

## Don't type anything in the headers!

Hello: As of about 6 am on Tuesday morning, the organizers of this open letter (Carolyn Betensky, Talia Schaffer, and Seth Kahn from Tenure for the Common Good) are closing it for signatures so we can take the day to check the list and make sure it's all tidy, and send it in on Wednesday. If you meant to sign and just didn't get here in time, you can leave a comment with your signature info, and one of us try to get back here later in the day to get any last-minute signatures.

Please check back here for updates, we hope within the next week to ten days.

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Dear US News and World Report rankers,

We write as a group of tenured, tenure-track, and contingent faculty who would like to propose that you consider adjusting the "faculty resources" section of the America's Best Colleges rankings in order to more accurately reflect current academic realities. Currently you allocate only 5% of this category to part-time vs full-time faculty, while you give 35% to faculty salaries. However, those faculty salary numbers do not reflect the majority of college instructors, who are contingent faculty: underpaid temporary workers (see <https://www.aaup.org/issues/contingency/background-facts>; and <http://www.newfacultymajority.info/facts-about-adjuncts/>).

Consider:

- contingent faculty are underpaid, exploited, and exhausted. Sometimes they are homeless or working several jobs, and they generally do not have health care. (<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/sep/28/adjunct-professors-homeless-sex-work-academia-poverty>)
- contingent faculty must teach double or triple the number of courses as tenure-track faculty, usually at multiple schools.
- contingent faculty rarely have an office of their own and are not paid to hold office hours, read drafts of student papers, or advise students.
- contingent faculty are hired for a course or a semester, often without oversight, mentorship, or access to basic resources (like a copy machine) to do their jobs.
- contingent faculty generally are not allowed to choose which courses they want to teach and often don't have any ability to determine the course content.
- contingent faculty are hired and fired irregularly, which makes it impossible for them to mentor students for the duration of the student's college life, write recommendations, or take a stable role in the student's life.
- contingent faculty are not generally granted citizenship in their departments, which makes them unable to serve on committees or shape policies.

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- contingent faculty are powerless to affect the terms of their employment, which means they can be given enormous classes with far more students than any one person can handle.

As Dan Edmonds points out, "If you are paying for a college education today, you are paying comparatively more money than previous generations have paid — nearly \$70,000 in annual tuition, room and board, and fees at America's most expensive schools — to be educated by a more poorly-resourced [and] poorly paid ... group of educators." In short, "you want to ensure that the college to which you'll pay tens of thousands of dollars a year treats its faculty well enough to provide the best possible education for students."

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/noodleeducation/2015/05/28/more-than-half-of-college-faculty-are-adjuncts-should-you-care/#66c894a01600>

If 50–75% of the faculty are working under these conditions, it changes the entire environment of the university in ways that the nation's premier ranking system really needs to register. A university that mistreats its employees this way is not giving its students a good education — no matter how much it may pay its few remaining tenure-track faculty members.

Please consider switching the percentages for faculty salaries and part-timers to reflect the reality of today's campuses.

Thank you,

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