

# AB 2705 (Williams)

## Community Colleges: Faculty

### SUMMARY

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AB 2705 changes the designation of “part-time” and “temporary” faculty to “contingent” faculty.

### BACKGROUND

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The terms “part-time” and “temporary” faculty appear throughout various sections of the Education Code for the California Community College (CCC) system and leave the impression that these two groups of employees are interchangeable although they are not.

It is an increasingly, well-known fact that higher education relies heavily on part-time/temporary faculty to do much of the teaching at colleges and universities. Over the past few years, university and college administrators have hired a vastly expanding number of part-time/temporary faculty to save money and provide more flexibility than hiring tenure and tenure-track faculty. Tenured and tenure-track faculty at all levels of higher education receive much higher pay, better health and retirement conditions, and greater job security.

Currently, 68.9% of faculty at California’s community colleges are part-time/temporary faculty, leaving only 31.1% of faculty as full-time. This is the highest level of contingent faculty teaching at California’s community colleges in over three decades.

This is a major departure from the original intent of the role of part-time/temporary faculty when the statutes defining “temporary” were adopted. At that time, most faculty were full-time, tenured or tenure track.

Now, however, it is not uncommon for career teachers who’ve had continuous service to their colleges and students to be called “temporary.” Moreover, many part-time/temporary faculty are known as “freeway flyers” for their attempt to piece together a full-time teaching load by commuting from college to college.

### NEED FOR THE BILL

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Many part-time faculty have been searching for a more accurate name/designation to better reflect their role within the CCC system. The current terms – ‘temporary’ and ‘part-time’ – are not only applied haphazardly but have also proven to be problematic due to their negative connotations.

There is a clear need to differentiate between “temporary” and “part-time” faculty because their appointment is contingent upon enrollments, funding, or program need and many of these faculty have been incorrectly classified as “temporary” for years or decades while serving in the same position within a district. Unlike temporary positions, these assignments are necessary, on-going, and continuing.

Additionally, the current terms do not adequately describe the role part-time/temporary faculty have come to occupy within the CCC system. Describing faculty who teach 67% or less of full-time faculty, as part-time faculty, suggests that these faculty members are only “temporary.” As a result, departments use this as an excuse to prevent part-time faculty from engaging in department decisions, curriculum decisions and academic decisions in general. Referring to these instructors as part-time faculty demeans their value, assumes they are not giving their full attention to student success and negates the fact that they are the instructional backbone of every community college.

AB 2705 takes a modest step in correcting these issues by redefining part-time/temporary faculty who work less than full-time, as “contingent” faculty. This designation will not change their contractual status as defined by local contracts. However, the change will provide clarity and bring recognition to the important role they serve in the CCC system.

### SUPPORT

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- UPTC-CWA (Sponsor)
- California Conference of the American Association of University Professors (CA-AAUP)
- California Part-time Faculty Association
- The California Community College Association of Student Trustees

### OPPOSITION

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- California Federation of Teachers

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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