

## **Q and A Concerning the “Teaching at Rutgers” Conversion Proposal**

Q1: What gave rise to the “Teaching at Rutgers” proposal?

A1: Over the past several years, with the focus on undergraduate education as the Taskforce on Undergraduate Education did its work and the reorganization of New Brunswick undergraduate education occurred, the lack of attention to contingent faculty, not to mention the absence of their participation, was glaring. With contingent faculty responsible for such a large portion of undergraduate education, the time seemed ripe for a report and recommendations.

Q2: Who prepared the “Teaching at Rutgers” proposal?

A2: Two engineers, an historian and a writer collaborated on this effort, two of them PTLs, one a tenured faculty member, and one a former tenured faculty member at another university now on the AAUP-AFT staff.

Q3: What is the purpose of the proposal?

A3: The goal here is to challenge the depth of our commitment to undergraduate education. Where some may see employee enhancements, we would highlight the effect on students. A stable, accessible teaching force is crucial to quality education.

Q4: What forms the basis of the proposal?

A4: The proposal draws on a wide range of authoritative studies and sources. The intention was to gather together as much genuine and reliable data as possible to generate a substantive proposal that would precipitate reflective discussion and action.

Q5: How exactly does this proposal relate to students?

A5: The instructor – student relationship underpins the educational process. Instructors without academic freedom, instructors who are insecure in their appointments, instructors with distracting health concerns are unable to fully realize the best they bring to the classroom. The proposal is an attempt to intervene and begin to restore what has been leaching from the instructor – student relationship as contingency has grown.

Minimizing part-time and non-tenure-track appointments maximizes continuity, mentorship, and coherence in these relationships.

Q6: Why not just leave all this totally to the individual departments?

A6: The Proposal is an attempt to look at the big picture, to recognize the larger University community. Contingency conflicts with traditional faculty roles, fragments faculty work, and ultimately undermines higher education. Departments are often unable to resist fiscal pressures, so some University-wide gestures are needed.