

# FORUM

ISSUES ABOUT PART-TIME AND CONTINGENT FACULTY

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CONFERENCE ON COLLEGE COMPOSITION AND COMMUNICATION

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### **The Question of Agency**

Amy Lynch-Binieck, Editor

When Holly Hassel and I decided to combine efforts on a special joint issue of *Teaching English in the Two-Year College (TETYC)* and *Forum* focused on academic freedom, I knew the subject matter would be of much interest to *Forum's* readers and contributors. (Note: *Forum* is distributed inside of *TETYC* each spring, and inside of *CCC* each fall. Readers of just one of those journals may not realize that one yearly issue of *Forum* is available as part of subscriptions to both publications, and all issues can be freely accessed on NCTE's website.) As we noted in our co-authored introduction to those issues, "Unquestionably, contingency complicates agency as it does every element of teaching. Even on campuses where contingent faculty have more protections and stability, they may encounter policies that undermine their ability to act. Guidelines that tenure-line faculty may not give a second thought can have a paralyzing effect on adjunct faculty and stifle their professional judgement" (335). The contributions to *TETYC* and *Forum* in that joint issue demonstrate that non-tenure-track faculty should play an enormous role in conversations about academic freedom, as certain manifestations of the stakes, definitions, and consequences of exercising it can be distinctive to them.

Those stakes and consequences play out often in the review and editorial processes at *Forum*. As editor, I have counseled non-tenure-track contributors weighing the risks of publishing articles that analyze or critique labor practices, especially those at their places of employment. More than once, a writer has chosen not to

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**About Forum**

*Forum* is published twice a year by the Conference on College Composition and Communication. Amy Lynch-Binieck, editor of *Forum*, welcomes you to submit essays related to the teaching, working conditions, professional life, activism, and perspectives of non-tenure-track faculty. Faculty and scholars from all academic positions are welcome to contribute. Of special interest are research, analyses, and strategies grounded in local contexts, given that labor conditions and the needs of contingent faculty vary greatly with geography, institutional settings, and personal circumstances.

Essays should address theoretical and/or disciplinary debates. They will go through the standard peer-review and revision process.

Submissions for the fall issue should be received no later than April 1; for the spring issue, the deadline is August 1. Note: Submissions will not be returned. Submit your work electronically to [lynchbin@kutztown.edu](mailto:lynchbin@kutztown.edu) and put the words “*Forum* article” in your subject line. Submissions should include your name, title(s), institution(s), home address and phone number, institutional address(es) and phone number(s), and if applicable, venue(s) where the submission was published or presented previously.

**For further information and to make submissions, please contact Dr. Amy Lynch-Binieck, Editor, *Forum*, at [lynchbin@kutztown.edu](mailto:lynchbin@kutztown.edu).**

It is the policy of NCTE in its journals and other publications to provide a forum for the open discussion of ideas concerning the content and the teaching of English and the language arts. Publicity accorded to any particular point of view does not imply endorsement by the Executive Committee, the Board of Directors, or the membership at large, except in announcements of policy, where such endorsement is clearly specified. Similarly, opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor or the Conference on College Composition and Communication.

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publish. I lament voices we will not hear, but I respect the decisions of these scholars who must consider material consequences of publication that many tenure-line faculty never need contemplate. While publication has professional rewards for non-tenure-track faculty at some institutions and rich intellectual rewards, these benefits may be cold comfort when a contract is not renewed.

This conflict between academic freedom and precarious employment most certainly has detrimental effects on scholarship in English studies overall. Non-tenure-track faculty make up a significant proportion of educators, the majority in first-year composition, yet they are less likely to have the material support and employment stability that allow for sustained contributions to the disciplinary conversation taking place in our publications. By and large, our system positions non-tenure-track faculty to *consume* scholarship, but does not work to ensure that their insights, voices, and research have a place in our journals. Certainly, anyone may send in a submission, but when the working conditions of tenure-line and non-tenure-track faculty differ so much—in number of classes, number of students, professional development, monies supporting research and travel, not to mention pay and benefits—our typical editorial process does a disservice to our community, essentially omitting so many experts from likely publication.

This omission in turn does further damage to non-tenure-track faculty themselves. Haviland, Allenman, and Allen explain: “As

expertise has come to be defined more narrowly as scholarship, those not involved in research have been gradually written out of the role of the integrated professor, despite a professional context that has increasingly relied on their services" (509). Publication earns academic capital; thus, every barrier we raise to publication serves to widen the chasm among faculty ranks. Of course, some non-tenure-track faculty are content to focus on teaching alone, with no desire to publish. Most are aware, however, of the double standard in so many departments that Haviland, Allenman, and Allen detailed in their study of thirty-eight such faculty at a research university. Even when scholarship is neither part of the job description nor funded by the department, "NTTF were aware that to gain respect and inclusion, they needed to meet unwritten expectations of engaging in research—on top of other regular duties" (516). Where campuses do not cultivate the scholarship of these faculty, what is the responsibility of our wider disciplinary community and of our publications?

If the editors of our professional journals do not take concrete steps to engage and support the scholarship of non-tenure-track faculty, we risk exacerbating a labor system positioning a shrinking tenured class as scholars and the majority of faculty as their teaching-audience, a separation with implications for both faculty and institutional missions. We can and should do more to mentor non-tenure-track faculty through the submission and publication processes, and to make certain that our calls for papers explicitly elicit the unique perspectives of professors from across all ranks and employment configurations, in this way making some small contribution to the state of academic freedom in our field.

Given the significance of this conversation about non-tenure-track academic freedom, the editorial board decided to continue it in the Fall 2018 issue. The first piece you'll find in these pages is Anicca Cox's qualitative study, "Collaboration and Resistance: Academic Freedom and Non-Tenured Labor." In it, she explores the effects of teaching autonomy and curricular agency on the academic freedom and professional identities of non-tenure-track faculty. Her discussion underscores the changing demographics of these faculty, contrasting the professional expectations of more recent PhDs and the MAs, MFAs, and PhDs who have been working in such positions for some time, and juxtaposing full-time and part-time instructors as well. Significantly, she notes the ways in which faculty find agency even when unsure of the limits of their academic freedom—or when skeptical of it existing for them at all.

In "Tenure, Academic Freedom, and Consequences: Oh, My!" Natalie Dorfeld considers how the reactions to controversial tweets in April 2018 by Randa Jarrar, an associate professor of English at California State University, Fresno, demonstrate

the widening gulf between how tenured faculty and non-tenure-track faculty understand and enact academic freedom. Dorfeld pointedly asks, “What if she were a freeway flyer—a professor working part-time at several institutions—barely making ends meet on renewable contracts?” She suggests better uses for the particular academic freedom given to tenured faculty: addressing inequity in higher education and spotlighting the voices of contingent “colleagues across the hall.”

Natalie Dorfeld, out of Florida Institute of Technology, is also a member of the newly reformed *Forum* editorial board. She joins Steve Fox from Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis and Jes Philbrook from Walden University—all dedicated teachers invested in scholarship or activism focused on equity in higher education. I look forward to sharing editorial space with them in these pages, and I encourage you to seek out their excellent work elsewhere. What’s more, I encourage you to seek out and amplify the scholarship of non-tenure-track faculty in your home departments, at professional conferences, and in our publications. If you have the privilege to edit anything—a collection, a blog, a journal, or book series—consider how you might better represent a diversity of employment categories, so that we might better embody the principles of academic freedom.

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## **Collaboration and Resistance: Academic Freedom and Non-Tenured Labor**

Anicca Cox

By most recent estimates, the number of full-time non-tenure-track (FT-NTT) faculty is increasing in higher education. While John Barnshaw, the AAUP’s director of research and public policy, notes that this latest increase from 12 to 16 percent is tied to economic recession and recovery (as qtd. in AWP’s 2015–2016 Report on the Academic Job Market [Tucker]), I would add that the replacement of part-time non-tenure-track (PT-NTT) labor with FT-NTT labor also signals a negotiation of the

economic imperatives faced by colleges and universities operating in a culture of increasing neoliberalism and a corporatized “growth model.” At my own institution, a small state university in southern New England and the site of this study, the creation of FT-NTT lines was also a clear response to the increasingly publicized problems of an outsized reliance on adjunct and other part-time labor, signaling a seemingly altruistic move toward better working conditions for instructors which belied motives of fiscal solvency. Because costs for adjunct faculty fluctuate based on enrollment numbers, lectureships present a “solution” in the form of calculable, stable cost expenditures, which serves universities contending with shrinking enrollments and austerity climates.

At the same time, where the number of available tenure-track (TT) positions is contracting relative to the number of qualified applicants for such positions, more and more of these FT-NTT positions will be filled by PhDs, not only because their academic job-market-ready applications will often outshine those of their MA-holding competitors, but because having a higher percentage of PhDs in the classroom provides a useful selling point for departments and universities. While this may seem a win-win for both parties, simultaneously improving the university’s overall profile and providing relatively stable, relatively well-compensated job opportunities in the academy for highly qualified graduates of long and difficult doctoral programs, it also has the potential to unleash a number of difficult-to-resolve tensions between professional position and professional identity. My institutional case, which investigated a first-year writing program staffed by these full-time lecturers (FTLs) and a few remaining part-time lecturers (PTLs) teaching from a shared, scripted curriculum, sought to understand particularly those tensions which were located at the intersection of autonomy/academic freedom and institutional rank. I know that my experience, while particular to my institutional configuration in many ways, and particular to the choices made by the department and acting WPA, illuminates concerns central to the endeavor of teaching and scholarship more broadly. I consider here, as the AAUP’s 1940 Statement does, that academic freedom extends not only beyond research to teaching, but also, I contend, beyond those who are *recognized* for their research, to those whose institutional rank concerns itself primarily with teaching and service.

### **Local Conditions and National Conversations**

Comparing TT and NTT experiences, Molly Ott and Jesús Cisneros note that a “sense of freedom and personal responsibility over one’s work . . . has long been a core value of American academic work,” which includes “how [instructors] teach their courses, and how they serve their institutions and professions” (6). Writing

programs tend to impose a great degree of intra-program curricular homogeneity, and despite their full-time status, instructors are, as Richard and Rebekah Shultz-Colby point out, “often reliant on a director or administrator and strategic decisions from upper-level university administrations” (67). Without an institutionalized research agenda over which to exercise a “sense of freedom and responsibility over one’s work” (Ott and Cisneros 6), I wondered: would PhD instructors experience the lack of such freedom in the classroom as an affront to hard-won professional identities historically entwined with an autonomy derived from hard-earned expertise?

At my institution, of the ten new FTLs hired to staff the newly configured first-year English (FYE) program, nine either had PhDs or were in the final stages of completing them, but these degrees were in literature, not composition. Meanwhile, the English department had hired a new TT professor, part of whose job in the department was to direct FYE. No (other) TT faculty taught FYE. This new WPA, in her *de facto* supervisory role relative to the other instructors, designed a heavily scripted curriculum, complete with “major” assignments, scaffolding assignments, grading rubrics, semester schedules, and—for first-semester courses—assigned texts. I interviewed a group of those new instructors in order to learn more about how they perceived themselves fitting into the institution and department relative to their own sense of professional identity, and how those feelings shaped and otherwise intersected with their work as instructors both inside and outside the classroom.

Additionally, when FT-NTT labor replaces PT-NTT labor, as happened in our department (not a single existing instructor was hired for an FTL role), we saw a significant loss of institutional expertise and program continuity that resided with the existing PTLs. I conducted interviews with several of the remaining PTLs to understand our programmatic working conditions holistically and to measure their experiences against those of the FTLs who became the focus of this study. The PTLs’ sense of professional identity was grounded more in their commitment to and understanding of the university’s unique student body than in their academic status or scholarly expertise.

As one variation or another of the FTL model edges toward becoming the new normal in first-year composition and similar programs, I hope my investigation may contribute to a shift from promoting it as an obvious improvement on the adjunct model to some necessary forms of interrogation and critique.

## Participants

All of the six instructors I interviewed—three PTLs and three FTLs—taught from a shared curriculum and worked under the same departmental governance, but the

two groups inhabited very different spaces within the program structure. In addition to working on two-year contracts, FTLs received health insurance and benefits, access to weekly professional development workshops (required as a part of their first year of teaching), and the use of an office where each had a separate cubicle. PTLs in contrast, worked on one-semester to one-year contracts, subject to change based on “departmental needs,” and were offered courses based on a seniority model. They had access to health care, some retirement benefits,<sup>1</sup> and an office shared with all PTL instructors in the college, providing significantly less privacy than the space used by the FTLs. While the FTLs were hired to teach a 4/4 course load, PTLs typically taught two or three courses per semester, and most were employed at multiple institutions. Rather than holding PhDs, most had MAs in professional writing or MFAs.

While both teaching pools received observations of their teaching tied to their contract renewal and merit raises, differences in how the two pools were evaluated yearly were significant: FTLs across campus were reviewed by larger departmental faculty evaluation committees made up of tenured faculty in two categories: teaching and advising. They submitted dossiers of information to support their renewal including CVs, student evaluation data, advising records, and course materials. Notably, while scholarship was not an official part of their union contract obligations and did not factor into their evaluation, most actively publishing FTLs included information about their publications in their dossiers. PTLs, on the other hand, were evaluated solely by the TT-WPA in a microcosmic, program-devised system and were then “certified” by the department chair for renewal. They were assessed on teaching alone, based on student evaluations and course materials. While many of them were also actively publishing, their evaluation materials did not provide the opportunity to present that work, even if they wished to.

### **Findings and Discussion**

My discussion below reflects a portion of a larger study with these two groups, which looked broadly at the landscape of labor concerns and inequity in this first-year English program. Here, however, I focus on two pivotal areas of interview data related to concerns of academic freedom. The first involves how instructors measured and assessed their own institutional positioning, in particular as that positioning intersected and at times conflicted with a deeply held sense of professional identity. Not entirely surprisingly, the data shows that feelings of being undervalued or misplaced in the institution often correlated with a perceived lack of autonomy in teaching practices. The second area of data focuses on collaborative practices, which are likely to arise in writing programs where instructors teach the same cur-

riculum, but which, in this case, often s(w)erved to support assertions of autonomy and academic freedom in employment conditions that instructors perceived as at least somewhat precarious. These practices, I noted, sometimes seemed compatible with the goals of improving pedagogy and practice and at other times almost indifferent to them.

### ***Institutional Position, Professional Identity***

The first-year writing program was taught almost wholly by NTT labor. When it came to FTL experiences, without exception, the FTLs I interviewed characterized their positions as interstitial, in the sense they did not feel like hired mercenaries, entirely ancillary to the institution or the department—a feeling some had experienced in previously held adjunct positions—but did not feel like full-fledged members of the academic community in which they were working either.

One instructor, for example, explained that as an FTL “you find yourself in a space between an hourly teacher and a tenure-track professor, in the sense that you’re salaried, you’re there all the time, but you’re not really seen as an intellectual contributor to the university or the department.” A few moments of his interview highlighted this feeling: Over the summer before he started teaching, he received what he and other FTLs characterized as a “giant binder” of curricular materials they were expected to use. He also described the “unpaid August orientation meetings” at which it became clear to him that “my role was to carry out a vision that I hadn’t had a whole lot [to do with], and wasn’t going to have a whole lot to do with formulating.” For him, as with other FTLs I interviewed, this “role” felt largely incompatible with his professional training and sense of intrinsic professional worth. “It’s a bit odd to have a job,” he said, “where you have the academic qualifications of some of the tenure-track professors and in some cases, I would say, a more extensive publication resume . . . but to not really be valued at all in that way.”

Another FTL, who had completed a PhD just prior to joining the faculty, recalled receiving the binder for the program’s “set curriculum about six weeks before the semester started” and described her frustration at discovering just how “set” it was so late in the game. Knowing how little control she would have to shape her own curriculum, she said, “would have shaped [her] thought processes on whether to accept [the job] or not.” She described her resentment at having been given what she called a “teacher proof” curriculum, and characterized teaching from that curriculum, rather than “to [her] strengths” and from her own interests and expertise as “not what I think of as college teaching.” She even attested to having felt “more valued” at a previous adjunct job where she had the freedom to “tailor the curriculum” accordingly.



A third FTL similarly recalled that she “wasn’t prepared for some of the constraints in the curriculum.” While she was far less ill at ease with these constraints than many of her colleagues—mentioning almost in passing that having the freedom to herself select “reading and discussion” materials in second-semester writing classes “seemed to improve the experience of the . . . assigned curriculum”—it is worth noting that she nonetheless saw her position in the department as discontinuous with her graduate education, “where people are working on the same sorts of things” but with “less anxiety built in.” If she was comfortable with this discontinuity, it may well have been because she happily identified herself as a teacher above all, rather than as the tenure-track scholar her graduate studies had groomed her to become.

Conversely, none of the PTLs interviewed were overly surprised at the mere fact of having been provided with a scripted curriculum. Indeed, the previous program director had also provided what one PTL characterized as a “top down” curricular model, “not something we volunteered to do [but] something we had to do.” For the PTLs, their resistance was to the content of the curriculum itself. While the FTLs’ sense of unease appeared largely connected to the mere fact of having been stripped of autonomy in the one area in which they were recognized and sanctioned by the institution—teaching, PTL complaints were more focused on what they identified as weaknesses in the capacity of this particular curriculum to work productively

The FTLs’ sense of unease appeared largely connected to the mere fact of having been stripped of autonomy in the one area in which they were recognized and sanctioned by the institution—teaching.

for the specific student body to which it was being delivered, a population they felt dedicated to serving. One PTL, for example, worried that the new curriculum would not successfully be “useful to [my students] personally or professionally,” while another expressed concern that the streamlining of both major assignments in the new curriculum would, by inviting plagiarism, foil her capacity to get her students “actually . . . writing instead of searching around for the writing of others.”

On reflection, I noticed that the PTLs’ sense of unease with regard to the scripted curriculum, though somewhat less indexed to freedom and autonomy, was also wrapped up in their sense of professional identity. As longtime employees of the institution, and in some cases graduates of its MA program in professional writing, they identified strongly as teachers: “I know that at the university level we’re supposed to be scholars first and teachers second, but I’m a teacher,” and as teachers,

in the words of one of them, they “understand the students and program at the university.” Insofar as they saw the new curriculum as imperfectly suited to the very particular needs and abilities of *those* students at *that* institution, they collectively felt impaired in their ability to, as one PTL put it, “be the good teacher I know I am.”

Their experiences of marginalization had a traceable history and structure, in comparison to the newly arrived FTL instructors. The feelings of instructors in already precarious positions were exacerbated by their relationship with the new curriculum and the hiring of the FTLs. One PTL, for instance, interpreted the department’s decision not to hire any experienced PTLs for the new FTL lines as having been (she guessed) “driven by the desire to get people to follow an exact, prescriptive curriculum.” A second PTL, someone who had received her MA from the institution, attributed it to what she herself characterized as intellectual snobbery. “They value the PhD, they don’t even value . . . the MFA,” she remarked. She went on to describe her working conditions as an “environment which has become, just, basic, fear.”

### ***Collaboration as Resistance***

Some measure of resistance to or uneasiness with the curricular strictures imposed on them was nearly universal among the FTLs interviewed for this project, and

Though they enjoyed full-time salaries and benefits and were working on two-year contracts, they wondered if making changes to the curriculum would have consequences on their renewal.

none felt entirely comfortable simply asserting their purported academic freedom and teaching to their own strengths, from their own interests, or as they saw fit. In general, this discomfort derived from the fact that though they enjoyed full-time salaries and benefits and were working on two-year contracts, they wondered if making changes to the curriculum would have consequences on their renewal. One remarked, “It’s hard not to feel concerned about consequences, particularly when you don’t have a contract beyond the next year.”

Along these lines, the same FTL who characterized teaching from a scripted curriculum as not what she thought of as “college teaching” described her efforts to reclaim some of that autonomy in terms of “thinking about how I can strategically change things but still . . . not change them enough that it will draw attention to me

. . . I have to think through, like, what can I change [that is] not going to get me in trouble if I get quote-unquote caught . . . and how can I prevent myself from getting caught?" Another FTL, discussing the fact that she hadn't made any modifications to the curriculum during her first two semesters at the institution, said, "I guess I just assumed I couldn't make those changes."

For the FTLs interviewed, collaboration emerged as something of an antidote to and safeguard against the potentially punitive consequences they feared for asserting autonomy. One FTL, for example, explained his decision to work with two colleagues on what he saw as a valuable redesign of one of the second semester class's "major" assignments as a way to "spread the blame," as a prophylactic against retribution, should he be caught. "No way was I going to make that [change] without having partners in crime," he explained, "because if it was a crime . . . we were not as likely to go down for it if we had to go down together, because what are you going to do, lose half your FTLs in one year?" Another discussed collaborating with her colleagues in more informal ways, conversing between cubicles in their shared offices, for example, and explained how learning about the changes some of those colleagues had been collaboratively making to the curriculum emboldened her to go further than she previously had in modifying her own: "After hearing how other people have changed things . . . I have [started to make those changes as well]."

Significant, however, was how these structured and unstructured, formal and informal collaborations at the end of the day seemed to exist as a vehicle to support individuation and a way to reclaim autonomy. The FTL who described seeking strength in numbers before he rewrote a major assignment, for instance (and this was common across participants), emphasized that in the end he and his colleagues "collaborated on stuff and then went our own way with it because we're different people [with] different strengths"—language that, to me, resonates unmistakably with the ideas of scholarly specialization and expertise on which professional status, and the autonomy and academic freedom that attend to it, is largely predicated.

PTLs, for their part, noted a rich history of collaborative practice that was interrupted by the new labor configuration, which stripped them of the majority of their collaborators. Interestingly, however, they almost uniformly described making sometimes radical changes to the curriculum, and found the notion of seeking safety in numbers in order to do so laughable. Not only were they aware that as part-time employees they could be replaced without the more time-consuming procedures required for hiring new full-time employees, but they suspected that the department would be more than happy to see them and the baggage they carried over from previous iterations of the first-year writing program go.

## Conclusions

The results of this project that I find most novel and arresting are those that point toward the complexities and possible pitfalls of what is broadly viewed as a positive shift in the writing programs that rely so heavily on NTT teaching labor, from a part-time adjunct employment model to a NTT-FT model that offers greater job security, expanded opportunities for collegiality and collaboration, and stronger institutional identification. I posit that the tensions that appeared in the nexus of autonomy and professional identity at this site reside not only with institutional rank broadly, but also in programmatic ethos, curricular design, and attendant models of managerialism, evaluation, and governance.

For the FTLs interviewed, what many saw as fairly favorable working conditions and financial compensation packages were simply not enough to neutralize the

**What many saw as fairly favorable working conditions and financial compensation packages were simply not enough to neutralize the frustrations of living daily the dissonance between how they identified as scholar-teachers and how the institution seemed to perceive them.**

frustrations of living daily the dissonance between how they identified as scholar-teachers and how the institution seemed to perceive them. The collaborative energies of ten highly qualified university instructors teaching by and large the same courses to the same student body and working long hours in close proximity, across cubicle dividers, might have been better employed in achieving productive student outcomes and honing best classroom practices. Instead, much of that work was performed in an attempt to simultaneously maintain economic and existential continuity in their professional lives—a striking example of the possible pitfalls of this model. That four of the original ten FTLs hired to teach in the

program departed within two years provides another.

While I absolutely hope more and more writing programs will choose to make the shift from fully contingent labor models to an undeniably fairer full-time lecturer model, my study suggests the importance of articulating that choice in a way that recognizes and honors the laboriously forged and deeply felt professional identities of workers by supporting continued professional development and encouraging autonomy in curricular design. To do so, I posit, would benefit those workers as well as the institutions whose students they will serve: a genuine win-win situation.

**Note**

1. These benefits were available as a direct result of the organizing efforts of unionized PTL instructors that had taken place several years earlier when they fought to gain contractual rights more equal to those of lecturers and tenure-track faculty.

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**Tenure, Academic Freedom, and Consequences: Oh, My!**

Natalie M. Dorfled

Tenure. To some, it is the golden ticket of academia, which is only bestowed on 21 percent of all college faculty. The hard work paid off, and you are one of the lucky ones to be on a campus that both still has tenure and rewards diligence. To others outside of higher education, the mental image of a tenured professor conjures up the most negative stereotype possible: deadwood, working nine hours a week while raking in six figures, and making wildly outrageous statements with little to no repercussions. Case in point? Randa Jarrar.

Professor Randa Jarrar is an associate professor of English at California State University, Fresno. Upon hearing the news of Barbara Bush's death in April 2018, she

sent out a series of controversial tweets. One read, “Barbara Bush was a generous and smart and amazing racist who, along with her husband, raised a war criminal . . . I’m happy the witch is dead . . . can’t wait for the rest of her family to fall to their demise the way 1.5 million iraqis have.” But the controversy did not stop there (Steinbaugh).

When Jarrar’s critics pounced, she clawed back, stating that she made \$100,000+ as a tenured professor and would never be fired. She even went so far as to give the name of her boss, President Joseph Castro, and her supposed phone number, which turned out to be a suicide hotline at Arizona State University. Mind you, all of this came on the heels of a colleague having been placed on leave one year prior for stating on the same platform that President Trump “must hang” in order to save American democracy (Paznar).

With some people demanding immediate action from the university (i.e., termination), as of this writing, Jarrar is currently on preapproved leave but scheduled to return to the classroom in the fall. A thorough review of the situation, complete with university lawyers and union representatives, is planned. In a curt and well-crafted statement, President Castro said, “A professor with tenure does not have blanket protection to say and do what they wish. We are all held accountable for our actions” (Lee).

Herein lies the kicker. Did Professor Jarrar have the right to say what she did, which was on her own time and in a private account? Absolutely. She can love or loathe Barbara Bush; that is her prerogative. Did it come without consequences? This is yet to be seen, though a Google search of her name will forever be attached to this incident, which only lasted one evening. Although her wording was deemed “unfortunate and unwise,” when the controversy settles, her job will be spared (Paznar).

She is privileged in the sense that she does have tenure in a union-backed institution. If a legal battle were to ensue, she has financial means and an arsenal of resources at her disposal: lawyers, the American Association of University Professors, and the American Civil Liberties Union. But what if she lived in the South and worked at a private college? What if she was a freeway flyer—a professor working part-time at several institutions—barely making ends meet on renewable contracts? What if she was one of the other 79 percent of college professors, the so-called contingent faculty, that are not as fortunate (“Tenure”)? No doubt, if these part-time individuals were in the same situation, they would be let go immediately. No questions asked. Don’t let the door hit you on the way out.

Perhaps one lesson to be learned here is mindfulness; power comes with responsibility. Free speech is everyone’s right, but bragging about one’s salary when your peers are collecting food stamps is insensitive. Likewise, spamming a mental health

crisis line helps no one. When tenure is portrayed in an arrogant, untouchable light, it reflects poorly on all of us in academia, especially given the grim reality of the new faculty majority: 50 percent adjunct appointments, \$2,700 median pay per course, and one-third without a phone, office, or computer (“Facts about Adjuncts”). This broken and shrinking system, where less than half of newly minted English PhDs will obtain full-time employment, makes it even more difficult for women and minorities to gain traction. In recent years, the number of female faculty who are tenured or on the tenure track has declined from 20 to 16 percent and 13 to 8 percent respectively, while part-time appointments have increased from 48 to 56 percent (Flaherty).

So pause before posting. The golden ticket of tenure is granted to less than one-quarter of the academy. Why not use that lofty platform for a greater good? Instead of commenting on an individual she never met, perhaps Professor Jarrar’s time (and that of all tenure-line faculty for that matter) could be spent lending a hand and/or voice to the colleagues across the hall. Because #insolidarity should be so much more than just a tweet.

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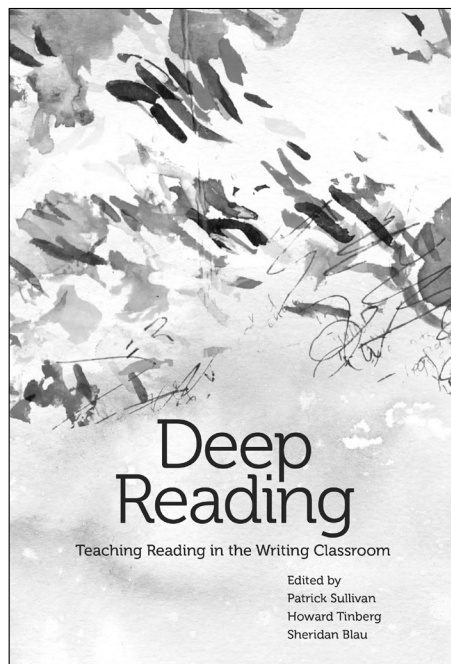
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### Deep Reading

Teaching Reading in the Writing Classroom

*Patrick Sullivan, Howard Tinberg, and  
Sheridan Blau, editors*

This book argues that college-level *reading* must be theorized as foundationally linked to any understanding of college-level *writing*. Measurements of reading abilities show a decline nationwide among most cohorts of students, so the need for writing teachers to thoughtfully address the subject of reading, especially in grades 6–14, has become increasingly urgent.

Contributors to this collection offer an antidote to the current reductive understanding of reading that views readers as passive recipients of information. These authors (1) define the challenges to integrating reading into the writing classroom, (2) develop a theory of reading as a specific type of inquiry and meaning-making activity, and (3) offer practical approaches to teaching deep reading in writing courses that can be put immediately to use in the classroom.

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