

URI/PART-TIME FACULTY UNITED (PTFU)

2012-2014 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ELECTION

CANDIDATE STATEMENTS

President, Edward S. Inman III (Political Science/Providence)

Statement:

I am respectfully requesting your support for the position of Union President of the University of Rhode Island's Part- Time Faculty United union. I have been a union member for my adult working life, and I am committed to PTFU and the American Association of University Professors. The excellence of the University is part of our main mission. Having helped organize and gather cards for the formation of this Part Time Faculty Union I am proud of what we have accomplished to date. However, we need to continue to strive to promote and preserve our standing in the URI community. To that end, we need to begin negotiations for our new contract which will result in better working conditions for PTFU. Some of the items for the upcoming negotiations that the members suggested include health care benefits, tuition waiver and an increase in our salary. These items and others are reasonable for the part time faculty and will ultimately benefit the whole community. We need to cooperatively promote our Union so that the students and the URI community continue to excel. The part time faculty play a significant role in the achievements of the whole community. With your support we can preserve, protect and promote the accomplishments of the Union and additionally serve the public as a whole.

I ask that we join together in this important endeavor.

Thank you.

~ *Edward S. Inman III*

Vice President, Marilyn Donahue (English/Kingston)

Statement:

I have taught as adjunct faculty at URI for more than twenty years. Needless to say, I have much experience with the treatment of part-time instructors by college administration. I have been dictated to (bullied even) by people younger, less experienced,, and less educated than me. I have often been given little or no consideration in the arbitrary assignment of courses. And I have worked years without an increase, or even mention of an increase in salary.

As we all know, adjunct faculty members have enabled universities and colleges throughout the U.S. for decades to balance their budgets and make profits. And we, never allowed to rest on our laurels, have worked to maintain high standards and to meet employer expectations.

Three semesters ago, after teaching at URI for twenty- four years, as a TA and then a part-timer, I was notified for the first time that there would be no courses available for me to teach. I had no reason to think that my teaching was not as good as it had ever been. What could I do? I realized there was nothing I could do. And then, the *deus ex machina!* After a long and hard struggle, our Union succeeded in signing a contract with the University of Rhode Island, a contract which assured us fair remuneration, protection, and respect. The Department Chair called me three days before the semester started and asked if I would teach two courses. I was given a raise and astonishingly, seniority! If the good people who fought for the PTFU had not sacrificed all it required to make the union possible, I'd probably have retired early on a very fixed income.

The PTFU has certainly benefited me and no one is more aware than I am as to how important our union is to all part-timers. I would like to serve this term as Vice President so that I will have the chance to share my energy, time and experience to help the PTFU to continue and to gain strength to benefit us all.

Sincerely,
~*Marilyn Donahue*

Secretary, Olga Ruiz de Panciera (Languages/Kingston)

Statement:

I have been employed as a PTF member at URI for many years and have always believed part-time faculty would remain unrecognized and under appreciated, as well as underpaid, for our substantial contributions as teachers of URI's undergraduate students, if we did not gain unionization. Without the support and assistance of a part-time faculty union - a union dedicated to the interests and professional needs of part-time faculty - we wouldn't make any gains at all.

I have seen first-hand the many challenges the PTFU has faced over the past few years (the initial PTFU Collective Bargaining Agreement was formally ratified by the URI/BOG and URI/PTFU on December 23, 2010) and, at the same time, observed the many successes the PTF union has achieved over the same period of time. For example, during the past year PTFU achieved, among other important items, the following: a substantial financial award to PTF whose rights were violated through the wrongful denial of course assignments; the correction of service records that are used to establish PTF time-in-service and salary level advancement records; and, providing PTFU staff assistance to numerous PTF across the University in their efforts to advance through the salary level advancement structure (from PTF I salary level to PTF II to PTF III salary level) as provided for in the PTFU collective bargaining Agreement.

It is my aim to continue to serve the PTFU with a second term as a member of its Executive Committee in the role of Secretary.

I would appreciate your support.

~Olga Ruiz de Panciera

Treasurer, Alexia Kosmider (Women's Studies/Providence)

Statement:

I believe that this is an important and crucial time for PTFU. We have in the last year made progress in securing member contracts as well as negotiating members through the grievance process with their respective departments. Yet we still need to secure more equitable salaries for our members as well as other benefits such as health care. We still are second-class instructors at a first-rate institution, without benefits, and without the proper recognition that we deserve and certainly need to continue to be productive members of the university community.

We need to develop a long-term plan for our advancement as well as new strategies for shaping our short-term goals. We need to become stronger, more active, more vocal in order to secure our future. I would like to work to bring a wider level of membership participation into our union and investigate ways to bring health care and other benefits to our membership. I look forward to working with the members of the Executive Committee in the next year and to helping broaden our membership base as a union and striving to create an equitable workplace where we all can thrive and feel secure.

~Alexia Kosmider

At-Large (2 years), Roy Panciera (Languages/Kingston)

Statement:

I have been employed as a part-time instructor in Spanish Language, at the URI campuses, since 1994. Having been with this institution for so many years, I have experienced, first hand, the many long-term abuses, by various administrations, against URI's part-time faculty. Because of this long history of having been treated as inferior employees, a group of part-timers commenced the long process of forming our own labor union, so that we might gain a little of the respect we felt was due to a work force which has long taught the majority of the courses offered to our undergraduate students at our university. Finally, we were able to grab a rung of the ladder to gaining respect by winning the first contract, for part time instructors at URI, with the RI Board of Governors for Higher Education.

It has been a long difficult struggle to achieve the foundation of a strong collective bargaining unit which will prevent us from being treated as throwaway tools, and I would like to be able to continue in this effort for as long as I may be able. If re-elected, I believe that my years of past experience can only benefit the URI/PTFU in helping to gain even more rights and benefits for the members of the University of Rhode Island part-time faculty community. Thanks for your vote.

~Roy Panciera

At-Large (1 year), Thomas D. Gidley (Writing & Rhetoric/Prov)

Statement:

I am a candidate for the open one-year “at large” term on the URI/PTFU Executive Committee. Presently, I am a member of the EC and Chair of the Grievance Committee. In 2010, I was Chair of the Election Committee and presided over the counting of ballots in the Union’s first election of officers.

I teach in the Department of Writing and Rhetoric. As I write this statement, I am teaching two writing courses at CCE, and have also taught in Kingston. I began to teach at URI as a part-timer in the fall of 2004, and have been teaching continuously in the fall and spring semesters at URI since the fall of 2005. I received a doctorate in English from URI in 2008 and a master’s degree in English from URI in 2002. Prior to becoming a graduate student in English at URI in 2000, I practiced law in Providence for 39 years.

In the time since the signing of the PTFU Collective Bargaining Agreement (“CBA”) between URI/PTFU and the Board of Governors for Higher Education in late 2010, I have seen how the Union’s efforts have helped members of the bargaining unit with respect to increased pay, fairer assignment of courses to part-time faculty, accurate computation of total courses taught (for purposes of measuring seniority under the CBA), and compensation for some PTF for failing to assign them courses according to their seniority. I believe that the Union has made an excellent start. The CBA comes up for renegotiation shortly, and I am optimistic that the Union will be able to build successfully upon this start in dealing anew with the University. I hope to continue to be a part of the Union’s efforts on behalf of all of us who are part-time faculty.

~Thomas D. Gidley