

**IMPROVING THE ADJUNCT FACULTY EXPERIENCE
AT QUEENS COLLEGE**

**CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
QUEENS COLLEGE**

ADJUNCT TASK FORCE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

IMPROVING THE ADJUNCT FACULTY EXPERIENCE AT QUEENS COLLEGE

Adjuncts, as a majority of the teaching force at Queens College, are an integral part of the teaching and learning community. However, there are significant deficits in providing for professional development, integration into the Queens College community, and day-to-day administrative and pedagogical support that impact adjunct teaching ability and job satisfaction. Given the sheer size of this adjunct population, such compromised quality of instruction has an enormous effect on the campus community as a whole. This report seeks to address some of these deficits. We recognize the limitations of physical and financial maneuverability within the CUNY system, and we seek to provide low- or no-cost suggestions for improving the adjunct—and therefore the Queens College—experience.

Our report is divided into three main sections that focus on specific areas for improvement: **Access to College Information, Communications, and Resources**; **Adjunct Representation and Community**; and **Professional Opportunities and Development for Adjunct Faculty**. We also include an appendix which describes the broader background of the CUNY-wide adjunct teaching experience.

In Section I, **Access to College Information, Communications, and Resources**, we describe the haphazard way that most adjuncts now navigate the Queens College system, and we identify key areas for creating and improving channels for adjunct information and communication:

- Offer orientation sessions for new adjuncts and publish an adjunct handbook.
- Create a venue for syllabi sharing.
- Monitor campus and departmental directories to include all adjunct teaching faculty.
- Centralize room assignments based on student and equipment needs rather than seniority or status.
- Improve adjunct access to office and teaching supplies, including computers, copiers, and technology.
- Increase adjunct participation in software and electronic device trials in the classroom.
- Allocate currently underused physical resources such as faculty carrels, rooms, lockers, etc. to adjunct faculty for on-campus use.
- Create adjunct lounge areas.

Section II, **Adjunct Representation and Community**, outlines the widespread sense of disenfranchisement adjuncts feel because of a lack of representation and participation in decision-making bodies; we identify the need for adjunct faculty investment in departmental and College-wide educational objectives:

- Form an institutionally-recognized committee to address adjunct issues, questions, and problems and act as liaisons between the College administration and adjuncts. Allocate a dedicated space for an administrative center for this committee.
- Allow and encourage participation in departmental meetings and committees, in particular, by enfranchising adjuncts and compensating them accordingly.
- Acknowledge and compensate adjuncts for student mentoring and advising.

Section III, **Professional Opportunities and Development for Adjunct Faculty**, delineates the artificial divide between the roles of adjuncts as "mere" instructors and as vital contributors to their fields of knowledge. We identify ways to involve adjuncts in maintaining and enhancing the pedagogical developments and high standards of research that make Queens College an excellent school:

- Create opportunities for adjuncts to observe experienced teachers and create a system of mentorship for new instructors.
- Accommodate adjunct teaching schedules in planning training sessions for classroom technology.
- Increase research support through grants and awards for innovative projects for collaboration between full- and part-time faculty, particularly for developing the general education courses that are predominantly taught by adjuncts.

In Section IV, **The Broader Context**, we detail some aspects of the state of professional working conditions of adjuncts across CUNY, placing the adjunct experience at Queens College into the larger context of the City University of New York (CUNY). We then address the personal isolation of adjuncts at Queens College, articulating the human costs to individuals of the two-tier labor system as it currently exists at Queens College.

The Appendix, **Faculty Composition Snapshots**, presents the figures that have informed our study.

INTRODUCTION

The percentage of adjunct faculty teaching at degree-granting institutions across the nation has increased dramatically in the last four decades. In 1970, only 22 percent of faculty members, nation-wide, were part-time.¹ By 2009, the population reached nearly 50 percent nationally. At Queens College, the percentage of adjuncts is even higher. During the Fall 2010 semester, for instance, nearly 60 percent of its primary instructors were adjunct faculty.² As these numbers suggest, part-time instructors are no longer nonessential members of the teaching community. Adjuncts perform a major part of the teaching duties on a day-to-day basis. However, their teaching concerns, interests, and needs often go unheard, for adjuncts continue to be marginalized both physically and intellectually despite their growing contributions to the overall education of students at Queens College.

This brief report is a small contribution to amending this shortcoming. It describes some of the issues that adjuncts face in their daily interactions in the physical and mental space of the Queens College campus and suggests some possible avenues for improvement. We recognize that many adjunct issues are, at their base, financial. However, while issues of labor and professional rights are undoubtedly high on our list of concerns, this report primarily proposes changes of mental habit or administrative structure, many of which require little outlay of money.

Improving conditions for adjunct teaching is in large part about social connectivity and integration, for we believe that one of the primary issues impeding effective teaching among adjuncts is the continuing sense of isolation they experience. For one, adjuncts are isolated from the College community as a whole. Adjuncts are often left uninformed about College and departmental policies and procedures. For this reason, the first issue addressed in this report is the limited access adjuncts have to college resources and information. Without full access to resources and information, adjuncts are unable to navigate through the community effectively, which undoubtedly affects their ability to teach and advise students.

Adjuncts are not only isolated from the College as a whole, they are also isolated from each other. Lacking any institutional identity and support on campus, individual adjuncts are insufficiently encouraged to learn from and collaborate with other faculty members. The second section of this report addresses this lack of community among adjuncts themselves, suggesting ways in which they may be granted means of representation and collaboration. In the third section of this report, we address the lack of professional opportunities for research and development provided for adjunct faculty. As professionals seeking full-time employment, many adjuncts feel isolated and removed from career opportunities. We believe improving representation and encouraging professional growth among adjunct faculty would greatly improve the overall climate of intellectual engagement and participation both in and out of the classroom. Finally, in the fourth section we place the experience of Queens College adjuncts in the broader context of the professional working conditions of adjuncts across CUNY and

¹ "Table 259. Number of instructional faculty in degree-granting institutions, by employment status, sex, control, and type of institution: Selected years, fall 1970 through fall 2009." *Digest of Education Statistics*. <nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d10/tables/dt10_259.asp>. Accessed August 1, 2011.

² Office of Institutional Research, Queens College, The City University of New York. *2010-2011 Fact Book*. (Forthcoming.) See Appendix, Most Recent Faculty Composition Snapshots, to compare national, CUNY-wide, and Queens College figures.

consider how these circumstances inform the personal experience of isolation at Queens College.

Overall, this report focuses on improving working conditions of adjuncts in order to enrich student education. We believe integrating adjunct faculty into the Queens College community by providing greater access to resources and information, improving adjunct representation, and encouraging professional development would ultimately enhance the teaching of Queens College students.

This report is authored by a group of volunteer adjuncts selected from a wide-range of disciplines representing all four divisions of Queens College. The creation of this group was inspired by James Stellar, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. Under his auspices, The Center for Teaching and Learning put out a Call for Participants early in the 2010 Fall semester. This Call for Participants sought "input from part-time faculty, since they teach a large number of courses at Queens"; the service that the resulting task force was asked to perform was to "offer advice on how part-time faculty might share teaching practices and propose mechanisms for improving teaching services."

Sixteen volunteer adjuncts plus two appointed coordinators were selected to form an Adjunct Task Force. This report is the product of conversations and debates among these volunteers during the Fall 2010-Spring 2011 semesters. Although we have made efforts to address a wide set of issues, we realize that this Task Force does not speak for all or even a majority of adjuncts. We realize that adjuncts at Queens College are a diverse group that may see their role(s) at the College in extremely different—even opposing—ways. For the part-time faculty here includes instructors who view themselves primarily as teachers and are not looking for tenure-track positions, doctorate-holders who are seeking tenured employment, professionals from the world outside of academia who teach as a sideline, graduate students who view their teaching as training, and teaching fellows with a strictly limited time commitment to the College and who are not paid by Queens College. If our arguments, descriptions, and recommendations tend toward the side of greater adjunct involvement within the College, it is because it is our stand that adjuncts are by all measurable statistics and external markers quite literally a big part of the community, and as such need to be made to feel and function as members of the Queens College community.

TASK FORCE MEMBERS

Jennifer Almaktari	Sociology
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Marc Farrior	English
Johnny Lew	English
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SECTION I

ACCESS TO COLLEGE INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION, AND RESOURCES

Introduction: Adjunct faculty members are disconnected from the College as a whole. As the term "adjunct" suggests, adjuncts are deemed supplemental and marginal to the College community despite the fact that they now constitute a majority of the teaching faculty at Queens College. On one level, their marginalization is created and perpetuated by restricting access to information and channels of communication. By limiting and controlling access to information and communication, the College prevents adjuncts from identifying with Queens College beyond the particular courses they teach. On an even more practical level, the College prevents adjuncts from performing to their fullest capacity as faculty members by restricting their access to College resources and spaces. The simple privileges of having adequate office space, computers, and other technologies are inconsistently made available to adjunct teachers.

We believe access to information and resources is essential for integrating adjuncts into the Queens College community as a whole. Furthermore, we also believe that the marginalization of the majority of faculty undoubtedly results in the marginalization of students. Since adjunct instructors are, in many cases, the primary connections students have to the College on a day-to-day basis, the marginalization of adjunct faculty also profoundly affects the ability of students to integrate into the College. To better inform and educate students, we believe it is essential to provide full access to College information and resources to adjunct faculty.

A. Improve Access to Information: The lack of available information is one of the greatest obstacles adjuncts face in order to successfully navigate their daily professional lives, serve students, and become involved in the College community. Lack of information and communication makes it difficult to develop courses effectively and virtually impossible to do the informal student advising and *de facto* mentoring that adjuncts are asked to do.

Suggestion 1: Adjuncts are rarely, if ever, offered an orientation session when they join Queens College. This initial inaction sets the tone for, and is symptomatic of, the general lack of incorporation into the vitally important campus-wide systems that adjuncts need to be part of in order to be effective teachers and colleagues. There are no clear venues for adjuncts to procure knowledge of College or departmental policies, procedures, and requirements when they first begin working at the College. We recommend providing a campus-wide orientation for new adjuncts. Also, many colleges make available to all incoming and continuing adjuncts a handbook (in both digital and physical form) explaining college policies and procedures, as well as listing important administrative contact people, grant availability, and benefits. We suggest that Queens College adopt this procedure, providing orientations for new adjunct hires and publishing a handbook for adjunct faculty.

Suggestion 2: We also suggest making information about teaching particular courses easily available to all adjuncts. Adjuncts are often asked to teach a course at the last moment. Although some of these courses have been taught before by other faculty, past syllabi and course materials are not made readily available. We suggest promoting a campus-wide effort to consolidate course information that makes model syllabi, course

descriptions, sample lesson plans, general education requirements, and textbook recommendations available.

B. Improve Access to Communication: Campus and department directories, websites and listservs are often missing adjunct faculty, thereby inhibiting their communication with colleagues and students. Likewise, many adjuncts do not have access to office space with telephones, and therefore have no access to voicemail.

Suggestion 1: We recommend initiating a College-wide effort to provide the necessary information to the appropriate department personnel and encourage department administrations to include adjunct faculty in department listservs, directories and websites on a regular basis. While working on allocating more underused spaces for part-time faculty offices (see section C below), we suggest that the administration improve adjunct faculty access to telephones and voicemail and use College-wide communication to inform part-time faculty that individual voicemail accounts are now available.

C. Provide Classrooms and Technology: Although classroom overcrowding and lack of basic supplies is necessarily a widespread problem in a beleaguered urban college, it seems that adjuncts, who often teach the general education core courses that are so susceptible to oversubscription, are often put in the uncomfortable position of negotiating class sizes that pose physical hazards—as well as being forced to work without basic classroom supplies such as chalk, dry erase markers, and the necessary technological equipment that allows for engaging 21st century pedagogy.

Suggestion 1: Create a coherent, centralized system (as opposed to asking departments to do their own room assignments) to assign rooms based on number of students and equipment needs rather than on status and seniority.

Suggestion 2: Regularly track and confirm (and, when necessary, adjust) adjunct access to departmental and college office/teaching supplies, computer and copier access,³ and technology requests.⁴ Create clear lines of communication for adjuncts who are faced with last-minute shortages, and make adjunct-wide awareness of technological resources available to faculty a priority.

Suggestion 3: Partner with educational discount software suppliers to provide discount software.

Suggestion 4: Queens College, in its mission to utilize new technological devices that promote student learning, should enlist its adjunct teaching force—which, after all, includes a large number of technologically savvy scholars. Adjunct classrooms are

³ The Professional Staff Congress (PSC) conducted a study in 2008 detailing the availability of computers. At that point, the PSC found that the average computer-to-adjunct ratio in a given department was abysmal—approximately one computer per eight adjuncts, with outlier departments even worse. Following recommendations, new computers were purchased and others were relocated. Since then no new data have been released.

⁴ Some rooms in Kiely, King, and Rathaus lack media equipment completely. Instructors are forced to borrow inadequate equipment, making presentations very difficult and ineffective. Trips to pick up and drop off multimedia equipment also often cut into teaching time and increase the number of unpaid hours an adjunct is on campus.

fertile testing grounds for electronic reader trials, in which a full class would be outfitted with e-readers or tablet computers, taking the place of textbooks and printouts, and "clicker" trials, which would allow for surveying classes and reviewing results dynamically.

D. Provide Spaces for Adjuncts: It is a truism that space, defined both physically and virtually, is at a premium on the campus, and all departments and administrative offices are affected by the squeeze. However, it is equally obvious that to meet the needs of students, at minimum, a small amount of private space to meet with students one-on-one, to protect the privacy of students and faculty, and to safeguard teaching is required. Mailboxes for all faculty members are also needed to allow for student-teacher, departmental, and interdepartmental communication. Lack of social and storage space, such as faculty lounges, kitchens, and on-campus storage, currently means that adjunct faculty must choose between personal comfort (eating, not carrying multiple classes worth of materials) and being effective educators. Allowing for common lounge areas would also facilitate informal yet irreplaceable discussions among part-time faculty about lessons, approaches and students.

Suggestion 1: Identify and allocate currently underused resources that the college already has: library faculty carrels, unoccupied meeting or conference rooms, and unoccupied rooms in buildings other than where the department is located.

Suggestion 2: Provide lockers, lockable drawers or lockable file cabinets in shared adjunct offices and common spaces.

Suggestion 3: Confirm and track mailbox availability in all departments.

Suggestion 4: Provide some small lounge areas with a refrigerator, microwave, tables and chairs.

SECTION II

ADJUNCT REPRESENTATION AND COMMUNITY

Introduction: While adjunct faculty members are disconnected from the College as a whole, as we have noted above, they are also disconnected from each other. Radically individuated and isolated, each adjunct is disempowered both professionally and intellectually. We strongly believe that such under-representation and lack of community among adjuncts do a disservice to the teaching objectives of the College as a whole. Often feeling vulnerable, disengaged, and uninformed, adjuncts do not participate fully in the overall educational objectives of the College and the educational welfare of students. We believe that all teachers, not just full-time faculty, need to feel invested in the College's overall objectives of educating students.

A. Form an Adjunct Committee: Adjuncts have few communal resources of their own for pursuing their interests and defending their professional rights. As a result, adjuncts must often choose not to participate fully in the overall educational objectives of the College and the educational welfare of students for fear of failing to be reappointed as a result of offending other faculty members and/or students. In other words, the vulnerability that isolated adjuncts feel compels them to act on behalf of preserving their own positions, sometimes at the expense of their objectives as educators.

Suggestion 1: We recommend the creation of an institutionally recognized committee consisting of a core group of adjuncts who are available to address adjunct issues, questions, and problems. As a governing committee acting on behalf of adjuncts campus-wide, this group will serve as the primary liaison between adjuncts and both individual departments and College administrators. Furthermore, this group will serve to encourage communication among adjuncts themselves by organizing regular meetings, listservs, and social/academic events. While the primary purpose of this committee will be to inform, empower, and advocate for adjuncts, as a cross-disciplinary organization, it will also serve to encourage interdisciplinary exchanges and cooperation. We believe an added benefit of an Adjunct Committee will be to encourage interdepartmental learning and teaching among faculty. We suggest that the committee members be elected from among the adjunct population and formed on the union steward model.

Suggestion 2: We also recommend allocating a dedicated space to serve as an administrative center for the Adjunct Committee. This space can be utilized for holding adjunct-related meetings, events, and social exchanges. Also, as a physical reminder of the College's recognition of its adjunct population, this dedicated space will help establish a sense of belonging and community among adjuncts and between adjuncts and the College as a whole.

B. Encourage Participation in Departmental Meetings and Committees: Few governance or academic committees have adjunct representation. While this may make sense in a system in which adjuncts are short-term workers and are not the main "face" of Queens College, we believe adjuncts should be more involved in, or at least informed about, such decision-making processes. Adjuncts often find themselves in the unfair position of not knowing nor having a say in decisions that affect their work, while having to uphold and explain such decisions in the classroom. Being largely uninformed and uninvolved in departmental affairs, adjuncts are also less capable of providing guidance to students beyond the limits of the particular course(s) they

are teaching. We believe students will profit from having instructors who can speak to a student's college experience more holistically.

Suggestion 1: Adjuncts are often not accorded full participation at departmental meetings and committees, whether their presence is ignored, charitably tolerated, or outright unwelcome. We recommend, therefore, actively encouraging—rather than passively "allowing"—adjuncts to participate in departmental meetings and committees by allowing adjuncts to vote on departmental policies and curriculum decisions and also reserving a certain number of seats on committees for adjunct faculty. We believe such participation should be regarded as part of an adjunct's duties, and adjuncts should be compensated and credited for such services.

Suggestion 2: Although adjuncts are not required to serve on student advisory committees, such as in the roles of primary/secondary readers for graduate students, many adjuncts do serve in this capacity nonetheless due to the fact that many students establish close academic relationships mostly, if not exclusively, with adjunct instructors. We recommend actively acknowledging this role as part of an adjunct instructor's scope of services and compensating him or her duly.

SECTION III

PROFESSIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND DEVELOPMENT FOR ADJUNCT FACULTY

Introduction: As yet another consequence and cause of profound isolation, adjuncts often find themselves locked in perpetual professional stasis within the College. At times it seems that an individual adjunct is merely an interchangeable part in the College machinery, hired to fill a spot rather than to be a true educator and representative of the faculty of Queens College. Adjuncts, in short, are not treated as researchers who are actively contributing to their fields and bringing new knowledge to the College community. At best, the matter of whether or not the adjunct continues to advance in his or her education and/or is a productive researcher in his or her field seems to be a matter of indifference to the College; the adjunct is free to be engaged in his or her field on his or her own time, but the College is uninterested in facilitating such endeavors. Adjuncts may be able to apply for tuition remission (after ten continuous semesters of teaching) as per the union contract, and the adjunct's home department and the College administration may look benevolently on publications and other research that burnish the College's reputation, but the fact remains that continuing engagement with his or her field is felt to be beside the point, and goes unrewarded by the College. At worst, adjuncts may even find that teaching and research are opposing interests: the adjunct is forced to choose between spending time on research or on class work. At this time, there is little in the way of practical or psychological support for any gestures made by the adjunct or his or her home department toward resolving this false dichotomy. Not coincidentally, this widens the gulf—both perceived and actual—between adjunct faculty ("mere" instructors) and full-time faculty (researchers whose work enriches student learning experiences and College reputation).

On another front, because the great majority of adjunct professional enrichment takes place outside of the College's sphere of interest, the adjunct is given few opportunities for professional *pedagogical* development that is specific to Queens College's particular perception of a liberal arts education in the twenty-first century. Greater opportunity for adjunct faculty professional development is urgent now as the College seeks to fortify its core curriculum, especially as adjuncts take on increasing responsibility for teaching general education classes. It is our opinion that Queens College misses an important opportunity for creating coherence in its core curriculum by neglecting to take an active role in encouraging adjunct participation in this college-wide endeavor.

That a lack of encouragement for adjunct professional development is detrimental to the students who pass through the halls and classrooms of Queens College, as well as to the general well-being and intellectual climate of the College community as a whole, should be amply obvious to all who make it their business to think seriously about higher education. Conversely, encouraging *all* faculty members to be active members of the academic community of their individual fields and providing support for pedagogical advancement in accordance with the goals of Queens College will improve the teaching and learning experience for all members of the Queens College community.

A. Encourage Pedagogical Development: If the goal of Queens College is to create and maintain a consistently and uniformly excellent teaching force, the College cannot neglect its adjunct majority. A concerted effort to provide guidance, advice, and practical support for adjuncts as they create and teach courses would be beneficial to students, faculty, and administration alike.

Suggestion 1: Teaching methods and approaches should be open for communal learning and sharing rather than private affairs between the instructor and his/her students behind closed doors. Rather than only “policing” adjunct teaching performance by means of observations, the importance of which is neither transparent nor consistent in its execution, an attitude of encouragement should be facilitated. We suggest encouraging adjuncts to observe experienced instructors by pairing adjuncts with faculty whose classes they may attend and with whom they may improve their own teaching.

Suggestion 2: There is the potential for all of Queens College faculty to enrich the classroom experience with technology. While training in hardware and software is ostensibly open to all faculty members, the timing of the training sessions (mostly during business hours on weekdays) is not feasible for the large number of adjuncts who teach in the evening and on weekends. We recommend planning training sessions in the evening and weekend hours and making online training available, preferably with the option to consult trainers remotely.

B. Provide Research Support: While we understand that many grants administered through the CUNY system may not be available to adjuncts, Queens College does provide a number of research and teaching awards. We are heartened to see that the Teacher Scholar Grant may be given for “courses offered in multiple sections, taught by new configurations of full and part-time faculty” as well as “courses focused on improving the role of doctoral students teaching undergraduates in General Education courses,” and that adjuncts may apply for these grants either individually or in collaboration with full-time faculty. However, these potential goals for the grantees are buried in the middle of the list of possible projects for funding. Given that attention to the core curriculum has only increased in prominence—and we have no reason to believe that it will decrease in importance in the College’s survival plan—and given that adjuncts teach the majority of these courses, it seems to us that such proposals should receive more attention and/or be a separate grant.

Suggestion 1: Increase priority for funding adjunct-headed projects and/or create a separate category for awards to projects that stimulate collaboration between full- and part-time faculty members.

SECTION IV

THE BROADER CONTEXT

THE STATE OF PROFESSIONAL WORKING CONDITIONS OF ADJUNCTS ACROSS CUNY

Introduction: The adjunct experience at Queens College is inseparable from the larger context of the professional working conditions of adjuncts across CUNY. In this Appendix we enumerate some of the factors of the two-tier labor system that contribute to the conditions described in this report.

A. Inadequate Compensation: Adjunct faculty compensation at Queens College (and indeed, at all of CUNY) is paid on an hourly basis and adjuncts are paid only for the time spent in the classroom. For example, an Adjunct Lecturer at Step 2 of the salary scale is paid at the hourly rate of \$67.42.⁵ If this Adjunct Lecturer teaches a three-credit course which meets three academic hours per week for 15 weeks of the semester (a total of 45 hours), the compensation for the semester is \$3,033.90 (\$67.42 per hour for 45 hours). If this adjunct teaches the same number of credits as a typical full-time faculty member at Queens College of 15 credits, she would make \$15,169.50 (plus \$2,022.60 for professional hours) for the year. A total annual income of \$17,192.10 is not a living wage, especially in New York City.

In addition, as matters currently stand, the current system does not adequately take into account that the teaching process, as anyone who teaches will readily confirm, requires an instructor to spend double or triple the amount of time outside the classroom in preparation, grading, and student conferences, as he or she spends inside the classroom.

B. Unfavorable Initial Placement and Movement Within Pay Schedule: At Queens College and other CUNY schools, the College has the discretion to place newly-hired adjunct faculty members at one or more steps above the first step in the pay scale. Factors such as prior service as an adjunct in the CUNY system or elsewhere, "nature and duration of a professional career," or "[s]carcity of qualified adjunct applicants for advanced or specialized courses" may be used by a department chair to justify placing a new adjunct on a higher step.

Such was apparently the case for ex-Governor Eliot Spitzer when he was hired by the City College of New York to teach a course for the Fall 2009 Semester. At least one news report pegged Mr. Spitzer's hourly compensation at \$98.43, a figure that coincides exactly with the highest step for an Adjunct (full) Professor as of the October 6, 2008 contract.⁶ Whether placing Mr. Spitzer on the highest possible salary step within the highest possible adjunct title was appropriate or not, the action highlighted for many long-serving, conscientious, yet underpaid and under-appreciated, adjuncts the injustice and inequalities of the CUNY system.

C. Unfair Unemployment Compensation Policy: CUNY takes the position and directs its legal department to make sure adjuncts are denied New York State Unemployment Compensation when the adjunct is unemployed between semesters, even as CUNY often

⁵ *Salary Schedules 2007-2010 PSC-CUNY Contract*, page 10. <www.psc-cuny.org/sites/default/files/SalarySchedules0710.pdf>. Accessed August 1, 2011.

⁶ *Salary Schedules 2007-2010*, page 10.

insists that it cannot guarantee that there will be sufficient funding or enrollment or that a class will be available for the adjunct to teach the next semester. Thus, at CUNY's insistence exists an inequality between CUNY adjuncts and other seasonal employees in other industries.

D. A Lack of Course Cancellation Compensation: Many adjuncts, including but not limited to professionals such as attorneys, accountants, engineers or fine artists, conduct their own business enterprises, and forgo remunerative opportunities in such businesses or at other colleges in order to accommodate their adjunct teaching assignments as promised at Queens College (or other CUNY campuses). When courses are cancelled very shortly before the semester begins, these adjuncts suffer severe financial hardships. In other professions, there are cancellation fees for analogous short-notice cancellations. Adjuncts have no such contingency remuneration for the risks they take which creates an atmosphere of both professional and personal disrespect.

E. Lack of Job Security: In most departments at Queens College, adjunct faculty outnumber full-time faculty. In the Fall 2010 Semester at Queens College, there were 895 part-time faculty members and 641 full-time faculty members.⁷ Adjuncts at CUNY have no contractual job security or seniority rights. In a university where nearly 60 percent of its faculty can be refused reappointment with no requirement to provide reasons, there can be no academic freedom.⁸ In a university where an adjunct teaching for 15 years in a department can have his or her course assignments given to a newly-hired adjunct without explanation, there can be no academic standards. What happens to full-time tenure-track faculty salaries, benefits and job security when it is more cost effective to hire two or three adjuncts instead of one full-time faculty member? What happens to faculty governance when the majority of faculty members are adjuncts with no real representation within departments or within the college?

At the beginning of the Spring 2011 Semester at Brooklyn College an elected official contacted the College President with objections over the appointment of an adjunct faculty member whose academic writings were interpreted by this politician as controversial. The adjunct was summarily dismissed with no just cause, no hearing, no transparency and no due process. This case illustrates clearly that there is no academic freedom for the majority of faculty at CUNY, and no academic freedom for all means no reliable academic freedom for any.

F. Bias Against Adjunct Faculty: Much of the dissatisfaction experienced by adjunct faculty is rooted in the negative views held by some of their full-time colleagues and administrators regarding their competence and/or worth as professional educators and scholars. The discussion of the causes and dynamics of this phenomenon is beyond the scope of this report. However, it can no longer be denied that such attitudes exist and perhaps even predominate within the profession. Conjoined with current economic realities, these attitudes have contributed to perpetuating the two-tier labor system.

⁷ 2010-2011 Fact Book.

⁸ See Appendix, Table 2. Of the 16,688 full- and part-time faculty members across CUNY, 9,911 are adjuncts—very nearly 60 percent. ("Table 1. The City University of New York University-Wide Profile—Fall 2008." *Office of Human Resources Staff Facts Fall 2008*, page 5. <www.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/ohrm/reports-forms/staff-facts/Staff_Facts_2008.pdf>. Accessed August 1, 2011.)

PERSONAL ISOLATION OF ADJUNCTS AT QUEENS COLLEGE

“Adjunct” is generally defined as something added to another thing but not an essential. When defining a faculty member, “adjunct” refers to those who have no permanent employment and those who serve as assistants or subordinates. More than half those teachers found in front of a classroom on a given day at Queens College fit the above description. Chances are, the instructor walking across the campus who appears to be a full-time professor is probably an adjunct, who by definition plays no essential part in the College and is regarded as an assistant to and/or subordinate of the smaller and ever-shrinking elite of full-time faculty.

On the Queens College campus, adjuncts are made to feel like second class citizens. Some critics and sympathetic commentators even call adjuncts the “invisible faculty” or “shadow university.” They may look like professors and work like professors but lack the authority and respect given full-time faculty. They are an oddity, indispensable to their students and undervalued by their College. Like medieval serfs, they have learned all too well under this two-tier labor system to keep their heads down and work in silence lest they displease someone and lose a course or lose their jobs.

It is past time we question why such attitudes persist. We know that when the College hires its adjuncts, it is because they have credentials and skills that are essential to the College’s needs. However, given its policies and practices, the College shows little interest in who these individuals are and what talents they possess. Such attitudes and behavior of the administration and the full-time faculty betray not only a lack of respect for adjuncts as colleagues, with whom they ostensibly share common goals as educators and scholars, but a lack of consideration for people they work alongside day after day to serve the College and the community.

This report attempts to define the problems and begin the process of repairing the damaged relationship between adjuncts and the College.

EPILOGUE: A CASE IN POINT

As the Adjunct Task Force prepared for one of its final meetings to review this report, many adjuncts at Queens College found it impossible to access the CUNYfirst system, or, if they were able to access CUNYfirst, were not accorded access to the "Faculty Center" screen which was necessary to post grades on the CUNYfirst system. The explanation given by the Office of Converging Technologies (OCT) was that "CUNYfirst de-provisioned 500-plus adjunct accounts on June 1, 2011 because the contracts ended May 31, 2011."⁹ The announced deadline for all Queens College faculty to submit grade rosters for the Spring 2011 Semester was June 4, 2011.

Just as teaching a course begins well before the professor takes attendance and ends after the class is dismissed, so too does the process begin well before the first day of classes for the semester and ends well after the final examination papers are collected. But the CUNYfirst system was programmed under the assumption that the adjunct faculty members' relationship with Queens College was in all respects severed after midnight of the 31st day of May.

Most of the affected adjuncts were slated to teach courses during the Fall 2011 Semester (and some during the Summer Session). Until the problem was rectified, those adjuncts, in the eyes of Queens College, effectively did not exist between May 31 and the beginning of the next semester or Summer Session.

Though the adjunct faculty members' access to CUNYfirst was eventually restored, the matter carries troubling implications. By the same logic, an adjunct would lose all access to library resources between semesters, thus significantly impairing the adjunct's ability to prepare for the upcoming semester (which in fact actually occurred at Baruch College following the Fall 2009 Semester).

The use of the term "de-provisioned" in OCT's explanation is significant. The word "provisional" carries connotations of temporary and inferior qualities. The system, and the people who write the specifications for it, view adjunct faculty members as something to be provisioned and de-provisioned, with no concept of a continuing and ongoing relationship with the College—even though some adjuncts have been faculty at Queens College for 15, 20, sometimes even 30 years. As exemplified by the CUNYfirst "de-provisioning" episode, Queens College's institutional conception of its adjunct faculty not only redounds to the detriment of the adjuncts themselves, but also impairs Queens College's ability to properly and efficiently operate, affecting the students' ability to receive their grades in a timely fashion.

The "de-provisioning" of the adjunct faculty members, then, is emblematic of the pervasive need for Queens College, on both the individual and organizational level, to reassess and revise its views regarding and treatment of its adjunct faculty members.

⁹ Email correspondence from the Office of Converging Technologies to Adjunct Task Force member, Kenneth H. Ryesky. June 2, 2011.

APPENDIX

FACULTY COMPOSITION SNAPSHOTS¹⁰

Table 1. National Faculty Composition (1970 and 2009)

	1970	2009
Full-Time Faculty	369,000	728,997
Part-Time Faculty	104,000	710,167

"Table 259. Number of instructional faculty in degree-granting institutions, by employment status, sex, control, and type of institution: Selected years, fall 1970 through fall 2009." *Digest of Education Statistics*. <nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d10/tables/dt10_259.asp>. Accessed August 1, 2011.

Table 2. CUNY-Wide Faculty Composition (Fall 2008)

	University-Wide	Senior Colleges	Community Colleges
Full-Time Faculty	6,777	5,052	1,725
Part-Time Faculty	9,911	6,961	2,950

"Table 1. The City University of New York University-Wide Profile—Fall 2008." *Office of Human Resources Staff Facts Fall 2008*, page 5. <www.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/ohrm/reports-forms/staff-facts/Staff_Facts_2008.pdf>. Accessed August 1, 2011.

Table 3. Queens College Faculty Composition (Fall 2010)

Primary Instructors, Fall 2010 Courses at QC	Part-Time Faculty	Full-Time Faculty
Total Number of Faculty	895	641

2010-2011 Fact Book.

¹⁰ Most recent data available.