

I have been living in the Portland area for nearly eight years, the first of which I spent writing a book. The first part time job I landed when I came up for air was with Portland Community College. I had taught full time in NC and was among a number of faculty let go in an effort to keep the doors open at that private institution, so I was thrilled to be back in a classroom. That fall I started teaching at University of Portland, as well, which turned into a regular two courses per semester (then \$12K/year, now 16K). My fluctuating course load at PCC means I earned 27K one year, and as little as 6K the next two. The unpredictability of adjunct work is near the top of the list of stressors in my life.

Educating is what I am wired to do. Every time I look into making a shift, vocationally and for financial reasons, I cannot make the leap because of how important not just educating is to me, but the particular field I teach within and have a relatively prominent voice within, still, even though I am no longer working full time in academia.

I have been juggling anywhere from 4-8 part time jobs since spring of 2014, including Ubering (while my car still qualified), office administrative work, delivering phone books, and catering work. I burst into tears when I heard that I finally qualified for health insurance with PCC. The year prior to that, my income went up unexpectedly at the end of the year, and just enough to put me over the threshold for qualifying to receive the help with my health insurance that I had been receiving that year. That meant that I had to *pay back* \$3000 the next year in my taxes. For someone living alone who only makes ~ 40K a year, this is a huge burden. And having to meet that burden makes putting aside savings or addressing other unexpected developments impossible.

I went five years without seeing a dentist or an eye doctor. You might imagine the mess my teeth and gums were in! As soon as PCC had my back I was able to start to get back into a healthier routine with more than just emergency visits to any of the array of doctors one might visit - preventatively and for maintenance - any given year.

It is impossible to paint the full picture for you, so I will trust that something in these anecdotes will connect for you, bring to mind an element of the life lived by thousands of part time faculty, dutifully and (mostly) eagerly educating members of this fine state of Oregon.

Respectfully,
Jennifer Bird, PhD