

# URI/AAUP/PTFU

## Part-Time Faculty United



### URI PTFU Executive Committee

Edward Inman III, *President (Political Science)*

Marilyn Donahue, *Vice President (English)*

Olga de Ruiz Panciera, *Secretary-Treasurer (Languages)*

Robert Leuci, *At Large (English)*

Keith Labelle, *At Large (Women Studies)*

Timothy Tierney, *Past President (AV/Production Services)*

Patricia Maguire, *Executive Director*

Dorothy F Donnelly, *Senior Consultant*

### SPRING 2015

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## *Change.org Petition*

*If you haven't already done so, please sign the attached petition asking President Dooley to intervene and bring parity to URI part-time faculty salary.*

Dear Colleagues:

It's time the University of Rhode Island ended its long-standing practice of disrespecting and devaluing part-time faculty. Today marks another step in our increased effort to call attention to the fact that adjunct professors at URI are the lowest paid in New England, and remain the only professional group on campus that continues to work without a raise. That's why I'm asking for your help.

We've launched a petition to President Dooley asking him to intervene, and help bring parity to adjunct compensation at URI. Today, your union needs you to do three things:

[Sign the petition](#) -- add your name to the list of supporters who recognize the critical role part-time faculty play in fulfilling the mission of the university.

[Share the petition on Facebook and Twitter](#) -- ask the people in your social networks to join you in standing up for the professors who are teaching nearly a third of all undergraduate classes at URI.

Forward this email to five people, right now. Ask your friends, family and neighbors to join the chorus of folks who believe part-time faculty deserve full-time respect.

By taking these three quick and easy steps, you'll help us spread the word about the challenges facing part-time faculty at URI and send the administration a message that we're not going to stand idly by while hard-working education professionals continue to be mistreated.

Thanks for all you do.

In Solidarity,

Ed Inman, president  
URI Part-Time Faculty United

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ACTIONS

The PTFU Executive Committee voted to join *Working Rhode Island (WRI)*. *Working RI* is the largest labor coalition in Rhode Island history. One hundred thousand unionized workers who make up the coalition membership are from such diverse groups as 229 RI AFL-CIO affiliates, and independents like NEA Rhode Island, the United Nurses, the Rhode Island Brotherhood of Correctional Officers, and many Affiliated Professionals, among others. In all, 306 labor unions have adopted the joint mission of returning dignity and respect to the Rhode Island workplace. (Source: Website: *Working Rhode Island*)

Voted to post an excellent article by URI/PTFU Vice President Marilyn Donahue to the URI/PTFU Website. ([www.uriptfu.org](http://www.uriptfu.org)) The title of the article, *Part-Time Faculty: Issues, Unionization, Outlook*, encompasses the breadth and scope of the information detailed in Dr. Donahue's extensive analysis. In brief, the study reviews the history of part-time faculty employment in universities and colleges throughout the country as well as offering a discussion of the current status and future prospects for improving the conditions of employment for part-time faculty.

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### Announcements:

#### SAVE THE DATE:

The Spring 2015 General Membership Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 30, 2015 (reading day) and will be held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Warwick at 3:30pm. (Agenda to follow)

## STATUS OF CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS

As mentioned in our earlier announcement concerning the status of contract negotiations between URI/PTFU and URI/BOE (RI Board of Education), the last salary offer proposed by the URI/BOE was for a salary increase of \$150 over the period of a five year contract, as follows: year one, 0 %; year two, 0 %; year three, 0 %; year four, \$100; year five, \$50. Not surprisingly, the URI/PTFU unanimously rejected the proposal.

While there have been several changes in contract language recommended by the URI/PTFU that have been approved, our proposals for a significant salary increase, health and dental coverage, tuition waiver option, and other items related to PTF workload have all been rejected by URI/BOE. There is no question that the point-of-view taken by the negotiators for the URI/BOE has rendered the negotiation process, almost entirely, as a waste of time.

To move forward and gain additional recognition and support for the issues faced by URI's part-time faculty (PTF) we have initiated the public phase of our campaign. We have set up an on-line Change.Org petition addressed to President David Dooley requesting that he do the right thing and negotiate a fair contract with URI's Part-Time faculty.

Articles addressing the conditions of employment for PTF at URI have appeared in state-wide newspapers, including: *Narragansett Times*, *Westerly Sun*, *The Good 5c Cigar* (URI student newspaper), *South County Independent*, and the *Providence Journal* (see *ProJo* article elsewhere in this newsletter).

Meanwhile, the URI/PTFU Negotiation Committee, and the URI/PTFU Executive Committee, remain committed to achieving a fair and equitable successor contract for the outstanding contribution made by URI's part-time faculty to the University of Rhode Island and, especially, to their students-- semester after semester, year after year.

We are pleased to acknowledge WORKING RHODE ISLAND, for their support in the URI/PTFU contract negotiation process.

## *Providence Journal Editorial*

### **Don't forget the other instructors**

**By Randal Edgar**

It might not be obvious to the thousands of students who attend Rhode Island's flagship public university, but sprinkled among their professors are some 500 people who teach part-time in subjects ranging from math to English to engineering.

Unlike their full-time counterparts, these part-time faculty members at the University of Rhode Island receive no health benefits or occasional pay increases. Or, perhaps, much respect.

Their base pay is \$3,549 per course — a wage that amounts to all of \$10,647 should someone teach, say three courses in one semester, or \$21,294 if someone teaches six courses in one year. And other than a small increase awarded to the part-timers at the URI's Kingston campus granted to match the pay at the Providence campus — their base pay has not changed in more than a dozen years. The low pay is one of the reasons the part-timers voted to form a union a few years back.

“For the work that we're doing and for the degrees that these men and women have, the advanced degrees, they're not getting paid what they should,” said Edward Inman, a part-time faculty member whose political experience — he was a state representative, and later, secretary of state — led his colleagues to make him the head of the union.

“They might do a couple of classes at URI and some other institution, and they try to cobble together an existence,” Inman said. “It's just not enough to live on.”

The problem is not unique to URI.

Across the country, the ranks of part-time professors have swelled, with schools trying to save on instruction as they pump more money into facilities and administration. The result, according to research and news reports, can be overworked part-timers who take on second jobs to try and make ends meet. That, in turn, can affect the quality of the education students are receiving.

URI is one of the schools where this conflict is playing out. At present, the two sides are in mediation, trying to hash out a new contract.

According to Dorothy Donnelly, a professor emeritus of English at URI and a consultant for the part-timers' union, the pay for URI's part-time faculty members is less than at other public research institutions of higher education in New England, and there are other concerns too. Some part-timers have filed grievances when they suddenly found themselves without assignments or responsibilities that had been theirs for years. One part-time faculty member who had advised students for more than two decades suddenly saw his pay cut in half when those duties were taken away. He eventually got them back, she said.

URI officials declined to comment on specific concerns raised by the part-timers, citing the ongoing contract talks. But Donald H. DeHayes, URI's provost and vice president for academic affairs, said in an email that they play "an increasingly important role in providing quality instruction in introductory classes" and helps to "help keep tuition costs ... at an affordable level."

He also said URI "has committed to adding 55 new full-time faculty positions ... over the next couple of years," with the aim of providing more full-time professors who can "bring their research into the classroom." That seems to make sense.

As for the part-timers, Inman says they are a mix. Some want to teach full-time. Others, like him — a social studies teacher in the Cranston public schools — are content with their status, if not their pay and working conditions.

Of course, no one is forcing them to teach part-time. And with student debt in the U.S. exceeding \$1 billion, no one wants to see an increase in higher education costs that are already too high.

But it also seems that there is something of a disconnect here.

Does a quality research institution — one whose full-time faculty are earning an average of \$110,000 after a 4 percent raise last year — want to pay roughly a third of its faculty a wage so low that it forces some to work many hours in other jobs? And isn't the knowledge that comes with a higher education supposed to include something about treating people fairly?

Randal Edgar is The Journal's deputy editorial pages editor.

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## NATIONAL SCENE: YOUR COLLEGE PROFESSOR MAY BE ON PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

BY Seth Freed Wessler (Reporter for NBC News)

The professor at the head of your college classroom may be on food stamps.

In search of cuts to their bottom line, American colleges and universities are using part time instructors to teach classes that a generation ago would have been the responsibility of tenured professors.

Paid as little as a couple of thousand dollars for each semester-long course, hundreds of thousands of people with doctorates or multiple master's degrees are earning near-poverty wages working as adjunct professors. And as a result, one in four families of part-time college faculty are enrolled in at least one public assistance program, like food stamps, Medicaid or the Earned Income Tax Credit, according to calculations of Census data by researchers at University of California, Berkeley's Labor Center.

"We're seeing a second class status of professors emerging," says Carol Zabin, Director of Research at the Berkeley Center. "More broadly, professional occupations have increased contingency and low pay."

*"We're seeing a second class status  
of professors emerging."*

Berkeley also found: 1 in 5 families of part-time faculty receive Earned Income Tax Credit payments. 7 percent of families of part-time faculty members receive food stamp benefits. 7 percent of adjuncts and 6 percent of their children receive Medicaid. Families of close to 100,000 part-time faculty members are enrolled in public assistance programs.

All of this amounts to a not-insignificant public cost, the Berkeley researchers found: The taxpayer cost of public assistance for families of part-time faculty is nearly half a billion dollars per year (\$468 million).

More than half of these costs, or an average of \$274 million per year, is spent on Medicaid.

Read the complete article: <http://www.nbcnews.com/feature/in-plain-sight/poverty-u-many-adjunct-professors-food-stamps-n336596>



## MISSION STATEMENT

The PTFU continuously works toward our mission and commitment of addressing matters that directly impact both individual and collective areas of concern to URI/Part-Time Faculty. The PTFU goals include giving a voice to URI's Part-Time Faculty, empowering them as equal members of URI's teaching community, ensuring that members' rights and entitlements gained from collective bargaining negotiations are respected and enforced. We will continuously work towards enhancing the work experience and environment for the Part-Time Faculty and continue to seek employment necessities, salary, equity and time in service rights. We strive to achieve these goals by leading and growing a sustainable and unified union group with a view towards advancing the status of URI's Part-Time Faculty.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

### URI/Part-Time Faculty United

Rodman Hall Rm.119  
94 West Alumni Ave  
University of Rhode Island  
Kingston, RI 02881

Telephone: (401) 874-4481

Fax: (401) 874-7725

E-Mail Address: [uriptfu@etal.uri.edu](mailto:uriptfu@etal.uri.edu)

Web Site: [uriptfu.org](http://uriptfu.org) Social Media: [@RhodyPTFU](https://twitter.com/RhodyPTFU), [facebook.com/URI.PTFU](https://facebook.com/URI.PTFU)

**THE URI/PTFU NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT SHOW  
YOUR SUPPORT THROUGH CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP**