



## HFCC Adjunct Faculty Organization News

HFCC-AFO  
AFT, AFL-CIO

November, 2008

Help us build a *strong* Adjunct Faculty Organization and a *better* college!

### Signs of Progress Shown in HFCC-AFO Contract Negotiations

Two months of talks between the Adjunct Faculty Organization and representatives of the College have produced tentative agreements on a handful of contractual provisions. Bargaining committee chair Tom Anderson told the *AFO News* that the committee has agreed to contract language on a half dozen of its “boiler-plate” contract proposals and that he anticipates agreement on many of the AFO’s other “non-economic” proposals before the end of November. Anderson said that “we knew going in that a first contract campaign would take a lot of work and so far that has been true. The groundwork we’ve laid and the relationships we’re building with the management team should make it possible for us to deal with the difficult economic issues ahead of us constructively.”

There are also signs that some progress is being made with regard to the thorny economic issues. The management team has provided budget information and is expected to make a presentation at an upcoming meeting. “Our economic proposals will be laid out after we’ve had a chance to analyze the budget in detail, but our expectations will not be constrained by the College’s finances. This doesn’t mean that the burden of paying for our contract should fall on students and taxpayers, but it does mean that the College needs to recognize that it can no longer expect to balance its budget on the backs of adjuncts,” Anderson said.

Interim AFO president Mary Beck added that “the College

needs to know that our membership is behind us. We have a general membership meeting on November 14 and I hope we pack the room with adjuncts who are fed up with the status quo and who are willing to do what it takes to win a fair and equitable first contract.”

#### Eight Stewards Named

Aside from establishing a fair and equitable contract, perhaps the most important function for any union is protecting its members through a grievance process when administrators do not follow the contract’s terms. While we do not yet have a contract and thus no basis on which to pursue a grievance, the AFO nevertheless wants to take steps to protect members’ welfare. Accordingly, the executive board has identified eight individuals who have agreed to serve as stewards: Tom Anderson, social sciences; Ventra Asana, English and world languages; Ron Emeigh, business and economics; John Farsakian, business and economics; Pete Grant, technology; Zana Macki, fine arts; Patrick Miller, social sciences; and Edna Wilkerson, nursing. As stewards, they will be members of the Grievance committee which will be chaired by interim grievance officer, Ron Webb. In addition to serving as the front line in the grievance process, stewards will also be (continued on back)

### General Membership Meeting!!!

Friday, November 14 @ 5:30 p.m.  
in the Ghafari Conference Room

The Ghafari Conference Room is located in room  
T-123 of the Technology Building  
right behind the College bookstore

#### Agenda

- Welcome
- Social Committee
- Bargaining committee report
  - Status of negotiations
- Constitution committee report
  - Executive board
  - Legislative power
  - Standing committees
- Elections committee nominations and election of committee members

#### Be Sure to Vote

In a recent memorandum to AFO members interim vice president Glenn O’Kray said that it is important for AFO members to be fully informed on the issues and urged them to vote for the candidates that they believe will do the best job of leading the country whether they be the candidates endorsed by the AFT and the AFO or their opponents. (The AFT has endorsed Barack Obama, Carl Levin and others—visit [AFTMichigan.org](http://AFTMichigan.org) for the complete slate of candidates endorsed by the AFT.) O’Kray also urges AFO members to remind their students to vote in this historic election but cautions that while the election can be used as an opportunity to teach a lesson in civic engagement that the classroom is not the place to push the political agenda of any candidate. As Glenn told the *AFO News*, “I consider this the most important election of my lifetime—and I’m not a young man. Historically, teachers and old people have voted in large numbers, but young people haven’t. Since this election is about the future, young people are the ones who have the most at stake. Make sure they know every vote counts.”

## This Issue's Member Profile: Ventra Asana

If nothing else, our ongoing series of profiles proves that AFO members have much to be proud of and bring a great deal of experience and diversity to the College. While many of our members are high achievers, few of us can match the accomplishments of Ventra Asana. Ventra, an adjunct in English since the winter of 2006, graduated from Cass Technical High School in Detroit before collecting a B.A. in interdisciplinary film studies from Wayne State University in 1988 and two Master's degrees (one in Divinity in 1999 and a second one in Theological studies in 2000) from Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary. Not content with two master's degrees, Ventra is currently working on her Ph.D. in urban ecology at the Division of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences of the Union Institute and University in Cincinnati. She has also started an eco-business, Workshops in Urban Ecology, which specializes in spiritual formation around Earth-care practices, eco-tourism, and teaching small groups to proactively engage avenues of urban ecology. (If you're interested in attending or scheduling one of her "eco-spirituality workshops," contact her at [Ecologydiva.com](http://Ecologydiva.com)).



As if that isn't enough, Ventra, a former Detroit Public Schools teacher, also serves on the Board of Directors of the Ecology Center of Ann Arbor and is an ordained minister who works as a Deacon at St. Timothy United Methodist Church in Detroit. Spiritual callings run in Ventra's family: two of her three sisters are practicing ministers and the youngest is currently in training for the ministry. As a committed Christian with a passion for social justice, Ventra has extensive experience serving the world's poor and learning about different cultures. Her master's degree in theology took her to the Dominican Republic where her research focused on the lives of women working on sugar cane plantations. Before that, she participated in a "cross-cultural immersion trip" to Bolivia where she worked with Aymara and Quechua Indians on small scale sustainable development projects that involved building health clinics and playgrounds. Another trip took her to India for an "interfaith cultural immersion trip" that was designed to increase understanding and to create a dialogue between Christians and members of other religious faiths including Hindus, Sikhs, and Jains.

Despite her busy life, Ventra found time to serve as a pioneering member of the AFO organizing committee and she recently volunteered to participate on the AFO's "social committee" and has agreed to serve as an AFO steward in the English and World Languages Division. As a steward, Ventra will participate on the Grievance Committee and the Organizing and Leadership Development Committee. Ventra said, "I became involved with the AFO early on because I knew that unless we formed a strong organization nothing was likely to be done to redress the issues of adjuncts. The fact is that adjuncts give so much to the College and we receive relatively little in return. I believe that people need to help themselves and that we can accomplish so much more together than we can when we stand alone. As a passionate believer in social justice, I couldn't stand idly by and let other people take the risks and do all the work. Now that the AFO is established, I believe we can start to make a real difference that will at once improve the lives of adjuncts and the quality of education our students receive."

## Grievance Committee Takes Shape (Continued from front page)

members of the Organizing and Leadership Development committee.

AFO members who feel they are being treated unfairly by administrators do not have to wait until a contract is in place to seek redress. They should contact any steward (not necessarily one assigned to their division), Ron Webb (Ron's e-mail address is [rawebb@hfcc.edu](mailto:rawebb@hfcc.edu)), the AFO office (A-024 in the Learning Technology Building) or any AFO interim officer. It is important that the instructor be prepared to present a detailed written summary of the events that have given rise to his or her concerns. This summary should include such things as specific dates of telephone conversations, face-to-face meetings (as well as a summary of what was discussed at such encounters), and other events. Also, be prepared with as much hard data as possible. E-mails, notes, letters, etc. between administrators and the instructor are important. In addition, copies of student evaluations and similar data are often helpful. Anything that shows in cold, hard facts exactly what the instructor has done to fulfill professional responsibilities (lesson plan copies, student test results, etc.) is going to help.

Based on the facts of the specific case, the AFO Executive Board will decide whether to pursue the matter with the administration by notifying human resources and seeking a meeting with the appropriate administrator who will be presented with the instructor's concerns and asked for a reaction. Supporting data will be presented as needed.

The member will be notified if this meeting resolves the problem. If it is unsuccessful, the instructor will also be notified and the matter will be taken back to the Executive Board. The Board will then decide whether to seek additional meetings with the specific administrator, seek a meeting with higher-level administrators, make the issue a subject of collective bargaining, or otherwise escalate the matter.

Relying on the basic goodwill that has existed between most HFCC administrators and adjuncts in the past, the AFO feels strongly that, even in the absence of specific contract language, successful resolutions to problems can be achieved.

### Member News and Notes

Political scientist Ihsan Al-Khatib will defend his Ph.D. dissertation, "Arab American Political Participation," at Wayne State University on November 11.

Christine Geddes gave a presentation on the Great Lakes on October 16 at HFCC. Her presentation focused on human alteration of the Great Lakes ecosystem. Christine is an U-M landscape ecologist and spatial analyst and a new adjunct in the HFCC geography department.

Graphic Design adjunct Nic Bongers will graduate Magna Cum Laude in December from the Art Institutes Online with a Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in Graphic Design.

Spanish instructor Sandra Azzopardi recently became an independent Mary Kay Beauty Consultant. She can be contacted at 734-775-4164 or at [i\\_sell\\_marykay@yahoo.com](mailto:i_sell_marykay@yahoo.com).

Items for "Member News and Notes" should be sent to the attention of Bill Norris at [wmmorris@aftmichigan.org](mailto:wmmorris@aftmichigan.org).

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