
AFA NEWSLETTER

OCC Adjunct Faculty Association IEA/NEA

AFA Website: www.oaktonafa.org

Office Room # 2470 - Ext. 2193 Thurs 2:30 – 5:30 p.m. Olivia Cronk, VP/OfficeManager

DATE: February 1, 2009

Chester Kulis, Editor (Div. 4)

IEA Delegates. AFA in December elected as our IEA delegates Barbara Dayton, Cheryl Wollin, Bev Stanis and Steve Brody.

AFA Office. VP/Office Manager Olivia Cronk is activating our AFA voice mail (847) 635-2193 for any inquiries which you may have. You can also drop by in person at the AFA office in DP #2470 on Thursday between 2:30 – 5:30 p.m.

AFA is preparing to commence contract negotiations with the administration. Our current contract expires at the end of the spring semester. How can you help out? If you are a Fair Share member, please contact our office ASAP to request a membership application form. Our strength comes from the size of our membership. If you have any suggestions, pass them on to AFA. Talk union issues with your fellow adjuncts!

AFA is planning its spring membership dinner. Details will be announced shortly.

AFA WEBSITE. You can view our contract, get answers to frequently asked questions, review our survey results, and read past AFA Newsletters at www.oaktonafa.org.

IEA CHICAGO METRO ADJUNCTS. Stay in touch with news about adjuncts at other Chicago colleges and universities through the IEA's adjunct website at www.chicagoadjunct.com. You can compare

adjunct salaries and contracts at various schools. It has a section on adjuncts and unemployment compensation. It even has current job postings at area colleges.

UNION MEMBERSHIP GROWING. The Department of Labor announced that union membership increased in 2008 by the largest number in 25 years. The percentage of workers in unions rose to 12.4%. Most of the new members are government employees.

36.8% of government employees belong to unions, compared to just 7.6% in the private sector. The percentage of unionized workers has dropped from 20.1% in 1983, especially due to plant closings and imported goods which have eliminated manufacturing jobs, once the heart of the union movement.

Unions support the Employee Free Choice Act which would certify a union once the majority of workers signed union cards, without the necessity of holding a subsequent secret election. Unions contend that private employers in particular can mount aggressive anti-union campaigns in certification elections to intimidate workers, for example, by threatening plant closings or layoffs.

Higher Ed Increasingly Stratified. One million of 18 million high ed students attend private research universities which spend the most per student. The largest number of students – 6 million – attend community colleges which spend the least per student and which have

reduced spending the most, as government aid has declined.

In 2006 (the last year data is available) students at public colleges and research universities paid half of the cost of their education, while at community colleges students paid 30% of the cost.

While the share of the higher education budget which goes into instruction has declined, the portion spent on administrative costs has gone up everywhere. At public research universities administrative costs consumed 28.3% of the budget, at private research institutions 32.9%, and at community colleges 37.7%.

Had tuition increased only to match spending, tuition at community colleges from 1995 until 2006 would have declined by 5.8%. Instead, it rose 18.1%. (NY Times, 1/16/09)

A Home Away From Home. The American Association of Community Colleges notes that, of the nation 1,195 community colleges, 303 have residence halls. Many of these residence facilities are in rural areas. Community colleges enroll 6.5 million for-credit students and a total of 11.5 million students, accounting for 46% of the country's undergraduates. (NY Times, 1/4/09)

Unemployment Stats. While unemployment grew to 7.2% in Dec, there were two sectors which added jobs: health care and education. Good news for adjuncts? Maybe yes, maybe no. If those working PT but who wanted FT work and those who have given up on looking for work (many adjuncts) are included, unemployment increased to 13.5% in Dec.

Oakton Free Tuition. Oakton Community College will waive tuition for five select career programs for residents who have lost a FT job in the last year. Programs range from computer diagnostics and project management to "green" marketing, manufacturing, and pharmaceutical

preparation. "Waiving tuition for these programs is one way for Oakton to immediately and meaningfully assist those whose lives have been disrupted by the economic downturn," said Margaret B. Lee, president. Programs are approximately 12 credit hours and most can be completed during a single 16-week semester.

An Open Letter (excerpts) to English and Foreign Language Graduate Students from Sean P. Murphy, College of Lake County adjunct:

The 20-plus-year job crisis in the foreign language and English professoriate has persisted beyond the shelf-life of "crisis." He cited the increasing reliance on adjunct labor, the creation of compromise full-time non-tenure-track positions, and the continued overproduction of Ph.D.'s.

Wandering the halls of the Modern Language Association convention in San Francisco last month brought to mind the two years he attended MLA conventions, waited in drafty hotel hallways for interviews to begin, and, looking back, participated, sadly enough, in an academic ritual which "Dante could not have imagined in his visions of hell. And my baptism by fire led to no job prospects."

After considering applying for a paid training program to obtain a bus driver's license in Ohio rather than work for less money as an adjunct instructor of English, he concomitantly considered applying to the spring two-year college market...