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For photos from the symposium, interviews with contingent professors, or for a copy of the report, “High Cost of Adjunct Living: Seattle”, contact Jia-Jia Zhu.

## **New Study Finds that Contingents Often Cannot Afford Basic Necessities**

*Seattle area contingent faculty build support for joining ‘Adjuncts and Contingents Together Washington/SEIU Local 925’ at Symposium today*

**SEATTLE** –A new study released today explores how difficult it is for an adjunct instructor in Seattle to afford basic necessities like housing, health care and food.

The report, called the *High Cost of Adjunct Living: Seattle*, finds that:

- 66 percent or nearly 2,000 faculty members at private, nonprofit universities in the Seattle area were not on the tenure track in 2011.
- The median pay per course in the Western U.S. was \$3,300 at master’s level private not-for-profit institutions and \$4,500 at doctoral level private not-for-profit institutions.

This means a Seattle area adjunct teaching 12 courses a year—an extraordinary course load—may have an annual income of just \$39,600. To afford a median-priced home and utilities in Seattle, an adjunct professor would have to teach 19 to 26 classes a year.

The report comes on the heels of Seattle University adjunct faculty’s growing campaign to form their union. Today adjunct and contingent faculty met to build on the momentum they’ve created to win a voice in their profession and to reverse the trend of low pay, few benefits and little job security.

“After graduating from SU in 2005, I sought out a job at my alma mater because I cherished the tight-knit learning community at SU,” said Seattle University Instructor Jerome Veith, Instructor in Philosophy. “But now I that I’m at the front of the classroom, I see the working condition difficulties that my professors probably faced. I’m left without the ability to stake a claim here and call SU not only my alma mater, but also my professional home.”

Part-time and non-tenure track faculty are now the majority of faculty at our colleges and universities and their numbers continue to increase. At the same time, revenues and tuition have increased steadily over the last two decades while spending on instruction has declined – placing significant hurdles in their mission to provide quality education to students.

Adjunct faculty are caught in this crisis in higher education. Adjuncts are all contingent workers. The 2,000 adjuncts in Seattle’s private nonprofit universities, and another 600 in for profit universities, are all overworked and underpaid, generally with no job security or access to health and retirement benefits.

Now, adjuncts in the Seattle area are joining a nationwide movement to [form unions](#), creating a movement to address the crisis in higher education and the declining standards that endanger the profession.

“If parents spend nearly \$53,000 a year – and it’s increasing - to send their child to university, I’m sure they want that money to buy the best instruction possible,” said Seattle University Instructor

Nancy Burkhalter. "But do they know where their money is going? I'm sure they'd be surprised to learn that some teachers are not even paid a living wage. That's why we need to change the status quo by holding union elections so all instructors can be paid a fair income. But what's most important is having a say in the students' education."

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*Adjuncts and Contingents Together Washington is a project of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 925, a member of the nation's largest and fastest growing union and home to over 18,000 unionized college and university faculty who have won improvements in pay, job security, evaluation processes, and access to retirement benefits.*

<http://www.actogetherwa.org/>