FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DUE PROCESS DENIED
TO COMMUNITY COLLEGE INSTRUCTOR

Last week, Jaye Brown, a community college instructor of American Sign Language at Shasta College was told that she would not get a teaching assignment next semester because a student complained that some of her signs were offensive. In response, over 200 students signed a petition to get her contract reinstated. Brown, who became deaf in childhood, has taught ASL for over 12 and half years and has contributed to the ASL curriculum adopted by the district.

This is not the first time due process, a fundamental component of human rights protected by international law as well as the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights, has been basically denied to community college temporary instructors. In fact, under the California Education Code, community college part-time instructors have never had the right to due process.

Jaye Brown is one of forty thousand part-time community college instructors in California who are employed without due process. In general, community college administrators can decide, without giving a reason, to withhold a teaching assignment to any part-time
instructor, even if that instructor has excellent evaluations and has been teaching for years. When asked in an interview with KNVN news reporter Elizabeth Gadley why Shasta College did this to Brown, Morris Rodrigue, Dean of Science, Language Arts, and Mathematics, revealed the impunity that community college administrations continue to enjoy: “...it’s just an option for us to not renew a contract.”

Rodrigue has announced that he will forward the petition to the college president. Yet, if Brown were given the right of due process, the misunderstanding between her and her student would be a classical example of a cross-cultural miscue between deaf and hearing cultures. Due process would give opportunities for both teacher and student to reach a greater understanding of what took place and could inform future interactions between other people of different cultures. Denying due process to part-time educators extinguishes teachable moments like this one and grants too much power to the subjective experiences of just one student over the entire educational process.

For more information on the plight of part-time community college instructors in the state of California go to cpfa.org. For information on Shasta College and Jaye Brown go to http://www.knvn.com/content/localnews/story/Shasta-College-Student-Try-to-Get-Their-ASL/QLSnlzkgbkSoea-3-iAX3w.cspx and http://education.change.org/blog/view/students_say_their_sign_language_teacher_was_fired_for_being_deaf

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