

Facts at a Glance re: Recent Changes in Part-Time Faculty at Parsons:

Strengthening Fine Arts at Parsons

- Parsons The New School for Design is undertaking an ambitious academic plan to reshape its Fine Arts program to better respond to art-making in the 21st century, and address such issues as globalization, diversity, political agency, and new technologies.
- These changes will open opportunities for students and faculty to collaborate across disciplines in the School of Art, Media, and Technology at Parsons, which also encompasses Communication Design, Design and Technology, Illustration and Photography.
- This academic plan was developed through several years of external and internal review, and reflects Parsons commitment to investing in its Fine Arts program. To further engage faculty in this process, Parsons has recently established a task force of full and part-time faculty to more fully engage in a dialogue about the proposed curricular changes.
- The Fine Arts faculty body is not diminishing but growing, including the addition of new full-time faculty.
- Through the efforts of our faculty, today the Fine Arts program is flourishing. The quality of applicants to the MFA is exceptionally strong, and both students and faculty have received significant honors over the past few months alone. MFA student, Kyung Eun Kang, was chosen to attend Skowhegan, the highly competitive and prestigious summer artist residency. Faculty member Lenore Malen is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship. And in March, the PULSE NEW YORK commissioned Parsons MFA Program for the second year running as the sole school to exhibit work at this art fair.

Part-Time Faculty at The New School

- The New School takes seriously its obligations to its faculty. In 2005, The New School negotiated its first contract with a newly formed union for part-time faculty, ACT-UAW, Local 7902. The university is very committed to following the terms of the contract as negotiated by the union (the contract is set to expire September 1, 2009, and negotiations for a new agreement will begin soon).
- The union contract outlines several categories of part-time faculty:
 - Probationary or post-probationary faculty who have served less than 11 semesters and who are assigned courses either semester-by-semester or academic year by academic year based on need.
 - Annual or Grandparented Faculty who have taught a minimum of 11 semesters. The union contract guarantees these part-time faculty specific course baseloads each academic year within the university.

Changes in Part-Time Faculty in Parsons Fine Arts

- In mid-March, letters were sent to the 39 part-time faculty members in Parsons Fine Arts program advising them of their expected courseload for fall 2009. A handful of probationary and post-probationary part-time faculty members were not assigned courses for the fall. As per The New School's collective bargaining agreement with the union, however, appointments for part-time faculty are not finalized until June 1.
 - Six Probationary or Post-Probationary part-time faculty whose assignments ran only through the spring received letters indicating that at that time there were not assignments for them in the fall; the university is making every effort to identify teaching assignments for these faculty members, which is beyond its union obligation.

In addition:

- Three Probationary part-time faculty received letters confirming they would not teach in the fall, following discussions that already indicated this (one was brought on to cover a faculty member who was on paid leave for one semester; another received a prestigious fellowship and cannot teach; a third was ask to teach for one semester this spring as a guest curator for our thesis exhibition)
- Three Annual part-time faculty received letters indicating they would not teach in the Fine Arts program but that they would be found courses elsewhere in the university. Parsons is optimistic it will have alternate teaching assignments for these annual part-time faculty by June 1.
- It is important to note that these decisions were not driven by economic concerns of the university but academic needs.