

Chapter 1

The Part-Time Faculty Advisory Committee

1979-1984

“You are like Puerto Rico; you can come to the meetings but you don’t have any vote.”
Faculty Senate member to Cheryl Wollin, former chairperson of the PTFAC

“It never dawned on me that my experience, my degrees, or my methodology were any less valuable than a full-time faculty member.” Cheryl Wollin¹

In 1978, Richard Storing, Dean of Cluster 3, decided that it would be a good idea to make contact with part-time faculty members. To that end, he organized a “welcoming meeting” on the Skokie campus one Saturday morning for every instructor who taught one three-hour class or more. He asked part-time teacher Cheryl Wollin to moderate the meeting and answer any questions. Cheryl had known Dean Storing on a social basis because Cheryl’s husband Jay was a full-time geology professor. At that time the Oakton faculty was small, almost like a family.

From this initial outreach to part-time faculty, Dean Storing established in 1979 the Part-Time Faculty Advisory Committee (PTFAC) “to promote issues that specifically affect part-timers, to provide for professional development, and to serve as a bridge to the administration.”² The committee had regularly scheduled meetings as well as meetings on an *ad hoc* basis with then college vice-president Dr. Harvey Irlen. A Part-Time Handbook was printed containing a complete list of committee members, “all of whom are ready to help”³ In 1979 and again in 1980, the PTFAC conducted research through surveys to determine what part-time faculty issues required resolution. According to a December 1980 memo to Dr. Irlen from committee member Leon Intrater, some of the immediate priorities of the PTFAC included:

- Policy of course assignments to part-time faculty
- Adequate office space and supplies for part-time faculty
- Possible half-time positions for part-time faculty
- Benefits for part-time faculty, e.g. tuition waivers, insurance
- Firm implementation of existing Oakton College Book Ordering Policy for part-time faculty (Part-Time faculty should not be hindered from ordering their own books.)⁴

¹ Cheryl Wollin, “The Role of Part-Time Faculty in Higher Education: The Ethical Dilemma, *Philosophy* 290, December 13, 2000.

² Cheryl Wollin, “Part-time Faculty flyer,” August 24, 19981.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Leon Intrater, “P/T Faculty Priority Issues, “Inter-Office Memorandum to Harvey Irlen, December 8, 1980.

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Many of these issues already had been presented to the administration through memos, presentations to the Board of Trustees, or as recommendations to the Deans' Council. Active part-time teachers such as Leon Intrater and Eunice Goldberg had participated in such communication. The main concern focused on the policy of class assignments. The problem for part-time teachers was the last-minute notification of their class assignments, resulting in inadequate time for course preparation. Moreover, if by chance a part-timer was not home when the cluster secretary called, he or she was skipped over. The secretary called the next name on the list, and the class was given to someone else, often to a person with less experience.

Part-Time Faculty Course Assignments Proposal

In the spring of 1981, Leon Intrater, on behalf of the PTFAC, submitted a seven-page proposal to the Deans Council on course assignment for part-time faculty. In brief, the PTFAC proposed that a "preferred part-time faculty pool" be created based "upon a seniority ranking system with evaluations by deans, coordinators and students."⁵

In addition, the proposal set deadlines for the assignment of classes. Several days before midterm of the previous term, all full-time faculty schedules would be programmed. No later than midterm the administration would send "Course Assignment Preference Questionnaires" to part-time faculty. The part-time faculty then would submit their choices, ranking them in order of preference, within two weeks after receiving the form. The coordinators would then evaluate the eligibility of part-time faculty and match their choices to the classes that were available. Six weeks after midterm (sooner if possible), coordinators would inform part-time faculty of their tentative course assignments.⁶

On May 29, 1981, the Council of Deans informed Leon Intrater that although they thought his proposal was "thoughtful...with a good deal of merit," they could not accept the proposal entirely. They were not willing to "base course assignments for part-time faculty so strictly on seniority." The administration realized there was a problem, but obviously did not want to be boxed into a corner.⁷ Nevertheless, the deans were willing to let individual discipline coordinators use the committee's ranking system, and they would recommend its implementation to some degree. The deans suggested that Mr. Intrater meet with the coordinators to discuss the proposal.⁸

The deans agreed it was "preferable to make relatively firm course assignments as early in the semester as possible." Therefore, on a one-year trial basis, the Deans agreed to try

⁵ Part-time Faculty Advisory Committee, "Part-time Faculty Course Assignment Proposal," 1981.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Interview with Cheryl Wollin, February 22, 2011.

⁸ Inter-Office Memorandum from the Deans to Leon Intrater, "Course Assignment Proposal," May 29, 1981.

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to implement the timetable suggested in the proposal. They also agreed to use the Course Assignment Questionnaire and the recommended assignment procedure.⁹

On July 15, 1981, Mr. Intrater and Richard Storing, Dean of Cluster 3, presented a revised form of the proposal on course assignment to the discipline coordinators as the deans had suggested. However, like the deans, the coordinators were “uncomfortable with the proposal’s emphasis on seniority categories and priority”; they thought it had the “potential of locking them in too rigidly, and if published, of raising the expectations among part-timers that we would be unable, and at times unwilling, to meet.”¹⁰ The coordinators did, however, “agree to a general ‘statement of principle’ in line with current practice – and a renewed commitment to applying it with some consistency: seniority will be a primary factor, along with the quality of the teaching performance, in determining assignments for part-time faculty.”¹¹ Moreover, the coordinators agreed to use one of the two assignment preference forms included in the PTFAC’s proposal, as well as to follow the proposal’s timetable.

Shortly after the 1981-82 school year began, Cheryl Wollin, the coordinator of the PTFAC, wrote a letter to the part-time faculty that their proposal, although not “official college policy,” would be the procedure followed.¹² She attached the seniority categories and the proposed timetable for classes to be assigned. However, she never sent the letter. A hand-written note on the unsent October 3rd letter stated: “Deans did not want this letter to go out....Felt it would be misunderstood and raise their expectations too much.”¹³

At the October 21st meeting of the PTFAC, the issue of the course assignment proposal was discussed. “Discussion included both the disappointment and anger that overloads¹⁴ would make our proposed timetable impossible,” Ms. Wollin wrote in the minutes.

“I received a note from Dick [Storing] citing that reason, and did also check with other deans to determine if that was, indeed, the reason. I passed around the memo and form that I just sent to all coordinators urging them to follow the procedure even if the timing was off. Our goal is to have every possible part-time section assigned by Dec. 10th.”¹⁵

The PTFAC expressed their hope that after the next Dean’s Council meeting on November 4 the scheduling of part-timers would begin for the next semester. If the

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Inter-Office Memo from Richard L. Storing to the Deans, “Part-Time Faculty Scheduling Proposal,” July 16, 1981.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Cheryl Wollin, Letter to Part-time Faculty, October 3, 1981.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Full-time faculty taught an “overload” when they agreed to teach more than the customary number of classes that semester. When, at the last minute, a full-time faculty member said he or she wanted to teach a particular class, he could, thus denying part-timers the opportunity to teach that class.

¹⁵ Cheryl Wollin, “Minutes of October 21st Meeting,” Part-Time Faculty Advisory committee, October 23, 1981.

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preference sheets did not come out by then, Ms. Wollin promised to address the Dean's Council and "speak to our concerns about past agreements and their creditability, and to meet with Dr. Irlen (vice-president) to discuss our next step to accomplish this goal."¹⁶

Issues of Part-Time Faculty, 1981-2

In addition to the issue of prompt assignment of classes based on seniority, the PTFAC addressed other issues at their October meeting. Ms. Wollin reported that she had met with Dr. Irlen to discuss "staff development possibilities" on October 7th. Still in the "thinking stages," the plan was to grant monies to faculty members willing to share an area of expertise with other faculty. The project had tentatively been titled a "Recognized Resource" and all full-time, part-time, and staff members were eligible. Ms. Wollin stated, "I feel that we are in at the ground floor and feel confident that I will have equal input into the decision-making."¹⁷

PTFAC's request for sixteen built-in locker-style cabinets for Room 2404 had been submitted to Vice-president Irlen on October 16. This issue seemed resolved.

The issue of a salary raise was discussed. Although the PTFAC agreed to ask for a \$75 per hour increase across the board, they felt that they should wait until the full-time faculty negotiations were completed. Ms. Wollin promised to discuss this issue with Dr. Irlen at the October 30th meeting.

The committee discussed the issue of tuition waiver for part-time faculty and their families. "We felt that this is a cost efficient request and would show the college's appreciation and reciprocal relationship with us. Other community colleges already have such a benefit. I have already discussed this briefly with Harvey (Irlen) and there is hope (not certainty, of course; it means we have to do all the background statistics, etc. to "prove" the feasibility)¹⁸

Discussion at the October meeting also addressed the need for part-time faculty representation on the new Faculty Senate. Since the Faculty Senate was part of the full-time faculty's constitution, part-timers were not mentioned. The Faculty Senate had been established as a means for OCCFAC to voice their opinions to the administration. Nevertheless, most members of the PTFAC felt that part-timers should also have a voice, and that two teachers (one from the Skokie campus and one from Des Plaines) should be voting members. Ms. Wollin reported that she had met with the President of the Faculty Senate Phil Jaffe and discussed with him the procedure for admittance. "It was agreed that I would draft a proposal, give it to John Boyles (title) who would in turn introduce it at the Senate meeting in November. This process follows the legalities of the present constitution."¹⁹

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

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Finally, Mr. Intrater voiced the need to push for a representative on the Oakton Board of Trustees in order to have some influence in policy-making. He noted that the staff (as well as the full-time faculty union) had such representation.

The Faculty Senate also endorsed candidates for the Board of Trustees through its Committee for Candidates and candidate's forum, whereby candidates for the Board presented their views. When the OCCFAC agreed to allow part-time teachers to join this committee, it became immediately obvious that the opinions of part-timers did not have much impact. The majority ruled, and often part time teachers did not agree with the majority's endorsements.²⁰ The PTFAC quickly realized that in the future they should investigate a candidate's views on part-time faculty issues specifically. Since PTFAC represented a "populous body," its support behind one candidate or another could make a difference, and the Faculty Senate was not the vehicle to accomplish this.

By November 1981, it was clear that each Cluster was keeping track of the number of semesters taught by part-time faculty. A list had been generated to be kept on file by the Cluster secretaries. According to Vice-president Irlen's secretary's memo, the Cluster secretaries were to refer to it when calculating part-time salaries.²¹

That November, the PTFAC sponsored a Saturday morning workshop at the Skokie campus on Stress Management for part-time faculty. The speakers addressed the "definition of burn-out, symptoms of stress, and very practical stress reduction techniques...."²² The workshop was well attended, and the administration paid for the refreshments.

"Preferred Pool of Part-Time Faculty"

In March 1982, class assignment for part-time faculty was still a problem. Ms. Wollin was working on another draft proposal for a "Preferred Pool of Part-time Faculty." The proposal stated that "each discipline establish a preferred pool of part-time faculty who shall be given first choice of class assignments at the earliest possible date."²³ This proposal simplified seniority categories to three:

- Top priority – over 10 semesters
- Second priority – over 5 semesters
- Last priority – 0 – 4 semesters

The letter sent by the PTFAC pointed out both the benefits to the administration as well as to the students and part-time faculty. (See Appendix) The benefits to adjuncts, she wrote, will be "1) that part-time faculty will have adequate time to prepare for courses

²⁰ Interview with Barbara Dayton, May 12, 2011.

²¹ Vera Huber, Inter-Office Memo, "Semesters Served as of Fall 1981," November 25, 1981.

²² "Managing Stress flyer," November 21, 1981.

²³ Cheryl Wollin, "Working draft of Proposal," Inter-Office Memo to PTAC, March 31, 1982.

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and develop curriculum plans, and 2) part-timers who have served the institution for a long period of time with enthusiasm and loyalty will feel that Oakton recognizes their commitment to the college.”²⁴

The Faculty Senate

On April 28, 1983, the full-time faculty association (OCCFA) voted on whether or not to allow part-timers to be represented on the Faculty Senate. Before the vote was held, PTFAC sent a memo, written by former chairperson of the PTFAC Cheryl Wollin and current chairperson Jim Stavish to all full-time faculty members urging them to give the part-time faculty members “two voting representatives equivalent in character to those faculty members who are not OCCFA members.”²⁵ The memo pointed out that the 150 Full Time Faculty members were represented by 15 Senate Faculty members, but the 375 Part Time Faculty members did not have any representation. Moreover, because “forty percent of college courses are taught by the Part Time Faculty, it seems only sound educational policy to integrate representatives of those faculty members into the academic decision-making community.”²⁶

The decision of the Faculty Senate concerning part-time representation was a disappointment. Although the full-time faculty voted to allow two representatives from the part-time faculty to attend the Faculty Senate’s monthly meetings, these representatives did not have voting rights. Nevertheless, Ms. Wollin volunteered to represent the part-time faculty on the Faculty Senate. She attended regularly until at one meeting a full-time faculty remarked, “You are like Puerto Rico; you can come to the meetings, but you don’t have any vote.” After this “put-down,” Ms. Wollin never went back.

A year later, according to a memo from co-chairpersons of the PTFAC of February 1984, “the issue of voting rights in the Senate should be on the agenda this year.”²⁷ It never was.

“The memo that began our organization to form AFA”

By February 1984, the PTFAC had achieved some gains in improving working conditions for part-time faculty. According to the PTFAC memo, “at long last there are offices reserved for part-time faculty!”²⁸ Adjuncts were provided two offices on the Des Plaines campus for use during preparation time or for student conferences. Arrangements were made to move lockers to these rooms. On the Skokie campus, office space was available in room 214.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Part Time Faculty Advisory Committee (PTFAC), “Part Time Faculty Representation on Faculty Senate,” Inter-Office Memo to Full Time Faculty, April 25, 1983.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Cheryl Wollin and James Stavish, “To All Part-Time Faculty,” PTFAC flyer, c. February 1984.

²⁸ Ibid.

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The administration had sponsored an “appreciation dinner for part-time faculty” held the previous November which was “well attended by administrators, including President Koehline.”²⁹ Oakton had also sponsored another Saturday orientation seminar for part-time faculty before the start of spring semester; in addition, the administration was sponsoring a February workshop, including a light supper and a seminar on “the special needs of Oakton students.”

However, crucial issues for part-timers still remained unresolved, such as a time frame for notifying part-timers of a class cancellation, tuition waivers, the ongoing issue of class assignment, and to a lesser degree, voting rights on the Faculty Senate. The frustration of the PTFAC was magnified when, in _____, the administration changed the college’s grading policy, changing the grade “F” (failing) to “R” (repeat). Not only did part-timers have no input, they were never officially informed of the change - another illustration of the lack of communication between part-time faculty and the administration.

The PTFAC’s February 1984 memo informed its membership that, effective January 1, 1984, new legislation in Illinois had been passed concerning educational bargaining rights. The co-chairmen wrote that the “PTFAC... will pursue the ramifications of this law,” and “a general meeting of all part-timers will be held in the near future to discuss this issue.”³⁰ As Ms. Wollin’s later hand-written comment on this flyer testified, this was the memo that “began our organization to form AFA.”³¹

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.