

Proposal for Contingent Faculty Rights Hearing

This year will be the third time Rutgers faculty members have participated in Campus Equity Week (CEW). CEW (October 31 to November 4, 2005) is a week of coordinated activities on campuses in the United States, Canada and Mexico designed to educate our campus communities, the public and policymakers on issues of fairness and quality in Higher Education relating to the overuse and abuse of contingent (non-tenure track) faculty. This proposal recommends that a Contingent Faculty Rights Hearing be the major public event for CEW.

Contingent Faculty Rights Hearings enlist prominent citizens to take testimony from faculty, students, workers, community members, and other involved parties about the impact of contingent employment on individuals and institutions. The hearing and the “board of notables” that takes the testimony have no legal authority, but they help to publicize our concerns and motivate community members to get involved. Public hearings provide an excellent way to make the connection between the working conditions of the faculty and the conditions in students learn and new knowledge is created.

Contingent Faculty Rights Hearings are a great alternative to panel discussions and other traditional academic formats because they encourage participation rather than passive listening, and involve community members. Testimony is short and lively

We will need to recruit 4-8 prominent members of our community to sit on the board (politicians, esteemed colleagues, clergy, student leaders, alumni, or other known citizens), and appoint a chair who will keep the hearing moving along and make sure that no one monopolizes the floor.

We will have to identify 8-10 people willing to testify in front of the board. We should including contingent faculty members, tenure-stream faculty members, faculty from nearby institutions, students, alumni, and administrators. Ask each person giving testimony to plan to speak for about three minutes (or less). They might speak about their own working experiences; poor conditions they have observed for contingent faculty members the effect that a largely contingent workforce has on student learning, research, individual careers or the impact of growing contingency on academic freedom, shared governance or the tenure system.

After an hour or so of testimony the “board of notables will be invited to make brief comments if they chose to.

Date: November 1, 2005

Time: 4:00-6:00 pm followed by pizza

Place: Graduate Student Lounge