

## URI PART-TIME FACULTY UNITED

### STATEMENT ON

### PRO-RATA SALARY COMPENSATION

Following the acknowledged leadership of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), many professional organizations have become strong advocates for fair standards in the working conditions of part-time faculty who are employed in increasing numbers by institutions of higher education throughout the country. “From 1975 to 2011, the number of tenure-track and tenured professors increased by only 35.6 percent nationwide, while the number of part-time professors increased by 305.3 percent.” (*Equality for Contingent Faculty: The Two-Tier System*, ed. by Keith Hoeller. Vanderbilt U Press, 2014)

The current president of MLA recently remarked: “Adjunct, contingent faculty members now make up over 1 million of the 1.5 million people teaching in American colleges and universities. Many of them are working at or under the poverty line [and] without health insurance. . . . What would it take to put these faculty members on the national radar? what would it take to make their working conditions a major issue for the higher education establishment--not only AAC&U but also, and most important, accrediting agencies?” (Michael Berube, *Among the Majority*. *MLA Newsletter*, January 2012, p. 1) Other organizations addressing the same questions concerning the status of part-time faculty employment include highly respected and influential groups -- Adjunct Nation, Coalition for the Academic Workforce, New Faculty Majority, and Coalition for Adjunct and Contingent Faculty.

The Organization of American Historians (OAH) has published *Standards for Part-Time, Adjunct and Contingent Faculty* which lists several priorities for the fair and equitable treatment of part-time faculty, a list that includes: “seniority for hiring and pay raises according to set policies; eligibility for grants; access to basic benefits such as health and life insurance, retirement plans, and unemployment compensation. Health benefits particularly should be universally available proportional to employment, with an opportunity provided for co-payments to ensure full coverage; support for professional development; eligibility for promotion in job position and rank; opportunity for regular employment in the form of year-long or multiyear contracts and/or reasonable timely written commitments for renewal.” (March 31, 2011)

Almost all of the advocacy groups speaking on behalf of part-time faculty have long argued that the only fair compensation for part-time faculty appointments is a pro-rated compensation

comparable to the salary of full-time faculty. As the AAUP recommended in 1993 (and the MLA in 2006), “compensation for part-time appointments should be the applicable fraction of the compensation (including benefits) for a comparable full-time position.” (*Background Facts on Contingent Faculty*, American Association of University Professors, 2012.)

It needs to be emphasized that compensation for part-time teaching appointments includes, beyond the actual time spent in the classroom, advising, evaluating and commenting on student work, assigning grades, labor-intensive reading, available (both in-office and electronically) for student conferences and consultations, development of syllabi as well as on-going course assignments including semester projects and mid-term/ final examinations, keeping course materials current, ordering books for the class, pre-class preparation (before the class begins and on-going throughout the semester), and myriad other related professional responsibilities involved with teaching a course. URI PTF teach on the same academic level and with the same rigor as full-time faculty teaching the same courses, and they teach in almost every department, division, and program at URI. The significant role of the part-time faculty in the education of URI’s students has too long been ignored by the University of Rhode Island administration.

As noted above, a committee report published in September 2006 by the Modern Language Association recommended that “part-time faculty should be compensated in a salary range of \$5,700 to \$8,000 per course section, with fringe benefits and cost-of-living increases, as reasonable minimum compensation for part-time faculty members.” (MLA Newsletter, September 2006, p. 27)

In its recent 2012 report, *MLA Recommendation on Minimum Per-Course Compensation for Part-Time Faculty Members* (April 9, 2012), MLA proposed:

“Following a review of best practices in various institutions, the MLA recommends minimum compensation for 2012-13 of \$6,920 for a standard 3-credit-hour semester course or \$4,610 for a standard 3-credit-hour quarter or trimester course. The recommendations are based on a full-time load of 3 courses per semester (6 per year) or 3 courses per quarter or trimester (9 per year); annual full-time equivalent thus falls in a range of \$41,490 to \$41,520.

If compensation rates were specifically tied, pro rata, to the MLA’s 2012-13 recommendation of \$45,310 minimum annual salary for an entry-level full-time instructor, these rates would be \$7,550 for a standard 3-credit semester course and \$5,035 for a 3-credit quarter or trimester course.”

If URI PTFU’s proposed compensation rates were specifically tied, pro rata, to the average URI full-time tenure-track/tenured faculty salary (\$90,000) the PTF compensation rate would be approximately \$15,000 per course; if PTF compensation rates were specifically tied, pro rata, to

the number of courses actually taught in some departments/colleges by full-time tenure-track / tenured faculty the compensation rate would be substantially higher than \$15,000 per course since it is not uncommon for tenure-track/tenured faculty to teach only one or two 3-credit courses during a full academic year.

As Michael Berube frames it: “If institutions are going to do anything to improve the working conditions of non-tenure-track faculty members, then sooner or later (and preferably sooner) they will have to show that they respect those employees not simply by including them in departmental governance and inviting them to departmental functions but also by paying them a salary commensurate with a decent level of professional respect and dignity. . . . Their labor will still be dehumanizing if it doesn’t garner a living wage with benefits.” (*Among the Majority*)

In support of our pro-rata salary increase proposal we further reference the recent report, *An Update Analysis of the Financial Statements of the University of Rhode Island: Academic Years 2004-2010*, which concludes: “While it may be the case that the State of Rhode Island is in a fiscal crisis, there is no financial crisis at the University of Rhode Island. . . . Although a great deal of uncertainty surrounding the state budgets and the economy in general remains, as long as there is no substantial decline in enrollment, the University of Rhode Island remains in good financial condition and is certainly in a position to offer competitive salaries and benefits to its faculty.” (Rudy Fichtenbaum, Wright State University, Dayton: OH, p. 41.)

In our previous (and first) negotiations (2010) the URI PTFU presented the following data: “Tuition Dollars Generated by PTF for 1136 course sections taught totaled \$52.8 million dollars; Salary Paid to PTF for 1136 course sections taught totaled \$3.98 million dollars. Total URI Income: \$48.82 million dollars.” (*E-NEWS: URI/AAUP Part-Time Faculty United Newsletter*, January 2009). These data remain essentially the same today with the PTF at URI continuing to teach courses on an annual basis that generate approximately \$53 million dollars for the University and continue to be paid a mere \$3.98 million dollars in salary (with no benefits). The current minimum salary paid part-time faculty at URI who teach a fourteen (14) week semester course is \$3,549--when calculated on an hourly basis over a fourteen week semester this salary compensation is below minimum wage.

The University of Rhode Island has the opportunity to significantly improve the conditions of employment of its part-time faculty and to become the model upon which other comparable research institutions of higher education should support their part-time faculty--the largest group of teaching faculty currently employed in public higher education research institutions and whose employment is integral to the successful achievement of the goals and purposes of the University of Rhode Island.

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Note: This statement was presented to URI/BOE by URI PTFU in November 2012 and updated here in February 2014.

