



HFCC Adjunct Faculty Organization News

HFCC-AFO
AFT, AFL-CIO

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

Constitution Vote Ends January 30

The vote to ratify the Adjunct Faculty Organization constitution will conclude during the first winter semester general membership meeting which will be held on January 30 (see the box for meeting agenda and details). The election is being overseen by the Elections Committee. A digital copy of the constitution can be found at the AFO website (HFCC-AFO.org) and a brief description of the document was included in our December newsletter. Because the constitution will establish the framework by which the AFO is governed, interim AFO president Mary Beck urges members to take the time to read it and to show their support for the democratic process it embodies by casting a ballot. The constitution was drafted by a committee led by Joe Sorokac and is modeled on constitutions of other American Federation

of Teachers locals including the HFCC Federation of Teachers, the Union of Part-Time Faculty at Wayne State University, and the Lecturers' Employees Organization at the University of Michigan.

Grace Plaza, chair of the Elections Committee, says that "this is the first of three critical elections we will oversee during the next few months (the other two will be the vote to approve our first ever contract and the election of officers) and we are committed to making the process as smooth and easy as it can possibly be without sacrificing integrity." Only members and associate members "in good standing" will be allowed to vote for or against the constitution. (Non-members, including new hires, are urged to become members in time to cast a ballot. See the accompanying article for information about the winter semester organizing campaign.)

Digital copies of the ballots and voting instructions are available on the AFO website. Hard copies can be obtained by calling (313.845.9707) or emailing (afo@hfcc-afco.org) the AFO office. Ballots must be mailed in time to be received prior to the January 30 general membership meeting. Alternatively, members can vote at the meeting or send their ballot in as proxies. Ballots will be counted by members of the Elections Committee immediately after the membership meeting and the results will be certified and communicated to the membership before the end of February.

Negotiations Update

Little visible progress was made in talks with representatives of the Board of Trustees over the semester break even though both sides continued their efforts to hammer out an agreement. The management team asked for time to analyze the economic proposals submitted by the AFO bargaining team and to discuss them with the new Board of Trustees. The AFO side continues to analyze the College's financial situation and to work on counter proposals regarding unresolved non-economic issues.

General Membership Meeting!!!

**Friday, January 30 @ 3:00 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**
- **Bargaining committee report**
 - **Status of negotiations**
- **Winter term organizing campaign**
- **Ratification of constitution**
 - **Elections committee report**
- **Discussion, new issues, questions**

Light snack provided, children welcome

Organizing Campaign Gets Underway (New Hires—Read This!)

If you are a newly hired "adjunct" or other part-time professional working at Henry Ford Community College for the first time this semester—or if you never signed an Adjunct Faculty Organization membership card for whatever reason during previous organizing campaigns—you should pay close attention to the information contained in this article.

Back in 2006, HFCC adjuncts began organizing a union to address a series of ongoing employment concerns. The extremely low pay of adjuncts relative to full-time faculty and in comparison to adjunct compensation at other colleges and universities, the total lack of job security even after years of service to the College, and a lack of fringe benefits topped a long list of issues. In December, 2007, we filed for a union representation election with the Michigan Employment Relations Commission. That election was held the following spring and when the ballots were counted it was determined that 89% of the adjuncts who had completed valid ballots had voted in favor of recognizing the AFO. We are now in the process of negotiating our first-ever contract with the HFCC Board of Trustees. (continued on back)

This Issue's Member Profile: Ron Webb

Ron Webb has been associated with Henry Ford Community College (HFCC) in one way or another for nearly 50 years. That link began in September, 1961, when Ron began attending HFCC after graduating from high school. After earning an Associate of Arts degree from HFCC in June, 1963, Ron went on to Wayne State University. He received his Bachelor of Arts with a major in English from WSU in June, 1965.

Ron began his public school teaching career the following September at Pierce Junior High School in Grosse Pointe, MI. After receiving a Master's degree in English in June, 1967, Ron began teaching at Edison Junior High School in Dearborn and also started his adjunct community college teaching career at Schoolcraft Community College. He returned to HFCC as an adjunct instructor in September, 1973 and has taught in that capacity ever since. For the last 26 years of his public school teaching career ending in June, 2004, Ron taught English at Dearborn High School. In addition to adjunct teaching at HFCC, Ron has also taught at Macomb Community College and Davenport University. In 1976, he received a second advanced degree in reading from Wayne State.



Over the years, Ron has seen HFCC grow from a very small school with a limited local population to the wide-ranging institution it is today. Indeed, when Ron first began attending HFCC, the present campus did not exist. Classes at the present campus began in January, 1962. In those days, the buildings housing nursing, physical education, fine arts, technical, library/learning resources, bookstore, and administration had yet to be built. Curriculum and programs offered grew in a similar fashion over the years.

Ron became involved with the effort to organize adjunct faculty when he realized how vulnerable adjuncts were without union representation. Throughout his public school teaching career, Ron had enjoyed the advantages of union support. Those advantages included an adequate salary to support his family, effective medical and other benefits, and job security. Adjunct teachers had none of those. He thinks that needs to be changed in order to keep a strong professional staff at the college.

Ron is married to wife Pam, whom he met when she was the secretary in the College's English Division. They have two adult daughters, Rebecca and Rachel, and one grandson, Samuel. In his leisure time, Ron enjoys spending time at the family cottage near Houghton Lake, MI. He passes days there sailing, fishing, playing golf, and teaching his grandson to swim. Another hobby has been Civil War re-enacting with the 21st Michigan Volunteer Infantry, Co. H, a unit that fought under Sherman during the war.

New Hires Urged to Become Members (Continued from front page)

As you might imagine, our top bargaining priorities are pay, job security, and benefits, but we have many other concerns as well all of which have an impact on our ability to do a quality job in the classroom.

A union's strength is measured by its membership and their willingness to work together to achieve common goals. If you are an "adjunct" instructor or a part-time counselor, librarian or other professional then you are a member of our bargaining unit but unless you have signed a membership card, you are not a member of the Adjunct Faculty Organization. The greater the percentage of eligible individuals who become members of the AFO, the stronger we are and the more effective we will be.

By becoming a member of the AFO, you not only make us stronger, you derive certain benefits that non-members don't enjoy. Members are able to fully participate in the democratic decision-making process of the AFO. They may vote in elections (including the vote to approve our constitution which ends January 30), authorize job actions and ratify collective bargaining agreements. Members also have a voice in deciding our annual plan and budget. They also help guide the AFO through their work on committees, and may hold office. Non-members have none of these rights.

At present, we are being supported by the organizations we are affiliated with (especially by the American Federation of Teachers—Michigan). Members will not be charged any fees or dues until our first contract is implemented. While we have not yet determined what our budget will be, we anticipate that the dues for members will range somewhere between 1.5% and 2.0%. Non-members will be charged agency fees that will be slightly less than the dues paid by members. To give you an idea of the difference between membership dues and agency fees, members of the Union of Part-Time Faculty at Wayne State University pay dues of 1.85% while non-members are charged agency fees equaling 1.65% of their pay. That means that on \$10,000 of income, members would pay dues totaling \$185 while non-members would pay agency fees of \$165, a difference of only \$20.

Glenn O'Kray, interim AFO vice-president and chair of the organizing committee notes that "we are a union of part-time employees and as such our bargaining unit is characterized by high turnover. Each semester, a large number of our members leave the College as they move on in their careers. Moreover, during these tough economic times, a lot of people are looking to HFCC for a high quality and reasonably priced education. As a result, College enrollment is booming which means more adjuncts. Each semester we will have to go out and talk to our new hires and explain the benefits of membership. If the AFO does not grow each semester, it will die." O'Kray adds that during the coming weeks organizing committee members will attempt to contact each and every new hire.

Becoming a member is easy—all you have to do is fill out a card and sign your name. Membership cards can be obtained from any organizing committee member or by calling our office (313.845-9707) or sending an email to af0@hfcc-af0.org. We also encourage you to visit our website (HFCC-AFO.org) to learn more about us and our bargaining platform.

Order Your AFO Sport Shirt Today!

It's not too late to order your AFO Sport Shirt. Besides showing your students, friends, and family your fashion sense, wearing your AFO shirt is a way of expressing your solidarity with your AFO brothers and sisters. Shirts are being sold at cost (\$25). Visit the AFO website (HFCC-AFO.org) to obtain an order form.