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Community College Adjuncts Gain Benefits Washington State Class Action Wins \$12 Million

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In a recent article published on the online "Adjunct Nation" newsletter ("[Law Firm Strikes Gold For Adjuncts' Golden Years](#)," January/February 2009), Cara Nissman reports that a law firm in Seattle has successfully argued in King County Superior Court that part-time community college instructors have a right to "retroactive retirement benefits."

This class-action lawsuit resulted in a court ruling that means about 1,000 community college adjuncts in Washington State are to receive a total of \$12 million dollars in benefits. One of the individuals who approached the firm of Bendich, Stobaugh & Strong to bring this case was Dana Rush, an astronomy instructor at Green River Community College. The law firm also successfully litigated for part-time workers at Microsoft in the past, winning \$96.8 million dollars.

The key issue in the adjuncts case turned out to be that eligibility for benefits were calculated without considering "out-of-class hours." In her article, journalist Cara Nissman reports that Washington State Governor Gary Locke "has likened the part-time faculty's situation to that of migrant farm workers."

A link to the article was circulated this spring on the Esfcc listserv. There are suggestions in the article that the King County Superior Court decision on retroactive benefits for community college adjuncts could be replicated in other states, depending on local statutes.

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