



Adjunct News

February 2013

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What is the AFA?

The AFA is *your* union, protecting and fighting for the rights of all adjuncts covered under the bargaining agreement between the college and the AFA (anyone teaching at least six LHE's in any one of the three most recent semesters).

Looming Cuts?

Word is out that college administrations would like to reduce the number of hours an adjunct faculty member can teach (presently 12 LHE's) in the future. Several colleges in Ohio, Pennsylvania and New Jersey have reduced maximum adjunct hours. By doing so, they can avoid providing the minimal health care insurance mandated by the Affordable Care Act ("Obamacare"). According to the Affordable Care Act, beginning in 2014, any employer of 50 or more employees must provide insurance to anyone working full-time, defined as 30 hours a week or more.

There are several issues. One, although the AFA defines full-time work as 30+ hours a week, how does that translate into work in academia? Often the "Carnegie unit" is used. According to this system, one credit is assumed to involve 2 hours of preparation done outside of class. For example, 2 credit hours would equal 6 hours worked. Many think that this system needs to be re-examined.

come out with any decision on how full-time status will be determined for adjunct faculty. Would the above measuring system be used? Because full-time status has not yet been defined by the federal government, any decisions made now are made without having complete information.

In addition, the reduction of adjunct hours seems to be a short term solution to the problem. Predictably, more adjuncts would need to be hired to take those classes that are pulled from others, necessitating recruiting, interviewing, orientation. Adjuncts, to make ends meet, could be forced into spreading themselves even thinner between schools, with added commuting time, etc. It is hard to see how this would benefit students.

Finally, at the very least, this appears to be a way for administrations to deny deserving employees potential benefits. It is certainly bad employer behavior and while adhering to the letter of the law, skirts its spirit. There are certainly other ways to cut costs other than on the backs of adjuncts.

Contract Negotiations Around the Corner!!

Our contract negotiators this year are *Bev Stanis* (an adjunct in social science and business), *Larry Cohen* (accounting), and *Steve Brody* (soccer coach). They need to hear what your issues and your priorities are. A survey asking these questions will be going out shortly to all adjuncts. Please respond – help our negotiators help us!
You can't be lobbied for if you aren't heard from.

Several years ago, the counselors lost their protection under the AFA contract because they failed to complain about unilateral changes in their status. So any special groups in particular – tutors, math tutors, librarians, coaches – need to speak up now.

Faculty Tutors Being "Docked"

Beginning this term, faculty tutors who need to miss their hours 1) will be docked for those hours, and 2) will not be permitted to "make up" those hours according to a memo that has come out. This is a new policy and contrary to how librarians, lab assistants, and classroom teachers are treated. It moves faculty tutors to be more like "professional" tutors the Learning Center employs.

On the current Human Resources page, there is an ad for Trio math tutors, with pay of \$9/hour for those with Bachelor's Degrees, \$10 for Master's, and

\$11 for a PhD. Are you willing to work for that wage?

Continued Eligibility

Some of you have received e-mails from Bev Stanis last Fall, reminding you to complete your Professional Continued Eligibility forms and to submit them to your chair to continue to remain eligible to teach. E-mails were sent to 91 people. Fewer than one-quarter have followed through. If you do not complete this requirement, you will not be able to teach at Oakton.



But I Have Academic Freedom!

Be aware of the difference between exercising academic freedom and being insubordinate. Any school administration has the right to set the curriculum and

standards for any class. You can be required to use a departmental text. The school cannot tell you exactly how to teach the material, as long as you cover the material in the departmental generic syllabus for your class.

Your Presence Needed at a Board of Trustees Meeting!

Your demands will have more impact if you are physically present to the Board of Trustees. Imagine if all the adjuncts - even 50 - showed up at a Board meeting! Help put a face to the "adjunct faculty" of Oakton! Science faculty in particular are being invited to come in February in recognition of the new Assistant Dean, Michael Carr. The next Board meeting will be on the evening of Tuesday, February 19, at 7:30 in the Board Room, Room 1506. Union president Barbara Dayton will introduce you to the board, so check in with her when you arrive.

Voice your Opinion on the AFA Blog

We need to rally as much as possible for the contract negotiations. One way we can do this is sharing our thoughts and opinions on the AFA members' blog. Just go to the AFA website to contribute.