„TOGETHER YOU ARE LESS ALONE“
Suggestion for the construction of a nationwide organization of adjunct faculty at language centers

We – a group of language teachers in Berlin – are committed to motivating the adjunct faculty members of language centers nationwide to form an organization with the objective of electing representatives who can speak for our common interests on a national level.

THE ACUTE SITUATION OF ADJUNCT FACULTY AT LANGUAGE CENTERS:

- In general, at the language centers of most German universities, only a small number of fully employed teachers teach. Adjunct faculty covers a large part of the faculty, which in only a few cases is below 33% and is mostly above 50 %. In this, the responsibilities of adjunct teachers regarding lectures and courses don’t differ from those of the fully employed.

- This situation has not changed, although languages have become a more important subject in the study plans during the last ten years.

- Because adjunct faculty are only allowed to teach a restricted number of hours (in general eight) at one university, the majority work at several institutions and have to live from a number of different, often unstable occupations.

- The universities do not contribute to the adjunct faculty’s social security. So the adjuncts have to provide the required health insurance and the retirement contributions for both the employee and the employed. In addition, adjunct faculty are regarded as „freelancers“ and therefore have a higher payment to social security.

- For years – and sometimes decades – the same colleagues have worked on ongoing contracts lasting only one semester. This situation is maintained in order to make actions for full employment almost impossible.

OUR OBJECTIVES

- We want to prevent language centers from misusing the legal instrument “Lehrauftrag”. Instead, we request that language centers are resourced with a sufficient number of stable jobs which correspond to both the language centers’ responsibilities and the importance of language education at universities and at colleges of higher education.

- In most cases, adjunct faculty employees cover permanent responsibilities at language centers. This situation is a further reason for the necessity of establishing permanent jobs.
At the same time, we aim for the increase of payment for adjunct faculty. This demand is not contrary to the creation of jobs. When the university has to pay higher fees to adjunct faculty, our work becomes more expensive for the university. In this way, an increased payment for adjunct faculty supports the creation of full time, fully acknowledged employment.

We are aware of the fact that the way towards our goals is not easy.

HOW CAN WE REACH OUR GOALS?

- For the tasks that are to be fulfilled, the language centers are chronically underfunded. Therefore in most cases no change in the faculty employed can be reached locally.
- In our opinion, this situation is an impasse in which changes can only be achieved if pressure is applied simultaneously on a national level, on a regional level (in each federal state) and at every university.
- We want to involve different levels of faculty. These are first of all the fully employed colleagues and the heads of the language centers. For them as well, it is a disadvantage to have only a small number of employees at their disposal.
- We suggest that adjunct faculty at each language center should first elect their own representatives. Then those elected should meet in each federal state and on a national level.

DATES

We plan to start this process in the summer semester 2012.

On the 27th, October 2012 we organize an initial nationwide meeting in Berlin in order to record the state of the process and to collect ideas for its further development.

We will work together with the unions which are present at universities – GEW and ver.di.

DO YOU FEEL INVOLVED? HOW DO WE GO ON?

- You are the representative at your language center: Please contact us.
- You are adjunct faculty at a language center without a structure of representatives but still you would like to be part of the process: Please contact us.
- You know some adjunct faculty at your language center: Please inform your colleagues about our initiative, please print this information sheet and post it in a place where many of your colleagues can read it. Talk about it ... and inform us about the response to it.
WE ARE ENCOURAGED AND DELIGHTED BY EVERY RESPONSE, PIECE OF FEEDBACK, EXCHANGE OF OPINIONS AND HOPE TO MEET SOON ON A NATIONAL LEVEL.

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