

Room 122

The Newsletter of the TC3 Adjunct Association (TC3AA), Local 8104, NYSUT/NEA/AFT
the Union for Adjuncts at Tompkins Cortland Community College

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ROOM 122 — A ROOM WITH A VIEW

The view is pretty straightforward: adjuncts and tutors at TC3 want a union for themselves, and the right to negotiate a contract covering pay, benefits, and working conditions, just like every other non-managerial employee at TC3 has long enjoyed.

That's why, in just the first few months of the Fall 2014 semester, a majority of adjuncts and tutors signed "union authorization cards" indicating their desire to be represented by the TC3 Adjunct Association ("TC3AA"), a union affiliated with NY State United Teachers (NYSUT) and the American Federation of Teachers. (AFT). Unfortunately, we're not at the bargaining table right now negotiating our first contract because members of TC3's administration and Board have, thus far, contested TC3AA's right to exist as a union of our own, separate from the Faculty Association. TC3 has spent more than a year purposefully delaying the certification of our union — the crucial first step which would enable us to begin negotiations.

Why? Because — not unlike most employers — TC3 administration would prefer to keep the status quo, the one where they get to unilaterally determine everything about our jobs without having to negotiate. TC3 claims it is simply exercising its legal right to question the formation of our union and, technically speaking, that's right — thus far they have absolutely been within their legal rights. But we believe the more relevant question is are they within their moral rights to spend taxpayer money on lawyers fighting their own employees? And we believe the answer to that question is a firm "NO!"

So as we wait for a judge's decision on the make-up of our Union, (see "Legal Update" on P. 2) we are using the time to build our organization and prepare for the future. Join us!

60

No, that's not the percentage of TC3 courses that are taught by adjuncts (that number is closer to 70%). 60% is the percentage of TC3 students who are at least partially financing their education at the college through loans. (The percentage of TC3 students who receive some sort of financial aid, be it loans or grants, is 86%.)

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No, that's not the number of adjuncts at TC3 (depending on the semester, that number ranges from the low to mid 200s, compared to 60something fulltime faculty). 298 (dollars) is how much the cost of fulltime tuition and fees at TC3 have increased since last year.

Nationally, student debt reached all time highs in 2015. Approximately 71% of Bachelor degree recipients graduated with some student debt. But at least they *graduated* with a B.A. — that alone gives them a \$443 median weekly earning advantage over those with just a high school diploma.

How many students have you known who have had to drop out of TC3 because of financial pressures? How many students have you known who have had to reduce their course load because of financial pressures? How many students have you known whose grades have suffered because work and financial pressures adversely affect their study time?

It's an enormous problem, obviously, and one we can't solve on our own. But maybe, in our little corner of the world, we can at least make a dent. That's our hope for the "**TC3 Adjunct Association Scholarship**" — to alleviate at least *some* of the financial

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60? 296? The TC3AA Scholarship (Con't from P. 1)

pressures for some of our students each year. The plan now is to be able to award the first awards in time for the recipients to use them in the 2017-18 academic year.

But there's a lot to do if we are to meet that goal. Here is the short list:

- *We need to decide the parameters of who is eligible to win a scholarship
- *We need to decide the method of how we will determine who wins (An application? An essay? A nomination? Something else?)
- *We need to get the word out about the scholarship, both to potential grantees and to potential funders (including anybody reading this newsletter, hint, hint).
- *And, obviously, we need to raise money!

So, we are now **forming a committee to coordinate all of the above** and we **need your help. If you are interested in helping out this worthy cause (our students) please contact any member of the TC3AA Executive Council or send an email to us at email tc3adjunctasociation@gmail.com. THANK YOU!**

Local Labor News

Annual Labor Day Picnic in Stewart Park: The Tompkins County Workers Center, in partnership with the Midstate Central Labor Council, AFL-CIO, is sponsoring its 33rd annual "Labor Day Picnic" in Stewart Park. It's a fun, free, family-friendly event and we encourage you to attend! At last year's picnic, the TC3AA was honored to be one of the recipients of the "Mother Jones Award" in recognition of our organizing efforts for adjuncts at TC3. (The plaque we received is on display in the Adjunct Office, Room 122).

Cornell University Graduate Teaching Assistants: Congrats to another recipient of the 2015 Mother Jones award, "Cornell Graduate Students United" who got exciting news in August when the National Labor Relations Board (the government entity that oversees employers and unions in the private sector) ruled that Columbia graduate teaching and research assistants are employees (not merely students) under federal law and therefore have collective bargaining rights. CGSU has been organizing since 2014 (and has lent support to the TC3AA efforts) and later this year will take the next steps toward formal recognition as a union.

Legal Update

Last spring Cayuga Community College adjuncts reached an important milestone: their union, the "Cayuga Community College Part-time Faculty Association" was certified by the Public Employment Relations Board ("PERB," the state agency which oversees employers and unions in the public sector) as the official bargaining representative of CCC adjuncts.

The victory was an important one for CCC adjuncts who have been organizing since Spring 2014 and can now turn their attention to negotiating their first contract. It's also an important victory for TC3 adjuncts as we are currently awaiting a PERB judge's decision about whether or not TC3 adjuncts should have our own union or whether we should merge with the existing faculty union. We believe (as do TC3's fulltime faculty union) that there should be two separate faculty unions at TC3. The College insists that there should be one.

A similar dispute played out at CCC. In April 2015, a PERB judge ruled in favor of two separate unions. CCC administration appealed that decision and, last spring, lost that appeal.

We anticipate receiving a favorable ruling later this academic year from the PERB judge (Judge Kenneth Carlson) who presided over a hearing in this matter in June 2015. When that happens we urge the TC3 administration to learn from the (bad) example that CCC administration set — an appeal is an unnecessary waste of College time and financial resources. — and to refrain from any other legal maneuvering which could delay the certification of the TC3 Adjunct Association as the bargaining representative of TC3 adjuncts.

TC3AA HONOR SC/ROLL

Please join us in extending congratulations and best wishes to colleagues **Aaron Decker** on his appointment as a fulltime faculty member in English, and Angela Martin on her appointment????? and **John Troyer** on his appointment as a fulltime faculty member in English.

Can YOU think of a TC3AA colleague we should recognize for a recent academic or professional achievement? Please email the details to tc3adjunctasociation@gmail.com.