and lack of assertiveness and self-confidence again may handicap them as they submissively follow their supervisors’ misguided advice. Adjunct faculty don’t even get that choice, of course, and, whether male or female, lacking the protection of tenure, they have little chance of even addressing inequities which they suffer.

Ironically, the proliferation of women in adjunct (part-time as well as sometimes full time, non-tenure track) positions is an unintended consequence of measures meant to benefit women. Judith Glazer-Raymo in *Shattering the Myths*, her book length study of women in the Academy since the 1970s, points out that

This trend [hiring a preponderance of women in adjunct positions] began in 1972 immediately after the passage of the Equal Employment Opportunity Act and Title IX. In its quest for mechanisms that would expand opportunities for women, the Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education (1975) made three well-intentioned recommendations that unwittingly encouraged the

development of a dual track for men and women faculty: the appointment of “qualified women lecturers” who met institutional standards but had less substantial records of achievement in research and publication; the appointment of women as part-time and non-tenure track teachers and administrators; and provisions for granting tenure and fringe benefits (or compensation in lieu thereof) for women hired as part-time faculty, reifying their lower status and legitimizing a dual hiring track. (57)

Such “unintended consequences” should serve as a reminder to legislators who, in attempting to address inequities, may unwittingly be passing legislation that only exacerbates the problem. More than forty years after Title IX and the passage of the Equal Employment Opportunity Act, it should be possible to help women and minorities, not by ending Affirmative Action because “it is no longer needed,” but by continuing to offer tenure track positions and hire qualified women and minorities for them; to encourage women and minorities to negotiate salary and other benefits before accepting such jobs; and, when contingent positions must be offered, considering and instituting a plan like that proposed by the MTSU Contingent Faculty Activists, which offers the possibility for advancement and thus preserves the dignity of highly educated untenured professionals with advanced degrees, whether male or female, Caucasian or minority.

Tenured and tenure track faculty need to be made aware of the conditions under which contingent faculty labor, and realize that, because contingent faculty teach the same students that they do, if these conditions do not elicit the best teaching from contingent faculty, the students that they share and most likely will inherit may be negatively affected. In Tennessee, under the Complete College of Tennessee Act, state funding is now allocated to universities

based on retention and graduation rates (Rhoda), and reliance on faculty who, after all, receive little support and few professional development opportunities and thus also have little reason to feel loyalty to the university where they teach, may lead to lack of retention and low graduation rates. In that case, will money really be saved by hiring “cheap” labor and exploiting vulnerable workers – the preponderance of who are women? MTSU’s Contingent Faculty Plan, gaining support from the Tennessee Board of Regents, is one step towards more equitable compensation for contingent faculty. To address fully the lack of pay equity for women in Academia and in the United States generally much more extensive efforts are needed, which would in turn reduce the number of women who are in contingent faculty positions. These include paid family and maternity and paternity leave and publically subsidized health and childcare. Mentoring girls and young women to prepare them for careers in male-dominated fields as well as the much more difficult task of eliminating biases, preconceptions and prejudices against women in academia could help women avert “contingent realities” and close the gender gap in pay. Recognizing the gender component in the contingent faculty issue makes clear how insidious and pervasive is the marginalization of the female worker. And, while the proposed tiered plan for “full time temporary” contingent faculty which allows them advancement, benefits, and pay raises at MTSU is better than the present system, undermining tenure to create an underclass of what may well be predominately female academic workers is a step which should prompt debate. But perhaps the tide is turning: the California State University system recently made a commitment to hire 700 new tenure track faculty in order to “improve student success” (hiring at least some formerly contingent faculty), though Cal State Academic Senate Chair Diana Wright Guerin commented that Cal State is “far from its long-standing goal to have 75% full-time faculty” (Rivera). Since the “new faculty majority” is contingent faculty (in fact, according

to the New Faculty Majority organization, adjunct faculty actually comprise 75.5% of faculty), this is an admirable goal, and one that has the potential to benefit academic workers. Yet, as we have seen, even a tenure track job doesn't guarantee salary equity for women.

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