

PART-TIME CONTRACT SETTLED

Contract negotiations end
part-time faculty reflect
improvements and down-
of new agreement

Armando Borboa

Clackamas Print

Clackamas' Part-Time Faculty Association (PTFA) said it is satisfied the contract negotiations settled at the college after the board of education ratified collective agreements Feb.

Although they did not receive all the concessions they were negotiating for, Bargaining Chair Tim Pantages said. In general, this new contract has significant improvements over the old (prior contracts)."

Clackamas is not the only Oregon educational institution currently in talks with PTFA, faculty or classified employee. Schools all across the state are in negotiations, with nearby Portland State University recently coming to agreement with its own part-time faculty but pending upcoming full-time faculty renegotiations.

Ongoing, perpetual dispute in the traditional elements of 'labor management' indirectly impacts Clackamas students, as the eventual end may have an effect on their academic choices and class flexibility.

According to Vice President of Negotiation Baldwin van der Bijl, the further concessions to the PTFA are arbitrary, but rather an attempt to find a balance between all these differences (students, staff, faculty) and what we have going. I mean, running a school is still a business."

Traditionally, schools have always



VAN DER BIJL



TEETOR

used a combination of part-time and full-time instructors in order to both meet their budgetary limitations, and as a vetting process for finding and hiring top-quality teachers.

From labor's point of view, working less than full-time is often a way to make ends meet while searching for full-time employment. It may also be a means of generating a side income while taking care of other personal responsibilities.

"Some of our people are raising families, or are retired but want to keep busy," said President of the PTFA Rosemary Teetor. "Others are just trying to earn a living wage until they can get hired on in a tenured position."

Like any other business for profit, it is cheaper in the short term for the school to hire part-time help in order to fill holes in staffing and to cover unexpected absences. This is balanced by the corresponding high rate of turnover and the resulting long-term loss of productivity.

One major incentive that Clackamas offers in order to retain quality personnel is the lack of a cap in the number of units taught per instructor.

Most other institutions traditionally limit the number of hours part-time faculty can teach. The policy often forces new or untenured instructors to work at a number of different schools at the same time in order to earn a living wage.

This in turn leads into the curious situation in which a part-time instructor might actually be working more than full-time

yet not receive the equivalent pay or benefits.

The new contract agreement attempts to address the issue by giving part-time Clackamas faculty a tiered pay and cost of living increase, more flexibility and benefits as well as paid sick leave and office hours.

Almost all part-time instructors will receive a 6.7 percent increase this year retroactive to July 1. For the next two school years, they will receive at least a 3.7 percent raise each year.

However, the new contract does not include additional health benefits for members working more than 50 percent of full-time hours, nor does it address the issue of pay equity between part-time and full-time instructors.

Currently, various academic deans are being asked to consider in the future how they structure their department programs and allot class schedules. The way students might be affected is if cuts are

made in one department in order to fill needs in another.

For example, an English literature class that might now be open for enrollment nine different times a week, but can only fill three quarters of the available seats, might be pared back to five sessions a term in order to fill classes. This would limit choices for interested students who find their chosen class times cut.

Conversely, a math class that perpetually has more students on the wait list than seats available might have extra classes opened. Here, the hiring of part-time faculty comes in. The school can more easily find instructors for a few classes in various disciplines than hire one instructor to fill all the needed slots.

"The last thing we want to do is to cut programs wholesale," van der Bijl said. "We would rather tighten up schedules in low attendance classes and open up new classes that are now impacted."

In part, the belt tightening by the school board is a symptom of the larger, national slowdown in the economy and the resulting trickle-down cuts into state and local budgets. The problem is further complicated by the drop in total student enrollment last year, the numbers by which annual funds from the state budget are calculated.

Although the numbers are not exact, van der Bijl estimates that last year the total Clackamas student population dropped by approximately 5 percent from last year. Population numbers are calculated by averaging all hours of student instruction and divided by 12 units per student to estimate total full-time student attendance.

What the drop in attendance means financially is a budget loss to the school of over \$1.7 million of state funds over the course of the next three years. This means that some hard choices will have to be made in order to meet the shortfall.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor:
Armando Borboa writes, Hillary Clinton cannot control her husband, can she be trusted in the country?" In response, I offer this from Shakespeare's "Winter's

King Leontes [to his son]:
"I am not worthy to be called father, if I will not stay here [that is, his wife's side]."
Borboa: "Hang all the fathers who cannot do that feat, I leave yourself to one subject."

...to paraphrase, if Mr. Borboa requires that any presidential candidate be her or his spouse being worthy to lead the country, there won't be any worthy candidate to be elected in the whole country.

—Bryant-Treiser, English Instructor

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