

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT PROBATIONARY STATUS, SENORITY SERVICE POINTS, AND THE CLASS ASSIGNMENT PROCESS**

### **1. Does it matter how many semesters I've worked for the College?**

The number of semesters you have worked for the College only matters during your probationary period. According to our contract, a teaching adjunct is considered "probationary" until he or she has completed a minimum of eight semesters and a minimum of 24 "weekly contact hours" of service to the College. If an employee has a non-teaching assignment, the employee must work at least eight semesters and a minimum of 800 hours. For purposes of determining probationary status, the spring and summer terms count as a single semester whether you work just the spring, just the summer, or both. Most teaching adjuncts teach at least one "three-weekly contact hours course" per semester and most non-teaching adjuncts work at least 100 hours per semester, so for all practical purposes, almost everyone completes the probationary period after they complete their eighth semester with the College. Once you've completed eight semesters, you become a "senior adjunct" and it no longer matters how many semesters you've worked. During the probationary period, the number of semesters you have completed as of the end of the most recent semester will be shown on the divisional seniority lists. Once you become a senior adjunct, the number of semesters shown will be "N/A" - not applicable - because it no longer matters how many semesters you've worked.

### **2. What is a "weekly contact hour?"**

A "weekly contact hour" is generally equivalent to a "credit hour," but individuals working in Science, Fine Arts, Technology, Nursing, Health Careers and a few other divisions may have more weekly contact hours than credit hours. For example, a science adjunct teaching a four credit-hour course consisting of three hours of lecture per week and two lab hours per week would be credited with, and paid for, five "weekly contact hours."

### **3. What's the difference between a "probationary adjunct" and a "senior adjunct?"**

While you are on probationary status, you have relatively little job security. Once you gain Senior Adjunct status, the College is required to follow a "due process" procedure and must have "just cause" before you can be dismissed.

### **4. I'm a teaching adjunct. How do I earn "Seniority Service Points?"**

Three different rules apply regarding the accumulation of seniority service points. For teaching adjuncts, the three rules are as follows:

- (1) If you worked for the College prior to the Fall 2000 semester (and didn't have a break in service longer than three years), you earned ten seniority service points for each academic year during which you taught at least one class.
- (2) If you worked at the College between the Fall 2000 semester and the Winter 2011 semester, you earned one seniority service point for each semester that you taught at least one class, with the spring and summer terms counting as a single semester, plus one point for each class taught. For example, if you taught two classes in the Winter 2011 semester,

you earned three seniority service points for that semester - one for teaching at least one class plus two for the two classes taught. If you taught two classes in the Spring 2010 term and one class in the Summer 2010 term, you earned four seniority service points for Spring/Summer 2010 - one for teaching at least one class during the Spring/Summer semester plus one each for the three classes taught.

- (3) Beginning with the Spring 2011 semester, when our second contract went into effect, for purposes of determining seniority service points, teaching adjuncts earn one seniority service point for each weekly contact hour (or credit hour for most of us) taught. Service points are no longer given for teaching at least one class in a semester, e.g. if an adjunct teaches a three-weekly contact hour course in a particular semester, she earns three seniority service points, not four.

HR is in the early stages of revising the existing seniority lists so they conform to the new system. This will involve recalculating seniority points between 2000 and 2011 and awarding everyone 30 annual seniority points (as opposed to 10 points) for the years before 2000. As soon as a list is completed, it will be posted on the AFO website and members of the division will be notified that the list has been updated and members will have 90 days to review their information. After that time, HR will not correct a problem that is more than 12 months old.

#### **5. I'm a non-teaching adjunct. How do I earn seniority service points?**

For non-teaching adjuncts, the same general rules apply except that 33 hours of work is considered the equivalent of a "weekly contact hour."

#### **6. Who is responsible for producing the seniority lists and ensuring that they are accurate?**

Seniority lists are produced by HR at the end of each semester and are posted, as a convenience to our members, on the AFO website as soon as we receive them. It is your responsibility to make sure you are credited with the appropriate number of service points each semester. You also have an interest in ensuring that other adjuncts are not credited with more points than they have earned. If you have any issues or questions, they should be directed to HR and your Associate Dean. You only need to involve the AFO if you have a problem getting an explanation or correction. If you fail to bring an error to the attention of HR in a timely manner (within 12 months), the College is not required to correct it. (See the last paragraph of 4 above.)

#### **7. Do adjuncts with the most seniority points get their classes assigned first?**

No. Under most conditions, the number of seniority service points doesn't really make that much difference. However, if the College reduces the number of classes available for adjuncts to teach for any reason, classes may be assigned according to seniority. Adjuncts with the least number of seniority service points would be the first to be laid off.

#### **8. How are classes assigned then?**

Under normal conditions, i.e. when a similar, or increased, number of classes are being offered, the class assignment process should work as described below. Different rules may apply under special circumstances such as when an administrator returns to the classroom as a full-time member of Local 1650 and as a result, the number of classes available to adjuncts is reduced.

The process begins when the Associate Dean sends out an "availability form." The specific form, procedures and process will vary from division to division. It is your responsibility to complete the form and to return it to the Associate Dean by the date established by the dean and using the procedures and process (email or otherwise) established by the dean. If you are a senior adjunct and you are requesting a schedule change, you should be as specific as possible. Don't be afraid to attach an addendum to the form used by the dean. It is advisable to keep a copy of all correspondence regarding your availability and assignment preferences in case there are any contractual issues.

Classes should then be assigned in stages as follows:

- A. Classes are first assigned to full-time faculty and administrators;
- B. Classes are then assigned to Senior Adjuncts who are requesting "similar schedules" to the schedule taught in the corresponding semester of the most recent academic year. Understand what this means: if I'm a senior adjunct with years and years of service and I want to teach a schedule that was taught in the corresponding semester of the most recent academic year by a senior adjunct with fewer seniority service points, I don't have a contractual priority over that less senior Senior Adjunct. In other words, once you are a Senior Adjunct, you "own" your schedule in the sense that another Senior Adjunct with more seniority cannot take it from you in normal circumstances. However, a full-timer could take it if one of her classes is cancelled. You might also lose the schedule you prefer, or even the assignment itself, if there is a reduction in the number of classes being offered within your department and a higher seniority Senior Adjunct loses her schedule;
- C. Classes are then assigned to Senior Adjuncts requesting reasonable schedule changes. This means that a Senior Adjunct requesting a schedule change will have priority over a Probationary Adjunct, but not Senior Adjuncts with less seniority. For instance, if I taught M-W evenings last winter and request a schedule change to T-Th mornings in the upcoming winter semester, I would be given those T-Th morning classes before any classes are assigned to Probationary Adjuncts. An important note: Senior Adjuncts wishing to increase their teaching load (for example from six weekly contact hours to nine weekly contact hours), will be handled at step 5 of the assignment process;
- D. Classes are then assigned to Probationary Adjuncts equal to the number of classes (weekly contact hours) they taught in the corresponding semester of the previous academic year. Note, a Probationary Adjunct who did not teach in the corresponding semester of the previous academic year is not assigned any classes at this stage of the process;
- E. Classes are then assigned to Senior Adjuncts requesting increases to their teaching load; and

F. Classes are assigned to Probationary Adjuncts wishing to increase their teaching load - including those who did not teach in the corresponding semester of the prior academic year and to new hires.

**9. The class assignment process described above applies to “normal” conditions. The implication is that the procedure can be abrogated under certain circumstances. What are those circumstances?**

There is a provision in the contract that allows for the suspension of these "normal" rules in the event a full-time administrator returns to the classroom or a new full-time instructor is hired resulting in a decrease in the number of classes available for adjuncts. Similarly, if there is a significant reduction in classes available to adjuncts resulting in layoffs, the normal rules would be suspended. In such cases, classes will be assigned first to those Senior Adjuncts with the greatest number of seniority service points. If classes are still available after all Senior Adjuncts have been assigned their classes, they will be assigned to Probationary Adjuncts in order of their seniority service points.

**10. The seniority lists also show “steps” and “lane.” What’s that all about?**

Under our contract, teaching adjuncts are paid by the contact hour (an hour in the classroom) and the per contact hour rate varies according to “step” and “lane.” There are four steps and four lanes so there are 16 different per contact hour rates for teaching adjuncts. The steps recognize longevity – the more service to the College, the higher the step. The lanes recognize differences in highest degree attained. You can determine your per contact hour rate based on your step and lane by examining the pay schedules published in our contract. (You can find a link to a digital copy of our contract on the AFO home page – [www.hfcc-afco.org](http://www.hfcc-afco.org) – in the AFO News and Documents box just below the center picture.) The per contact hour rate is intended to compensate you for the time you spend preparing for class, meeting with students outside of class, and assessing students – not just for the time you spend in the classroom.

Non-teaching adjuncts are paid an hourly rate as well that also varies according to “step” and “lane.” Like teaching adjuncts, the pay schedule for non-teaching adjuncts includes four steps, but unlike teaching adjuncts, it includes only two lanes.

**11. How does an employee advance through the steps?**

A newly hired teaching adjunct (or a former teaching adjunct or full-time instructor who has a break-in-service greater than three years) begins at step 1.0 and advances to step 2.0 after completing 24 “weekly contact hours” of service to the College. Remember, a weekly contact hour is generally equivalent to a credit hour, but there are exceptions – see question #2 above. A new hire who teaches six weekly contact hours in her first semester will be placed on the seniority list in her second semester and the seniority list will show her at step

1.06. If she works six weekly contact hours four semesters in a row, she will be shown at step 2.0 in her fifth semester and will be paid at the step two rate in the fifth semester. A teaching adjunct at step 1.21 who works six weekly contact hours will be shown at step 2.03 in the following semester (indicating that she has worked three weekly contact hours toward the 24 required to advance to step 3.0). Teaching adjuncts advance to step 3.0 and 4.0 in the same way.

Non-teaching adjuncts also begin at step 1.0 (subject to the same three year break-in-service rule as teaching adjuncts) and advance to step 2.0 the semester after they complete 792 hours of service to the College. For non-teaching adjuncts, 33 hours of work is considered the equivalent of one “weekly contact hour.”

## **12. How does the College determine what lane I’m paid at?**

The AFO contract recognizes four “lanes” that vary according to the highest degree attained in the field one is teaching or working in. The four lanes for teaching adjuncts are: (1) less than master’s; (2) master’s; (3) master’s plus; and (4) doctorate.

There are rarely any issues regarding any of the lanes except “master’s plus.” Generally, it is easy enough to establish whether or not an individual should be credited with a master’s degree or a doctorate. The master’s plus lane can be a little trickier. The rule is that a teaching adjunct qualifies for the master’s plus lane if she has completed 30 graduate hours after earning the master’s degree. However, an adjunct who qualifies as a doctoral candidate (“all but dissertation”) is automatically considered master’s plus regardless of when the hours required for the Ph.D. were earned.

With the exception of Academic Advisors, non-teaching adjuncts are paid at either the less than master’s lane or the master’s lane. Academic Advisors are paid at the less than master’s lane regardless of the highest degree attained.

## **13. Who is responsible for ensuring that steps and lanes are accurate?**

Human Resources determines your step and lane. The AFO just posts the information for the benefit of our members and fee payers. Until you reach step four, you should check your step every semester to ensure that you have been properly credited for your service to the College. If you qualify for a higher lane, it is your responsibility to notify HR in a timely manner and to provide an updated official transcript.

If there is a discrepancy, call it to the attention of HR and your Associate Dean. You only need to involve the AFO if you have a problem getting an explanation or a correction.