



A Union of Professionals

Contingent Faculty Quality of Work Life Survey

OCTOBER 2019

This report is based on the first nationwide survey of adjunct and other contingent faculty to be circulated since 2013. The 52-question survey was completed by 3,076 contingent faculty—adjuncts/part-time faculty, full-time nontenure track faculty, and graduate employees—between May 22 and June 30, 2019. AFT and our affiliates advertised the survey via email and social media. While the resulting sample is not random, taken together with other sources of feedback from and information about contingent faculty and their work/life conditions, we believe that the size of the sample allows us to draw some robust conclusions about the conditions faced by this new majority of college faculty in the United States.

RETIREMENT

- A plan for secure retirement remains out of reach for most faculty today. Even with large numbers contributing to their own retirement (44 percent report monthly contributions) and receiving employer contributions (27 percent), we were shocked to find that 37 percent said they cannot imagine how they'll retire. Clearly, low wages, lack of job security and high medical bills have created a situation in which a significant percentage of contingent faculty feel that retirement is out of reach *even when they are actively saving for it.*



The **American Federation of Teachers** is a union of professionals that champions fairness; democracy; economic opportunity; and high-quality public education, healthcare and public services for our students, their families and our communities. We are committed to advancing these principles through community engagement, organizing, collective bargaining and political activism, and especially through the work our members do.

Randi Weingarten
PRESIDENT

Lorretta Johnson
SECRETARY-TREASURER

Evelyn DeJesus
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT



- The idea that contingent faculty cannot imagine how they'll retire is even more disturbing when the age of survey-takers is considered: 64 percent are 50 or older. Faculty members who should be preparing for retirement, with some considerable progress toward retirement security, are instead wondering how long they'll be able to stay in the classroom, continuing to focus on just getting by.

