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The On-line Adjunct Faculty Organization News

American Federation of Teachers Local 337, AFT-M, AFL-CIO

First Slate of Officers Elected at Fall General Membership Meeting Constitutional Referendum Passes

Updated: November 16, 2009

By Bill Norris
Recording Secretary and Staff Organizer

No one in the Ghafari Room on the afternoon of October 23, 2009 was surprised when Elections Committee chair Pete Grant announced the results of the first ever election of Adjunct Faculty Organization (AFO) officers and Executive Board members. After all, all five candidates were essentially running unopposed. Elected to two-year terms ending November 30, 2011 were President Mary Beck, Recording Secretary Bill Norris, and Financial Records Secretary Sherry Morgan. Glenn O'Kray (Vice-President) and Bill Breger (Treasurer) were elected to one-year terms ending November 30, 2010. A referendum to re-approve the AFO constitution also passed by a wide margin.

Candidates for the officer positions were nominated during a special general membership meeting held in June, 2009 and the officer election and constitutional referendum were officially announced via newsletter and e-mail in September, 2009. The election was conducted using the "double-blind" system: an outer envelope was used to ensure the ballot was cast by a member or associate member in good standing and an inner envelope was used to ensure secrecy. Ballot packages were distributed to members primarily through inter-office mail in September and were also available

on-line at the AFO website (www.HFCC-AFO.org). Members had the option of sending their ballots in by mail, delivering them in person or by voting during the October 23 Fall General Membership Meeting.

The AFO membership also approved a motion to establish a non-profit corporation that will award the "Joe Sorokac Memorial Scholarship" to a deserving member of the AFO or to a dependent of an AFO member. See back page for details

A handful of ballots were rejected for technical reasons (e.g. a non legible or missing name on the outer envelope), but a total of 144 valid ballots (including a few cast during the General Membership Meeting) were recorded by the Elections Committee. Mary Beck received a total of 142 votes (with two abstaining) in her bid to become President; Glenn O'Kray had a total of 141 (with three abstaining) for Vice-President; 137 ballots favored Bill Breger for Treasurer (with seven

abstaining); and Bill Norris totaled 143 votes (with one abstaining). Running as a write-in candidate, Sherry Morgan received a total of 62 votes in her bid to become Financial Records Secretary with three other individuals receiving a single vote each.

One-hundred- forty-two (142) voting members favored passage of the constitutional referendum, with two opposed. One of the opposing ballots had a notation that the reason for the no vote was a "typo" involving a date that appeared in Article XV ("Amendments"). The date in question involved the sunset position that allows for a stream-lined process to amend the Constitution for a two-year period. As posted, the sunset date read "November 39, 2011" instead of "November 30, 2011." After reviewing the document, the Executive Board determined that it was acceptable to correct the mistake without the necessity of re-submitting the Constitution to the membership.

Interim No More

After serving as "interim" President of the AFO since May, 2008, psychology adjunct Mary Beck said that she and the other officers were pleased to discard the term "interim" from their titles. "It wasn't as if being 'interim' officers kept us from doing what needed to be done, but it was getting a little awkward to continuously have to refer to ourselves as interim. It was also heart-

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Membership Passes Scholarship Fund Motion

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By Bill Norris
Recording Secretary and Staff Organizer

In a fitting tribute to one of the founding members of the Adjunct Faculty Organization, the members present during the October 23 General Membership Meeting voted unanimously in favor of a motion to establish a non-profit corporation that will award the "Joe Sorokac Memorial Scholarship." The non-profit corporation will be named "The HFCC-AFO Founders Scholarship Fund" with the intention of possibly honoring other founding members of the AFO in the future.

The "Joe Sorokac Memorial Scholarship" will be awarded annually (or as funds permit) to a deserving member of the AFO or to a dependent, including grandchildren, of an AFO member. Joe served HFCC as a psychology ad-

junct from 1975 until his death from pancreatic cancer earlier this year. He was one of the original members of the AFO organizing committee and was passionate in his belief that adjuncts needed to form a union to improve their working conditions and the learning conditions of their students.

The application for a charter as a non-profit corporation must first be approved by the State of Michigan. Assuming that approval is granted (hopefully prior to the end of the year), members as well as the general public will be able to make tax deductible contributions to "The HFCC-AFO Founders Scholarship Fund." The AFO membership may also elect to contribute a portion of any dues surplus (at the end of a fiscal year) to the fund.

During its regularly scheduled November 13 meeting, the Executive Board named Joe's widow and political science adjunct Dorothy Pelton as chair of the Scholarship Fund's governing board. Also named to the board were Mary Beck, Michael Thomas, Sherry Morgan, and Colin Houston. Board members will be responsible for ensuring that the fund operates within legal guidelines, for establishing the criteria for awarding the scholarship, and for selecting a winner from those submitting applications.

Charter Application Filed

The Adjunct Faculty Organization's application for an American Federation of Teachers charter was sent to the AFT's Washington headquarters on November 13, 2009 after being reviewed and approved by the AFO Executive Board during a regularly scheduled meeting of the Board. Once the AFT acts on the charter application, members-in-good-standing of the AFO will receive a mailing from the AFT that will include an AFT membership card. As AFT members, AFO members will be covered by a one million dollar occupational liability insurance policy and a \$5,000 accidental death and disability benefit. The occupational liability policy protects members from lawsuits stemming from their employment. Only AFO members are covered by these insurance policies, i.e. agency fee payers do not receive these benefits. Another benefit of AFT membership will be the option to purchase term life insurance through the AFT at group rates. Visit the AFT website (<http://aft.org>) for more information regarding the benefits of AFT membership.

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Officer Election and Constitutional Referendum

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ening that so many members took the time to vote even though the outcome of the election was basically a foregone conclusion because we were running unopposed."

Besides being responsible for their constitutionally mandated duties as officers, the five elected positions, along with Tom Anderson, the appointed Chief Grievance Officer, will constitute the AFO Executive Board. The Executive Board serves as the "executive" of the AFO, responsible for carrying out the will of the members as determined at twice-yearly General Membership Meetings. The General Membership Meeting is the legislative branch of the AFO.

Speaking for the entire Executive Board, Beck said "I'm proud of what we've accomplished thus far, but we need to build on what we've started. We won a fair and equitable first contract because we have a strong and committed membership, but this is no time to get complacent. The six of us on the Executive Board will continue to work hard, but we don't work alone. We need more members to join those who take the time to attend meetings and are willing to serve as stewards or on committees. Two officer positions (Vice-President and Treasurer) will be up for grabs next fall and it would be great if future elections are contested. Running for office doesn't mean that you don't approve of the job we've done, it simply means that you are willing to help us build a strong AFO and a better College."