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AFT News Release

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Report Finds Significant Pay Inequities Among College and University Faculty in Pennsylvania

WASHINGTON— The compensation gap between permanent and nonpermanent faculty is so wide at Pennsylvania’s publicly funded colleges and universities that a part-time/adjunct community college faculty member who manages to teach a full-time load would still earn only about \$25,000 annually, according to a report released today by the Keystone Research Center. Such earnings fall below a “self-sufficiency income”—that is, the income a family needs to be able to support itself without public assistance.

“Reversing Course in Pennsylvania Higher Education: The Two Tiers in Faculty Pay and Benefits and a Way Forward” adds to a growing body of research showing significant pay and benefit gaps between nonpermanent faculty and tenure or tenure-track faculty across the country.

“Higher education has always been seen as a means to achieve the American dream, so it is shameful that too many of the instructional jobs in Pennsylvania’s colleges and universities pay so poorly, and with hardly any benefits, that instructors can barely provide for their own families,” said AFT Pennsylvania President Ted Kirsch, who is also an AFT vice president. “It is critical that we address and solve the higher education staffing crisis and urge our state leaders to invest, not disinvest, in our faculty.”

Economist Stephen Herzenberg, co-author of the report, said: “Closing the huge pay and benefit gap that exists between permanent and nonpermanent college and university instructors in Pennsylvania will deliver the double benefit of a better quality of life for these instructors and their families, and an improvement in the state’s quality of higher education. Ensuring the quality of our colleges and universities is essential in this knowledge-based global economy.”

The report examined 11 of the state’s 14 community colleges and the State System of Higher Education (SSHE), which comprises 14 state-funded four-year schools. Researchers also used publicly available information for four state-related institutions: Lincoln University, Pennsylvania State University, University of Pittsburgh and Temple University. A full list of colleges and universities studied can be found at the end this press release.

American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO

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One bright spot in the report—which could serve as a model for community colleges and state-related institutions—is the reliance on and treatment of contingent faculty at State System schools. The SSHE collective bargaining agreement prohibits any of its universities from having more than 25 percent of faculty in full- or part-time temporary positions, and it places full-time temporary faculty with five years of experience on a tenure track. These instructors also receive better pay and benefits. The State System example shows that major publicly funded colleges and universities can continue to rely on tenured and tenure-track faculty to teach most courses and achieve decent standards for the pay and benefits of contingent faculty.

The report's other major findings:

- Contingent faculty members and instructors teach 42 percent of the courses at all public colleges and universities in Pennsylvania, slightly lower than the national figure of 49 percent.
- Contingent faculty members earn lower wages per course than full-time tenured and tenure-track faculty members, and part-time/adjunct faculty earn particularly low compensation. At community colleges, part-time/adjunct faculty members earn \$2,547 per course.
- Most part-time/adjunct faculty members in Pennsylvania public higher education receive **no** health or pension benefits.
- Eliminating such significant pay inequities among higher education instructors requires a long-term plan and a strategy for expanding the share of courses taught by full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty.

The report recommends that higher education institutions receiving state funds should be required each year to publicly report the share of courses taught by part-time/adjunct faculty, and the salaries and benefits of these faculty and their full-time counterparts.

“In the long term, Pennsylvania needs a plan to invest in those who teach at our colleges and universities. But in the short term, the Legislature should establish a goal of not further increasing the reliance on part-time/adjunct faculty who do not earn enough to support a family,” Herzenberg said.

Over the past few decades, U.S. higher education has experienced a dramatic growth in the use of nonpermanent, or “contingent,” instructors. [A recent study](#) commissioned by the American Federation of Teachers found that these instructors—who typically receive low pay and inadequate health insurance benefits—teach approximately half of all undergraduate public college courses nationally. The Pennsylvania report is the first to examine the higher education staffing crisis in detail at the state level, and within individual institutions in a state.

Research also has shown that disinvesting in college faculty and staff erodes the quality of education for students because instructors may lack office space, have fewer office hours, or have inadequate time to propose, plan and prepare courses. To reverse the trends highlighted in this report, AFT Higher Education launched the Faculty and College Excellence (FACE) campaign to achieve equity for contingent faculty and more full-time tenure-track faculty jobs through legislative action, collective bargaining and public education. This and previous reports can be found on the FACE website at www.aftface.org.

Pennsylvania's Colleges and Universities Included in Report:

<u>Community Colleges:</u>	<u>Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education:</u>
Community College of Allegheny County Community College of Beaver County Bucks County Butler County Community College Community College of Philadelphia Harrisburg Area Community College Lehigh Carbon Community College Luzerne Community College Montgomery County Community College Northampton Community College Pennsylvania Highlands Community College	Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania California University of Pennsylvania Cheyney University of Pennsylvania Clarion University of Pennsylvania East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania Edinboro University of Pennsylvania Indiana University of Pennsylvania Kutztown University of Pennsylvania Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania Mansfield University of Pennsylvania Millersville University of Pennsylvania Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania West Chester University of Pennsylvania
<u>State-related institutions:</u>	
Penn State University University of Pittsburgh Lincoln University Temple University	