

## The Hidden Life of Law School Adjuncts: Teaching Temps, Indispensable Instructors, Underappreciated Cash Cows, or Something Else?

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### Abstract

*Adjunct professors are fixtures in law schools around the country. Yet they are among the least examined, least understood stakeholders in today's legal education industry. For example, few know that most law schools turn to adjuncts to teach more than 40% of their elective courses yet give them little to no institutional voice; that adjuncts effectively pay for the privilege of teaching; that most law schools enjoy an approximately 21X return on investment for each dollar paid to an adjunct for teaching; and that a typical full-time professor makes roughly seven times more than an adjunct for teaching*

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*the very same course (while also costing the institution considerably more in overhead).*

*This thought piece, written by two long-term adjuncts and a tenured professor, conducts the first deeper-dive examination of the adjuncts' role in today's law schools. The article examines why adjuncts take on the responsibility of returning to school to teach; how law schools, professors, and students benefit from adjunct instructors; the professional and reputational risks facing today's adjuncts; and why—despite these challenges—adjunct teaching positions continue to be highly sought after.*

*We wrap up this excursion into the largely unseen economic, professional, and interpersonal realities facing today's law school adjuncts by suggesting seventeen practical steps these immensely important institutions of higher learning can take to improve the relationship for the adjuncts, institutions, and students alike.*

## **Introduction**

Every August and December, thousands of practicing lawyers ready themselves for the fall or spring (or in the quarter system, winter) classes they will be teaching at any one of the 197 ABA-approved law schools around the country.<sup>1</sup> Whether in their first or thirtieth year of teaching, and regardless of whether they do so at a national, regional, or local law school, like clockwork, these dedicated professionals volunteer to return to the classroom to share their knowledge, insights, and experiences with the next generation of lawyers.

Instructing at the law school level is a tremendous responsibility that adjuncts take seriously, and, for most, it represents a source of enormous pride. The practicing lawyer also usually welcomes the opportunity to dip their toe back into the scholarly

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1. See *ABA-Approved Law Schools*, A.B.A., [https://www.americanbar.org/groups/legal\\_education/resources/aba\\_approved\\_law\\_schools/](https://www.americanbar.org/groups/legal_education/resources/aba_approved_law_schools/) [<https://perma.cc/UPA7-UR85>].

waters. Teaching represents a fun break, and perhaps even a distraction, from the practicing lawyer's everyday pattern, even if (or perhaps especially because) it is only on a part-time basis.

In the same way a litigator preps for trial, these part-time professors pore over potential class readings; draft or fine-tune their syllabi; think about how to make the materials as topical and “ripped from the headlines” as possible; develop bespoke arguments to make complex concepts more understandable; address required administrative tasks; engage with students on class or career issues; and otherwise do what is necessary to be ready for teaching action.

Adjuncts are in most circles unquestionably perceived as a relevant part of legal academia. But amazingly, scholars and other commentators have written or said comparatively little about them.

Speaking plainly, the law school stakeholders accept the adjuncts' presence on campus as a given without much consideration being paid to: (i) what motivates them to take on these positions with little to no remuneration, (ii) the exceptional economic benefit this team of short-term instructors provides for their institutions, (iii) what makes for a positive adjunct experience, or (iv) how institutions and their students can fully integrate adjuncts into the law school community with the attendant benefits to both from doing so.

In short, although scholars and other commentators meticulously record and analyze virtually every aspect of the law school experience,<sup>2</sup> they have written little to nothing about adjuncts

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2. See, e.g., Sara L. Ochs, *Impostor Syndrome & The Law School Caste System*, 42 PACE L. REV. 373 (2022); Mary Catena, *Spinning Tales of Financial Exigency: The Subversion of Tenure Contracts*, 24 LOY. J. PUB. INT. L. 107 (2022); Gabor Andrasi, *Expected but Not Taught? Teaching Management at Law Schools in Hungary and in the U.S.*, 2 J. RTS. & JUST. 18 (2021); Mary Louise Frampton, *Law School Design from a Critical Race Perspective: The Genesis of the Charrette*, 25 U.C. DAVIS SOC. JUST. L. REV. 53 (2021); Christopher Kelley & Natalia Borozdina, *Internationalizing the U.S. Law School Classroom: Lessons*

and the important—indeed, as the numbers might even suggest, vital—role this institutionally almost invisible group plays at law schools.

Our aim here is to fill this obvious void by initiating an overdue dialogue around the role of adjuncts in legal education. More specifically, we will take a closer, though necessarily summary, look at the mix of incentives motivating both adjuncts and the institutions that employ them. From these observations, we

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*Learned from Teaching Transnationally*, 52 INT'L L. 131 (2019); Jeffrey A. Pojanowski, *Teaching Jurisprudence in a Catholic Law School*, 58 J. CATH. LEGAL STUD. 75 (2019); Martin J. Katz, *Teaching Professional Identity in Law School*, 42 COLO. LAW. 45 (2013); C. Benjie Louis, *Reflections upon Transitions: An Essay on Learning How to Teach after Practicing Law*, 18 INT'L J. CLINICAL LEGAL EDUC. 227 (2012); Mary-Beth Moylan & Stephanie Thompson, *Enduring Hope?: A Study of Looping in Law School*, 48 DUQ. L. REV. 455 (2010); David M. Siegel, *The Ambivalent Role of Experimental Learning in American Legal Education and the Problem of Legal Culture*, 10 GER. L.J. 815 (2009); Joanne Ingham & Robin A. Boyle, *Generation X in Law School: How These Law Students are Different from Those Who Teach Them*, 56 J. LEGAL EDUC. 281 (2006); Steven A. Ramirez, *What We Teach When We Teach About Race: The Problem of Law and Pseudo-Economics*, 54 J. LEGAL EDUC. 365 (2004); Christopher L. Eisgruber, *Can Law Schools Teach Values?*, 36 U.S.F. L. REV. 603 (2002); Joshua D. Rosenberg, *Teaching Empathy in Law School*, 36 U.S.F. L. REV. 621 (2002); Leslie Espinoza Garvey, *Beyond the Matrix: The Psychological Cost of Fighting for Gender Justice in Law Teaching*, 11 S. CAL. REV. L. & WOMEN'S STUD. 305 (2002); Peter B. Friedman, *What Are Legal Writing Professors Doing as International Legal Educators*, 20 PENN ST. INT'L L. REV. 43 (2001); Pamela Edwards & Sheilah Vance, *Teaching Social Justice Through Legal Writing*, 7 LEGAL WRITING 63 (2001); Adrien K. Wing, *The Role of Culture, Race, Gender and Language in Working Together: Developing Cooperation in International Legal Education*, 20 PENN ST. INT'L L. REV. 35 (2001); R. Lawrence Dessem, *Top Ten Reasons to Be a Law School Dean*, 33 U. TOL. L. REV. 19 (2001); Terri LeClercq, *Failure to Teach: Due Process and Law School Plagiarism*, 49 J. LEGAL EDUC. 236 (1999); Arthur Austin, *Scoff Law School Debates Whether a Male Can Teach a Course in Feminist Jurisprudence*, 18 J. LEGAL PROF. 203 (1993); William Roth, *Student Evaluation of Law Teaching*, 17 AKRON L. REV. 609 (1984); Nathan L. Hecht, *Property under Due Process - Non-Tenured Teachers' Right to Re-Employment*, 27 SW. L. J. 398 (1973).

develop a list of best practices calibrated to ensure that adjuncts, their law schools, and the all-important students (who are the ultimate consumers adjunct and law schools cater to) get the most out of this important relationship.

### **I. Interim Feedback from Adjuncts, Full-Time Professors, and Law School Administrators**

In the months that separated our pitching this piece to the *Texas Law Review Online* and the date of its publication, we received thoughtful feedback on both our working draft and a shorter CliffsNotes version of the article we published in Law360.<sup>3</sup> Dozens of colleagues, administrators, former students, and other stakeholders from around the country with something to say about adjuncts and the adjuncting experience sent these unsolicited responses and comments our way.

The response was surprising both in terms of volume and the level of detailed feedback shared concerning the observations we made and suggestions we offered. Fortunately (we say recognizing our obvious bias here), virtually all that feedback was supportive of the points we raise. As more than one respondent with extensive teaching experience put it, “you guys are saying exactly what I have been thinking.” Another wrote that we summarized “some of the reasons I no longer teach as an adjunct: Too much time goes into it, too little pay (to compensate for the lost time away from job and family), and too little appreciation.”

Even though the feedback we received was positive, what was evident is that our piece spoke to different people in different ways. Given this diversity of opinion, we thought it beneficial to share some representative examples prior to diving into our analysis.

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3. Andrew Boutros, T. Markus Funk, and Eugene Volokh, *Time For Law Schools To Rethink Unsung Role Of Adjuncts*, LAW360 (May 19, 2023), <https://www.perkinscoie.com/images/content/2/6/263274/Time-For-Law-Schools-To-Rethink-Unsung-Role-Of-Adjuncts-Law360.pdf> [<https://perma.cc/MD99-8Z4G>].

Echoing our perspective that the real draw to adjuncting is getting to teach interested students on topics of interest, a colleague at a top-ten East Coast school shared his perspective, as he wittily put it, from the “basement of the ivory tower.” For this respondent, teaching as an adjunct for more than a decade “was one of the most enjoyable and meaningful experiences of my career.” He then kindly added that he found our points to be “remarkably insightful and accurate down to every single word. . . . I also found your recommendations to be spot on.”

On a similarly upbeat note, an adjunct working at a top law firm who taught in the Southwest expressed that “the very best thing about serving as an adjunct is the long-lasting relationships formed with students.” Deviating a bit from our position that adjuncts should be paid a bit more, however, this observer shared the perspective that “not getting paid actually elevates the trust factor. I am able to joke about it with the students. I’d rather have the trust than the money.”

Further, “[o]n Professor Volokh’s point about professional and reputational dangers,” “[w]hile I don’t try to pick fights, I warn students at the outset that I am a free speech/free thought instructor and the class is a free speech/free thought class, where we’ll respectfully listen to different perspectives without regard to ideology or orthodoxy. So far, so good.” Finally, this respondent agreed that “[s]ocial interaction between adjuncts and regular faculty is complex” and that more must be done to help “grease the social skids.”

Addressing the truly vast pay disparity between adjunct and full-time professors basically teaching the same class (yes, we readily acknowledge—hardly the most important incentive—but still important enough for at least some percentage of adjuncts), one adjunct teaching at a top tier law school offered that he tells “my kid who serves food at a fast-casual restaurant that his hourly salary is about double what [my top fifteen law school] pays me.” (This respondent also shared that he earned less than \$1,000 after tax for teaching a semester-long course at a top-

fifteen law school and reported that his preparation for class consumed much more than 100 hours).

Another fellow adjunct at a top-five law school similarly noted that “[y]our writing reinforces some of the thoughts I have had about my adjunct law school teaching.” He offered that, “[l]ike public school teachers, law adjuncts are under-paid and under-appreciated. The reason for tolerating this is that this is not our day job and we have the satisfaction of teaching an interesting topic to bright students.”

Hailing from the camp of those not entirely persuaded by the full range of our arguments, one associate dean at a top-twenty law school with a unionized faculty questioned what he described as our “market case.” This respondent candidly commented that at his law school, “[w]e probably turn down five people for every adjunct teaching opportunity that we have. . . . Clearly the non-financial remuneration from teaching offers sufficient incentive to attract a diverse candidate pool for adjunct positions.”

Fair enough. There are undoubtedly more aspiring adjuncts than there are openings. But we have never claimed—and certainly do not here—that money is a key motivator (much less *the* key motivator) for lawyers to adjunct. Indeed, many adjuncts forgo or return receiving a stipend for their teaching efforts.

Plus, to the extent that this logic has appeal, then what is one to make of the annual law school recruiting “cattle call” during which law schools also reject plenty of highly qualified applicants for full-time teaching spots? Suffice it to say that the availability of many aspiring scholars who would gladly take a current professor’s spot has, to our understanding, never been advanced as a good argument for reducing incumbent full-time professor pay.

Nor (again to our collective knowledge) has a law firm ever advanced such an argument to justify paying graduating law students *less* as opposed to *more* when they join Big Law. Indeed, the serial “salary wars” that have taken place over the last

twenty years reinforce the point that firms are willing to pay more—not less—to recruit top talent, even in an environment where there are fewer spots than applicants interested in joining an AmLaw 100 firm.

We, in short, are doubtful that focusing on the supply side of the equation (that is, focusing on the great number of those interested in becoming adjuncts compared to the openings available to fill) advances the ball much in the adjunct context or will improve the relationship between adjuncts and their institutions and the all-important teaching mission that this relationship is in service of.

This same respondent (as we said, some of the feedback we received was helpfully detailed!), commenting on Professor Volokh’s concerns around classroom comportment, further offered his take that “[a]n adjunct instructor who stumbles over preferred pronoun usage, for instance, is less likely to incur student wrath than a full-time colleague [who, presumably so the argument goes, is expected to ‘know better’]. . . .” Finally, the respondent added that “[w]hen I read your list [of recommendations]—which, again, I find humane and sensible—my immediate reaction was, ‘to implement these suggestions would entail two additional full-time staff members, working entirely on adjunct faculty administration.’”

As we will discuss, from a financial perspective we believe earmarking some resources to initiate our largely low-cost proposals is money well spent. Even if necessary, moreover, hiring one or two staff members at a modest salary to help get the best out of a very material proportion of a law school’s teaching pool would be unlikely to impact a law school’s bottom line—especially since, as we’ve already noted, many adjuncts donate their modest stipend back to the law school at which they teach or otherwise forego receiving a stipend in the first place.

At bottom, we were delighted to receive constructive feedback from administrators and law school deans from around the country, most of whom said our recommendations struck a



chord. Many even said they were in the process of adopting some of our recommendations. For example, as one associate dean at a prominent law school shared, she was “[d]istributing [the article] to our Dean’s cabinet for discussion and further support for my efforts to expand support for our adjunct colleagues!” We hope this article will generate additional commentary and look forward to continuing the discussion in the coming months and years.

## II. Your Interlocutors

Two of your authors, both seasoned adjuncts who have been happily teaching law for a combined thirty-five-plus years, over a year ago decided it was time for a more public conversation about the role of adjuncts in today’s law schools.

Recognizing that, as much as we might know—or at least think we might know—about the subject, having the perspective of a veteran and sage full-time professor could only enhance the piece’s utility and accuracy, we recruited Professor Eugene Volokh as our third author. As it turns out, he had already penned an article on part of the subject. That article from 2021, titled *Why I Wouldn’t Recommend Adjunct Teaching at Law Schools Now*,<sup>4</sup> undertook an interesting analysis of the reputational risks, and perhaps even professional dangers, facing practicing attorneys teaching law on the side.

Here, Professor Volokh will expand on that analysis. We also speak to the many pros—and some of the cons—of serving as an adjunct. (After all, no job is perfect, as the saying goes.) We offer our back-of-the-envelope economic analysis of adjunct teaching, an area that, to our knowledge, has received no substantive attention in the scholarly research. Finally, and as touched on above, we propose some practical (another way for saying “low

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4. Eugene Volokh, *Why I Wouldn’t Recommend Adjunct Teaching at Law Schools Now*, REASON: VOLOKH CONSPIRACY (Mar. 22, 2021, 9:01 AM), <https://reason.com/volokh/2021/03/22/why-i-wouldnt-recommend-adjunct-teaching-at-law-schools/> [<https://perma.cc/6QE6-KF8U>].

cost”) best practices that law schools can consider as they seek to embrace, fortify, and retain their adjunct cadre.

### III. Law School Teaching—By the (Rough) Numbers

Unlike with full-time law faculty, there is no comprehensive accounting of active legal adjuncts (who institutions alternatively refer to as “lecturers,” “lecturers in law,” “senior lecturers,” “adjunct professors of law,” “adjunct instructors,” “adjunct faculty,” and “part-time faculty”) at U.S. law schools.<sup>5</sup> So, to better understand the vital role this cadre of contingent academics plays, we start with an empirical analysis that is admittedly, and necessarily, rudimentary. But from a starting point that something is better than nothing, and in an area where nothing currently exists, we offer these nonscientific yet quantitative observations.

#### A. *There Are More Adjuncts Teaching More Classes Than You Might Think*

Based on our sampling of law school websites, as well as the numbers certain helpful institutions shared with us, in the typical U.S. law school there are roughly two adjunct professors for each full-time professor listed on the law school’s faculty page. Although listed adjuncts are less likely than full-time professors to be teaching each semester, and although the classes taught by adjuncts tend to be 2L and 3L electives with a smaller number of enrolled students (usually fewer than 35), we believe assuming a 2:1 ratio of rostered adjuncts to full-time professors is at least directionally close to the mark.

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5. A more fulsome discussion of the role of non-tenure-tracked faculty other than adjuncts is in our view also overdue. That analysis would include a particular focus on what we perceive to be a growing institutional and financial gulf among instructors who are not tenure tracked, such as, for example, legal writing faculty, non-tenure-tracked clinical faculty, fellows, and lecturers affiliated with various centers and programs.

**For example:**

- The University of Colorado Law School website lists 66 “Resident Faculty” and 123 adjunct faculty; in spring of 2023, adjuncts taught no 1L courses but taught 33 of the 62 upper-level classes.<sup>6</sup>
  - In the fall of 2022, and perhaps evidencing some COVID impacts, at Colorado Law, adjuncts taught 21 of the law school’s 51 upper-level courses; in the spring of 2022, adjuncts taught 23 of the law school’s 57 upper-level courses; and in the fall of 2021, adjuncts taught 17 of the 57 upper-level courses. With only a minor exception, no adjuncts taught any of the approximately 19 IL courses. [We extend a special thank you to the University of Colorado for supporting the effort to better understand, and improve, the life of adjuncts and for kindly providing these extremely helpful statistics; other institutions, in stark contrast, summarily declined to provide any of the requested information.]
- The University of Houston Law Center reports that it has 38 tenured or tenure-track

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6. *Faculty Directory*, UNIV. COLO. BOULDER: COLO. L., <https://lawweb.colorado.edu/profiles/allFaculty.jsp> [<https://perma.cc/D7UB-DJ6W>] (last visited Oct. 7, 2023); *Departmental Directory: Faculty-Adjunct*, UNIV. OF COLO. BOULDER: COLO. L., <https://lawweb.colorado.edu/profiles/department.jsp?id=56> [<https://perma.cc/YNW7-8BVP>].

faculty and “approximately 150 adjunct faculty.”<sup>7</sup>

- The University of Chicago Law School website shows 43 “full time teaching faculty” versus 108 “Lecturers in Law” (another—and, to some ears, a more dignified—term for adjuncts).<sup>8</sup>
- At the UCLA law school, there are 99 tenured or tenure-tracked professors and 123 adjuncts.<sup>9</sup>
- Harvard’s faculty page includes 119 professors and 193 adjuncts.<sup>10</sup>
- The University of Georgia has 30 tenured or tenure-tracked faculty and 68 adjuncts.<sup>11</sup>

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7. *The University of Houston Law Center Faculty*, UNIV. HOUS. L. CTR., <https://www.law.uh.edu/faculty/> [<https://perma.cc/7THV-N9TL>].

8. *Directory: Full Time Teaching Faculty*, UNIV. CHI. L. SCH., [https://www.law.uchicago.edu/directory?profile\\_type=103](https://www.law.uchicago.edu/directory?profile_type=103) [<https://perma.cc/S94H-JS9Z>]; *Directory: Lecturers in Law*, UNIV. CHI. L. SCH., [https://www.law.uchicago.edu/directory?combine=&profile\\_type=104&area\\_of\\_law=All&program\\_affiliation=All&department=All](https://www.law.uchicago.edu/directory?combine=&profile_type=104&area_of_law=All&program_affiliation=All&department=All) [<https://perma.cc/EX2N-GXGL>].

9. *Search UCLA Law Faculty*, UNIV. CAL., L.A. SCH. L., <https://law.ucla.edu/faculty/faculty-profiles> [<https://perma.cc/5W3H-S5CY>].

10. *Faculty*, HARV. L. SCH., [https://hls.harvard.edu/faculty/?page=3&faculty\\_type=HLS%20Professors](https://hls.harvard.edu/faculty/?page=3&faculty_type=HLS%20Professors) [<https://perma.cc/KY88-QUC4>].

11. *Faculty Directory*, UNIV. GA. L. SCH., [https://www.law.uga.edu/faculty-profiles?title=&field\\_department\\_target\\_id%5B%5D=601](https://www.law.uga.edu/faculty-profiles?title=&field_department_target_id%5B%5D=601) [<https://perma.cc/V8WV-JUYM>].

- At Northwestern University’s law school, we find 65 “Research Faculty” and around 200 adjuncts.<sup>12</sup>

**Almost 12,000 adjuncts in 197 ABA-approved law schools.** Assuming a conservative average of 60 adjuncts per law school, we estimate a total of some 12,000 adjuncts around the country teaching at one or more law school over the course of an academic year.

**Adjuncts typically teach up to 45% of law school classes.** Based on our review of many online course catalogues, discussions with law school administrators around the country, and our own anecdotal experience, adjuncts on average teach between 25–45% of a given law school’s courses. That said, and as noted above, in most cases, the adjuncts teach narrower subjects in more boutique-style classes with 35 or fewer students. In contrast, full-time faculty typically teach the larger 35–90 student 1L courses, such as constitutional law, torts, property, civil procedure, and introductory criminal law.

Put another way, the total number of individual *courses* taught by adjuncts during the 2L and 3L years in most law schools is often at or above 50%. Yet it is also true that the total numbers of *students* taught by full-time professors during *all three years* of law school is greater than 50%, and, therefore, necessarily greater than the total number of students taught by adjuncts. (And, as discussed below, this less-than-50%-of-students-taught-by-adjunct benchmark is, in fact, a formal, albeit debatable, ABA accreditation requirement.)

#### *B. What Law School Students Pay Per Credit Hour*

No surprise here, law school is expensive. The average tuition cost for law school (not counting cost of living, books,

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12. *Faculty Profiles*, NORTHWESTERN PRITZKER SCH. L., <https://www.law.northwestern.edu/faculty/fulltime/> [<https://perma.cc/3K4Y-AR5R>].

insurance, computers, etc.) is around \$50,000 per year.<sup>13</sup> Consider that, in 2020, the most expensive law school was Columbia University (at approximately \$72,360), and the least expensive law school was Inter American University (at approximately \$15,510).<sup>14</sup>

Earning a JD, in turn, requires at least 83 credit hours, per ABA Standard 311(a).<sup>15</sup> So, rounding up, each law student takes roughly 28 credit hours per year.

Based on the above necessarily rough calculations, the typical law student pays approximately \$1,785 per law school credit (that is, \$50,000 per year divided by 28 credit hours per year). Translating this into gross law school income, a typical two-credit class generates about \$3,570, which, when multiplied by an average of, say, 30 students per class, yields a gross total of some \$107,100 per class (\$3,570 x 30 students) to the institution.

*C. Adjunct Professor Pay Leaves Little Doubt: Adjuncts Are Not Motivated by Money*

**Standard adjunct pay (\$3,000–\$5,000/class).** The standard pay for an adjunct is \$3,000–\$5,000 per class, though a contact at one law school located in a metro area shared that their school pays adjuncts \$10,000 for a three-credit class.<sup>16</sup>

**Adjunct opportunity cost (\$100,000+ for Big Law partners).** From a purely numbers analysis, there is a surprisingly significant opportunity cost to a practicing lawyer who chooses to teach part-time. It is not unusual for an adjunct to dedicate at least 100 hours per semester to teaching and all that comes with

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13. Melanie Hanson, *Average Cost of Law School*, EDUC. DATA INITIATIVE (Sept. 13, 2023), <https://educationdata.org/average-cost-of-law-school> [<https://perma.cc/7CAF-QE42>].

14. *Id.*

15. A.B.A. STANDARDS AND RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR APPROVAL OF LAW SCHOOLS 311(a) (2023).

16. As noted, in our experience, many adjuncts, particularly those who are among the alumni ranks, donate their teaching stipend back to the law school, particularly if they are alumni.

it. That includes preparing the syllabus and selecting the course material; preparing for and teaching the one or two dozen individual (virtual or in-person) classes per semester; traveling to and from class; meeting with and advising students regarding class materials, the law student experience, and career path; grading papers, exams, and/or other assignments; writing letters of reference; and attending to the various administrative responsibilities that the job entails. Further, adjuncts must typically bear whatever additional (in some cases minor and in other cases not so minor) costs, such as copying, mileage/gas, parking, Ubers, subway/metro tickets, plane tickets, hotel stays, train rides, etc., that are incurred as part of their teaching roles.

Many of the adjuncts, particularly in the major markets in which many law schools are clustered, are “Big Law” partners who bill at rates close to or well above **\$1,000 per hour**. Conservatively, this translates into approximately **\$100,000** worth of billed time that the practicing lawyer, and, derivatively, his or her law firm, forgoes for the privilege to teach. (For senior partners, that figure can be 1.5 to two times as much and in some cases, even more.)

So, assuming the general rule of thumb often repeated in the industry that partners take home some one-third of what they bring in or bill, each adjunct forgoes roughly **\$33,000** in lost law firm take-home pay, assuming, of course, that the 100 hours spent teaching could have been spent on billable work.

**Hourly pay (\$30–\$50/hour).** Based on these baseline calculations, the hourly pay for an adjunct is approximately **\$30–\$50 per hour** (\$3,000–\$5,000 divided by 100 hours). Mathematically, then, an adjunct voluntarily accepts an approximately **95% pay cut** for each hour of teaching when compared to what the adjunct could earn working for their paying clients.

**Insignificant adjunct overhead.** Law school overhead is largely fixed. Moreover, as we noted in Section I, adjuncts predictably require far less administrative resources than full-time professors. For example, institutions provide full-time faculty

with designated offices in the law school, healthcare insurance and medical leave, on-site assistants, school-issued computers and other electronic devices, research stipends, research assistants, paid vacations, and sabbaticals.

**Adjuncts offer an approximately 21X return on investment.** Although the full-time law professor is the beneficiary of institutional sunk costs, in most cases, the adjunct in effect functions as a solo operator. The typical adjunct prepares everything at home or work with little or no institutional support, arrives at the law school to teach the class, and then departs. In fact, it is not at all unusual for an adjunct to get through a full semester without receiving any but the most ministerial institutional assistance. In our humble opinion, should law schools follow at least some of our practical integration and other advice below, adjuncts will likely begin to develop a far less transactional, far more engaging and mutually reinforcing relationship with their institutions.

So generally speaking, what this math establishes is that adjuncts' pay is less than one-twentieth of what the school grosses on each class, assuming the institution pays the adjunct \$5,000 per class while generating some \$107,100 in gross law school income per class. Suffice it to say that this 21X(!) institutional return on investment is truly extraordinary and may be unparalleled in higher education.

*D. Full-Time Professor Pay: Among the Highest in Higher Education*

Based on the 2021 Society of American Law Teachers' salary survey and similar sources, a full-time law school professor, a catch-all term used to include assistant professors, pre-tenure associate professors, and tenured professors, on average earns **\$150,000**.<sup>17</sup> At what are sometimes referred to colloquially as

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17. Society of American Law Teachers, 2021 SALT EQUALIZER, no. 1, June 2021, <https://www.saltlaw.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/SALT-salary-survey-2021-final.pdf> [<https://perma.cc/74HC-UE2A>]; *Law Professor Salary*, ZIPPIA,



“elite law schools,” that average pay can quickly rise to or well above **\$500,000** per professor per year.

But even these numbers do not account for summer research stipends and other “extras” or “perks,” such as preferred status for faculty children in undergraduate or even graduate admissions and free or reduced tuition for these children. Additionally, depending on the professor’s area of expertise and experience, law schools permit them to supplement their income—often significantly—by counseling on court cases, testifying as experts, advising companies, etc.

Taking into consideration annual leaves, outside research grants, and sabbaticals, among other such things, the typical full-time professor is available to teach **nine months** a year and **teaches between eight to twelve credit hours a year**. In contrast, the average adjunct teaching a two-hour course for two semesters or a three-hour class for one semester teaches **four or three credit hours**, respectively.

By the numbers, then, law schools pay the average full-time professor at a rate of *at least* **around \$16,700** for each credit hour, as compared to the average adjunct professor who receives *at most* around **\$2,500** for each credit hour when the adjunct teaches for four credits per year. Thus, a full-time professor receives almost **seven times** the pay of an adjunct teaching the exact same class; and, as noted, the opportunity costs for most law professors are not on par with those of adjuncts, particularly those practicing at law firms.

But putting all the numbers aside, and at the risk of noting the obvious, full-time law professors are, of course, not exclusively paid to teach. Depending on seniority, law schools expect professors to engage in various levels of scholarship, administrative work, recruiting, committee involvement, and alumni engagement, among other important duties that go to the very vitality of the institution. And the strength of the full-time faculty

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<https://www.zippia.com/law-professor-jobs/salary/>  
[<https://perma.cc/W29H-9XDK> ] (last updated Sept. 14, 2023).

is also an important consideration for law school rankings, which bring prestige to the institution and in turn attract top students from across the country, if not the world.

#### **IV. The Society of American Law Teachers' Curious Opposition to Loosening ABA Standard 403**

The Society of American Law Teachers, despite having as part of its stated mission “diversifying law schools” and “improving the legal profession,”<sup>18</sup> has been vocal in its opposition to the ABA loosening Standard 403.<sup>19</sup> That standard requires that full-time faculty perform at least 50% of *aggregate* law teaching—meaning classes provided during all three years of law school. The Society’s principal argument for opposing adjuncts teaching more classes is that adjuncts purportedly are less available to students than full-time professors.<sup>20</sup>

The Association of American Law Schools has advanced similar arguments.<sup>21</sup> In its 2017 press release, it argued:

Part-time law teachers enrich the curriculum, to be sure. Nonetheless, they cannot substitute for the focus of full-time faculty on teaching, availability to students, curriculum design and assessment, scholarship, and sustained engagement for educating professionals for the multiple roles they will play as lawyers and leaders.

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18. Society of American Law Teachers, *supra* note 17.

19. Paul Caron, *Society of American Law Teachers Opposes ABA Proposal to Allow Adjuncts to Teach More Law School Courses*, TAXPROF BLOG (Mar. 28, 2017), [https://taxprof.typepad.com/tax-prof\\_blog/2017/03/society-of-american-law-teachers-opposes-aba-proposal-to-allow-adjuncts-to-teach-more-law-school-cou.html](https://taxprof.typepad.com/tax-prof_blog/2017/03/society-of-american-law-teachers-opposes-aba-proposal-to-allow-adjuncts-to-teach-more-law-school-cou.html) [<https://perma.cc/F8WM-AHX3>].

20. *Id.*

21. *See AALS Opposes Proposed Revision to ABA Standard on Use of Part-Time Faculty After First Year of Law School*, ASS’N OF AM. L. SCHS. (Aug. 3, 2017). <https://www.aals.org/aals-newsroom/aals-opposes-proposed-revision-to-aba-standard-on-use-of-part-time-faculty-after-first-year-of-law-school/> [<https://perma.cc/3EJR-82AS>].

A key distinction between ABA accredited and unaccredited law schools has been the role of full-time faculty. ABA accreditation has carried with it an imprimatur of quality that state supreme courts rely on. If the proposed change [to Rule 403] is enacted, this difference will erode, accompanied by a corresponding diminution in the significance of accreditation, and of quality in legal education.<sup>22</sup>

We set aside for now our skepticism of what strikes us as the dubious argument that adjuncts are less available. We also will not belabor the conspicuously missing link between engaging in scholarship and teaching ability (on this note, and for what it is worth, consider also that some adjuncts produce as much or more scholarly output than their full-time colleagues). Importantly, however, we flag for discussion whether such policies may in fact hurt efforts toward diversity, equity, and inclusion. More specifically, artificially restricting the number of adjunct instructors in this way may well threaten to create rather obvious barriers that might otherwise lead to a greater proportion of diverse instructors being part of the law school community.

Highly paid “Big Law” partners or in-house attorneys, after all, can take on adjunct positions with less concern for the net financial costs of doing so. Arguably, the same cannot be said of those working for the government, pursuing public interest jobs, or working at smaller firms that may have comparatively greater diversity in their attorney ranks.<sup>23</sup> Although this is not the time or place, we think that conducting a deeper dive into how these protectionist dynamics aid, or fail to aid, the profession’s mission of diversifying today’s law schools would be a worthwhile exercise. (We are not aware of the Society of American Law

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22. *Id.*

23. Noam Scheiber and John Eligon, *Elite Law Firm’s All-White Partner Class Stirs Debate on Diversity*, N.Y. TIMES, (Jan. 27, 2019), <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/27/us/paul-weiss-partner-diversity-law-firm.html> [<https://perma.cc/5TCS-DQNT>].

Teachers, the Association of American Law Schools, or anyone else for that matter, having launched rigorous empirical or statistical studies examining these important issues.)

#### V. **Additional Observations from the Adjuncts' (Funk's and Boutros's) Perspective**

Although the numbers laid out above are not scientific, they directionally go far in persuasively supporting the conclusion that adjuncts are financially precious—and, in fact, indispensable—to law schools. It is not an overstatement to say (and so far, none of our law school contacts have disagreed) that most U.S. law schools would have serious—and in many cases, life-threatening—operational challenges if adjuncts suddenly disappeared. It is no surprise, then, that adjuncts over time have become a prominent fixture in virtually every law school in the country—and that they are far more present today than they were, say, twenty or thirty years ago.<sup>24</sup>

Institutions are, therefore, smart to publicly recognize how much they value their adjuncts. Arizona State University, for example, until recently had a public page on its website dedicated to “Amazing ASU Law Adjuncts”<sup>25</sup>—a very nice touch.

But life is hardly all about money, whether it is making it, spending it, or, as most relevant here, making it for others. To be sure, adjuncts are not teaching in the hopes of amassing personal riches. Instead, the big draws for adjuncts are the opportunity to give back and share experiences with future lawyers, the benefit of staying on top of legal developments, the “prestige”

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24. See Jordan Weissmann, *The Ever-Shrinking Role of Tenured College Professors (in 1 Chart)*, THE ATLANTIC, (Apr. 10, 2013), <https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2013/04/the-ever-shrinking-role-of-tenured-college-professors-in-1-chart/274849/> [https://perma.cc/WG9Q-5RZK] (discussing the rise in adjuncts in all colleges).

25. Formerly found at: *Amazing ASU Law Adjuncts*, ARIZ. STATE U., <https://law.asu.edu/amazing-adjuncts> [https://perma.cc/8XNZ-U76V].

associated with a teaching appointment, and the chance to enjoy a break from the norm.

*A. Teaching—and Learning from—Students*

Adjuncts are typically able to, and in fact law schools purposefully hire them to, teach in a bespoke setting. They enjoy a rare opportunity to share their subject-specific expertise with students who have specifically sought out their course. At some law schools, a percentage of these students are also LLM candidates who bring unique legal insights and perspectives to the class discussion, especially because frequently these students have been practicing law in their home country for several years.<sup>26</sup> Repeating a refrain heard time and time again in the thoughtful feedback we summarized at the outset, learning from engaged class participants who selected a tailored class offers real benefits, both to other students and the adjunct, which cannot be quantified in dollars and cents.

Full-time professors, as noted, generally teach the required introductory courses, such as civil procedure, criminal law, torts, property, contracts, and constitutional law, among others. In contrast, most adjunct-taught classes will have twenty to thirty-five students, and often fewer, and tend to focus on more specialized subject matters where the instructor's background and real-world experiences shine more brightly. Although teaching such tailored courses does not mean that the instructors leave the more abstract aspects of legal theory at the door, in most cases, the added expectation is that adjunct instructors teaching courses to 2Ls and 3Ls will help produce more practice-ready students.

Seasoned adjuncts also recognize that the teaching experience goes both ways. It is undoubtedly true that adjuncts are

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26. See Jakki Petzold, *The LLM Experience*, L. SCH. SURVEY OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT (Oct. 5, 2020), <https://lsse.indiana.edu/blog/the-llm-experience/> [<https://perma.cc/J8EP-4Q3L>] (noting that 79% of LLM students are international students who already hold law degrees).

putting their subject-matter expertise on display, engaging with students in an area of the adjunct's interest and specialty, and having a bit of a "break from the norm." This can be profoundly rewarding, both professionally and intellectually, for the instructor. But knowing that each week the adjunct will have to be ready to teach also sharpens the adjunct's own skill set and provides that extra push to stay up to date on the most current legal and public policy developments.

*B. The Value of Student Feedback*

Receiving end-of-class anonymous student feedback through instructor evaluations can make for high anticipation. It also is accompanied by unique, and potentially significant, benefits. Taking seriously student commentary on a teacher's performance offers the opportunity to honestly evaluate, reflect on, and address issues with one's presentation style, substantive knowledge, personality quirks, or other aspects of one's ability to convey complex concepts and problems in an engaging and effective way.

For those adjuncts who litigate cases, this type of periodic feedback can be valuable for their in-court performance. And for non-litigators, student feedback may be even more helpful, considering that, say, transactional lawyers may not regularly get such candid critiques on their demeanor and ability to convey information clearly, succinctly, and effectively.

*C. Burnishing the Adjunct's "Brand" in a Competitive Legal Marketplace*

Beyond self-critical analysis, there are also reputational upsides to being an adjunct. That a law school has vetted the practitioner and decided to entrust its students to learn from that person conveys an external, oft-prestigious seal of approval. Teaching as an adjunct for a long time is a proxy for staying power and continued excellence.

Whether in LinkedIn profiles, firm biographies, X (Twitter) homepages, or otherwise, clients, general counsels, and other

consumers of legal services also tend to notice the distinction of a teaching position. (Media outlets similarly seem to prefer commentary from a lawyer who “teaches law at law school X” rather than one who is exclusively a “partner at law firm Y.”) In this way, burnishing the practitioner’s “brand,” particularly when the lawyer recently came from the government or is still relatively junior in their career, can make the difference in an ever more competitive marketplace of lawyers offering their legal services.

*D. Enjoying a Break from the Norm*

Finally, adjuncts also have an opportunity to immerse themselves in an academic community that is very different from their typical day-to-day interactions with colleagues and clients, whether those instructors come from law firms, public-service organizations, in-house, or elsewhere. Like most things in life, however, adjuncts tend to get back what they put in.

Law schools offer full-time professors joining a faculty with immediate opportunities to fully embed themselves in their new institution. On the other hand, many adjuncts, even ones who have taught at the same law school for years (or even decades), simply come and go from their classroom, usually in the evenings or even late evenings. They rarely, if ever, get involved—or are given the opportunity to get involved, as the case may be—with the other faculty members or the broader administration. It is no surprise, then, when these instructors do not feel like full-fledged members of their law schools.

Of course, this is not always the adjunct’s fault. True, some law schools go out of their way to make their adjuncts feel like they are truly part of the campus and intellectual life. But many others leave the adjuncts to figure things out for themselves, sending the message that they are little more than the temporary classroom stewards whose terms are over in a quarter or semester. In our estimation, although it ultimately is the adjuncts’ obligation to reach out to faculty and otherwise affirmatively make their best efforts to become a real part of “their” law school

community, law schools should make a concerted effort to welcome adjuncts into the law school family (and keep them there—more on this below).

Wrapping up our observations from the adjunct bleachers, securing an adjunct teaching post is without a doubt a great and honored thing to do. We, therefore, offer our focus on the economics of adjunct teaching not as a criticism, but rather as a recognition of important economic, professional, and interpersonal realities that, for no apparent reason, have been all but ignored in the academic literature.

## VI. Observations from the Full-Time Professor's (Volokh's) Perspective

As my coauthors correctly contend, adjuncts are immensely valuable to law schools. They help cover subjects that full-time faculty members often cannot. They help law schools provide a mix of classroom experiences: more theoretical (though of course not purely theoretical) perspectives from the full-time faculty who often have limited practice experience, and more practice-minded (though of course not purely practice-minded) perspectives from the adjuncts. And to be blunt, they, for the reasons given above, are a financial bargain for the school compared to full-time faculty.

### A. *Limited Protections for Adjuncts*

Although my coauthors have eloquently described the positives of teaching part-time, I want to add that such teaching is not without its risks. To begin with, adjuncts are not going to have the same academic freedom that faculty members do. Even if the law school or the broader university provides assurances of academic freedom to all faculty members,<sup>27</sup> adjuncts lack the

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27. See Stephanie Francis Ward, *Professors, Administrators and Counsel Applaud Proposed ABA Standard on Academic Freedom*, A.B.A. J. (Aug. 16, 2023, 10:02 AM), <https://www.abajournal.com/web/article/professors-administrators-and-counsel-applaud-proposed-aba-standard-on-academic-freedom> [<https://perma.cc/9C25-7KMW>] (describing



extra procedural protections offered by tenure. If an adjunct says something controversial, whether in class or outside it, it is easy for the law school to simply not renew the adjunct's contract.<sup>28</sup> "We just don't need your class anymore" or "we're interested in trying out a different teacher for your class" is all that the university needs to say.

Indeed, adjuncts have less protection even than untenured but full-time faculty. Those untenured faculty tend to have friends on the faculty who will go to bat for them. Law schools also usually renew contracts,<sup>29</sup> and failure to renew the contract will be noticeable in a way that it would not be for adjuncts. And from the course title to continued employment at the school, adjuncts have less control than full-time professors and, in the end, almost always have no choice but to comply with institutional directives. (I am also skeptical of the administrator's claim, quoted in Section I, that students give more leeway to adjuncts who say things that the students disapprove of; perhaps that is so, but I have not seen much evidence of it.)

### B. *Professional and Reputational Dangers*

There is also a related concern, which is perhaps more serious because it deals with dangers to the adjunct professor's (lucrative, one hopes) day job and not just dangers to the (not-at-all lucrative) adjunct position. In recent years, law students and others have become much more likely to publicly condemn law professors' statements—and those condemnations have become

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proposed standards on academic freedom that includes application to part-time faculty).

28. Jordan Howell & Adam Steinbaugh, *How Adjunctification Undermines Academic Freedom, and What FIRE Is Doing to Help*, FIRE (Dec. 6, 2021), <https://www.thefire.org/news/how-adjunctification-undermines-academic-freedom-and-what-fire-doing-help> [<https://perma.cc/Y4RP-CYLT>].
29. *Becoming a Law Teacher: Frequently Asked Questions*, ASS'N OF AM. L. SCHS., <https://teach.aals.org/tenure-track-faq/> [<https://perma.cc/D6BY-STU9>] (highlighting that some contract-based faculty have the presumption of contract renewal).

much more likely to be aired in the public square of social media and in other publications that reach far outside the law school.<sup>30</sup>

When there is a controversy about an adjunct, the adjunct might be subjected *not* to a quiet parting of the ways, a discreet conversation in which the dean politely sends the adjunct on his or her way. Rather, the adjunct might well become the subject of a roiling public controversy, potentially accompanied by public excoriation by students (and their supporters outside the school) and public condemnation by administrators. Adjuncts who are practicing lawyers are particularly vulnerable to this because their relationships with their firms or with their clients, potential and current, can get seriously undermined if they get caught up in an academic freedom controversy.

Nor is it easy to stay safe just by avoiding controversy in class or even by teaching a seemingly uncontroversial topic. One can get publicly fired from a law school for things one says outside class, including if one doesn't realize he or she is being recorded or overheard.<sup>31</sup> Indeed, in one instance, an adjunct was publicly pushed out just because he did not explicitly object to a statement made by the person who was speaking privately with him.<sup>32</sup>

One can similarly be on the pointy end of a public firing, and associated shaming, for seemingly accurately discussing important subjects that naturally come up in one's job. One can get fired by a law school—and then fired, as a result of the publicity, by one's day job—for relating stories from practice where

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30. William Lee, *UIC Law Professor Says Public Flashpoint over Words Used in Exam Has Been 'Absolute Hell'*, CHI. TRIB. (Feb. 27, 2022, 5:00 AM), <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/breaking/ct-uic-law-professor-files-lawsuit-20220217-ogxsiixuxfdmfdxh6qd4i3p4a-story.html> [<https://perma.cc/S5LN-N9BW>].

31. Michael Levenson, *Georgetown Law Fires Professor for 'Abhorrent' Remarks About Black Students*, N.Y. TIMES (Mar. 11, 2021), <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/11/us/georgetown-university-sandra-sellers.html> [<https://perma.cc/J8NU-9SSF>].

32. *See id.*

people had said offensive things.<sup>33</sup> And where even tenured professors have been sharply criticized by the law school administration for things like condemning the government of China in a blog post (saying “China” five times and then saying “Chinese” to refer back to the Chinese government’s actions),<sup>34</sup> adjuncts face even more peril. (In that case the University Provost’s office ultimately rejected the complaints;<sup>35</sup> but if this had happened to an adjunct professor who was a practicing lawyer, the publicity surrounding the investigation might have been quite damaging despite any eventual vindication.)

To be sure, this was always a risk. But it appears to me that, in recent years, the risk has appreciably increased with the growth of social media and the greater willingness of students to file formal complaints about what they see as insensitive or otherwise offensive statements.<sup>36</sup> As the only full-time law faculty member on this article, I am not expressing any normative views here; instead, I am speaking descriptively. Some might view it as a positive that students are more willing to file such complaints

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33. See Debra Cassens Weiss, *Human Rights Watch Fires General Counsel After She Used N-Word in Classroom Lecture*, A.B.A.J. (Apr. 27, 2021, 9:47 AM), <https://www.abajournal.com/news/article/human-rights-watch-fires-general-counsel-after-she-uses-n-word-in-classroom-lecture> [<https://perma.cc/BL3W-CZ6D>].
  34. See, e.g., Kristina Davis, *USD Law Professor Under Investigation over Chinese Reference in Coronavirus Blog Post*, S.D. UNION-TRIBUNE (Mar. 19, 2021, 3:45 PM), <https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/education/story/2021-03-19/usd-law-professor-chinese-post> [<https://perma.cc/VV43-KMYW>].
  35. Mark Saunders, *University of San Diego: Professor’s Comments in Blog Protected by Academic Freedom Policy*, ABC 10 NEWS: SAN DIEGO (May 4, 2021, 1:04 PM), <https://www.10news.com/news/local-news/university-of-san-diego-professors-comments-in-blog-protected-by-academic-freedom-policy> [<https://perma.cc/UEU4-3KTB>].
  36. See Emma Pettit, *When Professors Offend Students*, CHRON. OF HIGHER EDUC. (Dec. 16, 2021), <https://www.chronicle.com/article/when-professors-offend-students> [<https://perma.cc/72BJ-NMZQ>].

these days; but our point is simply that this does seem to be happening.

Indeed, in many incidents that have led to public controversy, the faculty members have reported that they had taught the class without objection in previous years, and in some cases, decades.<sup>37</sup> They thought it was safe; indeed, they had not even considered that it might not be. They might have thought of themselves as progressive and fully in sync with the politics of the campus.<sup>38</sup> But, regardless of one's political views, we seem to be in a different time now.

Now, of course, most adjunct professors will never become floats in this parade of horrors. Many practicing lawyers will accept these statistically modest risks and will still want to become adjuncts. Nonetheless, if I were advising friends who were considering trying to become adjunct professors today (or even considering whether to remain adjuncts), I would urge them to at least consider these risks.

## **VII. Conclusion: Suggested Best Practices for Integrating Adjuncts into the Fabric of the Law School**

In the final analysis, most U.S. law schools would be unable to continue operating as normal if the sea of legal part-timers suddenly decided to stop teaching. As such, it stands to reason that law schools each semester should be laser focused on ensuring that adjuncts are fully integrated into the institutional fabric and are otherwise made to feel welcomed and appreciated.

At present, however, too many law schools fall short in their efforts to foster a constructive community conducive to strengthening positive relationships between full-time faculty, administrators, staff, students, and adjuncts. We, therefore,

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37. *See id.*

38. *See* Eugene Volokh, *The Controversy Over Quoting Racial Epithets, Now at UC Irvine School of Law*, REASON: VOLOKH CONSPIRACY (Aug. 8, 2020, 2:51 PM), <https://reason.com/volokh/2020/08/29/the-controversy-over-quoting-racial-epithets-now-at-uc-irvine-school-of-law/> [<https://perma.cc/75FF-TVP5>].

wrap up this short excursion into the largely unseen economic, professional, and interpersonal realities facing today's law school adjunct instructors by suggesting practical steps these important institutions of higher learning can take to improve the relationship for the institutions, as well as for the students and their dedicated visiting instructors.<sup>39</sup>

1. **Promote Faculty Pairing.** Link up new adjuncts with members of the full-time faculty teaching the same subject matter so that the adjuncts have an “inside” connection, are invited to events, and generally feel more comfortable as they get to know the institution. This can be especially beneficial to new adjuncts teaching at a particular law school for the first time.
2. **Initiate Administration Introductions.** Strengthen institutional bonds by scheduling one-on-one or small group meetings with the law school dean, the dean of students, DEI coordinators, and other key members of the institution's leadership.
3. **Make Peer Introductions.** Ensure that the administration introduces adjuncts to the full-time professors teaching the same subject or working in the same field, and schedule (or even encourage) informal get-to-

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39. A colleague commented that our recommendations basically fall into two buckets. One bucket consists of modest requests that schools can easily respond to and that would make adjuncts feel more welcomed and valued (and, accordingly, more committed to both the institution and their teaching activities). The other can be described as recommendations that, both implicitly and explicitly, call for greater status equity in law schools. The call for a role in governance and discipline is emblematic of this second category of recommendations.

know-you coffee, lunch, or other outside meetings.

4. **Encourage Informal Institutional Integration and Knowledge-Sharing.** Hold receptions and similar social events at the start and end of each semester to which both full-time faculty, staff, and adjuncts are invited. Welcome adjuncts to attend talks given by visiting lecturers and faculty, participate in faculty colloquia, take part in open student and faculty events, etc.
5. **Foster Interdisciplinary Collaboration.** In a world where the practical application of academic output is increasingly important, invite adjuncts to present to faculty on their area of expertise or to address some discrete real-world issues involving their subject matter. Such cross-pollination, in our experience, can be a significant generator of innovative ideas, both practical and academic, and can uniquely facilitate productive interdisciplinary collaboration.
6. **Encourage Full-time Professors to Guest Lecture in Classes Taught by Adjuncts, and Vice Versa.** This collaboration can provide numerous benefits to faculty, adjuncts, and students. For example, it bridges the gap between full-time and adjunct faculty, encourages the sharing of knowledge between them (especially since they will be teaching in the same general discipline), and makes for more diverse and enriching course content.
7. **Give Adjuncts an Institutional Voice.** Identify one or two adjuncts to, in a

representative capacity, participate in law school administrative and faculty meetings, disciplinary hearings, etc., so that adjuncts have a more meaningful seat at the institutional table. This can be done even if the adjunct is simply participating as a non-voting member, for example.

8. **Promote Adjunct Academic and Other Professional Contributions.** Encourage knowledge-sharing, while leveraging adjunct achievements, by including adjunct publications, speaking engagements, honors, appointments, etc., in the standard faculty circulars and newsletters and similar institutional publications (and, of course, make those publications available to all adjuncts).
9. **Boost Adjunct Pay (At Least a Little Bit).** The current vast disparity between adjunct and full-time professor pay, and the approximately 21X return on investment law schools typically enjoy from adjuncts, presents nothing short of an embarrassment of riches for institutions. Law schools boosting adjunct wages to, say, \$7,000–\$10,000 per class so that they can recruit a broader cross-section of the legal community—especially those in public interest—to teach is both fair and astute, and still will allow law schools to make a windfall on each class taught by an adjunct.

True, this additional compensation may be largely irrelevant to Big Law partners who still will end up, in real dollar terms, having to pay a significant amount for the privilege of teaching, and who often simply donate their teaching stipend back to the law school.

But the additional compensation will mean that the law school can recruit and retain a broader cross-section of the legal community to teach. And one of the potential added benefits of this adjustment is to help bring greater diversity to the teaching pool.

10. **Sign Adjuncts Up for Periodic Alumni Publications.** Add adjuncts to the list of recipients of the law school's periodic alumni publication.
11. **Ensure Physical Mailboxes, University Email Addresses, and Online Presence.** Make sure that adjuncts have a physical mailbox, a university-based email address, and a meaningful (not just name and title) online presence at the law school.
12. **Include Adjunct Faculty and the Courses they Teach on Law School Areas of Study Landing Pages.** Include adjunct faculty on the "Faculty" pages for the various subject areas, such as criminal law, constitutional law, litigation, international law, etc., and include the courses they teach on the associated areas of study landing pages.
13. **Cover the Cost of Incidentals.** Cover the costs of trivial incidentals, such as parking on university property, to send the right message. Do so because providing these small "perks" sets the right tone with adjuncts.
14. **Make Adjuncts Eligible for Teaching Awards.** Only a handful of schools allow adjuncts to be eligible for teaching awards. Considering that teaching awards motivate and appropriately recognize full-time faculty



(after all, why have them if not?), law schools should similarly either create teaching awards for adjuncts or, alternatively, make adjuncts eligible to receive the same teaching awards available for full-time faculty.

16. **Consider Offering Titles.** Some law schools offer adjuncts who have taught for many years, or who are otherwise particularly distinguished, titles such as “Senior Adjunct Professor” and the like.<sup>40</sup> This is an outward-facing way of fortifying institutional loyalty and recognizing years of service and outstanding contributions.
15. **Offer Adjuncts Maximum Flexibility When Scheduling.** Because adjuncts almost always have other professional commitments, including frequently demanding travel schedules, structuring lecture times mindful of their schedules (say, by offering evening classes) will enable a broader pool of practitioners to want (and be able) to teach, and of those who do, allowing evening courses will also allow the practitioners to devote their full attention to teaching during those times.
16. **Invite Adjuncts to Attend Graduation Ceremonies and Other Important Events in the Life of the Law School.** Making such gestures further emphasizes and solidifies

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40. See, e.g., *Faculty, Rangita de Silva de Alwis, Senior Adjunct Professor of Global Leadership*, PENN CAREY L.: U. PA., <https://www.law.upenn.edu/faculty/rdesilva> [<https://perma.cc/5K8W-KABF>]; *Judge Ira Bank*, U. W. L.A., [https://www.uwla.edu/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC\\_ID=926585&type=u](https://www.uwla.edu/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=926585&type=u) [<https://perma.cc/ZFW8-43JS>].

the sense of belonging that the law school community is extending towards adjuncts.

17. **Offer Thoughtful End-of-Semester Recognition.** Provide small tokens of appreciation—for example, a “Thank-You” note with a mug, t-shirt, or sweater—at the end of each completed semester and consider providing plaques or similar recognition for teaching milestones, such as having dedicated five, ten, or more years to adjunct teaching at the law school. Once again, these recognitions are minor from a financial perspective but can have a significant positive emotional impact on the particular adjunct (as well as the family and work colleagues who support the adjunct’s teaching engagement) or the greater adjunct community.

There are no doubt more suggestions on how to improve the adjunct experience for all stakeholders. Likewise, we are under no illusion that much more can be said, both positive and not, about the role of today’s adjunct within the broader institutional and teaching context.

The modest objective here, however, was to kickstart the important conversation about the proper role of adjuncts at today’s law schools, generally, and to offer practical ways to maximize the win-win benefits to the institutions, the adjuncts, the full-time instructors, and the students, specifically. It is our hope that in this short discourse we have provided the fodder necessary to advance that vital dialogue.