Every Week Should be Campus Equity Week: Toward a Labor Theory of Agency in Higher Education

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On October 31, 2001, the University of Wisconsin-Madison Teaching Assistants' Association (AFT 3220) sponsored a TAA Freak Show. The "Freak Show" featured an "old-fashioned carnival barker" who invited people to "step right up" and gaze upon the "astonishing, shocking, and bewildering" spectacles of the modern university:

> The World's Smallest and Most Overcrowded Office!
>
> The Tiniest Pay Raise Ever!
>
> The Oldest Limited Term Employee on the Planet ('can't die until after she can retire — and has been working on a "limited" term contract for decades with neither health insurance nor retirement benefits, let alone a decent wage."
>
> The Tatooed TA!" (he's tattooed because he is covered with sticky notes reminding him of all of his appointments with students "he carries the bulk of the teaching on campus, and is too overworked to write his appointments in a datebook."

(CEW Action Plans, University of Wisconsin-Madison).

At Central Connecticut State University a large tent was erected on campus in order to finally give lecturers office space. All week they held office hours in the tent, charging 25 cents per consultation. The same campus also sponsored 1) a "Bake Sale" for faculty salaries, because part-timers deserve more than crumbs; 2) a medical clinic which dispensed cough drops, to stress the high cost of healthcare for the uninsured. The Halloween event in Chicago billed itself as a healthcare Horror show! (Brodsky).

WORKS AND DAYS 41/42, Vol. 21, Nos. 1&2, 2003

> In Chicago faculty stood next to a life-sized replica of an elephant and handed out snack packages to passers-by, since pachyderms and part-timers both work for peanuts (Brodsky).
>
> At Syracuse University, members of the Students Coalition on Organized Labor perform a skit entitled "Family Feud" whereby undergraduate students role-playing part-time faculty and administrators squared off over questions about budgets, salaries, office space, and other topics.

On October 27-November 3rd, 2001, organizers and activists staged Campus Equity Week (CEW), a national and international week of action on contingent faculty issues, "in over 25 US states and 6 Canadian provinces" (Berry 1.1). Utilizing "wry humor" (Brodsky) and good old fashioned organizing tactics—street theater, petitions, information tabling, rallies, legislative hearings, union drives, and mass screenings of Barbara Wolf's insightful documentaries on contingent academic labor[1]—part-time faculty, joining with full-time faculty, graduate students, campus staff and workers, and community activists used CEW to raise awareness and to achieve strategic goals. As Joe Berry, one of the chief organizers of the Chicago Coalition on Contingent Academic Labor put it, Campus Equity Week 2001 "demonstrated that there is now a national movement among the literally hundreds of thousands of adjuncts, part-timers, lecturers, and visiting professors who make up the casualized contingent majority in the college classrooms today" (1.1).

Campus Equity Week 2001 and the upcoming Campus Equity Week 2003 (slated for October 27-November 3, 2003) enact and promise to enact what Marc Bousquet has referred to as a "labor theory" of agency in higher education founded on a "rhetoric of solidarity, aimed at constituting, nurturing, and empowering collective action by persons in groups" ("Composition" 2). In contrast to a managerial theory of agency in higher education, which Bousquet defines as a emphasis on "institutionally-focussed pragmatism," "acceptance of market logic," and "collaboration with a vocational and technical model of education" (3), a labor theory of agency promises to open up spaces in higher education for worker solidarity and alliances across the lines of rank and position. A labor theory of agency in higher education is particularly urgent as the widely documented corporatization and globalization of higher education (see Nelson, Noble, Martin, Rhoades, Slaughter and Leslie) has accelerated the casualization of the higher education work-force. Nowhere is this pattern more evident than in the overuse and exploitation of contingent academic faculty, the focal point of Campus Equity Week organizing. The American Association of University Professors indicates that 43 percent or more of faculty at American colleges and universities

teach in part-time and non-tenure-track positions, and these positions comprise over half of all faculty appointments in the U.S.

With the increasing casualization of higher education, we need a broad-based labor movement established on the model of "cross-sectoral activism," the solidarity that can be built between different constituencies and groups in the higher education workforce and in our surrounding communities (Moser). To continue to forge such an inclusive and diverse labor movement, higher education workers need rhetorics and organizing strategies that speak to multiple constituencies on intersecting labor issues. My essay addresses one specific front on which such a "labor theory of agency "is being realized: contingent labor activist movements,[2] in general, and Campus Equity Week in particular. I have chosen Campus Equity Week 2001 as a watershed moment in academic labor history as it involved the first national and international mobilization of contingent faculty and their supporters—the first ever of this type and scale. Chicago COCAL activist Joe Berry characterizes Campus Equity Week 2001 as the first-time contingent faculty "made a concerted noise continent-wide" (1.1). Given the unprecedented scope and scale of Campus Equity Week 2001, faculty activists of all ranks and stripes seeking to address the casualization of higher education have much to learn from Campus Equity Week's example and organizing tactics, namely its focus on three overlapping organizing tactics: a focus on grassroots community organizing intersecting with international organizing, electronic organizing and information swapping, and cross-sectoral activism.

To understand Campus Equity Week, though, one must understand its placement within a framework of contingent faculty and graduate student labor action that has been ongoing over the past decade with roots that extend back to the 1970s. In the U.S. and Canada, growing unionization of graduate students and contingent faculty coupled with campus, municipal, state-wide, and national and international organizing efforts are creating the momentum for a revitalized academic labor movement among academics and a range of university workers, including staff, cafeteria, and physical plant workers. Universities employ a "vast army of clerical workers, food-service workers, janitors, and other employees whose job is to maintain the physical plant," notes labor historian Robin Kelley (146), and it is no accident that many of these workers are women[3] and people of color. Hence, it is important for unions and organizing efforts to resist low-paid wage work and resist race and gender-based oppression as part and parcel of class oppression (150).

Fortunately, that work is well underway. Coalition building among university workers and the recent local and national campaigns for Fair Wage/Living Wage Initiatives and student-led international campaigns against sweatshop labor are indicators of an important shift in business as usual at American colleges and universities. Barbara Gottfried and Gary Zabel refer to the growing emphasis on labor and social justice issues in American college

universities as "labor-based social movements" (207). These labor-based social movements are "self-consciously fluid and transient, coalescing when needed and dissolving when the need is past" (208). These movements also involve an "informal grass-roots organizational style" and "appeals to justice and community" (207). The contingent faculty movements and organizing strategies I address here are part of these labor-based social movements and also demonstrate an approach to contingent faculty organizing that is likely to work among a fragmented work force. Contingent faculty often occupy temporary positions at one campus or are freeway flyers at several campuses. Some contingent faculty may have offices, mailboxes, and access to workplace-provided computers, but far too many contingent faculty do not have access to these basic items. The lack of basic access to the normal channels of academic communication also makes it difficult for organizers to contact contingent faculty, to track them down through department directories or find mailboxes or offices where they can leave organizing literature. Many colleges and universities are only too happy to conceal contingent faculty contact information or to claim it is inaccessible. There is also the threat of non-renewal of appointment, of not being "asked back" to teach if contingent faculty are too openly vocal about their working conditions. Moreover, such faculty members are on the move much of the time and often exhausted and overwhelmed by making a living through contingent positions. Therefore, fragmentation, mobility, overwork, and threat of non-renewal of appointment often prevent contingent faculty from developing "the workplace bonds that sustain concerted action" (Gottfried and Zabel 210). Vincent Tirelli summarizes the problem succinctly: "The fragmentation of work roles in the post-Fordist era places obstacles in the path of successful mobilization of workers and raises the question of what, if any, strategies and tactics might help to alleviate exploitative conditions" (182). In this essay, I take up the challenges to organizing posed by Tirelli and address the strategies and tactics that contingent faculty and their allies are utilizing to struggle toward employment equity in the fragmented, Post-fordist university workplace.

Contingent Faculty Organizing: Municipal, State-Wide, and National/ International Organizing

Over the past decade, municipal organizing in cities like Boston, statewide organizing (particularly in the states California and Washington), and national and international organizing efforts around contingent labor issues via the Coalition on Contingent Academic Labor (COCAL) have grown. Much of this organizing has been sparked by COCAL, a Coalition that was formed as a result of three academic conferences held in the late nineties in Washington D.C., New York City, and Boston. COCAL was birthed from a strategic alliance of graduate students and contingent faculty at the first National Congress of Adjunct-Part-time, Graduate Teaching Assistants, and Non-Tenure-Track Faculty held in

Washington, D.C. in December 1996. At the same time, across town, the Graduate Student Caucus of the MLA sponsored a panel "Making the MLA More Proactive," which engaged part-time faculty issues. Following the initial conference, a second Congress was held in April 1998 at the CUNY Graduate Center. At that conference, the group met under a new organizational name The Coalition on Contingent Academic Labor (COCAL) and formed a steering committee that designated a third conference in Boston in 1999 hosted by members of the University of Massachusetts Boston Part-time Faculty Committee of the Faculty-Staff Union (Concordia). The alliance between contingent faculty activists and graduate student activists is not particularly surprising as these two groups share common issues and a common agenda of combating the casualization of higher education. Also, graduate students and contingent faculty serve as an interchangeable labor pool "with individuals moving back and forth between the two groups and often simultaneously functioning in both" (Thompson 2).

Since those first three conferences, COCAL has held an annual conference every year that serves as crucial space for contingent faculty, graduate students, full-time faculty, and union representatives to gather, exchange organizing information, and plan international events like Campus Equity Week. What initially began as a national coalition has now become an international coalition with significant participation from Canadian unions. The fifth annual COCAL conference was hosted by the Concordia University Part-time Faculty Association, one of the largest independent unions in Canada, in Montreal, Canada; Canadian universities were also active in the 2001 Campus Equity Week campaign.

Structurally, COCAL is governed by "a loosely affiliated group of contingent faculty activists" on the organizing principle of local autonomy, " an effective way for dealing with the wide variations that exist in [working] conditions, political traditions, and language" (Moser). With no ongoing staff or regularized budget, COCAL is "governed by a shifting steering committee of volunteers that is constituted according to the task at hand" (American Association of University Professors "About"). COCAL has been a particularly effective organizing arm for the contingent faculty movement, serving not only as the primary organizing group responsible for initiating Campus Equity Week, but as a proponent of municipal organizing. Municipal chapters of COCAL have been initiated in Boston and Chicago, and the Boston chapter working in cooperation with the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) has initiated a successful municipal organizing campaign.

According to Gary Zabel and Harry Brill, Boston "has the highest concentration of colleges and universities of any city in the world. There are 58 institutions of higher learning within a ten mile radius of the urban center" (1). Recognizing the significance of this critical mass of educational institutions and its accompanying critical mass of mobile contingent faculty who work at more than one institution, members of the Boston area Chapter of COCAL and

the American Association of University Professor teamed up in 1998 to undertake a contingent faculty municipal organizing campaign. The time was ripe for organizing in Boston. The example of full-time-part-time worker solidarity was in the air with the 1997 Teamster's Strike against the United Parcel Service (UPS). The militant action of Teamster picketers in Sommerville, a suburb near Boston, where "28 picketers were arrested for trying to stop truckers from scabbing" (Zabel and Brill 4), caught both local and national attention. Inspired by the Teamster's victory, contingent faculty members of the university's Faculty Staff Union at UM-B, an affiliate of the National Education Association, launched their own campaign to improve their union contract, managing eventually to win three year contracts that guaranteed "1) half-time, salaried status and full medical, dental, and pension benefits for all part-timers teaching 2 courses per semester (currently more than 2/3rds of union part-timers). 2) A 21% increase in base pay to $4000 per course. 3) Additional 'appropriate professional responsibilities' compensated by a cumulative $200 bump in each semester of the new contract. 4) An additional 16% wage increase over the life of the contract" (Zabel and Brill 19). Inspired by the solidarity of the Teamster strike and fortified by this recent victory, the Boston coalition undertook a municipal organizing project that continues to this day—one that is bound to set the stage for labor actions in cities where contingent faculty are heavily utilized.

To those outside looking in, AAUP's participation in Boston's municipal organizing campaign may come as a surprise. Most academics tend to associate AAUP with the "center" of academic life, with its staunch protection of academic freedom and tenure rights for full-time, tenure-track faculty. However, AAUP is increasingly becoming a supporter of contingent faculty rights and improved working conditions, issuing reports on non-tenure-line faculty and making recommendations for improving contingent faculty working conditions. However, in the nineties, the organization upped by the ante and began to pursue a more active and visible role by hiring a full-time national field representative, Rich Moser, to help part-time faculty organize on their campuses. One of Moser's first moves was to begin work on the Boston municipal organizing campaign.

The Boston project began with a survey of part-time faculty to determine their working conditions (wages of $2,200 per course, few with health benefits, no role in governance) (Moser). Also the Boston coalition worked through the third annual COCAL conference and other meetings to launch the multi-campus coalition. As Boston-COCAL activists Gary Zabel and Harry Brill describe it, the Boston campaign was and is meant to "shape the character of adjunct work in the city as a whole" (25). The plan, as reported by Zabel and Brill, was originally to set city-wide standards for wages and working conditions, launch campaigns that highlight campuses that fail to meet the standard and make those campuses the focal point of organizing. Such campaigns would make use of strategic alliance building through cross-sectoral activism, drawing

in "students, staff, and full-time faculty" and would also make "appeal[s] to churches, community organizations, and unions for support, engage in postering, leafleting, informational picketing and so on, all by way of pressuring the administrations concerned to meet the basic standard" (25). Zabel and Brill also mention the eventuality of creating "a hiring hall that would supply qualified adjuncts to institutions meeting the standard, withdraw labor from those that do not, establish a portable benefits package, and otherwise enable adjuncts to improve their lot throughout the city and its environs" (25).

Thus far, the campaign's outcomes are encouraging. The campaign has helped full-and part-time faculty at Suffolk University revamp their AAUP chapter and gain pay raises for both parties and governance rights for part-time faculty. COCAL has also initiated demonstrations at Emerson College, Northeastern University, and Massachusetts Bay Community College and has gained popular press and radio coverage of the working conditions of part-time faculty. Student newspapers have run editorials and pieces on contingent faculty issues, and student consciousness has been raised that the professors in their classrooms are often not the tenured or tenure-track faculty that their colleges and universities imply or promise. COCAL has also built strategic alliances with Boston-area labor groups such as the Campaign on Contingent Work and Jobs With Justice, a coalition that took on the banner of the University Organizing Project (UOP), " an umbrella organization of campus unions, student groups, faculty associations, and individuals" (Moser). UOP has circulated a "campus charter" that establishes standards for fair employment for all campus workers. With its vision of an inclusive campus community, the UOP promises to provide solidarity for university workers seeking economic justice and a voice in their working lives." Commemoration of the 1979 strike at Boston University also was a key event (see Moser), creating historical consciousness of past struggles in light of continuing struggles.

The true litmus test of course, is organizing. Six union organizing campaigns on Boston campuses were launched as part of the Boston coalitions' efforts, and one has resulted in a landmark victory at Emerson College in 2001.[4] Contingent faculty at Emerson College, a private institution, "voted by a three-to-one margin to be represented in collective bargaining by the Affiliated Faculty of Emerson College/American Association of University Professors (AFEC/AAUP)" (American Association of University Professors "Emerson"). This 240 member bargaining unit is seeking to improve their working conditions and gain benefits. This is a landmark victory for two reasons: this is the first all-adjunct unit in the Boston area and also the "first union triumph in the Boston area since the U.S. Supreme Court's 1980 decision in National Labor Relations Board v. Yeshiva University, which effectively stopped organizing at private colleges and universities" (American Association of University Professors "Emerson").

The Boston municipal, multicampus approach offers those of us seeking to address contingent employment several important

organizing strategies. First, it shows that multicampus coalitions seeking to work on cross-campus contingent faculty issues can be workable and successful. All too often single-campus labor coalitions built solely from one group such as graduate students or contingent faculty break apart after achieving their stated goals or dissolve when specific individuals or clusters of individuals take other positions or discontinue their involvement due to burn-out or other priorities. A multicampus, municipal coalition, however, allows organizers from across campuses to build up and maintain a critical mass of activists from diverse walks of life. In addition, a municipal approach minimizes "the risk to faculty participants by allowing them to be activists on neighboring campuses rather than on their own" (Moser). For contingent faculty and for graduate students, this is a particularly significant feature of municipal organizing as reprisals—whether it be through threat of non-renewal of employment or denial of letters of recommendation—are omnipresent and well-documented (see Nelson *Will*).

The Boston coalition also illustrates the efficacy of academics building strategic alliances with other labor-rights groups such as Jobs with Justice, the Campaign Against Contingent Work, and Scholars, Writers, and Artists for Social Justice (SASWJ). Community organizations and students are becoming increasingly aware of the casualization of higher education and its links to the globalized economy. Undergraduate students who have supported worker rights campaigns for sweatshop workers in Asia and Mexico are now increasingly becoming aware of the university's implication in the casualization of labor among multiple segments of university employees, from cafeteria workers and physical plant workers to graduate teaching assistants and research assistants, adjuncts, non-tenure-line instructors, and library staff workers. Student involvement in the Boston campaign has been crucial. For instance, the successful contingent faculty unionization drive at Emerson College was strongly supported by students: "Over 700 students signed a petition endorsing the faculty's union effort" (Moser). Finally, the Boston COCAL campaign has allowed for a challenging of undemocratic union structures (Gottfried and Zabel 220)—structures that prioritize full-time faculty interests over that of contingent faculty.

Gary Zabel and Harry Brill liken the organizing tactics of the COCAL-Boston coalition to those of the Industrialized Workers of the World's (IWW or Wobblies) early twentieth century organizing campaigns "among "hoboes," "harvest stiffs," and other flex-workers of the era: "The wobblies crafted a mobile organizing strategy for a footloose workforce, agitating in temporary encampments, riding the rails, concentrating its forces on short notice wherever it made sense to wage a battle" (Zabel and Brill). The connection between the Wobblies and the Boston COCAL-AAUP municipal campaign, however, is not merely coincidental; Wobblies in the Boston area have been involved in the municipal campaign, and the success of the campaign has not gone unnoticed. The seeds of a potential municipal, multicampus coalition were planted in

Chicago during Campus Equity Week 2001 (Berry 1.9-1.11), and exploratory efforts at multicampus organizing have been launched at the Auraria Higher Education Center campuses in Denver, Colorado (Schell "Toward" 13).

Notable as well have been statewide organizing campaigns. Statewide organizing of contingent faculty at public campuses, especially community colleges, has become a promising trend. In the 1970s, the California Association of Part-time instructors (CAPI) succeeded in initiating "a serious debate over whether part-timers should be included in bargaining units with tenured full-timers under the then-new collective bargaining law" (Berry 1.2). As a result, collective bargaining units that contained both part-time and full-time faculty became the trend, with "a pattern of both unionization and better conditions in California than in most of the rest of the nation" (Berry 1.2). This strong history of organizing in California has continued in the 1990s with the revitalization of statewide contingent faculty organizing. In 1998, the newly revitalized California Part-time Faculty Association, a statewide organization of community college faculty, began to make employment equity for part-time faculty and quality education for students their main focus (Fraser). To achieve this goal, CPFA members worked and continue to work tirelessly to encourage fair labor practices, educate the public about part-time faculty issues, provide resources to their membership, forge alliances with other statewide and national part-time faculty activist organizations, and use the legislative process to gain access to particular goals ("CPFA Mission Statement"). With their website, newsletter, and frequent local, regional, and statewide meetings and conferences, the organization reaches out to the over 30,000 adjunct faculty across the California Community College system and draws membership from "40 districts" and "over 50 colleges" (Fraser). Perhaps most significantly, the CPFA has begun to influence the legislative process. In the spring of 2000, organizers from the CPFA conducted an Action 2000 campaign (A2K) to draw attention to part-time faculty working conditions in California; activists collected 40,000 petition signatures from 86 California Community College campuses. A2K's successful public awareness campaign and petition drive sparked California Governor Gray Davis to make a $62 million dollar commitment to correct inequities in part-time faculty compensation (Canadian Association of University Teachers). Fifty-seven million was actually distributed. As I will discuss later in this essay, CPFA also hosted the 2001 Coalition on Contingent Academic Labor Conference (COCAL IV) that launched Campus Equity Week 2001.

A hallmark feature of CPFA organizing campaigns is their uncanny ability to combine factual, hard-driving data and information with rhetorically effective, eye-catching verbal and visual performances that bring home the realities and ironies of contingent faculty life. Like sports teams seeking to embody the spirit of their organization, CPFA has a mascot, the Freeway Flyer, a contingent faculty member dressed up in a bird suit who appears at their ral-

lies, meetings, and public information campaigns. A press announcement released before Action 2000 Coalition (A2K) week characterizes the Freeway Flyer as follows: "The Freeway Flyer, a feathered professor in academic gown and mortarboard, will be migrating northward throughout Part-time Faculty Equity Week. The large bird, who has said "I'm s-o-o smart! I teach at five caw-caw-cawlleges!" often calls out its distinctive cry, "cheep, cheep, cheap," as it flies from one campus to another on its pedagogical itinerary" ("Large"). During A2K Week in California, Campus Equity Week 2001, and other significant organizing events, the Freeway Flyer visited multiple locations, handing out freeway flyer dollars that signify that part-time faculty make 33 cents on the dollar that full-time faculty make. In addition, at CPFA events, a theatrical troupe called the Rabble-A-players performs songs and skits that effectively bring to light the realities of part-time life, including performances such as "Full-time Psychic"—a commercial for a psychic to help freeway flyers keep track of their many classes or "Get Compensated"—a quiz show in which faculty and administrators battle over funding for salary increases allocated by the Governor" ("List"). Through a dramatic performance and more traditional organizing tactics such as petitions and legislative hearings, CPFA works to communicate that contingent faculty working conditions are students' learning conditions. Perhaps this link is nowhere more apparent than in the memo history instructor Dave Bush sent to his students at Butte College in Oroville, California—a memo posted on the CPFA website as an organizing tool:

> Butte College Student:
>
> Do you go to the dentist and expect her to clean your teeth for free? Do you expect a doctor to mend your broken arm for free? These are noble occupations. Each provides a needed service, but we don't expect to receive this assistance for free. We realize that these people deserve compensation for their time and expertise.
>
> Butte College considers office hours an important component for student success, so it pays full-time faculty to meet students outside of class. However, your College is refusing to pay part-time faculty for providing this same service, even though the State of California has provided funds to offset the cost of this assistance. Thus, if I, a part-timer, meet students outside of class, I'm giving away my services for free. That is not right. Beginning in the spring of 2000, I will no longer subsidize the College by donating my time to provide office hours. Any questions concerning class will only be addressed in class. I'm sorry for this inconvenience.
>
> If you feel frustrated and upset, you have a good reason. You pay the same tuition for all your classes, yet you

> receive a different level of service based on the employment status of your teacher. If I were you, I would complain to the administration and to your legislators in Sacramento.
>
> Sandra Acebo, President of Butte College
> 530/895-2484 AceboSa@Butte.cc.ca.us
>
> Tim Leslie, State Senator
> 916/445-5788 senator.leslie@sen.ca.gov
>
> Sam Aanestad, Assembly Representative
> 916/319-2003 sam.aanestad@asm.ca.gov
>
> I encourage you to make your voice heard.
>
> Dave Bush, History Instructor
> Permatemp at:
> Shasta College, Redding, CA — 1994 to Present
> Butte College, Oroville, CA — 1996 to Present

Dave Bush's rallying cry to his students is significant, for far too often contingent faculty have felt the need to hide their contingent status, their lack of reasonable compensation, and their lack of professional treatment. Walter Jacobsohn refers to this process as "adjunct passing," whereby contingent faculty pass themselves off as respected professionals who are adequately compensated (171). Dave Bush, the Community College permatemp in the memo above, refuses to "pass;" his memo makes it impossible to ignore his working conditions, his marginal status, and, most significantly, he calls his students to action, identifying places and individuals to whom they can go to address the difference between what they are tacitly promised, a professor who can devote his/her full attention to their academic well-being, and what they are granted, a professor who is so ill-paid that he is not compensated for his office hours.

Yet the CPFA's battle to address contingent faculty issues is not solely about compensation for contingent faculty, it is about the link between employment equity and quality education. As Chris Storer, Legislative Analyst for the CPFA, argues, it is about the "faculty having a real opportunity to undo some of the damage to our profession, our institutions, and our students, damage that has occurred over the past 30 years as faculty work has been unbundled and degraded by the increasing corporatization of higher education under the guise of cost cutting forced by underfunding." CPFA's campaigns also have set the bar for contingent faculty organizing across the U.S., sparking innovative, creative, and performative organizing tactics that make the link between employment equity and quality working conditions an immediate and tangible one. During Campus Equity Week 2001, many local campuses drew on the web-based resources such as skits and songs that CPFA generously provided (see "List").

Contingent faculty at Community Colleges in Washington State have shared a similarly strong organizing history to that of California, although their numbers are fewer and their tactics slightly different. The Washington Part-Time Faculty Association (WPFA) co-founded in 1996 focuses on equal pay for equal work for part-time faculty. Although the WPFA membership is not large, they have effectively utilized their numbers by undertaking email campaigns, protesting at the state capitol, and writing opinion pieces in local venues. Deploying the legislative process and the court system, The WPFA has worked with key legislators to gain a $25 million increase in part-time faculty salaries and to gain approved retirement benefits and sick leave for contingent faculty. The WPFA with key leadership from co-founder Keith Hoeller, an adjunct philosophy and psychology professor in Seattle area community colleges, along with other complainants levied "two class-action lawsuits to require the state to provide retirement benefits to part-time faculty, and to extend health-care insurance to part-time faculty in the summer quarter" (AAUP "Keith Hoeller"). Another suit includes fifteen part-time faculty who are asking for damages for years of unpaid wages and overtime: "The plaintiffs charge that the community-college system did not pay them for work they did outside the classroom—the hours they spent on class preparation, student counseling, test preparation, grading, and department meetings—the sort of work for which full-time faculty members are compensated" ("Part-Time").

Regarding the first class action suit over retirement eligibility, in February 2000, a Washington state court ruled that the hours worked outside the classroom must be counted as part of retirement eligibility for part-time faculty—class preparation, student advising, and grading papers (Schubert). This case is a landmark decision as it puts state institutions on notice that part-time faculty will demand the benefits to which they are entitled and will not tolerate second-class citizenship. This victory also opens the door for contingent faculty in other states to pursue similar lawsuits, although each state offers different criteria for retirement eligibility. The other class action suit regarding health benefits during the summer quarter resulted in the June 2003 Supreme Court ruling Mader et al. v. The Health Care Authority, in which the justices "ruled that any part-timer who carries at least a half-time workload has the right to state-paid health insurance during the summer months, thereby making amends to countless adjuncts" (Henson). This case clearly shows that "equity can be sought through the judicial branch as well as the legislative" (Henson).

State-wide organizing, as the California and Washington groups demonstrate, offers contingent faculty and their allies the opportunity to work broadly to address the future well-being of higher education, an issue pertinent to all citizens. In particular, by addressing community colleges, the colleges that serve a majority of students of color, recent immigrants, white working class students, and returning students, these organizations also call upon local and state-wide officials to fulfill their promise that education is a democratic enterprise for teachers and students.

Campus Equity Week

Against the backdrop of municipal organizing, statewide organizing, and the initiation and action of COCAL came plans for a national and possibly international week of action on contingent faculty issues. On January 12-14, 2001, the California Part-Time Faculty Association jointly hosted the fourth annual National Conference on Contingent Academic Labor with the Coalition on Contingent Academic Labor (COCAL). Known as COCAL Conference IV, the event was billed in the press release announcing it as "likely to be the agenda-setter for a true national break through for contingent labor" (CPFA Press Release). Conference attendees from 16 states came from as far away as Texas, New York, and Massachusetts and even four Canadian provinces, including Quebec (Canadian Association of University Teachers).

The Conference sponsored panels with local, national, and international speakers, organizing workshops, appearances by California politicians, an information table, and even live entertainment, including the "Rabble A Performers" who performed songs and skits about part-time labor. Representatives from the North American Alliance for Fair Employment (NAFFE) were present as well, an alliance of organizations that fights for "equal treatment (pay, benefits and protections under the law)" for part-time, temporary and contract workers "regardless of employment status." A major centerpiece of the Conference was the announcement of plans for an international Campus Equity Week modeled on the successful Action 2000 or A2K Coalition led by the California Part-Time Faculty Association. To spur organizing efforts at the 2001 Conference, COCAL organizers formed a Campus Equity Week 2001 steering committee to develop a set of web-based organizing resources. Regional coordinators were also designated to provide information and potentially build coalitions across campuses and regions.

However, the major thrust for Campus Equity Week organizing was the decentralized approach that is characteristic of COCAL. The Steering Committee issued press releases and organizing materials via their listserv, and the Campus Equity Week website urged local groups and coalitions to come together to cooperatively determine their organizing strategies. True to COCAL's emphasis on local autonomy, each local organization or group was to decide upon its own organizing approach for Campus Equity Week. Interested parties could download the resources from the Campus Equity Week website, send in ones they had developed, and interact with other Campus Equity Week organizers on the CEW listserv. An organizing guide on the Campus Equity Week website entitled "What You Can Do" offered a plethora of strategies, advising individuals or groups to begin by building coalitions with committees, organizations, and unions on campus. Interested groups were then advised to gather for goal-setting and planning meetings, using their goals to guide their specific actions and to effect outreach efforts. The electronic organizing hand-book for Campus Equity Week "What You Can Do" offered the following suggestions for action:

> *Set up an **information table** in a high-traffic area of your campus where students, faculty and staff can find out about the campaign, sign a petition or express their support.
> *Hold an **information picket** on your campus, using CEW flyers or material targeted to your situation.
> *Circulate a **petition**, perhaps using or modifying one of the sample Charters or Codes in this packet. Gather signatures asking your institution's board of trustees to adopt a Charter or Code as Board Policy.
> *Distribute **buttons, stickers or other material** as a way to build interest in the campaign.
> ***Guerilla theatre** is a great way to get your message across - develop some skits and perform them (with or without notice) in places where people on your campus tend to congregate.
> *Form a group of **Wandering Minstrels** to serenade your campus with rabble-rousing tunes.
> *Hold **hearings** where decision-makers can hear testimony from contingent faculty, students and others.
> *Bring **resolutions** about your issues forward for debate and consideration by your institution's decision-making bodies.
> *Write **op-ed pieces** for your campus and community newspapers, radio stations and other media outlets. Invite the media to take part in CEW events.
> *Conduct a **letter-writing campaign** to legislators or your governing board members.
> * Have a **film showing of** "Degrees of Shame." (Contact Barbara Wolf at br_wolf@hotmail.com for a copy.)

The organizing language in the 2001 CEW website and likewise in its current Campus Equity Week 2003 version was and is open-ended, accessible, and inviting. Individuals and groups were and are advised to participate at whatever level they can: "Campus Equity Week (CEW) is a flexible campaign, designed so anyone can take part - whether you're an individual on a campus, a local union or association, or a national group. You don't need a lot of organizing experience or resources, just energy and ideas!" ("What"). In addition, the CEW organizing web site entreats potential participants to be "creative" and "have fun," a maxim certainly apparent in the performative Campus Equity Week events described in the opening of this essay. Many campuses staged skits and musical performances that highlighted contingent faculty life. Some sponsored information tables and forums where contingent faculty and others spoke about the rise of contingent faculty labor in higher education and its links to the global economy. Dozens of campuses showed Barbara Wolf's documentaries on contingent faculty *Degrees of Shame* and *A Simple Matter of Justice*. Others held legislative hearings and lobbied their state representatives. Still others encouraged the adoption of Community Employment Standards in the form of a Campus Charter for Fair Employment, a Fair Labor

Standards University Code of Conduct, or a 10 point plan for the employment of contingent faculty ("Community"). Others urged local politicians to endorse Campus Equity Week. For instance, AFT-Oregon asked for and received a proclamation from the Governor of Oregon declaring the Week of October 28-November 3 Campus Equity Week. The governor of the state of Washington also offered an endorsement. Moreover, some colleges and universities urged faculty to take up contingent faculty issues in their courses, creating paper assignments or assigning readings that pertained to the topic. On my own campus, Syracuse University, a team of contingent faculty, full-time faculty, graduate students, and undergraduates held a teach-in on contingent faculty issues that included a number of events and collaborations: a panel on contingent faculty issues featuring faculty and students addressing the growing use of contingent faculty on campus and across the nation, a student-acted skit entitled "Family Feud" featuring contingent faculty squaring off against administrators over pay and working conditions, and a screening of Barbara Wolf's "Degrees of Shame."[5]

By many accounts (see Berry, Brodsky), Campus Equity Week was a success at raising awareness of contingent faculty issues, staging specific struggles on local campuses, and forging sustained coalitions. Indeed, the 2001 Steering Committee suggested staging a second CEW in 2003, which took place October 27-October 31,2003. But the true test is if Campus Equity Week helped contingent faculty activists and their supporters achieve "self-organization on a continuing basis" (Berry 1.4)? Has the labor-theory of agency promoted by CEW continued and reaped real results? A survey of follow-up reports on Campus Equity Week 2001 reveals a number of achievements.

First, Campus Equity Week was conducted as a flexible campaign via grassroots community organizing. Local Campus Equity Week's broad concepts of employment equity and quality education to highlight issues specific to their campuses and communities. Moreover, Campus Equity Week sparked unprecedented information sharing of organizing tactics and coalition building strategies. Information swapping through the Campus Equity Week website built awareness and solidarity. Literally dozens of Campus Equity Week action plans from colleges across the U.S. and Canada were posted on the Campus Equity Week 2001 organizing page and can still be viewed at an archived version of the site. Like the anti-globalization movements that have mobilized in Seattle, in Washington, D.C, L.A., Ottawa, Prague, and Genoa to protest the policies of the World Bank and the IMF, the contingent faculty movement has used the Internet and email as a primary mode of communication. As Naomi Klein points out in *Fences and Windows:* "Thanks to the Net, mobilizations occur with spare bureaucracy and minimal hierarchy; forced consensus and labour manifestos are fading into the background, replaced instead by a culture of constant, loosely structured and sometimes compulsive information swapping" (17).

Thanks to email and web-based announcements and posting, for perhaps the first time ever, hundreds of contingent faculty activists and their supporters were aware of one another's efforts and aware of a groundswell movement. The contingent faculty struggle became a shared struggle as undergraduate students, graduate students, full-time faculty, other campus and community groups, politicians, and religious leaders got involved at local meetings, rallies, and gatherings. Campus Equity Week 2001 also helped build sustained coalitions. For instance, following Campus Equity Week 2001, Chicago area activists formed a metropolitan Campus Equity Week Coalition and founded a COCAL Chapter in Chicago (Berry 1.9-1.11). At the regional level, Campus Equity Week sparked some new linkages. As was expected, activity and participation in the Northeast, Midwest, and Pacific Northwest was high, but, surprisingly, Campus Equity week sparked activity in Southern and Southwestern states like Tennessee, Louisiana, Texas, and New Mexico where little visible contingent faculty activism has taken place before. In addition, an international alliance with Canadian unions was further solidified with Campus Equity Week and with the fifth annual COCAL Conference, which was held in Montreal. Canadian Unions, says Berry, "with their greater militancy, clearer political perspective and class consciousness, and commitment to bilingual, inclusive organizing, promises to be a very positive influence" (1.5).

Finally, Campus Equity Week helped contingent faculty " "think union" in the words of Nick Tingle, a non-tenure-track lecturer at the University of California-Santa Barbara where he is a founding member of Local 2141 of the UC/AFT Unit 18. To Tingle, thinking Union means understanding the "cash nexus" of higher education, that "[u]niversities fancy themselves in the knowledge business, and they believe that if they are to succeed they must keep production high and costs very low" (1.10). With sponsorship from all the major faculty and graduate student unions (The American Federation of Teachers, The National Education Association, The American Association of University Professors, and The Coalition of Graduate Employee Unions) and with union leaders forming a core constituency on the CEW Steering Committee, thinking union and organizing toward the establishment of a union is a growing trend for contingent faculty as it is for graduate students as well. Since Campus Equity Week 2001, a number of contingent faculty unionization campaigns have been waged and won. In addition to the Emerson College victory mentioned earlier, one recent significant recent victory in the struggle toward contingent faculty unionization took place on April 29, 2003 when non-tenured faculty at the University of Michigan's three campuses (Ann Arbor, Dearborn, and Flint) voted for union representation, establishing the Lecturers' Employee Organization (LEO) as a collective bargaining agent affiliated with the Michigan Federation of Teachers & School Related Personnel, AFT, AFL-CIO., which now represents approximately 1,300 part-time and full-time lecturers, adjunct faculty, and visiting faculty (Lecturers'). The growth of independent bargaining units for contingent faculty is an important and growing trend.

The work of contingent faculty organizing on the municipal, state-wide, and international/national levels is clearly underway, and contingent faculty along with graduate students are a growing force behind a revitalized academic labor movement. However, a major question lingers: will these efforts be enough to stem the tide of the growing use and exploitation of contingent faculty? This question is difficult to definitively answer. In many ways, the contingent faculty activist movement is currently building momentum and it is too soon to make pronouncements about its ability to turn the tables. Suffice it to say that the contingent faculty labor movement is gaining momentum and influence and promises to be a formidable force in battling corporatization and casualization. However, it is clear that the obstacles to organizing and coalition building are formidable, and all branches of the academic labor movement must address these obstacles. To strengthen and solidify the work of the contingent faculty movement, several main constituencies need to be further addressed and made strategic allies, namely undergraduates, full-time tenure-line faculty, elected officials, and other workers in the university and other sectors of the economy. I do not have the space here to address each group, but I will address two groups in particular: undergraduate students and full-time, tenure-line faculty.

Although I am hopeful, as many of us are, that our undergraduate students will become active in the academic labor movement (see Bousquet "An"), far too many undergraduates simply do not know that the majority of their instructors are contingent faculty or graduate students and that these groups labor under exploitive conditions that impact the overall quality of education. Drawn in by glossy reports of educational excellence and reports singing the praises of particular institutions in the yearly college ratings published in magazines such as the *U.S. News* and *World Report*, undergraduates and their parents expect the professor in the classroom to be a full-time employee. They do not reach this conclusion independently; rather, the language and visual rhetorics of college marketing materials lead them to believe that small classes, personalized student advising, and intimate faculty attention will be bestowed on undergraduate students by armies of eager, available full-time, tenure-line faculty who keep their office doors open at all times. Local community colleges and four-year institutions promising affordability and accessibility to their potential admitted students fail to mention that the students will be taught by mostly contingent faculty who have more in common with working students who labor as office temps or employees in fast food restaurants. Although there have been attempts to publicize the growing use of contingent faculty through popular press feature articles and through the advocacy efforts of professional associations (the American Association of University Professors, the Coalition on the Academic Workforce, the Modern Language Association, and the Conference on College Composition and Communication), the college admissions apparatus manages to keep the reality of contingent and graduate student labor largely concealed from the

"educational consumers," the students. To reach those students and parents and also our fellow citizens who subsidize public higher education, we need a campaign of public pressure and disclosure that highlights the overuse and exploitation of contingent faculty. This is not a new idea. The Coalition on the Academic Workforce (CAW), a group of 25 organizations in the humanities and social sciences,[6] has gathered data on part-time faculty through a major survey, although the CAW has not fully publicized their data in the fashion I advocate here (Coalition). Such information could be distributed in a number of venues: through editorials in local and national publications, letters to alumni, major donors of specific institutions, high school guidance counselors and teachers of college preparation courses. Several reports indicate that students often choose colleges on the basis of personal recommendations and going to the source of those recommendations—college alumni, college preparation teachers, high school guidance counselors—could be an important way to spread the word. Also, another means of spreading the word and bringing to bear public pressure would be to publish information on the ratio of contingent and/or contract faculty to full-time tenure-line faculty in popular ranking guides such as the *Gourman Report, Rugg's Recommendations on the Colleges. U.S. News and World Report, Money Magazine, Time, and Newsweek*. Although these guides are suspect for lots of reasons, both methodological and political, they are one factor that students and parents consider in their college decision-making. Moreover, national rankings may affect the decisions that college administrators make about institutional direction and practices. Some colleges and universities go to great pains to hide, obfuscate, or rationalize their use of contingent faculty. Bringing the contingent faculty situation more fully into the public eye through responsible and ethical reporting would serve to further expose and highlight questions about labor practices and quality instruction and potentially hold universities accountable for their labor practices, pressuring some to change their "business as usual."

I do not imagine such campaigns of public disclosure and "truth in advertising" as a panacea or a substitution for labor-based social movement organizing and unionism; rather, I see it as a way to stimulate further public debate and action. Who would conduct such campaigns of public disclosure? An initial list of those who might be enlisted include non-profit organizations specializing in educational issues, consumer advocacy groups, public interest research groups, academic and non-academic unions (some of whom have already undertaken or participated in such campaigns), journalists, professional and disciplinary associations (who are already raising such questions through the Coalition on the Academic Workforce), prominent public and political figures, and, of course, faculty of all ranks and their students. Part of this campaign, though, should be a campaign to define why higher education is significant and why access to a democratic, open, and well-supported educational system is necessary. Part of that democrat-

ic, open, and well-supported educational system is a faculty who works with benefits, contracts, and salaries that allow them to meet students' educational needs. Part of it is also a view of students that is not cynical, not rooted in a vision of them as mere "consumers," but as citizens who have a right in a democratic society to an affordable and accessible education (Johnson, Kavanaugh, and Mattson 236).

While undergraduate students are becoming increasingly vocal and visible in campaigns against the exploitation of contingent faculty, graduate students, and university workers, full-time, tenure-line faculty have not been as supportive nor as visible in this fight. There are, of course, many exceptions; notable individuals, local AAUP chapters, and faculty unions have stood up for instructor and graduate student colleagues. Some supportive full-time, tenure-line faculty have faced tenure denial and non-renewal or milder forms of social harassment: disapproving comments such as "when are you going to forget about this labor nonsense and get back to your real work." However, there are far too many tenure-line academics who have stood on the sidelines of this issue or have actively campaigned against graduate students and contingent faculty seeking to change their working conditions. Even a number of leftist academics have failed to support the contingent faculty and graduate student labor movements. Benjamin Johnson, Patrick Kavanaugh, and Kevin Mattson the editors of *Steal This University*, contend that many left-leaning academics may become so caught in substituting scholarship for activism, that they may fail to take part in academic labor campaigns or they may actively work against those campaigns. The reprisals some successful tenure-line faculty exercised against graduate students seeking to unionize at Yale University illustrate this problem (238). Further, many academics may get caught up in "the talk to ourselves" mode: acknowledging the realities and exploitation of contingent faculty, debating the issues, squabbling over categories and terms and perhaps issuing statements about contingent faculty, but doing nothing at all to address the direct overuse and exploitation of contingent faculty. Thus, one of the major dilemmas in organizing a broad-based contingent faculty movement is galvanize full-time, tenure-line faculty—those who are enjoying the fruits of the profession. One way to urge the professoriate's involvement in the academic labor movement, contends Johnson, Kavanaugh, and Mattson, is to appeal to tenure-line faculty's self interest in the future of their professions and disciplines but also to the "larger social goals of education that prompted so many to become academics in the first place" (237). In a related vein, in a recent AAUP Presidential address, Jane Buck argues that full-time, tenure-line faculty must take action "[b]y dying at their desks, refusing to retire until they have a written guarantee that they will be replaced by a tenure-eligible faculty member; by organizing with or without the protection of collective bargaining to put pressure on their administrations and state legislatures to limit the use of contingent faculty; and by encouraging their students to value the ingredients of a real educa-

tion." But moreso than dying at our desks, which implies a rather passive approach (faculty sitting around until their arteries harden), Buck urges tenure-line faculty to take on common cause with contingent faculty, to "reach out to their contingent colleagues by demanding reasonable compensation; the conversion of contingent positions to tenure track positions, where appropriate; and their inclusion in collective bargaining units." In other words, Buck urges AAUP members to become agitators on behalf of and with contingent faculty, a position that most other professional association officers stop short of proclaiming (see Nelson "Moving").

Finally, we need an *activist labor scholarship* that illuminates the key linkages and strategic alliances that are being built across the academic labor movement. . Although much has been written about the "part-time" or contingent labor problem" in many disciplines, much of this scholarship recites already known facts and statistics about contingent employment, issues "statements" or manifestos about the employment of part-time faculty, offers managerial perspectives on how to best "utilize" contingent faculty, or offers large and often grand abstractions about the growth of contingent faculty and the casualization of the workforce. These facts, statements, and abstractions have their use and value, but we also need a scholarship that offers what Nelson calls "on the ground accounts of actual efforts for change" ("Moving" 192). Often I hear colleagues in my field, Writing and Rhetoric, speak about contingent faculty as if they have no agency or ability to change their working conditions and as if there are no ongoing contingent faculty organizing campaigns. At the root of such assumptions is a basic illiteracy about the state of academic labor politics. Bousquet underscores that point when he argues that much of the scholarship in Rhetoric and Composition "consistently attempts to offer 'solutions' to its 'labor problem' without accounting for the historical reality of organized labor' ("Composition as Management Science" 2). In a similar vein, in "Making a Place for Labor: Composition and Unions," Bill Hendricks argues that "mainstream Composition (again, the field) seems to be remarkably uninformed about organized labor. When they are mentioned at all, unions are most often treated as tangential rather than as the centrally important player that, I believe, they must be in successful transformations of the academic workplace" (5). While Bousquet and Hendricks address the dearth of informed labor scholarship in Rhetoric and Composition, the same complaint can be made of much of the scholarship on academic labor issues in most disciplines. Rather than simply reciting the familiar reports, statistics, and horror stories, we need a labor scholarship that accounts for the power of collective action and that analyzes the increasing interconnectivity of contingent faculty activist movements with other labor movements in academe and outside. Cary Nelson's insightful organizing case book *Will Teach for Food* on graduate student organizing at Yale, many of the organizing-focused articles in *Workplace: A Journal of Academic Labor*, and portions of *Steal This University* provide a model for what this

scholarship may look like: documenting organizing tactics, rhetorical strategies, and desired outcomes, thus creating a blueprint for a renewed academic labor movement that fulfills the promise of Marc Bousquet's vision of labor theory of agency. This essay has been an attempt to enact such a scholarship.

Notes

[1]Barbara Wolf's 1997 documentary *Degrees of Shame* addresses the growing use and exploitation of contingent faculty, offering glimpses into the personal stories and daily lives of adjunct faculty. Modeled on the famous documentary on migrant workers *Harvest of Shame, Degrees of Shame* demonstrates that contingent work in higher education is now a new market of exploitation of which many students, parents, and citizens are unaware. Wolf's more recent documentary *A Simple Matter of Justice: Contingent Faculty Organize* is a two hour "video handbook" that "focuses on what part-timers and their allies are doing to change the working conditions documented in Degrees of Shame" (Carter). A number of the activist movements I mention here are chronicled in the second documentary.

[2]Elsewhere Bousquet, Nelson, and others have addressed graduate student activist movements, especially the growing organizing of teaching assistants and research assistants. I will only briefly reference this work for the sake of space and focus, although labor organizing among graduate students closely intersects with that of contingent faculty.

[3]For more on the connection between gender and contingent labor, see *Gypsy Academics and Mother-teachers: Gender, Contingent Labor, and Writing Instruction* (1998). This book analyzes the reasons why women are disproportionately represented among the ranks of part-time and non-tenure-line faculty in the humanities and especially in fields like Rhetoric and Composition.

[4]For more on contingent faculty unionization efforts in Boston, see Gottfried and Zabel's discussion of the successful unionization drive at the University of Massachusetts-Boston in the Continuing Education division (219-20).

[5]For more on the history of campus faculty-worker-student solidarity at Syracuse University, see Ali Zaidi's article on the Service Employee's International Union Strike in 1998. Zaidi chronicles the strike and the involvement of faculty and students in this crucial labor action.

[6]The Coalition on the Academic Workforce (CAW), founded in 1997, conducted a large-scale study of staffing in higher education released in 1999. For more on the establishment of the CAW, see the AAUP website "About the Coalition on the Academic Workforce."

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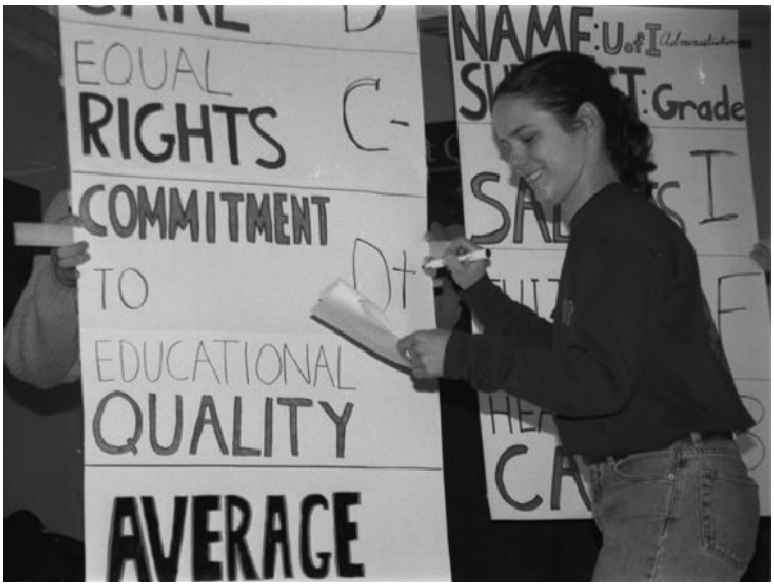
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