

Help Needed: Contingent Faculty Initiative

Posted on October 25, 2015 by Rosemary Feurer

Adjuncts and contingent faculty are teaching more and more students at colleges and universities today. LAWCHA is setting up an ad hoc committee to help make our organization more responsive to the needs and circumstances of this growing cohort. We seek volunteers—adjuncts and contingent faculty—who would be willing to talk together over the next 4 months (email exchanges and occasional conference calls) in order to draw up suggestions and proposals for LAWCHA's spring board meeting to consider.

All of us would agree that LAWCHA needs to continue making itself into an organization that fosters full participation by adjuncts and contingent faculty. Moving along these lines will make LAWCHA a stronger organization. And as an organization attentive to work and working conditions, LAWCHA has an opportunity become a model for other professional organizations, all of which are confronting this new landscape of colleges and universities being staffed by more and more contingent faculty.

This ad hoc committee might address a number of different areas of concern, from the nuts and bolts of LAWCHA's policies (e.g. membership categories), to conference practices (e.g. making the conference more affordable, opening the program to more contingent faculty), to the culture of LAWCHA. On this latter point, LAWCHA leaders are especially interested in hearing ideas about how the organization can work against replicating academia's two-tiered structure.

If you are an adjunct or contingent faculty member and would like to help out, please contact Eric Fure-Slocum (furesloc@stolaf.edu). We welcome suggestions from anyone, of course. But at this juncture, we especially encourage those of you who would be willing to help out over the next 4 months, or so. This ad hoc committee will aim to draw up a series of questions, concerns, and proposals that then can be the basis for conversations with the LAWCHA board and the membership at our April 7-10 meeting in Providence in conjunction with the OAH.

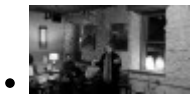
This initiative focuses specifically on adjuncts and contingent faculty in higher education. LAWCHA recognizes that other members of the organization who are not tenured or tenure-track faculty at Research-1 universities also face challenges relating to professional

organizations. LAWCHA will continue, of course, to seek ways to improve graduate student participation. The same goes for members who are labor union and community leaders, as well as members who teach at the secondary school level or labor centers. We hope that this particular effort to focus on contingent faculty might well lead also to ideas that will benefit all.

Sincerely,

Nancy MacLean (LAWCHA president)
Eric Fure-Slocum (contingent initiative convener)

Author



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