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To: Jim Mahler and AFT Guild Executive Council

Re: SDCCD Faculty - Initial Contract Proposal for Period 7/1/18 - 6/30/21

We wish to express our opposition to the proposed changes below:

5.2.3.1 Adjunct faculty who have completed ~~eight (8)~~ six (6) semesters (fall/spring semesters only) of service within ~~an eight (8)~~ a six (6) year period within a specific discipline at a particular college or within a specific discipline in continuing education will become eligible to begin their participation in the priority of assignment process in that discipline. Priority of Assignment rights shall automatically begin at the start of the seventh (7th) assigned semester.

We recognize that good adjunct instructors should have the right to job security. However, we feel that the current process already provides that and the proposed changes will adversely impact students and adjunct faculty.

The obvious argument in favor of this proposed change is that if an adjunct is good enough to be kept on that long, they deserve protection. The reality, however, is more complex. Adjuncts are recommended to deans - chairs don't hire - and the requirement for evaluation is minimal. Not all chairs will insist on additional evaluations for a variety of reasons. Our faculty are already overloaded doing even the minimal evaluations as our departments are not even close to being sufficiently staffed by contract faculty. Sometimes, adjuncts who are weak slip through the cracks, but a requirement that they apply for POA can alert a chair and prevent a bad situation from becoming permanent. Unless one has been a very overworked department chair, one cannot appreciate how many metaphorical balls are being juggled and how easy it would be for a mediocre (or worse) instructor to end up with POA. It has happened before under the current system. It would happen so much more easily under the proposed system.

Then there are the competent, but not good instructors. Why do we keep them on? Because we have too many vacancies to fill and they are competent. However, during times of contraction, these adequate adjuncts can end up having priority over really good instructors, simply because they were here first. Thus, seniority can override excellence. This leads to poorer quality instruction and worse working conditions for certain adjuncts. The current process serves to protect students and to allow the best adjuncts to be rewarded on their merit. It provides a modicum of a safety net. The automatic assignment of POA goes against the interests of students and the best adjunct instructors. Contract faculty are hired through a very rigorous process and under no circumstances are they automatically given tenure, yet this proposed change leads to essentially automatic tenure of adjunct faculty hired through a much less rigorous process. Seriously?

Additionally, even after contract faculty receive tenure, they are still required to complete two classes of student evaluations each year, ideally one class per semester. Currently, adjunct faculty must be peer evaluated within the first year of employment, and are only required to complete a student evaluation once every six semesters with subsequent

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evaluations. Why aren't adjuncts held at least to the same student evaluation standard as contract faculty? Even this small change may help alert the department to a potential problem sooner. Under the proposed changes, an adjunct faculty member will have had only one required additional peer evaluation and one required student evaluation (within two semesters of qualifying for POA) before they will be automatically granted the equivalent of tenure.

student evaluations (?)
sometimes cannot be trusted.

Pay and Status
same for contract

The real problem is that higher education in this country has been increasingly shoved onto contingent faculty. Although many of these faculty are excellent, many are simply not. We recognize and acknowledge the inequities experienced by adjunct faculty, and appreciate the union's desire to legislate changes to improve these inequities, but we believe that some of the proposed contract changes will not accomplish the ultimate goals and may well have a negative impact on students and adjunct faculty. To allow mediocrity to slip through the cracks, even unintentionally, does not address the true issue of underfunding and, in fact, undermines the very reason we do our job.

lip service
blindly

like this argument

This change to POA is not necessary nor in the best welfare of our adjunct faculty. We actually want to keep our best adjunct faculty and strive to maintain the same regular class assignments for them, as well as seek to provide collegial support for their classroom duties. By implementing an automatic POA, we may be forced to let many of our competent faculty go before they may have reached their full potential as an instructor.

number confusion

mediocre use of commas

Why should they not have?

Other Serious Concerns:

5.3 Assignments to be scheduled in such a way to minimize the amount of driving necessary to fulfill work obligations.

On its face this seems fair but in reality may prove problematic. Do we bump long-standing adjuncts in favor of a new one with a shorter distance to travel? Do we offer a new adjunct a smaller load to avoid them having to drive more?

stupid questions

5.11 No class closure allowed while an adjunct faculty member out on sick leave.

So, for example, if a zoology adjunct is out on extended sick leave, and we have no qualified instructor, we must continue to offer the class with any warm body with an FSA in biology?

5.15 Mandates a minimum of six adjunct faculty to be interviewed for each tenure-track position offered.

you idiot if they aren't qualified you shouldn't hire them as adjuncts

circular logic

Unnecessary - they can apply based on their qualifications, not their longevity. This is totally unfair to students and contract faculty because current hiring does not allow us to include written application in our final consideration, so an experienced, highly trained applicant may be "bumped" by somebody who is calmer during interviews, but would not make the cut to get an interview. This is also unfair to adjuncts by getting their hopes up simply because we need to invite a certain number. For example, there is currently one (1)

So, they are unfit?

this logic perpetuates the myth of merit & the two-tiered system

Specious assumption

adjunct qualified to teach botany. How does anybody benefit from interviewing 5 unqualified adjuncts? The hiring process is broken, but this is not the cure.

- so, what is?

7.4. Limits on summer and intersession assignments in college programs to ensure fair distribution of assignments among contract and adjunct faculty.

who may lack competence?

We realize that some departments may have a problem with weaker contract faculty taking on all the summer teaching. However, other departments wish to select the best suited faculty and this may often mean the contract faculty. We oppose any one-size-fits-all solutions which may inhibit student success.

have slipped through the cracks?

9.3. Allows college adjunct faculty with more than six semesters of service to vote in Department Chair elections.

Misuse of semesters

Adjunct faculty are mainly on campus to teach. In large departments, they may not know any contract faculty beyond the chair who hired them; certainly not all contract faculty. They have difficulty even coming up with people they feel comfortable asking to be their evaluators. They are usually not involved in nonteaching support activities that are critical to the departments and the school and generally have limited knowledge of issues that are relevant. We realize that this may make sense for very small departments with a few contract faculty and a body of long-time adjuncts, but for larger departments this makes no real sense.

they are in English?

18.1. Makes adjunct faculty eligible for sabbaticals.

Sabbaticals are competitive already. Contract faculty are hired under very strict criteria and evaluated often and stringently. If adjuncts are to receive all the benefits earned by contract faculty, then they should be required to meet the same hiring criteria. As they are not, and the same work obligations are not demanded of them, they should not receive all the benefits earned by contract faculty, most especially when doing so comes at a cost to students, contract faculty, and even other adjuncts.

I thought I see hiring

We strongly oppose the proposed changes to the contract language, and will be voting "no" on ratification if the contract language goes through as proposed.

Respectfully,

Current and past department chairs:

San Diego Mesa Biology Department:

- | | |
|----------------|---------------|
| Anar Brahmhatt | Kevin Krown |
| Bill Brothers | Leslie Seiger |
| Jan Clymer | Paul Sykes |
| Anne Geller | |

San Diego Mesa Chemistry Department:

Donna Budzynski