

THE SPARK

HARPER FACULTY NEWSLETTER

Number 5 - Aug. 2009 * Cook County College Teachers Union ~ American Federation of Teachers Local 1600

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**CCCTU
LOCAL
1600**

FROM THE PRESIDENT

From the President's Desk

Welcome back to a new school year. It's always sad to see the end of summer, but this school year promises to bring plenty of excitement and changes. As you undoubtedly know, we officially welcomed the new college president, Dr. Ken Ender, this summer. He has hit the ground running and has already established good communication and working relationships with the Faculty Senate leadership and Local 1600. He also wants to get to know the faculty. He is very approachable, so if you see an opportunity to introduce yourself, be sure to take advantage of it. He has been known to join faculty who are eating lunch in the cafeteria, so don't be surprised if you get an additional lunch guest at your table. One of the changes Dr. Ender has helped bring to Harper is the Achieve the Dream program. You will definitely be hearing more about this program, including Sean Noonan's article in this newsletter. We are also privileged to have 16 new faculty members. Let's all make ourselves available as resources to our newest members to ensure their careers are both professionally successful and personally satisfying. And student enrollment is predicted to be up significantly this semester as the demand for the knowledge and skills you teach continues to grow. The work of community college teachers has never been more important.

A new school year always brings opportunities and challenges. Together we have weathered plenty of storms in the past. Even though the skies may seem clearer today, the need for unity is still the same. We have a once-in-a-decade chance to help make Harper a better place to learn and work. I know your efforts will make the community proud of the work we do.

As always, if you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please feel free to contact any of the Faculty Senate officers or Senators. Have a great semester. — Tom Dowd

NEWS & NOTES

WELCOME NEW FACULTY!

We're glad you're here.

Best Wishes as you begin your new career.

John Cody

Tonya Dixon

John Gately

Angela Mannina

Pardess Mitchell

Kimberly Polly

Kelly Taylor

Sandra Vega-Picchietti

Karega Coope

Kathleen Fisher

Amy LeFager

Tara Mathien

Crystal Paunan

Jane Suarez de Real

Colleen Tomanek

Eric Waldstein

\$25,000 in Harper College Technology Grants Available Just for You!

Wondering how you can extend your professional learning opportunities without straining your finances? Join your colleagues who have attended conferences, presented papers, received technology tool training and taken courses with monetary assistance provided by these grant funds available to you, Harper College's full-time faculty! Applications must be for discipline-specific, technology-related professional development projects. Examples of projects that may be funded include:

- +++ Information gathering with regard to utilizing technology as a tool in the teaching and learning process (attending conferences or taking related courses)
- +++ Learning how to use a technology (seminars or courses)

Applications are reviewed monthly from September through May by the Instructional Technology Committee (ITC). Details about the application and submission process are included in the application form. Get your application form at <http://www.harpercollege.edu/facdev/grants.htm> or contact the Instructional Technology Committee Co-Chairs for more information.

Instructional Technology Committee Co-Chairs:

Terry Morris (tmorris@harpercollege.edu) and Michele Ukleja (mukleja@harpercollege.edu)

NEWS & NOTES

Harper Ensemble Theatre Company auditions for THE DIARY OF ANNE FRANK

by Goodrich and Hackett adapted by Kesselman on September 2 and 3 from 7-10pm at the Harper College Liberal Arts Center Drama Lab located at 1200 W. Algonquin Road, Palatine, IL (Building L, room L109), parking lot #2. Director Kevin Long seeks strong ensemble of dedicated actors. All roles are open. All students, faculty and staff are strongly encouraged to audition. Rehearsals will begin in September 2009; production runs from November 13 - 22, 2009. Please prepare a 2-3 minute dramatic monologue. Bring H/R. Callbacks will take place on September 5 from 12-4pm. To schedule an audition appointment, contact Kevin Long (847.925.6944 or klong@harpercollege.edu).

AFT Membership Benefits

At some point we all received a packet of information on the benefits of membership in the American Federation of Teachers. And if you're like me, you probably glanced at it, set it aside to read later and never got back to it. The AFT offers a number of services and unfortunately only a small percentage of its members take advantage. I was at an AFT conference this summer and was reminded of all the programs that are available. The AFT offers a number of financial services from credit cards, discounted mortgages, credit counseling, and even help stopping home foreclosures. You can get insurance policies (including pet insurance), auto club memberships, personal legal advice, and discounts on everything from car rentals to cell phones to fine dining and magazine subscriptions. For a complete listing of AFT benefits, check out their website at <http://aft.org/aftplus/index.htm>. You're sure to find something that benefits you. — David Richmond

PAYSLIP REMINDER

Be sure to regularly check that your payslip has accurate information. Be sure to check your contract grade, insurance deductions, COPE deductions, sick days accruals, retirement deductions (e.g. 403b) and of course your pay. Mistakes that are caught quickly are easiest to fix.

Presidential Installation Ceremony

Order your Cap and Gown Today
Submit your Reservation Online at Harperstore.com
or at the Bookstore in Building L
Orders Due by 9/11/2009

ISBN Numbers Published for all Courses

by Diana Sharp Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs

As we all know, the cost of books is constantly rising. In order to help students find alternative sources for books, the federal government has developed a possible solution requiring institutions to list, in their on-line course schedules, the International Standard Book Number (ISBN) for textbooks and supplemental materials for courses. The ISBN is the easiest identifier for a student to use when searching through on-line sites like Amazon and Barnes and Nobel, for example.

To facilitate getting this information to all our students and to comply with the Higher Education Opportunity Act federal mandate, Harper College will begin to list the ISBN for our textbooks starting Spring term, 2010. In order to do this, we need faculty to identify the text book and author early in the semester planning process. How this will work, is that faculty will put through a book order to our on-campus bookstore for all the required materials (books, supplemental materials, and so forth) for all courses. Our bookstore will then do two things:

They will automatically share the entire list with any local book providers (they have already been doing this with the bookstore just down the road from Harper).

They will prepare the list of books and materials and ISBN numbers and post it on our website linked with our course schedule.

These activities will put us into compliance with the federal mandate. We need your help. We need you to determine what resource materials will be required for all your classes. We need you to put your texts and supplemental class materials orders in to our campus bookstore as soon as you know your class assignments. Chairs and coordinators will need to help us make sure that materials are ordered for classes where adjuncts have not yet been assigned. By getting the orders in early, our bookstore (and others) can obtain materials via the used-book market which means additional savings for our students.

We will begin officially posting this information for the Spring, 2010 term. We are currently working on that schedule and hope to have it posted by the end of September. What is most important is helping our students save money and easily obtain the materials they need to be successful in our classes.

Bookstore Open House

Wednesday October 14th 11am—6pm

Attention Faculty

Get useful information about textbook ordering process

Get help using online textbook requisition system

Refreshments Will Be Served

Achieving the Dream

By Sean Noonan

Last Spring the Faculty Senate enthusiastically endorsed the Harper Board's decision to join the Achieving the Dream network of community colleges. Over 100 community colleges, serving more than 1 million students across 22 states have joined Achieving the Dream. The overarching goal of Achieving the Dream is to increase the percentage of students that earn postsecondary credentials (certificates and degrees). Intermediate steps in student success include: completion of remedial courses, completion of gatekeeper courses, passing grades of C or better and persistent enrollment from one term to the next. The Achieving the Dream network conceptualizes its work as involving a 5 step process:

Commit – the college leadership team actively supports efforts, and make explicit policies aimed at student learning and course completion.

Use Data to Prioritize Actions – deploy IT and institutional research to examine, evaluate and disseminate data dealing with student success and identify achievement gaps.

Broad Engagement – garner support from faculty, student service staff, students and the community in developing a limited set of strategies to improve student success.

Implement, Evaluate and Improve – implement the strategies for increasing student success, evaluate the outcomes and use the results to make further improvements.

Culture of Improvement - create a campus culture of systemic institutional improvement where every facet of the college is critically examined in light of improving student success.

Harper is in the initial Commit and roll out stage of the process. Over the summer, Dr. Ender put together a leadership team consisting of himself, Shante Holley, Joan Kindel, Sheila Quirk, Chad Taylor and myself. Thus far we have been active over the summer. In June, the six of us attended a three day Kick Off Institute in Austin. We have presented on Achieving the Dream at the last three board meetings. We have conducted an initial readiness assessment and have been putting together planning documents.

There are many opportunities for faculty from all divisions to contribute to Achieving the Dream. To Volunteer for Achieving the Dream go to the Harper Portal Page and find the **Opportunities for Faculty and Staff Involvement** (also reproduced on page 6 of this issue of the Spark). Read this document, decide which facet(s) of Achieving the Dream you are most interested in and then fill out the on-line application form on the Harper Portal page.

Achieving the Dream is an opportunity to foster a collegiate environment of student success and to investigate and cultivate the many intersections of higher education, student success and community development.

Achieving the Dream

Opportunities for Faculty and Staff Involvement

The below listed teams will be activated Fall 2009. The commitment time is for one year but two would be great. The Data Team and Core Team will be activated first. Please complete the application to indicate your interest. See the application for details.

Team Charges

Data Team

The Data Team is focused on collecting and analyzing data specific to student outcomes and achievement. Special attention is on low-income, students of color and others who face barriers to success. Responsibilities include:

Identification and examination of relevant quantitative and qualitative data. Identification of strengths and weaknesses of current structures and systems. Engage the Focus Group Facilitators in gathering relevant data. Organize the findings in clear, understandable formats. Present findings that clearly identify where the College is doing well and where improvement is needed. Work with the Core Team in establishing a mutual understanding of the findings. Membership will involve a team of 7. Coordination with the Focus Group Facilitators will be involved.

Core Team

The Core Team is focused on identifying responsive strategies based on the data elements. The team will recommend ways to involve the campus in dialogue about the data, examine feedback and help formulate strategic initiatives. Responsibilities include:

Examine existing structures and systems at the College that nurture and impede success. Examine the findings from the Data Team. Work with the Data Team to clarify a mutual understanding of the implications of the findings. Engage the Intervention Teams in considering avenues for improving student outcomes and lead a process for identifying related goals and strategies. Work with the Feedback/Reactors in the process, collect feedback and analyze results. Recommend strategic initiatives, identify implementation processes and timelines. Membership will involve a team of 10. Coordination with the Intervention Teams and Feedback/Reactor Teams will be involved.

Intervention Teams

Intervention Teams work with the Core Team in exploring and recommending effective intervention strategies that address the identified issues. The focus of the Intervention Teams is to assist in gathering widespread involvement in the process of identifying appropriate strategies. Responsibilities include:

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Assist in reviewing data findings and clearly communicating these to others. Assist in identifying strategies for improving student outcomes, relevant to the findings. Assist with identifying implementation processes. Membership will involve 3 teams of 10 each (30 people total).

Focus Group Facilitators

Focus Group Facilitators will work with the Data Team as well as other teams as needed in gathering qualitative data and feedback from the internal and external College community. Responsibilities include:

Being trained as a facilitator. Leading and/or assisting with focus groups. Assisting with the compilation of data. Membership will involve 5 lead trainers and 20 trained facilitators.

Reactors

Reactors are individuals who are called upon to give feedback as ideas and strategies are formulated. Similar to taste testers, Reactors may be called upon to give feedback to ideas before they are ready for “market”. Reactors may be called upon in a group for feedback to a formal presentation or to react individually to written proposals or ideas. Membership will involve up to 40 people, internal and external to the College.

Event Assistants

Event Assistants assist with ancillary duties as part of the various processes involved in the Achieving the Dream initiative. Responsibilities may include collecting feedback sheets, organizing set ups, taking attendance information, etc. Membership will involve 15 people internal to the College.

To access a PDF copy of this list visit the Harper Portal (3rd Item, Left Column) or visit:
[https://myharper.harpercollege.edu/pls/portal/docs/PAGE/MY_HARPER/ACHIEVING_THE_DREAM/ATD%20TEAM%20DESCRIPTIONS%20\(2\).PDF](https://myharper.harpercollege.edu/pls/portal/docs/PAGE/MY_HARPER/ACHIEVING_THE_DREAM/ATD%20TEAM%20DESCRIPTIONS%20(2).PDF)

To fill out the Volunteer Application visit Harper Portal (3rd Item, Left Column) or visit:
https://myharper.harpercollege.edu/pls/portal/docs/PAGE/MY_HARPER/ACHIEVING_THE_DREAM/ACHIEVETHEDREAM.HTM

DID YOU KNOW...

20-30% - The Difference in earnings of people who hold Associate degrees (or comparable certificates) in relation to those who hold only high school diplomas. Higher levels of education lead to higher earning for all racial and ethnic groups and for both men and women. Higher education yields other benefits, including access to health care and better opportunities for the next generation. Higher levels of education also correlate positively with higher levels of civic participation, including charitable giving, community service, voting and political action.

From: <http://www.achievingthedream.org/docs/SUCCESS-counts-FINAL-11.6.pdf>

2008 Climate Survey

By Sean Noonan

In order to better serve the interests of Harper full-time faculty, the Faculty Senate commissioned a survey of faculty attitudes about institutional climate at Harper College. The first version of the Faculty climate survey was carried out in March 2005. Then in 2007 (with the hard work of a number of faculty) the results of the Faculty survey were included in the Harper Self-Study for the Higher Learning Commission. Subsequently, in order to avoid disputes over methodological issues in the future, Harper College administration and Faculty Senate have agreed to carry out their respective surveys of institutional climate in parallel with each and to use the National Initiative for Leadership and Institutional Effectiveness (NILIE) associated with North Carolina State University as the vendor responsible for collecting and compiling the data. In November 2008, the second Faculty Senate climate survey was administered to 210 full-time faculty at Harper College. Researchers at NILIE and representatives of the Faculty Senate collaborated to administer a survey that would identify full-time faculty attitudes about institutional climate at Harper College. 128 of 210 full-time faculty completed the instrument, yielding a response rate of 61%.

When comparing the 2008 Faculty survey with the 2005 Faculty survey a key methodological issue needs to be kept in mind. The 2005 Faculty survey deployed a 4-point scale of measurement and the 2008 Faculty Senate survey deployed a 5-point scale of measurement. This change from one yardstick to another caused a change in the responses to the questions. There is a psychological tendency for survey respondents to eschew selecting the extreme end points in Likert-style questionnaires (called central tendency bias or the Goldie Locks effect). With the introduction of a 5th (mid-point) option, question response can be expected to gravitate towards the new central mid point in the scale. Evidence of this Goldie Locks effect can be found when comparing the Faculty surveys of March 2005 and November 2008 which changed from a 4-point to a 5-point scale with the Harper Administration PACE surveys of April 2005 and November 2008 which retained a 5-point scale for both iterations.

Survey	2005 Mean Climate Score	2008 Mean Climate Score	Change in Mean Climate Score
Admin PACE	3.55	3.48	-.07
Faculty Senate	2.66	3.24	+.58

According to the PACE survey faculty perception of institutional climate went essentially unchanged from 2005 to 2008. According to the new 5-point scale Faculty Senate survey, faculty perception of institutional climate improved. So, when two surveys seeking to measure the same institutional climate arrive at different results the changes in the yardsticks used in the measuring need to be taken into account. Regrettably, this methodological change has produced a one-time hiccup in the data. Nevertheless, using a more refined 5 point scale and avoiding future squabbles with the administration about data collection and will result in faculty having a stronger voice at Harper going forward.

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Turning to the synchronic aspects of the data, of the 34 questions, the top five mean scores identified by faculty were:

- 1) The extent to which Harper College programs meet students' educational needs (4.18)
- 2) The extent that building and grounds of Harper College are well-maintained and conducive to student learning (4.18)
- 3) The extent that I feel safe while at Harper College (3.98)
- 4) The extent to which the Faculty Senate represents the faculty on college-wide issues (3.98)
- 5) The extent that needs of academic transfer students are being met (3.95)

Of the 34 questions, the bottom five mean scores identified by faculty were:

- 1) The extent that the administration collaborates with faculty when setting the academic vision for Harper College (2.16)
- 2) The extent that faculty input is considered by administrators when making important decisions for Harper College (2.22)
- 3) The extent that the Board of Trustees understands the needs of faculty when making decisions (2.29)
- 4) The extent that there is open communication between faculty and administration (2.36)
- 5) The administration values the role of the Faculty Senate (2.40)

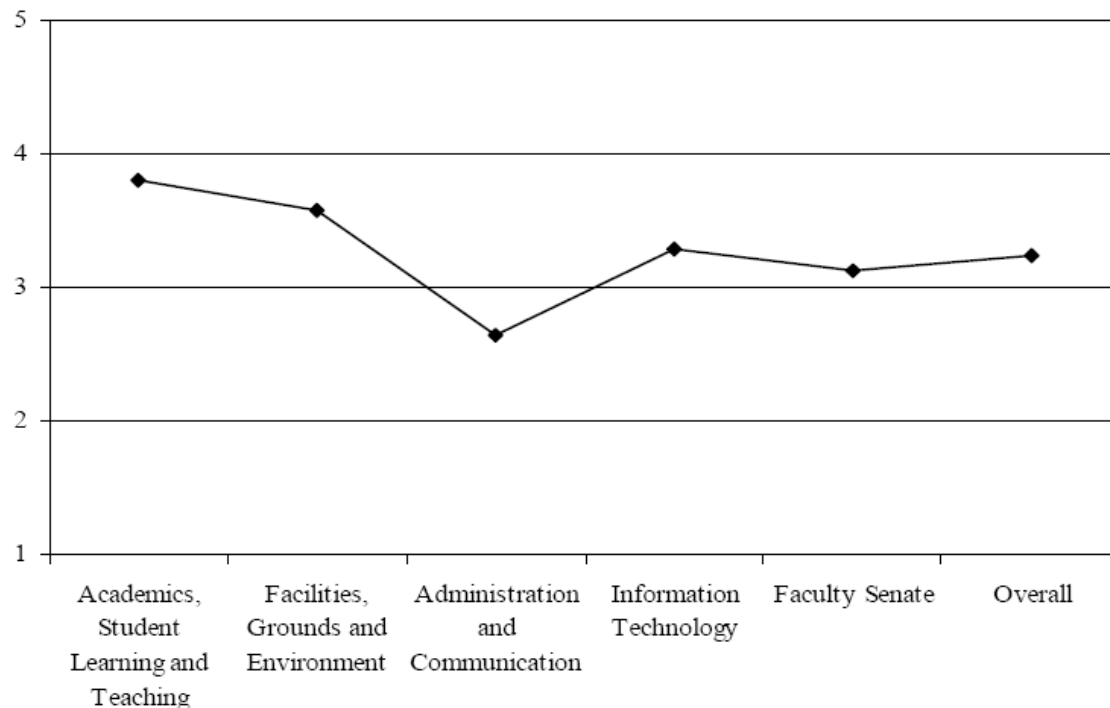
The 34-item instrument was organized into five climate factors: (1) Academics, Student Learning and Teaching; (2) Facilities, Grounds and Environment; (3) Administration and Communication; (4) Information Technology; (5) and Faculty Senate. Respondents were asked to rate these factors on a five-point scale. Faculty reported "Academics, Learning and Teaching" as the highest institutional climate factor and rated "Administration and Communication" as the lowest institutional climate factor.

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Harper Works Because We Work
American Federation of Teachers Local 1600

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Harper College Climate as rated by full-time faculty



Overall, faculty perceived the strongest aspects of institutional climate to be our work meeting the needs of students, followed by the built environment and infrastructure for learning. Faculty perceived the weakest aspects of institutional climate to be the strained relations with Harper's Administration in the arenas of decision making, collaboration and communication.

The 2008 Faculty Senate Climate Survey was a snap shot of faculty attitudes at the end of the Brueder administration. In the last 12 months Harper has had three presidents, and thus, institutional climate is in a period of transition. At this point early in Dr. Ender's tenure as College president there are some hopeful signs that Faculty-Administration relations are improving. The 2008 faculty climate study will serve as the benchmark for comparison with the next faculty climate survey which will be administered in 2011.

"The whole history of the progress of human liberty shows that all concessions yet made to her august claims have been born of earnest struggle...It must do this or it does nothing. If there is no struggle, there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom and yet deprecate agitation are men who want crops without plowing up the ground; they want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters." — Frederick Douglass 1857

Labor History – Working Conditions

By David Richmond

I'd like to make a proposal to my fellow faculty: every paycheck we'll each put a few dollars into an account and that way if any of us are killed on the job, we'll be able to pay for the burial. Who wants in?

Most of you are probably thinking that I've finally lost my mind and you definitely saw it coming (the signs were all there). But my proposal is only ridiculous because of the work that unions have done. In fact, that was the way some of the first unions were formed. Working conditions in many fields were so dangerous that the odds of being killed on the job were startlingly high. At the same time wages were so low that the families of workers who were killed often could not afford burial services. Therefore, workers came together in "mutual aid societies" to protect their families in case of the worst. In fact, one of the main issues in some of the earliest strikes in the United States was what was called "post mortem security".

Eventually these mutual aid societies came to the realization that they should instead be fighting for "pre-mortem security". The idea may sound simple, but it took an overwhelming effort and huge sacrifices from hundreds of thousands of unionized workers to change the burden of responsibility for workplace conditions. For many decades, employers had practically no obligation – legal or otherwise - to provide humane working conditions. Not only were times dangerous and the hours long, but job security didn't exist. If an employer found someone willing to do your job for less money, you were fired. (Just think of how many adjuncts currently teach in your department...) So unions not only fought to make sure their workplaces were safe, they also struggled to ensure reasonable hours (8-hour day), adequate time off (weekends, holidays, and vacations), job security (seniority and anti-discrimination safeguards), health benefits (insurance), and retirement security (pensions and social security). Today's improvements were made only by workers standing up together, and even then there were setbacks at times.

Sometimes there's a temptation to think that all of the work's been done. After all, we don't work in a mine or an industrial factory where safety of life and limb is a major daily concern. There's no doubt that we all benefit from the work done by those who came before. But if you're tempted to believe that it's all ancient history, try talking to your peers in many of the "right to work" states of the South and West, where unions have not had the same influence as in Illinois, and Chicago in particular. Compare your contract to theirs (if they even have a contract.) Some of these states have practically no worker compensation laws. Many of the poorer schools in these states have working conditions that remind one of a Charles Dickens novel. I assure you it's not an exaggeration.

And unions still directly benefit our working conditions today. Unions have obtained and continue to protect our rights to tenure, academic freedom, leave time, insurance, seniority, time off, promotion, etc. These benefits were not given to teachers simply because society thinks we're wonderful. If they were, these benefits would be enjoyed universally by teachers (and they're not) and would not be so contentious at times (and they are).

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Unions also enable us to collectively influence the political processes. Unions endorse issues that are important to workers and their families. Collectively we are able to support politicians who promote a working class/middle class agenda, and with our particular union, a pro-education agenda.

All of this means that we enjoy working conditions that would have been undreamt of in the past. The part that is easily forgotten is that many non-unionized teachers also benefit from our work because they have to compete against Harper College in the hiring process. So when you're working with the union, you're not just helping yourself, you are actually helping teachers all over the country.

And as for my original proposal of forming our own mutual aid society, in the faculty contract you're already guaranteed life insurance (and the AFT will kick in an extra \$100,000 for your estate if you're the victim of workplace violence). Illinois has some of the best worker compensation laws in the country. So I guess we're already covered. Therefore, rather than simply contributing some money to an account, instead be an active part of the union protecting those "pre-mortem" issues.

The Level Of State Funding For Higher Ed Is The Same As It Was Nearly A Decade Ago

In 2000, a statewide poll found that 88% of Illinois residents strongly or somewhat agree that a college degree has become as important as a high school diploma used to be.

Unfortunately, the level of state funding for higher education is the same as it was nearly a decade ago. It is essential that higher education funding is not lost in the shuffle.

An investment in public higher education will grow leaders in business, education, social services and the private sector, as well as good consumers, good taxpayers and good citizens. We must turn the tide this year and provide additional funding for higher education in Illinois.

Higher education in Illinois is many things to many people:

- 355,684 students attend 48 community colleges-
- 202,236 students attend 9 public universities on 12 campuses
- 31,775 bachelor's degrees conferred in 2005
- 25,158 associate degrees conferred in 2005
- 11,826 master's degrees conferred in 2005
- Public institutions of higher learning employ more than 54,000 full time employees.

Making sure that higher education is affordable and provides the highest level of career preparation for Illinois citizens is the common goal that we all must work toward.

Cook County College Teachers Union Local 1600 and the Illinois Higher Ed Legislative Coalition.
<http://il.aft.org/local1600/index.cfm?action=article&articleID=c5496315-500a-4d3c-bda2-d24e6b5595de>