



TAUP Adjunct Negotiations Update

On February 9th, TAUP and Temple met again to negotiate the first contract for the 1400 adjuncts who are now part of our Union. We have made some progress on a few consequential issues but on the majority of the most important matters we must report that our positions and our vision of the Temple we want for all do not seem to coincide with those of the administration.

The administration presented the TAUP negotiating team with a proposal that they felt resolved a number of issues that we've worked on together, but their proposal actually offered little to resolve disagreements over how adjuncts could grieve mistreatment, how affirmative action would be applied to them, and other issues. They also made it very clear that they do not agree that adjunct salaries, working conditions and benefits should be negotiated in relation to that of other faculty. Their position is that adjuncts should be hired in relation to a "market rate". It is not clear which market the administration has in mind: the minima for Temple adjuncts is considerably lower than at West Chester and Rutgers (all campuses). More importantly, as we all know, hiring contingent faculty at a going rate rather than in relationship to professional academic standards is exploitative when the market has been flooded with potential candidates who are eager to teach.

TAUP believes that adjuncts need to be treated as the professionals they are, and that doing so is good for students, all faculty, for the quality of education Temple can offer.

Our proposals as of January 24th can be found [here](#).

Progress and clarity: Desk copies, orientation, parking, and others

Both parties have agreed to a provision that requires Temple to provide information in adjuncts' letters of appointment on desk copies, orientation, parking, copy machines and other matters detailed in current policies. Temple agrees not to make unilateral changes to these features without discussion with TAUP. Adjuncts will also be directed to contact the administration if these policies are not being followed. A valuable piece of information that emerged out of these discussions was the need to make available a written policy on parking for those with disabilities, and the administration has agreed to work on this. Agreement was also reached on a joint labor-management committee to discuss ways to address the woeful lack of office space for adjuncts, which is crucial to their ability to assist students in need..

The administration's new proposals did nothing to bridge disagreements over which adjuncts are eligible to be covered by the contract, academic freedom, and the ability of adjuncts to grieve violations of the contract and to seek arbitration, though some progress has been made on these issues.

Grievances and arbitration

On grievances and arbitration, TAUP believes that like all other faculty and librarians, adjuncts should have some recourse *in the contract* if their reputation and their likelihood of being re-hired are damaged by a false claim or unjust treatment. In contrast, the administration's position is that if adjuncts are terminated and paid for the remainder of their contract, they would have no recourse to grievance or arbitration. This becomes problematic if, for example, the adjunct believes that discrimination (or any false claim) was a factor in their dismissal. While they may be able to file a claim with the Equal Opportunity Compliance office representative on campus, they, alone among faculty and librarians would have nothing to protect them in our contract.

Affirmative action

TAUP and the administration also continue to disagree about how to realize the goals of affirmative action in adjunct hiring and retention. We have agreed that a joint committee should be activated to generate ideas, which does mark some progress on this. But TAUP wants affirmative language in this contract encouraging efforts in this direction with respect to adjuncts. There are procedures for affirmative action for non-faculty employees. Why not for adjuncts?

Job security, promotion, and professionalism

The area of most serious disagreement concerns job security, promotion, and related matters that would acknowledge the professional identity of adjuncts. We have proposed ways for the experience of adjuncts to be factored into the process of making class assignments without making seniority the only criterion. We have proposed a way for adjuncts seeking promotion to be rigorously and fairly evaluated, with standards set by schools and departments. We have proposed the conversion of adjunct lines into full-time positions reserved for adjuncts who have a strong track record of teaching at Temple. In response to some fair objections raised by the administration, we have revised our proposals to make them clearer and easier to put into practice.

The administration's reply? They have stated that they believe these issues are **not** a problem. **They see nothing wrong with the status quo.** But adjuncts organized in the face of harsh opposition, voted decisively to join TAUP, and have told us in a variety of ways that job security and professional treatment are central to why they have fought so hard and so long.

In our proposals, Chairs would still have significant freedom in hiring and renewing adjuncts. Our proposals hold that *as with all faculty* adjuncts need and deserve regular and transparent systems and processes guiding their employment—as the administrators and staff at Temple also have. These provisions need to be in a *contract* mutually agreed to by the parties involved and legally enforceable. The status quo, where faculty are hired at an indefensibly low 'market rate' is degrading to our adjunct colleagues, and has created an environment where few faculty at the University are left who have adequate protections in their teaching. The workload of all faculty has risen. It is clear that a market-driven approach to adjunct hiring has had devastating effects on us all. There is one clear answer to these issues: treat adjuncts fairly in relation to the salaries, benefits and working conditions of all faculty.

Looking Ahead

When adjuncts gain a living wage, a measure of job security, a fair and transparent system of reappointment, and other provisions that accord them the respect they deserve, our students will benefit and so will Temple as a whole. It's a familiar line, but a true one: "Teaching conditions are our students' learning conditions." With these gains, adjuncts would no longer have to teach above the equivalent of a full-time load between multiple schools, allowing them to concentrate more on each individual student at Temple, and to grow professionally as faculty. They would be in a better position to meet with students, to write recommendations and participate more in the lives of their departments if they wish to. They would be treated like the professionals they are.

We look forward to further negotiations in hopes of finding more common ground, but compromise cannot mean compromising our values. Our Temple values a high-quality academic environment and properly acknowledges the teachers who are central to it. This is the vision of Temple that we will keep striving for.

Stand in support of a fair contract. [Add your name here.](#)

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