

# Editorial: A treacherous impasse

## *THE GOOD 5C CIGAR*

10/08/08 - The university has come to an impasse. It can't afford to hire more full-time, tenured professors, but it's also going to have a difficult time rebuilding departments post-budget cuts simply with adjuncts - and it's no longer just because some see their part-time capabilities as inefficient.

And the fact is, the world of adjuncts is not "simple" at all. Frustration is brimming on the educational horizon, with more and more adjuncts taking a stand for not only better pay, but perhaps more imperative, better protection.

With all of the time they dedicate to their courses despite being without an office or access to grants and better research, the \$3,000 per course each semester becomes a slave wage.

Not only that, but the instructors don't have the freedom to teach to their full potential without the comfortable shell of tenured work surrounding them.

According to an article in the Chronicle for Higher Education, the AAUP's 1940 Statement of Principals on Academic Freedom and Tenure notes "professors should be free to discuss pertinent subjects in the classroom and to comment critically on a university's operations without being punished. Academic freedom has always been

closely tied to tenure, which until recently protected the overwhelming number of professors."

Because of the ever-increasing amount of part-time instructors, the AAUP has tried to convince universities to extend the same protections as tenured professors to them.

The new union URI adjuncts have formed is just the beginning of a new movement across the country, and hopefully the University of Rhode Island can not only lead higher education into a new age of "Thinking Big," but also "Thinking Fair."

While many adjuncts have full-time jobs elsewhere, especially in the case of per course instructors doubling as lawyers, reporters and nurses, others are struggling to make the bills with no health or retirement benefits and a miniscule salary. They bounce from school to school, teaching two courses here and two courses there. Most of these teachers spend more time on the road than they do advising their students.

This is no way to ensure the education URI students deserve - not in a place that is trying desperately to expand in the right direction; not at the expense of instructors who live in fear of the horrible job market this country is seeing day after day. Before considering building new dorms, before considering taking on new partners, and even before considering building new parking lots, the administration needs to take one hard look at the possibility that the core

education at this university could deteriorate if it ignores the basic infrastructure that we all seem to take for granted.