

seek to ensure that our colleagues are treated fairly and respectfully. Contingent employment also imposes costs on APSA and its members. It affects teaching quality and student success by constraining faculty time and resources (The Delphi Project 2013a; 2013b). Moreover, it impacts research productivity (Bland et al. 2006). Declining ranks of tenured faculty also mean that those remaining in tenure lines face increased service demands. In short, increased contingent employment impacts APSA's aims of promoting high-quality teaching and research, advocating for the profession, and ensuring that political scientists can best serve the public good. ■

NOTES

1. "Alternate arrangements" were defined as temp work, independent-contractor status, on-demand work, and contracted employees.
2. These figures include graduate students in the contingent counts.
3. APSA is a member of the Coalition on the Academic Workplace.
4. For sharing insights, I thank members of the Modern Language Association Committee on Contingent Labor; Emily Swafford of the American Historical Society; and Alyson Reed of the Linguistic Society of America.
5. The Delphi Project on the Changing Faculty and Student Success—a partnership between the Association of American Colleges and Universities and the University of Southern California's Pullias Center for Higher Education—has numerous tools to educate tenured faculty and administrators on how to support and assist non-traditional faculty.

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COMPARING CONTINGENT FACULTY PAY AND WORKING CONDITIONS: THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AND THE CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY

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Recent years have seen a wave of adjunct-faculty union organizing, particularly in the private sector. These bargaining units typically are adjunct-exclusive, in large part because of the US Supreme Court's 1980 *NLRB vs. Yeshiva University* ruling, which held that private-sector tenure and tenure-track faculty are managerial. However, unionization for both full- and part-time faculty has long had legal support in the public sector (with state-level variation). Although this has led to some adjunct-exclusive bargaining units (e.g., some state community colleges in New York), in two of the largest systems in the country—the City University of New York (CUNY) and California State University (CSU)—adjunct faculty are in the same units with their tenured colleagues.

The CSU and CUNY systems both have approximately 25 campuses, and both faculty unions were taken over by progressive leadership at approximately the same time (1999 and 2000, respectively). Yet, CSU adjunct faculty (called "Lecturers") have a version of pay parity as well as broad-based job security, whereas those at CUNY make only \$3,200 per course to start and only 2,200 of more than 10,000 adjunct faculty have job security. This difference is stark. What factors explain the divergent outcomes for adjunct faculty in the CSU and CUNY systems? This article presents the following five hypotheses:

1. *Right to Strike*. Unlike in the private sector, public-sector labor law is governed at the state level. New York State has long had extraordinarily onerous penalties for public-sector strikes, whereas California's 1978 legislation permits them. The Professional Staff Congress (PSC)—which is the American Federation of Teachers union local representing CUNY faculty and professional staff—has twice threatened to strike, once in 1973 and again in 2016. Conversely, the California Faculty Association (CFA)—California State's faculty union—has led true work stoppages and threatened them more legitimately at other times.
2. *State-Level Politics*. Although both New York and California are large progressive states with substantial tax bases, their political compositions vary significantly. The New York State Senate has long been controlled by the Republican Party. In 2010, when its grip had slipped, a group of rogue Democrats began to caucus with Republicans—a practice that finally ended in 2018 when progressives defeated six of the eight aisle-crossers. Meanwhile, recent Democratic supermajorities in both chambers of the California legislature increased taxes, generating more revenue for agency funding. Between 2013 and 2018, California increased spending on higher education by 52.5%—the highest increase in the country—whereas New York spent only 14.6% more in the same period (Seltzer 2018). In addition, CUNY faculty salaries have never recovered from cuts foisted on the system during the financial crisis of the 1970s.
3. *Contingency*. In 1969, an arbitrator handling a case about reappointment rights ruled in favor of CUNY adjunct faculty—in essence, upholding a system of just-cause termination. However, when the PSC—formed from a merger of two unions—ratified its first contract in 1973, this practice was abandoned

(Tirelli 2007). Meanwhile, a similarly positive ruling from a California arbitrator in 1985 defined the contractual language of “careful consideration” for reappointment to the benefit of adjunct faculty. This second ruling came *after* the establishment of the broad “wall-to-wall” union model that prevails today at CSU, and it remains intact.

4. *The First Contract*. When the first union contract was settled for California State faculty, three of the five Lecturer lines had the same pay scale as their tenure and tenure-track counterparts. In large part, this was the result of the state education code, which—even without a union contract—was supposed to place all faculty on the same salary schedule (Hoffman and Hess 2014). In New York, meanwhile, neither the first PSC-negotiated contract in 1973 nor the contract for adjunct faculty that preceded it had these provisions. Following decades of “adjunctification,” such a demand is more difficult to win today.
5. *Subjective Factors*. The history of adjunct disenfranchisement in the PSC is extreme. Until new leadership won office in 2000, the union took the truly exceptional stance of declining to collect adjunct “agency fees.” In effect, this created a so-called right-to-work environment for part-time faculty. These conditions led to a failed union decertification attempt in 1986 as well as an intensely anti-union culture among some activist adjuncts that persists to this day. In the CFA, by contrast, adjunct activists had greater success in transforming feelings of disrespect into motivation to organize.

It is likely that all five hypotheses have some power in explaining the divergent outcomes for contingent faculty in the CSU and CUNY systems. Moreover, because history is made by the decisions of individuals and organizations in interaction, at some level all of the factors are—as the fifth hypothesis is named—“subjective.”

Today, in bargaining units both old and new, adjunct faculty are making history—albeit not under circumstances of their choosing. The first step is always organizing: finding leaders and transforming disrespect, oppression, and exploitation into collective motivation to organize. The program in each workplace and union will vary; however, especially for those in the public sector, engaging in and—as happened in New York in 2018—changing state-level politics are vital to raising pay for adjunct faculty. Some unions in New York are considering an effort to legalize public-sector strikes, as has long been the case in California. Regardless of the legal terrain, organized adjunct faculty should assess and build their capacity to withhold their labor, which is evermore essential to universities both public and private. ■

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SCRAPING BY AT CUNY: THE FRUITS OF DISINVESTMENT

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The City University of New York (CUNY) was founded on a democratic principle—“whether the highest education can be given to the masses ... and whether an institution of learning, of the *highest* grade, can be successfully controlled by the *popular will*” (Board of Education 1849). During its 170-year history, CUNY’s commitment to this principle has waxed and waned. During the 1960s and 70s, students, buttressed by the new social movements of the era, pushed the institution to a democratic high tide marked by free tuition and open admissions—in other words, a commitment to universal public higher education. The long economic crisis that began in the 1970s (Brenner 2006) prompted an ongoing retreat from this goal, making the country’s largest urban public university a frustrating laboratory for the effects of disinvestment on the students who need our help the most. A key component of this retreat has been an attack on the wages and working conditions of the faculty, achieved by fostering a class of teachers whom the school demeaningly calls “adjuncts” despite the fact that they teach the majority of courses at the university.

In recent years, the crisis has worsened. Between 2008 and 2015, per-student state funding fell 17% at CUNY’s four-year colleges (CUNY Rising 2016), reflecting a trend that shook public colleges across the United States (Mitchell, Leachman, and Masterson 2016). Administrators compensated by increasing the number of students, increasing the tuition they pay, deferring maintenance on crumbling campuses, and replacing full-time faculty with adjuncts, who are low-paid and can be jettisoned as demands shift. An adjunct starting at one of CUNY’s 25 campuses earns just over \$3,200 per course, slightly more if one possesses a terminal degree. This works out to under \$26,000 a year before taxes for an eight-course annual load in the most expensive city in North America, although few adjuncts can secure this much work. I once made more money moving furniture for nine days than I did for an entire semester of teaching at CUNY.

The university’s goals in establishing a tiered workforce are the same as employers everywhere—to cut costs and to safeguard those cuts by undermining workers’ solidarity. Adjunct work is a form of contracting, a maneuver designed to sever conventional bonds of responsibility between employer and employee. This disavowal of responsibility is expressed not only in low wages and vulnerability to layoff, but in the thousand subtle and not-so-subtle ways adjuncts are reminded they do not fully belong at the institution.

In their roles as department chairs and committee members, tenure-track professors risk becoming conscripted as front-line managers of the growing adjunct crisis. To the extent that they acquiesce, they become complicit not only in the erosion of their own salaries and working conditions, but of their power to check the university’s slide into the narrow logic of profit-seeking. At the City University, doing more with less means bulging class sizes, decrepit facilities, overworked faculty, and inadequate advising (Chen 2016). It also means increased tuition, which privatizes the school, making it an instrument that hardens class and racial divisions instead of ameliorating them. The ability of the faculty to intervene in the interests of students