

UNION GOALS

There has been a push across the country to change the status of faculty members who find themselves making a career out of jobs that are technically non-career track. Faculty Forward is pushing to raise adjunct pay to \$15,000 a course, and the National Adjunct Walkout Day was staged Feb. 25 at schools across the country to call attention to the one in five part-time faculty members living below the poverty line nationwide (Oregon State held adjunct events, but if anyone at the UO observed the protest, it went largely unrecognized).

At the UO, Dreiling says, United Academics (AAUP/AFT Local 3209, AFL-CIO) has changed the status of at least 300 adjuncts on campus. Under collective bargaining last year the union developed a process to evaluate the more than 400 adjunct positions on campus for possible reclassification to career non-tenure-track faculty positions, meaning around 300 teachers went from employment that could be uncertain from fall to winter term to a career-track position.

According to Klinger's data, the numbers of adjunct/visiting faculty in 2014 dropped from 503 to 393 and the number of NTTF went up from 704 to 846, after the implementation of the collective bargaining agreement.

A goal of reclassification was removing the reliance of the university on term-to-term instructors, who lack employment security, Dreiling says. In the current contract, if a department is employing a faculty member term-to-term, they can't do so beyond three years; that faculty member needs to be reclassified as a career position.

So last spring, faculty who met certain conditions — length of term of employment, years in service, teaching responsibilities — were evaluated for reclassification. "Faculty who are doing their job and doing it well have the opportunity for security and professional development," Dreiling says.

In addition to reclassifying many adjuncts, another change called for and executed in the CBA is a change in

salaries, he says. UA negotiated a "salary floor," essentially creating a minimum wage, which Dreiling says did not exist before. Instructors in phys ed were making less than \$19,000 a year on average — ironic, given the UO's notorious focus on sports.

Klinger says information about salaries across campus "isn't data that we have readily available." According to data submitted to *The Chronicle of Higher Education's* Adjunct Project, a course in linguistics or art might pay around \$2,500, and English and composition range from \$2,800 to \$3,000. Earth Sciences lists the highest pay for the UO on the Adjunct Project's webpage at \$6,000.

People with advanced degrees were working full-time and earning less than \$26,000 a year, Dreiling says. "These are people with advanced degrees and committed to the teaching mission of the university."

CHANGES

The union, in its efforts to improve salaries and teaching conditions across campus, is also up against the way those changes get implemented by administrators and departments.

For Melissa Hart, who spent 12 years as an adjunct instructor in the School of Journalism and Communication, some of the changes on campus were negative. Julie Newton, Interim Edwin L. Artzt Dean, says the SOJC looked at its overall needs and its 56-1 student to tenure-track faculty ratio — the worst of any accredited high-ranking journalism school in the country, she says — and began to restructure positions in the spring of 2013 and, later, reclassified adjunct faculty.

There were a lot of positive outcomes, Newton says — the school has added a number of new faculty, including two Pulitzer Prize-winning faculty members, Brent Walth and Hector Tobar, to its roster. And the SOJC greatly reduced its number of adjuncts as well as reclassified 13 adjunct faculty as career NTTF.

For Hart, an essayist and author of two books who was

not one of the faculty hired into a career position, the result was heartbreaking. "They took the union stipulation" to ensure they were not abusing their adjuncts "very, very seriously," but that meant "some of us who were thrilled to be there got cut."

She loved her teaching, Hart says, adding "I'm not the kind of professional writer who can sit in my house all day. I love to share what I've learned and help people start getting published."

Hart says, "This is my last term and I'm going to disappear into the sunset after 12 years."

She says the changes have "forced me to be creative," and she will now be teaching at a distance college but will miss "sitting around the big table" with her students in person. "Abuse me, please, this works for me," she says of her adjunct status.

Newton says she can't comment on personnel issues but, speaking generally, there were several adjunct faculty who had been teaching for a while that "we could not reclassify because of the way the positions were described in the reorganization." Of Hart, she says, "She's exceptional, a beautiful writer and very fine teacher and we were fortunate to have her teaching our students."

Dreiling, who is a professor in sociology, says the only thing the union required is that faculty were correctly classified, but because the SOJC's decision to consolidate part-time positions into tenure-track positions happened at the same time as the union's reclassification, some people equated the change with the union.

The union's goal is to avoid situations where people are teaching year after year without professional long-term benefits accruing, Dreiling says. "There's nothing in the contract that bars the UO from hiring from professionals from the community on term-to-term or visiting contracts."

Just as Moberg frets that administrators are interpreting GTFF union language in ways leading to unforeseen consequences, Copperman, who was reclassified as a senior instructor in the English Department, questions how the department is applying the collective bargaining

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