

Putting Together a FACE Hearing

So, you would like to put together a FACE hearing on your campus. Who should speak? What should you cover? What data is there to support your position? The answer to those questions depends a great deal on what you are trying to accomplish. What follows is a basic outline to help you put a FACE hearing together. The ideas are general so that they can be adapted according to the situation at your local and whether FACE legislation has been introduced in your state. Bottom line: The goal, as always on campus, is education.

Advertise and Organize Widely

There is nothing worse than holding an event that no one attends. So think carefully about how to promote your event. Posters are available on our Web site that you can use to advertise the event (www.aft.org/higher_ed/cew/index.htm). Also consider placing an advertisement or editorial in your campus newspaper to help spread the word.

This is a great opportunity to “issue-organize.” Raise staffing issues in your union newsletter and listserv, and be sure to mention your event. Provide an announcement of the event to your steward, chapter presidents or building representatives, and have them hand-deliver the announcement to members and talk to them about the issues. Remember, the process of getting people to the event can be as educational as the event itself.

Create a Hearing Packet

Another way to spread the word is to create a hearing packet of information that attendees receive, so the ideas go with them when they leave the hearing. Your packet could include any or all of the following:

- the FACE brochure;
- a data sheet that shows the national trends regarding the growth and exploitation of contingent faculty (see the FACE Web site);
- information about the situation at your institution or in your state;
- information about Campus Equity Week;
- a copy of the FACE legislation in your state or the model legislation (available on the FACE Web site); and
- information about speakers at the hearing.

Your packet could include other pieces you think are particularly relevant to your college or university (e.g., news stories, reports on staffing for your institution).

Hearing Presentations

You will determine the makeup of your hearing based on your goals. However, we urge you to consider having some mix of the following four types of presentations:

- Policy
- Data
- Human Interest
- Feedback

Policy Presentation: This presentation should be delivered by the union president or your lead policy person. The purpose of this presentation is to discuss the FACE campaign in general and the public policy position you and the AFT are promoting. Key points to be made in this presentation are:

- FACE has two goals:
 - The first goal is to ensure that all faculty members receive the financial and professional support they need to do their best work.
 - The second goal is to establish a better balance between the number of full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty, and the number of part- and full-time nontenure-track faculty.
- FACE is a public policy that invests in faculty, but ultimately it is about students. When faculty are in full-time positions or adequately supported in part-time positions, they can better serve the needs of students.
- FACE, in its legislative form, comes at a cost to the state, but it is an investment that will pay off by creating more stable jobs, improving student success and generating more economic returns for the state. As the slogan says, “FACE Facts, Investment Counts.”

This presentation, as is the case with all of the presentations, should be grounded in your local situation.

Data Presentation: Ultimately, FACE aims to convince state legislators and the general public to invest more in your state’s colleges and universities—and a little data never hurts. The key here is that FACE is about people, so don’t get obsessed with trying to present too much data. Ideally, you would have a researcher from your institution or state speak about what has happened in your state regarding the shift to contingent faculty and the declining investment in higher education. To get you started, see the FACE Hearing Data Sheet for national data.

Key points to make in this presentation are:

- Over the last four decades, there has been a major shift from a faculty workforce that was predominantly full-time and tenured or on the tenure-track, to a faculty workforce that now is predominantly contingent.
- The majority of contingent faculty are underpaid, undersupported and not recognized for the huge sacrifice they make to teach at the level they do.
- A sizeable percentage of part-time adjunct faculty are simply stringing together part-time teaching jobs to make ends meet and many would take a stable full-time position if one was available.

It would be great if you can get an administrator in charge of institutional research to talk about these issues.

Human Interest Presentation: This is perhaps the most important presentation you can make. You need to put a face on FACE. Nothing is more persuasive than real people talking about how the shift in our academic staffing has affected their lives and their work. Presenters could include:

- An adjunct faculty member teaching multiple courses to make ends meet.
- An adjunct faculty member who has given years to an institution, never to be offered a full-time position.
- A full-time faculty member who is now the only full-timer in a department, and so is left to do all department work by himself or herself.
- A department or division chair who can talk about the huge amount of administrative time spent hiring a new set of faculty every term or year.

The possibilities are endless; the more colleagues you talk to about this issue, the more potential presenters you have. Ideally, you would have multiple presentations of this sort, or collect those stories in writing and include them in your packet.

Feedback—Hearing from a Respondent: Your hearing could include just the first three types of presentations—policy, data and human interest—followed by a discussion with attendees. However, we would recommend that a fourth piece be added, which is to have either an administrator or a legislator (or both) to respond to the presentations. They may not agree with the policy you are putting forward, but beginning a dialogue with those we have to either bargain with on these issues, or persuade to support our position, is important.

In addition, being able to advertise the event as a dialogue with the administration or a legislator will help attract people to the event.