



February 12, 2015

Re: National Adjunct Action Week: February 23-27, 2015

Dear Local Leader:

Background: The National Adjunct Action Week (#NAAW) grew out of an anonymous call on Twitter for contingent faculty to participate in a “National Adjunct Walkout Day” on February 25. There are no national organizations with any organizing capacity who are coordinating this call to action, and participation in a walkout raises questions of both legality for organizations—especially unions advocating a walkout—and economic security for contingent faculty, who may face discipline for participation. However, there will be other types of events occurring during this week, and it is essential that the AFT and its affiliates support the efforts of contingent faculty in addressing the challenges facing them. The week provides an opportunity for AFT affiliates to demonstrate the commitment of our organizations to advocate on behalf of our 80,000 contingent higher education members.

Actions: To reiterate, we do *not* endorse contingent faculty walking off the job for the day. But there are other actions your affiliates can take to put the issues facing the contingent in the public eye. If your local is already planning on conducting an action, *please let us know!* You may contact Chris Goff (cgoff@aft.org) in the Higher Education department with your plans. If your local would like to participate, but is at a loss for ideas, here are some suggestions based on what affiliates have done in the past or are planning on doing:

- **Teach-in on contingent faculty issues:** The United Academics of Philadelphia is planning on holding a teach-in to educate students and members of the university community about the realities of the academic workforce at Philadelphia’s dozens of colleges and universities.
- **Grade-ins:** Many locals in the past have drawn attention to contingent faculty by making their labor visible, conducting their work together in a public space.
- **Petitions:** The Professional Staff Congress will be conducting a petition drive on contingent issues during this week as part of its contract campaign.

Again, if your local is planning on participating in the Week of Action, please let us know so that we can work with our Media Affairs department to help promote your work!

Social media: This campaign started as a call to action via social media, and we expect that the activities of the week will get heavy play on a number of social media outlets. We would encourage you to take to the internet as part of your Week

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of Action activities. First and foremost, if you are conducting a social media campaign or will be live-tweeting your affiliate's event, please be sure to tag @AFTUnion and @AFTHigherEd and use the #NAAW hashtag in your tweets so that AFT's social media team can promote your efforts. Other social media ideas may include:

- *Touting your accomplishments:* Many of your locals have long histories of advocacy and action with contingent faculty. You can use social media during the week to promote those accomplishments as a history lesson on the power of collective action and a resource for those looking for ways to improve their workplaces.
- *Legislative campaign:* In some states, legislation has been introduced that directly addresses issues faced by contingent faculty. These bills may call for pay equity or make it easier for contingent faculty to access benefits, for example. You can use social media to thank legislative sponsors, ask for support, and generally let your representatives know that addressing contingency is a legislative priority for your affiliates and members. Even if there isn't a specific bill in your state, asking state legislators to come out in support of contingent faculty can help lay the groundwork for future legislative campaigns by identifying potential allies and champions. We are currently working with state affiliates to provide them with bills to support and the appropriate hashtags for their states.
- *"Day in the Life" photos:* Locals and members can use Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and other social media apps to document the work done by your members. The United Academics of Philadelphia gave members time to "curate" the official UAP Instagram feed with snapshots of their days. The idea here is to make contingent faculty work – and the issues facing them in the workplace—visible.

The AFT and its affiliates have a proud history of advocacy and action with contingent faculty dating back almost 40 years. The National Adjunct Action Week is already drawing the attention of the media to the issues surrounding contingency. We would encourage your affiliate to be a part of this conversation and look forward to assisting you in your efforts to promote your events and work. Again, if your affiliate is planning any sort of event or action in conjunction with the Week of Action, please let Chris Goff in the Higher Education department know so that AFT can work with you.

Sincerely,



Jessica Humphrey
Interim Acting Director, AFT Higher Education

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