

# HFCC Adjunct Faculty Organization

## Organizing Committee News



Help us build the Adjunct Faculty Organization! Help us build a better college!

### Why Form a Union?

In our conversations with adjunct faculty across campus, we have heard a number of concerns that we believe can be addressed most constructively with a strong union, including:

- Low *pay* (we currently make \$200 per class less than any other comparable local college)
- Access to HFCC's *health insurance* and other benefits, even if we have to pay some of the costs
- No *job security* or assurance of contract renewal from term to term, which leaves us vulnerable to being bumped from a course at the last minute without consideration of our performance
- *Respect as professionals* doing valued work — we deserve offices, computers, space to meet with students, and secretarial support
- The general degradation of *higher education*

The core principle of unionism is simple: we can accomplish more working together than as isolated individuals.

As an officially recognized union, we will gain the legal right to negotiate salary, job security, health insurance, and other working conditions, which we will discuss with the administration until both sides agree on changes to be codified in a binding contract.

## How Could Our Jobs Be Better?

### 1. Better Pay

COMMUNITY COLLEGE	ENTRY-LEVEL Pay for 3 credit class (with MA)	AFTER 4+ YEARS Pay for 3 credit class (with MA)	MAX PAY (assuming 9 classes per year)
Grand Rapids	\$2,592	\$3,498	\$31,482
Lansing	\$2,390	\$2,691	\$24,219
Wayne	\$2,178	\$2,449	\$22,041
Schoolcraft	\$1,752	\$2,373	\$21,357
Washtenaw	\$2,148	\$2,250	\$20,250
Oakland	\$1,809	\$2,166	\$19,494
Macomb	\$1,686	\$2,130	\$19,170
Henry Ford	\$1,504	\$1,798	\$16,182

Forming a union will give us the chance to bargain collectively over our wages and benefits. Right now, the HFCC adjunct payscale “tops out” after the 4<sup>th</sup> step, so you don’t get any reward for experience after your 4<sup>th</sup> year. Also, our salaries are calculated only on the hours we spend directly in the classroom, with no compensation for the long hours of prepping, grading, or meeting with students. Both of these things could easily change for the better.

### 2. Access to Health Care

While some of us have benefits through another job or a spouse, many others struggle to find quality, affordable health care. Several local unions at comparable colleges have won the right of adjuncts to “buy in” to the college’s health insurance plan, which is almost always cheaper than trying to get insurance as an individual. Adjuncts can buy into the school’s health plan at:

- Schoolcraft Community College
- Wayne County Community College
- Lansing Community College created a pool of money to help subsidize uninsured adjuncts

Like other adjuncts across the country, we can make progress on these issues through unionization. While there are of course no guarantees, we know we will be in a stronger position united together than as isolated individuals. If you want better pay and benefits, become an active member of the AFO today!

## Letter of Support From John McDonald, President of the HFCC Federation of Teachers, AFT Local 1650

[NOTE: The most recent Local 1650 newsletter carried this letter to full-time faculty members, reprinted here]

A recent letter from the College's Office of Human Resources to HFCC's adjunct faculty states: "We do not believe that having an adjunct faculty union will improve our ability to accommodate the needs and interests of our adjunct faculty." Such a statement is clearly intended to dissuade support for an adjunct union.



*A Union of Professionals*

In the letter's conclusion, the Administration also raises for consideration by adjuncts whether an adjunct union would be in "the best interests of adjunct faculty as well as the College, our community, and especially our students."

That such "considerations" would be raised by the Administration is very troubling, given how very much the full-time faculty union, the support staff union, and the administrators' union are part of the culture and very fabric of Henry Ford Community College and given how unions are part of the very fabric of our community and the lives of so many of the students we serve.

That the Administration would raise such "considerations" regarding a potential adjunct union is also troubling, given the positive history of the Administration and Board of Trustees' relationships with HFCC's full-time unions. While serving the interests of their members very well, the College's full-time unions have never compromised the best interests of the College, our community, or our students.

HFCC's full-time unions have been very responsive in negotiations to the College's needs when cuts in State revenue have impacted the College. HFCC's full-time unions also work very hard to secure local, state, and federal funds for HFCC and its students. Our unions finance local operational and capital improvement millage campaigns for the College. With AFT-Michigan and the State AFL-CIO, HFCC's unions lobby the State legislature to improve funding for HFCC. With the national AFT and AFL-CIO, HFCC's unions lobby for federal programs and funds that support student access to higher education and HFCC.

The Federation believes that an adjunct faculty union would be equally committed to the best interests of its members and the best interests of our College, our community, and our students. We have faith in the values and dedication of HFCC's adjunct faculty and believe that these will be reflected in the policies and practices of the union they form.

The Federation also believes that HFCC's full-time employees, whose professional lives and livelihoods have been greatly enhanced by their unions, should support adjunct faculty in their effort to do what we have done – in their effort to form a union and thereby enhance their professional lives and livelihoods.

John McDonald  
President, HFCC Federation of Teachers

### What Can You Do?

If you're an adjunct, please sign an AFO membership card as soon as possible.

Becoming a member means that you intend to vote "yes" in the recognition election next semester and that you can participate in setting up the union and identifying our most important concerns.

*Get involved!* If you are willing to give some time to reach out to our colleagues, to enter data into our database, or to make phone calls, we will be assured of success!

Speak to an organizing committee member, call (313) 274-6314, or email [afo@hfcc-afo.org](mailto:afo@hfcc-afo.org).

We're a diverse group. Some of us support the formation of a union out of the need for a living wage and access to health insurance; others support it out of recognition of the needs of others.

But as we talk to people all over campus, we are struck by what we have in common: our love for teaching and our commitment to our students.

Please join us...we need your help in building a stronger college!

*hfcc-afo*