

November 2013

Fall Membership Meeting a Success

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About seventy adjuncts attended the Fall membership meeting of AFA in October at Fairway Banquets, which provided a beautiful view and ample room for visiting colleagues at other tables. Before dinner, Camille Grant, our IEA liaison, talked about her role and congratulated AFA for being a leader at both the state and national level. She also said that we have “set the standard” for other adjunct associations. In addition, chief negotiator Bev Stanis responded to written questions regarding our new contract.



The steadfast hard work of Bev, Steve Brody, and Larry Cohen was acknowledged and they were presented tokens of our thanks for negotiating the best possible contract for our members.

The AFA

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).

Join us next time!

Not a member yet? You can be for just \$15 each fall and spring semester. To join, you need to fill out two forms: the Oakton payroll deduction form and a form from IEA/NEA. Both can be downloaded from the website of AFA, oaktonafa.org. New members also receive a free AFA tote bag – a stylish black with the AFA logo on it - and of course a free seat at the table at the membership dinner, joining your colleagues in April.

Keep Informed

Always check the Oakton website weekly to check the current job listings. Your supervisor may not always let you know of the opportunities that might be out there.

In addition, the websites for AFA's umbrella unions (IEA, Illinois Education Association, and NEA, National Education Association) contain information about discounts and special deals available to union members. Check them out. Curious about the new contract? The entire document is available on the AFA website, at afaoakton.org.

Research on Adjuncts

There has been a bounty of articles on adjuncts lately. An article in the Sept. 9, 2013, issue of the Chronicle of Higher Education has garnered attention. It summarizes a paper released by the National Bureau of Economic Research entitled *Are Tenure-Track Professors Better Teachers?* The study was based on a study of eight cohorts of incoming Northwestern University students, and found "strong and consistent evidence that Northwestern faculty outside the tenure system outperform tenure/tenure track professors in Introductory undergraduate classrooms," and that students were more likely to take a second course in that field and get a better grade if the initial course was taught by an adjunct. The study, however, has been criticized, as it is based on the "rarefied" student population and atypical faculty distribution of Northwestern. David Laurence, in the Sept 27, 2013, *The Trend* blog of the MLA Office of Research responded to the Northwestern article. On one hand, he questioned the kind of generalizations which could be made from a study done at Northwestern, where approximately 65% of faculty outside of tenure track were full-time. Laurence expressed the fear that this argument - that the quality of adjuncts teaching is as good as or better than tenured/tenure-track faculty's, could be used to encourage increasing the number of adjuncts at colleges.