

Oakton AFA News

Oakton Adjunct Faculty Association NEA/IEA
AFA Website: www.oaktonafa.org
Office: Room 2470 on the Des Plaines Campus, extension 2193

Special points of interest:

- > **Adjunct Authors Still Wanted**
- > **Watch for Eligibility Letters**
- > **SURS Limits Worth Considering**

FALL MEMBERSHIP MEETING: ANOTHER SUCCESS

On Sunday, October 10th, 50 adjuncts attended the Fall AFA membership meeting at Riggio's.

The well-received guest speaker, Paul Johnson, professor of student development, discussed "Dealing With Distressed, Distressing and Disturbing Students." Johnson said Distressed students show emotional issues such as depression and should be referred to Advising and Counseling Services. A distressing student is verbally or physically abusive or engages in disruptive behavior in class. While a referral to counseling is an option, so is filing a Code of Conduct Complaint with the Vice President For Student Affairs. A disturbing student shows signs of potential violence. Faculty should view these threats as needing a prompt response of calling campus security, filing a "RADAR" report (on the Banner employee page) with the threat assessment team, or contacting the Vice President For Student Affairs by phone or email.

The adjuncts in attendance told classroom war stories, some concerning really annoying students and a few mentioning disturbed students who posed apparent security threats. There is a complex privacy issue involved, by which the administration is restricted from giving some information on the result of any response, but the message was passed back that we'd like to hear the overall response to our reports.

President Barbara Dayton also gave a short quiz to show members the importance of being familiar with our contract, especially with issues such as stipend amounts, seniority in assignments, and the grievance procedure - all of which can be viewed at the AFA's website at www.oaktonafa.org.

RA DELEGATES WANTED

Please consider submitting your name to run for election to be a delegate to the IEA Representative Assembly. It is held over two days in March, in Rosemont. Last year, we had five adjuncts represent Oakton at this convention which influences our union and thus all of state's education policy. Submit your name to Donna Ryan so she can place your name on the ballot.



CAW SURVEY INVITATION

A perennial problem of organizing part-time college instructors is lack of clear information on who we are. The Coalition on the Academic Workforce is collecting survey responses with the aim of producing a report on the contingent higher education work-

force. All real information that is available about us to decision-makers, the press and to possible union organizers may be to our benefit. The survey can be found at www.surveymonkey.com/s/VNNNRVS. It takes only ten minutes to complete.

ADJUNCT AUTHORS

So far five Oakton adjuncts have forwarded their books to the AFA for our proposed recognition event. The books include a western novel, a children's book, books of poetry, a book about environmental concerns, and books about family history in urban neighborhoods. It's a won-

derfully diverse sampling of adjunct interests and talent. Yet, one book is missing - the one written by you or another adjunct whom you know. AFA is planning a recognition event for early next semester. If you have a book you've written which you'd like nominated, please

send a copy of your book and a brief synopsis to Chester Kulis in Division 4. Questions: ckulis@oakton.edu.

ELIGIBILITY LETTERS

According to our contract, every adjunct is required to engage in some professional development (and submit proof that he has done so) every five years. If you received an eligibility reminder for this professional development, please take it seriously. Talk to your chair soon.

Not every adjunct will receive a letter—only those who fall into this year's rotation.

ADJUNCT REPRESENTATION AT BOARD MEETINGS

Most of you should be receiving e-mails encouraging you to attend the college board meetings. This is one of the simpler ways you can support your union. By showing a presence of adjuncts at these monthly Tuesday night meetings, we remind the board of the college's reliance on our work.

When you attend, introduce

yourself to Barbara Dayton, our AFA president, who will make sure you are acknowledged by the board.

As a small motivator and reward, the AFA will be giving one \$10 gift card to one of the attending adjuncts after each meeting. The card will be awarded randomly among those attending.

SURS RETIREMENT LIMIT

We're trying to learn from the experience of members who move into retirement under the SURS system. One technicality that has come out is a limitation on earnings from teaching at a SURS-covered college after one starts accepting a pension annuity. One can return to teach after accepting a SURS annuity,

but the resulting yearly income from teaching plus the annuity cannot exceed the highest year of previous earnings.

This becomes an issue for an adjunct who had previously taught one or two classes a year. He or she may have to choose to put off retirement or not teach after retirement.

MEMBERSHIP MILESTONE

Kudos go to our membership chair, Cheryl Brown. Thanks in a large part to her efforts, and the effort of every member who talks of the union to new faculty, the AFA has reached the three hundred member mark.

This was a goal of the semester, and we've already

reached it. A union's strength is in its numbers, and this is a notable benchmark.

We can't rest now. Due to the nature of adjunct work, there are always new faculty coming in and others leaving us. Also, we have a complex definition of whom we can

represent, so don't rest on this number. Keep talking to non-members and encouraging them to join.

