
AFA NEWSLETTER

OCC Adjunct Faculty Association IEA/NEA

AFA Website: www.oaktonafa.org

IEA Adjunct News & Jobs www.chicagoadjunct.com

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

DATE: May 1, 2009

Chester Kulis, Editor (Div. 4)

A CALL FOR ALL ADJUNCTS TO APPEAR AT THE OAKTON BOARD MEETING ON TUES MAY 26TH AT 7:30 PM TO SHOW SUPPORT FOR OUR AFA NEGOTIATING TEAM!

Please put it on your calendar now. That was the urgent message given to over 55 AFA members at our membership meeting on April 26th. President Barb Dayton reported that negotiations with the administration over our new contract taking effect in Fall 09 have been “very difficult.” For the first time, Oakton is trying to take back from us rights we have in our current contract. *Let’s fill the Des Plaines board room with adjuncts demanding some R-E-S-P-E-C-T.*

There has been agreement on some relatively minor issues. For example, the next Oakton directory will list adjuncts along with FT faculty – not in a separate addendum. Negotiating teams are working on definitions used throughout the contract. The pay issue has not been discussed yet in the 7 meetings to date. (The FT faculty averaged a 4.7% increase in their recent new contract.) The administration wants “more flexibility in hiring and supervising adjuncts.”

THE MEMBERSHIP AT OUR MEETING APPROVED A NEW CONSTITUTION.

Most notable was a provision that any new contract must be approved by the membership either during the spring or fall semester - not over the summer months. Several new AFA members expressed the view that we adjuncts should be willing to flex our muscles now, as we teach more and more courses at Oakton.

One member suggested that adjuncts should get paid a full credit hour for each hour of lab time, as FT do. However, at some point more credit for lab time might mean teaching fewer courses, due to the ceiling on credit hours one can teach each semester. The AFA tries to balance the interests of all the members when looking at issues like this in our contract.

The AFA under membership chair Bev Stanis now has 255 adjuncts who have signed IEA/AFA memberships – the highest number ever! If you’re a Fair Share participant, don’t just feel guilty – *sign up today* by contacting the AFA office.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT. 29 adjuncts this year have been asked to submit “evidence of professional development activities/content currency relevant to the teaching assignment.” This documentation must be provided at the conclusion of every five years of service. Professional development may include taking a course, publication of an article, doing a presentation or participating in a workshop (including those at Oakton), earned license or certification, etc. Failure to submit such evidence may make the adjunct ineligible for future assignments. Article 3.5 (p. 14) of the AFA contract, which you can view at our website www.oaktonafa.org, along with our constitution, newsletters, and IEA links.

Although this provision has been in our contract since 2006-07, the administration has chosen to enforce it only within the past several months as the current contract expires. Several members at our meeting complained about the miniscule financial support which Oakton adjuncts receive for professional training – generally \$100 only once a year.

HAS THE AFA MEMBERSHIP EVER REJECTED A CONTRACT? Yes, about 15 years ago the Oakton administration made what it called ‘its last, best offer’ on pay, which the AFA board rejected but was nonetheless legally required to submit to the membership for a vote. The membership rejected the Oakton-proposed contract and, for good measure, then rejected a second revised offer from the administration as well – showing that the AFA and its members have some spunk and support out AFA board!

We certainly hope that AFA and the Oakton administration will achieve a mutually acceptable contract soon. But as with any union, negotiations can be tough, a strike is never out of the question, and we must stick together.

IEA DELEGATE ASSEMBLY. Steve Brody reported that the 1,162 IEA delegates in March approved two Higher Education priorities. *First, IEA will support legislation to extend unemployment comp benefits for adjuncts during summer and other times when they have no work.* College administrators have played the “guarantee of work” both ways, telling the Unemployment Compensation Board that adjuncts ‘have a job assignment next semester,’ but then reminding us that our job is really ‘just contingent’ when it cancels our course or we get bumped.

The second priority is setting up standards and procedures for “dual credit courses” by which HS students can also get college credit for courses. College instructors are concerned that courses are sometimes watered down and/or are not taught by college-level faculty. Oakton

presently has dual credit courses taught at Oakton and at Evanston High School.

The delegates approved a modest IEA dues increase but turned down a larger ‘rainy day fund’ sought by the IEA administration. Cheryl Wollin, Bev Stanis and Barb Dayton are our other IEA delegates.

SURS. On April 3, 2009, Governor Quinn signed legislation which eliminates the current Governor-appointed Board of Trustees of the State Universities Retirement System. The new board will consist of 11 trustees: four appointed by the Governor, four elected by the contributing members of SURS, and two elected by SURS annuitants. The AFA endorses NEA member Jeff Beaulieu for trustee. Three other unions (IFT, AFSME, and SEIU) also are fielding candidates. **Look for a ballot and information in the mail soon.**

IN DEFENSE OF THE UNITED AUTO WORKERS. The American Federation of Teachers has included a defense of the auto workers and their pay in its newsletter to its members and retirees. Its executive council noted: “The automotive industry accounts for fully one fourth of all American manufacturing jobs and output. The survival and revitalization of the domestic automotive industry is just as important to the nation’s economy as is the health of financial companies like A.I.G. and Citibank.”