INTRODUCTION

The Impact of COVID-19 and the Defunding of Higher Education on Contingent Faculty

The tragic story of Thea Hunter, a Black female academic who completed her doctorate in history at Columbia University, illustrates the struggles of adjunct faculty to survive in a tightening economy without sufficient financial resources or health insurance. According to her doctoral adviser, celebrated historian Eric Foner, Hunter's dissertation that focused on the case of James Somerset, a Black man who escaped slavery and won his freedom at trial in England, was a pioneering analysis in the study of transatlantic law and slavery.[1]

Following completion of her dissertation, Dr. Hunter assumed a tenure-line teaching position at Western Connecticut College but left due to a long commute from New York City and an apparently unsatisfying work experience. She faced growing financial difficulties as she alternated between temporary and adjunct appointments, including some not in her own field at several universities. As she wrote in an email, "I have been saying I am done, emotionally drained and without reserves. There has just been too much going on in my life that has been drawing upon whatever emotional reserves I have. That plus the constant financial crisis that has been my life for years takes its toll."[2] Without regular health checkups, this once-promising scholar's asthma and heart condition worsened, and she passed away on December 17, 2018, after being

transported to the hospital by ambulance. Her colleagues at Columbia University are memorializing her work by including her papers in an edited collection.[3] Hunter's story reflects the loss to society and waste of scholarly talent due to the highly constricted academic job market.

Thea Hunter's employment circumstances exemplify the precarious and unstable working conditions of non-tenure-track (NTT) teaching faculty. The COVID-19 pandemic that swept the United States in 2020–2021 exposed deep cracks in the academic mission of colleges and universities. As institutions faced drastic budgetary cutbacks due to enrollment declines, loss of tuition revenue, and decreased funding, contingent faculty positions, both full-time and part-time, were among the first to be eliminated. Part-time faculty were the group most affected by the pandemic, with a drop of 5 percent at all institutions and a 6 percent decrease at master's, baccalaureate, and associate degree institutions.[4]

Overall, the workforce experienced a 13 percent loss in what has been described in a *Washington Post* analysis as an "unequal recession" due to its severe impact on the lowest-paid workers.[5] While employees of color make up only one-quarter of the entire higher education workforce, more than half of those laid off were nonwhite.[6] This trend is consistent with a recent research study indicating that women and people of color are more likely to be laid off during times of economic uncertainty. In fact, during the Great Recession of 2007–2009, hiring of Black, Hispanic, and Asian American faculty declined disproportionately in colleges and universities, with public institutions implementing the largest cuts.[7] Crystal Chang, a lecturer at the University of California, Berkeley, summed up the dire circumstances of NTT faculty: "Contingent faculty were already living on the margins before the COVID-19 pandemic. Now we find ourselves at the precipice."[8] The higher education workforce began a slow recovery, building back a third of the 660,000 jobs it had lost by mid-2021.[9]

Public institutions were especially hard hit in the pandemic, with an estimated $74 billion decrease in state funding coupled with additional

expenditures of $24 billion for related safety measures.[10] This decimation of budgetary resources is particularly problematic, since public institutions enroll 14.6 million of the nation's 19.7 million students. Funding cuts disproportionately impact students of color and low-income students who enroll in greater numbers in these institutions. Early estimates indicate that enrollment of historically underrepresented students declined at a faster rate during the pandemic than enrollment of historically privileged students.[11]

Notably, states affected by the tourism industry and fossil fuels faced dramatic drops in revenue, resulting in further fiscal retrenchment. For example, the University of Alaska endured three years of budget slashing and program reduction. In early 2020, the university's Board of Regents voted to eliminate, reduce, or merge forty-five academic programs that included undergraduate majors in sociology, chemistry, and earth sciences. In Nevada, a 20 percent cut to higher education in 2020 was followed by an additional 12 percent cut over the biennium.[12] And at the University of Hawaii, the legislature cut the system budget by 10 percent, with a greater share or 14 percent assumed by the flagship Manoa campus. These substantial cuts amounted to $47 million in the first year and $42 million in the second year.[13] All told, the pandemic created budgetary crises at many institutions, both public and private, leading in many cases to cuts in part- and full-time contingent positions.

THE STEADY EROSION OF TENURED FACULTY POSITIONS

The layoffs of contingent faculty during the pandemic struck at the heart of the educational equation, since these faculty now comprise the majority of the instructional workforce. The continuous shrinking of the tenured faculty ranks over the past five decades has resulted in a significant imbalance of teaching resources. Now, nearly three-quarters of faculty are serving in part- and full-time contingent roles. Furthermore,

even among this new faculty majority, almost half of the instructional workforce is part-time, with another 20 percent holding full-time contingent positions.[14]

The dramatic increase in contingent faculty employment over the past five decades is not accidental. While it has arisen in some part due to fiscal constraints, the growth in both part- and full-time contingent positions also reflects the perceived benefits of administrative convenience and workforce control. The contingent faculty model now replicates the trend in the US workplace at large toward a gig economy that favors short-term, project-based assignments without employment protections. In their perceptive book *The Gig Academy* (2019), Adrianna Kezar, Tom DePaola, and Daniel Scott solidify the parallels between the gig economy and the gig academy. As they explain, the gig economy is a collection of workforce management approaches and practices that have emanated from neoliberalism. In higher education, these practices center around forms of "at will" and "just-in-time" employment as a major strategy for control and regulation of the workforce.[15] In essence, these practices of administrative control hark back to twentieth-century industrial labor methods of control that limit employees' rights and are justified in terms of cost efficiency and responsiveness to market demands.[16]

The shift to a predominantly contingent faculty workforce has occurred as job opportunities for new PhDs have eroded dramatically. Colleges and universities have capitalized on the oversupply of academically prepared candidates in today's saturated academic job market. In the view of Kezar and colleagues, "the structural lack of stability imposed by the so-called gig economy is a key part of a broader regime for regulating a surplus labor supply, which it has *intentionally fabricated*."[17] What does this mean? Even given the lack of tenured faculty positions, academic institutions have continued unrelentingly to churn out doctoral degrees. In fact, the number of PhDs awarded in the United States doubled from 91,218 in 1976–1977 to 184,000 in 2017–2018.[18] Whether intentional or simply the desire of colleges and universities to sustain

enrollment in doctoral programs, the oversupply of PhD recipients means that the practices of short-term faculty and staff employment will continue to thrive.

Note also that the constriction of employment rights for contingent faculty through "at will" appointments substantially limits the exercise of the central component of tenured faculty work, that is, academic freedom. Contingent faculty have few if any safeguards for speaking out and also may have limited input into academic curricular matters. Henry Reichman, chair of the American Association of University Professors' Committee A on Academic Freedom and Tenure, points out that threats to academic freedom have accelerated and are more dangerous than at any time period since the 1950s.[19] Interference in university governance by conservative legislators and corporatized boards of trustees, especially in the public sector, can undermine faculty control of teaching. Faculty members have experienced harassment through online and personal interactions due to controversial comments made in or outside the classroom. The examples of abrupt termination and nonrenewal of adjunct faculty for controversial comments or perceived violations of minor rules are numerous.[20]

What is the appeal of the contingent faculty model to colleges and universities? Contingent faculty appointments allow substantially greater flexibility, represent a limited-term employment commitment, and require investment of far fewer financial resources. Part-time/adjunct faculty can be hired at the last minute by department chairs as course enrollments fluctuate from term to term. To add to the convenience factor, the adjunct recruitment and hiring process usually has few procedural requirements, and department chairs can draw from available pools of individuals in their existing networks without the process requirements and search committees required for tenure-track appointments. Because appointments are essentially discretionary, there is considerable leeway in decision-making, with few checks and balances and the tendency for department chairs and faculty to hire from existing

personal networks. These processes often do not involve affirmative action and other standards that help ensure fair employment.[21] And chairs and tenured faculty who prefer to teach upper-division and graduate courses are often responsive to the appeal to deploy contingent faculty to teach large undergraduate sections.

The de-professionalization of contingent faculty roles derives from what scholars describe as a series of "material indignities" that are magnified by economic insecurity.[22] In the words of Mark Purcell, a University of Washington professor who was formerly a contingent faculty member, through "pervasive exclusion, oppression, and devaluation," these faculty are confined to "limbo," a state of being in between, of representing "a spectral, supernatural presence."[23] As he explains, "They are not fully there. They are in limbo in every sense of the word. . . . [T]hey are not really members of the faculty. They are in between. And they are waiting. For something to break. . . . Meanwhile they move in the shadows."[24] Consistent with this perspective, researchers Kim Tolley and Kristen Edwards aptly describe adjuncts and, by extension, contingent faculty as members of a growing "academic precariat."[25] Consider how Sahil, an Asian American male queer adjunct faculty member in a midwestern public research university, describes "the caste system" of two-tiered faculty employment in which even the language used to designate lecturers as compared to professors reifies this distinction: "An interesting thing to really reflect on is how the institution creates that caste system in many ways and then tries to reinforce it in the language they use."

But the so-called case system extends beyond mere nomenclature. Research indicates that the impact of such secondary status in terms of job security, compensation, and health benefits is highly consequential and affects not only career but also life trajectories. In *Dying for a Paycheck* (2018), Stanford University professor Jeffrey Pfeffer identifies and documents ten workplace factors arising from employer decisions that affect health and mortality. Eight of these factors clearly apply to

the working conditions of part-time and even some full-time contingent faculty: (1) unemployment as a result of being laid off (or the threat of being laid off), (2) lack of health insurance, (3) working long hours in a week, (4) job insecurity, (5) low control over the job with relatively little discretion, (6) high job demands, (7) low levels of social support, and (8) settings in which employment-related decisions do not seem fair. Based on a meta-analysis of more than two hundred articles by Pfeffer and his colleagues, research reveals that the factors have profound effects on mental and physical well-being and, in turn, affect morbidity, mortality, and health care costs. Strikingly, the meta-analysis found that the absence of health insurance is the leading employment condition that contributes to the greatest number of annual excess deaths, followed by unemployment and then job insecurity.[26] In other words, job insecurity, unemployment or even sporadic employment, and the lack of health insurance affect mortality and life expectancy.

Take the experience of Gila Berryman, a Black English adjunct at the New York City College of Technology. She stopped at the supermarket and had just pulled out her EBT (food stamp) card to pay for groceries when she ran into one of her students who greeted her with "Hi, Professor Berryman." Berryman was averaging $10,000 per year from her part-time course load and had made only $23,000 one year when she took on summer classes and twelve hours of tutoring per week in addition to her full academic year course load, which involved grading six hundred papers. She knew that her students had no understanding of her reality, and a few students even guessed that her annual salary was close to $65,000. In her words,

> I wasn't ashamed of using food stamps to afford groceries. But that day I felt like a fraud. What kind of role model was I? I was a Black woman teaching working-class Black and brown students the importance of learning to write clearly so they could get a good job, yet I couldn't support myself on my own salary.

After a decade of teaching as an adjunct, Berryman experienced a severe case of burnout and left teaching to pursue freelance writing and editing jobs.[27]

The average pay for part-time contingent faculty, or adjuncts, in doctoral institutions is only $1,288 per credit hour and $917 at associate degree institutions.[28] This compensation typically does not account for work outside of class, including classroom preparation, grading papers, and office hours. Adjuncts do not receive the benefit of institutional commitment and support, whether in terms of ongoing employment, health care, training and development, or even obtaining a living wage. Most adjuncts who are paid per course do not have any health insurance or retirement benefits from a plan to which their employer contributed. In 2019–2020, only 30.4 percent of institutions contributed to retirement plans, and only 29.9 percent of institutions contributed to medical insurance premiums.[29] Adjunct appointments are at the mercy of departmental politics and can suffer from budgetary whiplash. Gary Rhoades, professor at the University of Arizona, remarked on the difficulties heightened by the pandemic, stating that adjuncts are "kind of like the Uber drivers. COVID just heightens and surfaces the already existing inequities."[30]

The working conditions for full-time contingent faculty are noticeably better, with longer contracts after initial periods that can range from as little as a semester to three or more years. These full-time roles at least offer some measure of stability, often involving appointments of one or more years and generally including health insurance and other benefits. An increasing number of institutions have developed contingent career ladders with title changes, salary increases, and even continuing status after an extended period. Nonetheless, our interviews reveal that modest pay levels on nine-month contracts at doctoral research institutions that hover around $50,000 for teaching three courses per term can present significant financial challenges. Only small salary adjustments may

be offered after an initial time period, and these adjustments remain unchanged for the duration of a multiyear appointment.

For example, Valerie, a Black female full-time contingent faculty member at an eastern liberal arts college, notes the difficult trade-off between staying in a full-time contingent role with limited salary potential and trying to piece together an income as an adjunct at multiple institutions. She concludes that the latter choice would leave her little energy and time to devote to students:[31]

> Sometimes you think this position is going to pay me that, and it doesn't pay you that. And then if you renew the position, you have like a 2 percent increase in your pay that you have to hold on to for the next two or three years or however long your appointment is. So, you have to make a decision: Do I want to walk away or do I want to have five jobs that saturate me in five different places? So then I have 1 percent of myself left to give to twenty-five students in front of me.

The typical workload for a full-time contingent faculty member is three courses per semester, although this configuration can vary significantly and may also involve additional components of service or administrative work. At one public research university, a full-time lecturer is considered to be 88 percent full-time equivalency for the academic year yet teaches a full load of three courses per semester with an additional service block. Ironically, at this university, although considered full time, these faculty are not paid as 100 percent full-time equivalency. In addition, according to a contingent faculty union leader at the university, the service block has grown in a kind of scope creep and includes committee meetings, faculty meetings, and work with students and the community. This teaching load is in stark contrast with tenured faculty at the university, who teach two courses per semester with responsibilities for service and research.

At some institutions, even so-called full-time contingent appointments can involve semester-by-semester variations in full-time equivalency. For example, at another elite western public research university, a full-time appointment can dip in full-time equivalency over the course of a single school year. In such cases, health benefits can terminate especially during the summer months and wreak havoc in terms of needed health care coverage. The faculty member then may need to go through the onerous process of reapplying for coverage in the fall. Consistent with Jeffrey Pfeffer's analysis, the roller coaster in health care coverage can be not only time-consuming and frustrating but also damaging to the health of individuals and their families.

With these prevailing workforce realities in mind, it is clear that the two-tiered faculty structure constitutes a significant inequality regime within higher education. Scholars Donald Tomaskovic-Dewey and Dustin Avent-Holt indicate that inequality regimes vary at the workplace level, are not uniform, and depend on unequal power that has been routinized and reproduced through the medium of unequal employment conditions.[32] Moreover, as social theorist Joe Feagin points out, institutions and processes that reproduce social inequality are grounded in relationships that are fundamentally inegalitarian, asymmetrical, and oppositional. Powerlessness is a key feature replicated in contingent faculty status and is emblematic of well-developed and long-standing systems of oppression.[33]

Asymmetrical power arising from status differentials is exacerbated when individuals in secondary academic positions are from different cultural and social identities than those in authority.[34] As a result, contingent faculty can experience double marginalization due to their secondary employment status in the academic hierarchy coupled with the exclusion resulting from minoritized social identities. When coupled with minoritized status, contingent faculty often must struggle for acceptance, recognition, and career stability in the day-to-day academic environment and can face devaluation of their contributions.

Perceptions of incompetence can limit their contributions, opportunity, and mobility with significant material, social, and psychological outcomes.[35] Yet remarkably, only recently have accounts of the experiences of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) in contingent faculty roles even begun to come to light. For example, Takumi Sato, an Asian American cisgender male NTT faculty member at a predominantly white institution, documents the racial battle fatigue he experienced resulting from being ignored, pacified, and deflected within academe as a person of color. He acknowledges that he was inadequately prepared for the tactics used against him and underestimated the extent to which systematic oppression permeated academic spaces.[36]

INTERLOCKING DIMENSIONS OF EXCLUSION

Based on extensive research and our own interview findings, in this book we posit that the intersectionality of minoritized social identities including race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, age, class, and religion can compound and intensify experiences of marginalization and exclusion for contingent faculty. In the higher education environment, scholars have recognized the unique experiences that derive from the intersectionality of social identities and the ways in which membership in different identity groups can affect how individuals are perceived and treated on college campuses.[37]

Yet, as Fred Bonner, professor and chair of educational leadership at Prairie View A&M University, explains, intersectionality has "fallen woefully short in providing an authentic rendering of the experiences of Black men and boys." Bonner suggests the term "mascu'sectionality" as a possible alternative theoretical framework for Black males. This approach does not negate feminist perspectives but instead seeks a viable approach to the experiences of Black men. He cites the challenges of using intersectionality as a critical lens to evaluate the experiences of Black men who are presumed to share the advantages of patriarchy and, when

they do not, are seen as somehow deviant.[38] In this regard, consider how Justin, a Black male clinical sociology faculty member in an elite western private university, describes the double marginalization he faces as a contingent faculty member and a scholar on social justice and race:

> It's twofold. . . . [M]y place in the hierarchy in terms of tenure. . . . [T]hat's part of the pie. The other half would have to be . . . because I am who I am and what I am talking about: this idea of calling out social justice and race, talking about intersectionality, talking about the white racial frame. That's beyond them. . . . So I think you are isolated because of skin tone but also by the manner in which I speak for equality and justice and point out the wrongs within systems in organizations.

Reinforcing Bonner's observation, Justin indicates that because he is a Black male speaking about racism, others may feel discomfort, as he is forcing them "to look in that mirror" in terms of their relationship to white supremacy and systemic oppression. Justin's keen description of his vulnerable positionality in the academic hierarchy sheds light on the double jeopardy faced by minoritized contingent faculty. While being male is not usually described as a minoritized identity, being a Black male has vastly different connotations and has led to extensive stereotyping in the United States. As Justin explains,

> You know, I'm dealing with a two-edged sword. One due to the stereotypes and thoughts about a Black male . . . and the lack of real power as a contingency sort of instructor. I think I'm challenged more than I would be if I was a white male or if I was a white female or if I was a Black female as well.

The pioneering work of sociologist Patricia Hill Collins provides a holistic framework for understanding the impact of intersectionality and

systems of power on minoritized contingent faculty in the higher education workplace. Her analysis highlights the "cognitive architecture" of intersectionality in terms of the overlapping core constructs of relationality, power, social inequality, social context, complexity, and social justice. The guiding premises of this framework clarify how these interlocking systems of power reinforce each other, yield complex social inequalities, and shape the differential experiences of both individuals and groups.[39]

The concept of relationality refers to the interdependence of race, gender, class, and other systems of power and the ways that these systems mutually construct each other. According to Collins, examination of the ways in which multiple structures of domination intersect allows "a clearer view of oppression," since, for example, minority women cannot use whiteness to neutralize the stigma of being Black or maleness to negate female subordination.[40] Columbia University professor Kimberlé Crenshaw further cautions against thinking about subordination as occurring along a single axis or category causing distortion in which, for example, Black women "are theoretically erased."[41]

In this regard, a study of fifty-nine Black female executives in the corporate sector offers significant insight into the phenomenon of intersectional invisibility in which individuals from two or more nondominant groups are both physically hypervisible and cognitively invisible. These executives experienced the tendency to be consistently overlooked, forgotten, or disregarded even as they held positions in the upper four levels of their organizations. Michaela, a managing director of financial services, described the challenge of having "a boss who really gives you no airtime, cancels every meeting, doesn't give you a sense of belonging." In navigating intersectional invisibility, the female executives have had to focus on the development of professional identities that aligned with others' expectations for their leadership in order to disconfirm negative stereotypes. The lack of acceptance in these roles has led them to scrutinize and carefully construct their professional image by focusing on style, appearance, and related factors.[42]

Another eye-opening study of 423 corporations, "Women in the Workplace 2021," found that women of color and women with other traditionally marginalized identities face a wider and more frequent range of microaggressions at work that cast them as outsiders. In addition, they receive less support and are twice as likely to feel burned out and three times as likely to report struggling to concentrate at work due to stress. Tellingly, the study reveals that women who are "the only" or "double onlys" in a workplace face greater discrimination, bias, and pressure to perform.[43]

Furthermore, the exclusion experienced by minoritized contingent faculty may in some cases be an extension of socially imposed barriers that individuals have experienced previously in the educational process. Several of our interviewees described the challenges they faced as first-generation college students coming from immigrant or low-income backgrounds. While in graduate school, they did not have any assistance from influential faculty sponsors in navigating the complex requirements of doctoral education or in subsequently obtaining a coveted tenure-track position. For example, Sahil, the Asian American queer contingent faculty member cited earlier, describes how his undergraduate experiences and the lack of sponsorship in unfamiliar academic environments substantially affected his later career trajectory:

> I really struggled as an undergraduate student. And I think because of that, I, you know, didn't pursue things like an independent study; I didn't write an honors thesis. I didn't have the best relationships with my faculty because they didn't reflect my identities or they were not as inclusive as I would have hoped that they were. And so, I think those things prevented me from going straight into a PhD program. I think my identity impacted it in terms of long-term trajectory. So, I think that, you know, if I had more privileged identities I probably would have a PhD by now and hopefully, you know, have a tenure-track position.

Tressie McMillan Cottom, professor at the University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill, further emphasizes that the perils of adjunctification are intensified for Black contingent faculty. These faculty may have already encountered significant structural barriers in the educational process leading to their subsequent difficulty in attaining tenured positions. In fact, Cottom sees adjunctification as a pathway to poverty: "Adjunct labor in higher education has revealed the structural flaw in our post-recession reality: The prescription for poverty—educational attainment—has become a condition *for* poverty."[44] In other words, the very myth of progress through educational attainment for underrepresented groups has led to an uncertain career pathway that can result in poverty and lack of stable employment.

THE EXPENDABLE NATURE OF CONTINGENT FACULTY APPOINTMENTS

Consider the ways that the pandemic has laid bare the underlying scaffolding of faculty inequality in the two-tiered employment model. The stories of contingent faculty losing their positions during the pandemic were so widespread that the *Chronicle of Higher Education* ran a special article titled "Forced Out" in April 2021. These reports of contingent faculty layoffs are just the most prominent instances that surfaced in press accounts. The devastating experiences of contingent faculty underscore their precarious working conditions, financial challenges, psychological demoralization, and the loss of identity that can result from nonrenewal. In some cases, individuals were already well advanced in their careers with few prospects of finding new positions. Ageism can impinge upon the career prospects of more senior faculty in a severely constrained academic job market. Just as significant, however, is the impact of the layoffs on the student educational experience and the loss to the scope and richness of educational programs. As academic programs are downsized

or even eliminated, students lose the opportunity to pursue important fields of interest and work closely with valued faculty mentors.

Among the shattering accounts included in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* article is that of Zoe Fox, math lecturer at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Fox (who uses the pronouns they, them, and theirs), described the emotional toll of not being reappointed in the fall of 2020 after two years of working at the institution. When told while teaching a summer course that there were no jobs, Fox described entering the first of the five stages of grief. Still retaining hope for reappointment, Fox penned a letter to department leaders that ultimately received no response.

Upon finally receiving notice of nonreappointment in the summer of 2020, Fox cried at the news but still had to show up to teach classes the next day. As Fox explained, "Losing your job is one of these cultural touchstones where everybody knows it sucks, but you don't actually realize how humiliating and terrifying it is until it happens to you."[45] Later, after living on unemployment insurance and a stipend from the faculty union, Fox found a job as a staff organizer for the university's graduate union. The realization that faculty are expendable and that the university is run like a business became clear to Fox from this experience. In Fox's poignant words, "Cutting costs means cutting me."

The working conditions at the University of Illinois at Chicago for contingent faculty are quite typical. Although both part- and full-time contingent faculty at the university are represented by the United Faculty union, the contract only requires notification of renewal (or nonrenewal) of fall NTT appointments by the preceding June 1. Little recourse exists for appeal or reconsideration. Yet, when fully 5 percent of NTT faculty were not renewed in 2020, the union submitted a letter of protest signed by 250 faculty and allies to the university administration. When no response was forthcoming, the union began to pressure the Board of Trustees by holding a press conference and sending a letter timed to

coincide with the board meeting. In the press conference, Jeff Schuhrke, a visiting lecturer and contingent faculty member, emphasized the prevailing administrative view that NTT faculty are disposable and expendable in a system that creates anxiety and uncertainty and therefore hurts the students who rely on these faculty.[46]

Other stories of contingent faculty layoffs reverberated across the educational landscape, with a particularly significant toll taken on small liberal arts colleges. Take the situation of Lenora Warren, an African American and Latina lecturer in the Department of English at Ithaca College who was laid off from her teaching position in African American literature. Warren holds a PhD in English from New York University and had left a tenure-track position at Colgate University to be with her husband, who is executive director of the Cornell Prison Education Program. Warren's academic achievements include a book on abolitionism and insurrection in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. When notified of the nonrenewal of her contingent teaching position, she found herself "demoralized" with "a sense of total identity loss." She was perplexed at how the college claimed to believe in diversity but was cutting that part of the curriculum. Discouraged and dispirited, Warren stopped attending the administration's faculty forums once she realized that "the 'we' being referenced were the ones who were staying, whose jobs were safe—not the ones being fired. It isn't even my college anymore."[47]

On of the most egregious cases of contingent faculty nonrenewals during the pandemic was the massive layoff of 2,800 adjunct faculty and 1 part-time staff in the twenty-five-campus system of the City University of New York (CUNY). Announced on July 1, 2020, this sweeping action underscored the vulnerability of part-time instructional faculty despite their long-standing contributions to the institutions they served. As was the situation at a number of other institutions, the timing of the layoffs occurred amid an already bleak employment situation and appeared to

contradict the commitment to employees that should have been at the forefront of institutional human resources policy.

The impersonal way the layoffs were communicated reinforced the disposable nature of adjunct faculty appointments. Significant prior service to the institutions by these faculty appeared to have minimal impact. For example, longtime adjuncts such as Bernard A. Bilawsky at Queensborough Community College, who had taught business courses for forty-eight years as a "temporary" employee, were only sent a three-line form email about their reappointment.[48] As Bilawsky recounts,

> Along with hundreds of other adjuncts, at the end of June, I received a three-line form email from the college HR director informing me that I would not be reappointed for the fall semester. My years as an adjunct started in the spring semester of 1972. Yes, that's correct. Forty-eight years ago I became a "temporary" employee. Since that time, I was offered courses each semester by each of the department's four different chairpersons, until now. I received not a personal word in regard to my impending departure from the college. Nothing. *Not from the department chair and not from the director of HR, in spite of both of them knowing me for decades.*

Monika Pacholcyk, adjunct lecturer at LaGuardia Community College and Baruch College, also described her nonreappointment as "extended agony" after more than twenty years at LaGuardia and twelve years at Baruch. At age fifty-three, Pacholcyk lost her health insurance and had to pay the rent for her one-bedroom Queens apartment with unemployment insurance and cover her burgeoning medical expenses with Medicaid.[49]

Even prior to the pandemic, adjunct salaries at CUNY had made it difficult to earn a subsistence-level living in New York City. As Rose Squillacote, adjunct assistant professor of political science at Hunter College, observed, "Currently, if I were to work 'full-time' as an adjunct (and my earnings are in the higher range of what adjuncts make),

teaching six classes a year, I would make $30,000 a year pre-tax—about $19 an hour."[50]

Pushback to CUNY's large-scale downsizing of the contingent faculty ranks occurred at a subsequent hearing held by the Higher Education, Civil Service, and Labor Committees of the New York City Council in November 2020. CUNY's senior vice chancellor and chief financial officer, Matthew Sapienza, testified that despite the receipt by CUNY of $251 million from the federal government in the 2020 Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, the cuts were justified by a 5.1 percent drop in enrollment, with additional expenses arising from the pandemic and a state budget cut by Governor Andrew Cuomo of $2 billion, or 20 percent of the budget.[51]

Unsatisfied by this explanation, city council Higher Education Committee chair Inez Barron pressed Sapienza and Pamela Silverblatt, senior vice chancellor for labor relations, further: "We know that CUNY relies on adjuncts for the bulk of the instruction," she said. "So why are we now gutting that body that is responsible for delivering that instruction?" And Barbara Bowen, president of the Professional Staff Congress/CUNY that represents the employees, chastised the university for its rush to lay off adjuncts: "They rushed to lay off adjuncts even before cuts were applied, revealing the deep structural problem of contingency."[52]

The financial justification offered by Sapienza for the large-scale layoffs was later seriously undercut when a proposal to hire the McKinsey Corporation for a $3 million no-bid consulting contract to develop a plan for reopening the university was set to come to a vote at the April 2021 board meeting. After a tidal wave of public pressure, the proposal was pulled from the agenda at the last minute.[53] CUNY's mixed message of considering multimillion-dollar consulting contracts while conducting layoffs of low-paid adjuncts appeared to be at odds with its long-standing commitment to provide education to working-class families. In fact, the median household income of CUNY students is less than $40,000 a year, and 38 percent of the students come from households earning less than $20,000 per year.[54]

In another prominent example of mass adjunct layoffs during the pandemic, Rutgers University (also known as the State University of Jersey) asked its adjunct workforce to help transition to remote instruction in the spring of 2020. Yet, after the adjuncts pitched in and retooled for the change, when the pandemic struck Rutgers did not rehire three hundred adjuncts for the next academic year. This move was particularly astonishing, since 30 percent of undergraduate courses at Rutgers are taught by part-time adjuncts. Critics noted that the cost of rehiring the adjuncts for both the fall and spring semesters was less than the salary of the head football coach, who was earning $4 million in the first year of an eight-year contract.[55] Once again, we see a disconnection between claims of financial difficulties when it comes to the meager salaries of part-time faculty and the willingness to spend exorbitant sums of money for other administrative purposes.

Compounding the difficulties, on a number of college campuses a clear blow was delivered to faculty labor unions as universities and colleges invoked fiscal exigency clauses to justify faculty layoffs. Between 2013 and 2019, significant growth in the unionization of contingent faculty in both public and private universities had occurred, with 118 newly certified bargaining units and a total of 36,264 members added between 2013 and 2019.[56] The pandemic revealed the inability of collective bargaining units to protect faculty, both tenured and nontenured, in the face of budget crises, resulting in the wholesale elimination of majors, programs, and departments. Although NTT faculty have union representation at both Rutgers and CUNY, fiscal exigency and emergency clauses in their contractual agreements permitted the implementation of large-scale layoffs. In another example, at the University of Akron the arbitrator, Jack Buettner, ruled in binding arbitration that the "catastrophic circumstances" permitted the elimination of unionized faculty positions, including tenured faculty incumbents.[57] After the dust settled, 67 faculty were laid off, and 21 retired or voluntarily resigned. [58] In spite of these difficult financial circumstances, researchers indicate that

NTT faculty have been important catalysts for change on college campuses particularly at the localized level.[59]

Looking at the bigger picture, many public universities and colleges including Rutgers, CUNY, and the University of Akron have suffered from the continuous shrinking of state support. As we shall discuss further in chapter 1, declining state support for public higher education has caused colleges and universities to make up budgetary shortfalls with increased tuition and fees. Today, tuition and fees represent the major source of revenue for public higher education.[60]

QUESTIONS THE BOOK SEEKS TO ANSWER

Although a substantial body of research has focused on the working conditions of contingent faculty over the past few decades, scant attention has been paid to the differential experiences of minoritized faculty in these roles. The dilemmas posed by a rapidly changing academic landscape and increased hostility to diversity in the United States have intensified the challenges for contingent faculty from minoritized groups. Due to the very limited literature on the experiences of minoritized contingent faculty, this book seeks to explore the disparate workplace realities encountered by these faculty in both part- and full-time NTT roles. Our research focuses on four-year institutions both private and public, although we include associate degree colleges with four-year degrees in the overall data analysis shared in chapter 2.

The book focuses on the following policy and research questions:

1. How have neoliberal trends, political partisanship, and a tightening of administrative control in colleges and universities accelerated the movement to a two-tiered faculty instructional model?
2. What are the discrete challenges faced by minoritized faculty in contingent roles? How has the intersectionality of minoritized characteristics such as race, gender, sexual orientation, gender

identity, first-generation status, disability, and age affected their employment experiences?
3. What specific strategies have assisted minoritized contingent faculty in coping with the stress and precariousness of their employment status?
4. How can institutions adopt proactive workforce strategies and policies to address the employment conditions of contingent faculty?

Our primary audience for the book is presidents, provosts, chief financial officers, academic and administrative leaders, department chairs, tenure-line and contingent faculty, and diversity officers as well as those involved in university strategic planning initiatives and staffs of state/local legislative entities responsible for supporting academic goals.

METHODOLOGY FOR THE STUDY

An extensive literature review was undertaken for the book, including a broad range of resources on contingent faculty and the limited research pertaining to the experiences of minoritized contingent faculty. We approached the existing literature on contingent faculty using extended case methodology to formulate the questions asked and assess the findings from twenty in-depth interviews conducted with contingent faculty and diversity officers/administrators. The extended case method focuses on "theoretical gaps or silences" in the literature that may result from overlooking or failing to address particular aspects of empirical phenomena.[61] Specifically, we found that while the existing literature largely addresses overall working conditions for contingent faculty, only a partial understanding of these conditions can be obtained without examining the impact of minoritized social identities and intersectionality on work experiences. As such, our book seeks to expand and amplify existing theory on the tenuous employment conditions of contingent faculty and illustrate how minoritized social identities including race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, age, class,

and religion can intensify experiences of marginalization and exclusion. We draw further from the interpretive case method in examining the details derived from our interview findings to illuminate larger macro-realities in the higher education workplace.[62]

Take, for example, the reverse discrimination complaint filed by a white male student against one of our interviewees, Monica, the only Black female lecturer in her department in a largely white midwestern research university. The student escalated the complaint to the provost when he received a grade of B instead of an A. As we detail further in chapter 3, the parents of the student refused to believe that Monica had a doctorate and claimed that she had lied about her qualifications. The mother of the student wrote a note claiming that the family was not racist, stating, "We have black people in our family so we couldn't possibly be racist." Monica's colleagues did not understand the extent to which the situation derived from her minoritized identity. As Monica herself observed, "I think it would have been different if I were a man. . . . Obviously it was about race and so the intersection of race and gender." The data from this interview enhances our understanding of the precarious nature of contingent faculty appointments by revealing how such contingency can be magnified by the intersectionality of minoritized identities.

In this study we refer to NTT faculty as part- or full-time contingent faculty. The term "adjunct" is also used to describe part-time contingent faculty. The terms "clinical professor" and "professor of practice" refer to an NTT appointment in which the faculty member's work involves practical instruction of students such as in medicine, law, and engineering.

All but one of the interviews were conducted virtually via Zoom over an eight-month period between May and December 2021; one interview was via telephone. The interview questions covered the terms of the interviewees' appointments and their experiences in teaching. Open-ended questions were posed relating to appointment renewal, course assignments, student evaluations, and relationship with the department

chair, as were questions regarding possible differential treatment based on social identities. The interviews were conducted by the first author, and notes on the salient points of the transcripts were compared by the coauthors. The interviews were approximately one hour in length. Informed consent was obtained for interviewing purposes, and the participants were assured of their confidentiality. All but three of the interviewees chose to remain anonymous. The interviewees were provided transcribed passages selected for use in the study for their review and permission. A profile of the interviewees and a summary of key demographic data are included in the appendix.

Analysis of data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System served as the basis for the summary tables in chapter 2. We focused on full- and part-time contingent faculty data from four-year institutions including associate degree institutions that include baccalaureate degrees, analyzed data by institutional type, and examined the relationship of full-time tenure-line faculty to contingent faculty over a five-decade period.

We begin our study in chapter 1 by examining the systemic factors that have led to the evolution of a two-tiered faculty model. In order to understand this consequential shift, we focus on the progressive impact of the forces of neoliberalism. In this context, we highlight the troubling convergence of diminished funding for public higher education by conservative state legislatures with rising student diversity.