

THE SPARK

HARPER FACULTY NEWSLETTER

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcome back. We hope that you had a great summer. As always, life is busy at Harper College, but fortunately things are relatively conflict-free. Happily, we are not gearing everyone up for contract negotiations this year. Without the three-year extension we signed last spring, the Faculty Senate would be starting a contract campaign to prepare for negotiations this spring. Of course, one of the dangers of signing back-to-back contract extensions is that our membership might become complacent. It's easy to become involved with the union during contract negotiations. But it's just as important to remain active between negotiations, as well.

This year promises to be very eventful, as always. President Ender and the Board of Trustees have established a very full agenda for the college centered on the theme of "student success". We have all been asked to be involved in numerous committees and programs. There is so much going on, it would be easy to get burned out on Harper College. Faculty input and involvement are imperative parts of any proposed changes to the academic processes. Your participation is necessary, but it's also important to maintain a healthy balance in life. Stay involved, but don't get yourself over-extended.

One of President Ender's goals approved by the Board of Trustees is to investigate and propose reforms to the Shared Governance system. All of us have at times been frustrated with some aspect of Shared Governance – so obviously improvements are possible. But all of us also recognize that Shared Governance helps make Harper College a great place to work and learn. We will need faculty to volunteer to work on committees that will look at the Shared Governance system and make suggestions for improvement. Please consider volunteering for these assignments. If you are interested, please email the Faculty Senate Secretary Anne Abasolo. Have a great semester and please contact any of the Faculty Senate Officers if you have any concerns.

Tom Dowd, Faculty Senate President

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KNOW YOUR (WEINGARTEN) RIGHTS

On February 19, 1975 the United States Supreme Court ruled against J. Weingarten, Incorporated, a national retail store operator. The National Labor Relations Board brought charges against the management of J. Weingarten, Inc. for its refusal to allow employees to have a union representative present during disciplinary interrogations. The Supreme Court's decision established what are commonly referred to as Weingarten Rights, the right of an employee to have union representation during investigatory interviews.

It is incumbent on you to assert your rights. Unlike Miranda Rights, officials are not obligated to inform you of these rights before an inquiry begins. The Supreme Court's decision allows you to assert your Weingarten Rights any time you are questioned by a supervisor and you have reasonable belief that possible disciplinary action or a change in your working conditions could result from the interview. If you are being questioned, you should insist that the meeting be rescheduled when you can have union representation present (see below). Once you request representation, supervisors have three choices.

* They can request that you waive your Weingarten Rights, but they cannot use intimidation, threats or pressure to get you to waive your rights. (There is never a good enough reason to waive your Weingarten Rights.)

* They can end all questions and drop the issue.

* They can temporarily stop questioning and reschedule the meeting at a time when you can be represented by the union.

Any other action by supervisors constitutes an unfair labor practice.

There are many reasons to have union representation during any questioning. The representative serves as a witness to ensure accurate reporting of your answers. The representative has the right to give relevant information on the issue, to ask that questions be rephrased or clarified, and to speak privately with you before you answer any questions. However, the representative cannot tell you what to say, nor can you be instructed to "remain silent." Asserting your Weingarten Rights can provide you with critical protection, but you must request representation. Hopefully you will never need to invoke your Weingarten Rights, but if you find yourself in a situation where an administrator is asking you questions and you are worried about possible negative consequences, simply say:

"If this discussion could in any way lead to my being disciplined or terminated, or affect my personal working conditions, I request that a union officer be present. Without representation, I choose not to answer any questions. This is my legal right."

— David Richmond

TEACHING AND LEARNING INNOVATION GRANTS

\$25,000.00 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)

Your application can be submitted at any time. Applications are reviewed monthly from September through May at Instructional Technology Committee (ITC) meetings. Details about the application and submission process are included in the application form.

Get your application form at <http://dept.harpercollege.edu/facdev/grants.html>

Questions about Technology Grants?

Contact Terry Morris, Instructional Technology Committee Co-Chair
X6818 or tmorris@harpercollege.edu

News and Notes

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First Year of Dental Rollover Balances – You may recall that January 1, 2009, we implemented the Delta Dental program which featured “To Go” benefits. If you went to the dentist at least once in calendar year 2009, then the remainder of your \$1200 benefit will be rolled over for use in calendar year 2010. Example: If you had \$200 worth of benefits paid by Delta Dental this year (2009), \$1,000 will be rolled over and added to the \$1200 maximum benefit limit in 2010. In this example, this employee would be eligible for \$2,200 worth of benefits in 2010.

Another point to note: The last paycheck for calendar year 2009 will be dated December 31, 2009 because the January 1, 2010 payday falls on a bank holiday. This payday will be the 27th pay in calendar year 2009. Since Medical, Dental and Flexible Spending Account contributions are based on either a 26 or 20 pay contribution year, Harper College will not be taking any deductions for these plans on the 27th pay dated 12/31/09. Deductions will resume for the paycheck dated January 15, 2010 and will reflect your 2010 benefit elections.

Note: 403(b) and 457 deductions will not stop. Your regular bi-weekly deduction will be taken on the December 31, 2009 pay (unless you have exceeded the 2009 IRS maximum contribution limit).

Another point to note, II: Illinois law now mandates that insurance plans cover dependent children up to the age of 26. Look for information on eligibility and enrollment forms for adult dependent children this December. It will be separate from the Open Enrollment forms.

International Programs by Bobby Summers

As the Coordinator for International Programs for Faculty at Harper College, I wanted to share a few of the upcoming events that are available for faculty at Harper. Harper College and the International Committee in particular are committed to making resources available to the Harper community to increase international awareness. We have launched a website to help in this endeavor. The website may be accessed at <http://dept.harpercollege.edu/ipf/>. The website contains information on the International Committee and international related events at Harper College. It also contains links to various organizations and resources that may be useful for faculty development. One of the best features of the website is a section that contains information and email links of faculty at Harper that have volunteered to serve as an international resource for faculty to utilize in their classes and curriculum. We are always looking for more faculty resource volunteers. If you wish to volunteer, please email me at bsummers@harpercollege.edu.

The International Committee is proud to continue the tradition of sponsoring two books each semester for Read Around the World. Faculty discussed *The Wall Jumpers* by Peter Schneider on October 02. *The Hill Bachelors* by William Trevor is scheduled for November 06. You can register for CEU credit through Harper College for these sessions. We also are always looking for new books to consider. If you have any ideas, please send them to Elke Weinbrenner at eweinbre@harpercollege.edu and she will get your ideas to the committee.

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The International Committee in conjunction with the Illinois Council for the Social Studies brought Costas Spirou to do a presentation at Harper. His discussion was Globalization, Urban Competition, and the Olympic Games. His presentation was timed to coincide with the announcement of Chicago hosting the 2016 Games. It was a great presentation anyway. He has a new book coming out next year on the topic titled *Urban Tourism and Cities of the 21st Century*. We also are looking for any ideas on others that we can bring to Harper College in the future. If you have any ideas, please email me at bsummers@harpercollege.edu.

I also wanted to mention that there are many opportunities for faculty to travel and study internationally. I encourage faculty members to use the links on the website to check into the programs and opportunities at the Illinois Consortium for International Studies and Programs, the Fulbright Scholar Program, and the National Endowment for the Humanities among others. Sabbaticals are part of your professional development opportunities at Harper. If you are able, please take advantage of these learning experiences. It will enrich you both professionally and personally.

Elke Weinbrenne (International Committee Chair), myself, and the rest of the committee members encourage everyone to make contact with us and to share any ideas which you may have. We want to be a useful resource to the Harper community and we need your input and feedback to help us accomplish our goal.

Choice Scholars Institute by Shante Holley

During the all faculty meeting at the beginning of the year, Dr. Skold highlighted several faculty accomplishments including an interdisciplinary summer pilot designed to bolster the success of developmental students. The effort involved Julie Ellefson-Kuehn (Chemistry), Diane Martling (Math), Judy Kulchawik, (Academic Success), Shante' (Holley) Bishop (Academic Success), and adjuncts Elizabeth Pagenkopf (Nursing), and Yevgeniya Rudnytska (Business). The pilot had several goals:

- * **Promote scholarship and student engagement through project based learning**
- * **Prepare students for academic rigor**
- * **Provide skill building in the areas of reading, writing and math through a contextual framework of science/technology, business, and professional/technical careers.**
- * **Provide opportunities to improve placement and reduce time to degree completion**
- * **Rearticulate developmental learners as developmental scholars**

The program successfully met each goal and has since won the 2009 Innovation Award from the Illinois Council of Community College Administrators. Given the success of this initiative, the program has been expanded to a larger entity that will now be known as the **Choice Scholars Institute**.

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The focus of the institute is *college readiness*, and approaches it from three perspectives: curricular alignment, summer enrichment, and successful learning strategies.

After our week of engagement, it has become clear that there is a groundswell of enthusiasm and willingness to build bridges and pathways to student success and to prepare students academically for this endeavor. There is also a need to formalize the manner in which we connect with our district and university partners so that our efforts are coordinated and transparent. A similar effort is already established at one of our fellow Achieving the Dream schools, Elgin Community College. Elgin's Alliance for College Readiness is the means by which they coordinate with the high schools, and develop collaborative initiatives to prepare students for post secondary education.

The Choice Scholars Institute has the potential to be that and more for Harper College. On **February 10, 2010 from 4p – 6:30p**, faculty from Harper, our feeder districts as well as our university partners will be here to discuss formalizing our own alliance and using the institute as a vehicle for a coordinated approach to college readiness. Faculty leadership is essential to the success of such an undertaking and I would be honored if you would consider helping to spur that dialogue.

Building Alliances for College Readiness
Wednesday, February 10, 2010. 4p – 6:30p
Wojcik Conference Center – Amphitheater
Light refreshments and dinner will be served

RSVP: csi@harpercollege.edu

For more information about the institute, please contact sholley@harpercollege.edu

Musings from your friendly neighborhood Psychological Services
By Caryn Levington

If you're a good listener, an intuitive or an observant type, you might have guessed it...there has been a national increase in students on college campuses with psychological disorders. This has translated into an increase in students seeking services and is something we've been dealing with here at Harper's Psychological Services (part of the Health and Psychological Services program) for many years. If you're interested in learning more about this trend, there's a good deal of literature on it. A great introductory read can be found at:

<http://www.collegecounseling.org/pdf/cscmh%20report.pdf>

Harper is definitely a microcosm of the national trends. More and more students have come to us with increasingly severe psychological disorders, concerns, and life situations. For example, over this past week I personally have seen three suicidal students, an Iraqi war veteran with post-traumatic stress disorder and a severe level of major depression, a student who was raped at her work place, a student with heroin addiction, a now homeless student who has been working two jobs in addition to his full-time coursework to try and help his mom and dad save their house from foreclosure., and a student grieving her second miscarriage. We've worked with cult victims, refugees from Rwanda (and Katrina), as well as a 9-11-01 family.

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Musings from Psych Services Continued from Page 5

Like everything else, being a psychologist has its pros and cons. There are so many genuinely beautiful aspects of getting to know people in this way. You get to see the core strength, courage, and heart of life and death issues. As an existentialist, I am always fascinated and deeply moved to witness the dialectical process by which people find strength and meaning in the suffering that life inevitably brings....and attain and enhance the health of their lives...and souls...in the process.

On a “con” side...it’s a hidden job. It is easy to misunderstand who we are and what we do. The clinical team and I see a side of the “hidden Harper” that we often wish more people knew about, especially when we hear comments around campus about the “crazy” or “potentially violent” mentally ill on our campus. In fact, according to a recent statistic from Simon and Tardiff (2008, p. xvii) “3 – 5% of the risk for violence in the United States is attributable to mental illnesses, and it has long been clear that people with serious mental illnesses are more likely to be the victims of violence than its perpetrators”.*

All this just to say that while students undoubtedly have so much to learn from us, we too can learn much from them, and from the listening to the music of our own inner workings... and often complex lives. After all, we all know that we’re on this life journey together –educator and student alike. If you come across an eccentric student on campus, it might be interesting to wonder what kind of path s/he’s walked...and where it is s/he (and hey – the rest of us) – are going.

Simon R.I., & Tardiff, K. (Eds.), (2008) *Textbook of Violence Assessment and Management*, Washington, D.C.: American Psychiatric Publishing, Inc...

Q: Do you mind if I ask you about your own story, how you went from English Professor

**The Importance of Teacher’s Unions
Not Just for Faculty, but for the Profession and for Students.
An Interview with Perry Buckley, President of Local 1600**

By John Garcia

Q: Do you mind if I ask you about your own story, how you went from English Professor to President of Local 1600?

“I came from a labor background. My family had always been in unions. My father and my two brothers are Chicago firemen; they were always strong in the union. And I had a lot of odd jobs as I was working my way through college. I worked at Peabody Coal Mine, so I was a member of the United Mine Workers. I was also an order picker at Certified Grocers, so I was a member of the Teamsters and I was a steward with the Teamsters. So, I always knew that unions are important.”

“At first I was sort of like Dave and Tom and Sean; I was a local leader. I was a Grievance Chair, then a Chapter Chair. Then, for about ten to fifteen years I worked as the reporter for The Voice. That’s when I really got to know the inner workings of the Union, and got to meet Norm [Swenson] and meet everyone else. I really had no intention of being a Local –wide officer. I was just happy to work on The Voice and continuing to be a teacher.”

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“In a way it was all just part of a coincidence. I was just in the right place in the right time. I never intended to run for Local-wide office, never intended to run for President, but there I was. I guess, I had known because of my family, my background, and as a child of the sixties, having studied the labor movement, studied what unions had done for occupations, for teachers, I always thought unions were important.”

“I always had an interest in the unions; I always valued them. But I really didn't think there was a contradiction between being an academic and a union leader.”

Q: What advice do you have for people struggling to balance involvement in the Union and with politics with a desire to be a teacher?

“For me it's always been natural. I look at being an active union member and being an academic as bi-polar fields or opposites. I think it's very symbiotic. A lot of people think that unions simply fight for pay and benefits and pensions... but it's way more than that. The Union fights for the profession. We introduced legislation for the fifth year in a row to try to keep at bay the growing amount of classes taught by adjuncts. We wanted some legislation passed that said that 75% of all classes taught should be taught by full time faculty.” “The Union protects not just the bread and butter issues, but it protects the academic issues as well. We are fighting constantly to make sure that the faculty departments control the academy.” “I really think that the union enables us to be professionals, academics, in our fields.”

Q: I hope it's clear to all faculty members that there's no doubt that the Union benefits us as faculty, but I was wondering if you could talk a bit about the ways that you see the Union translating into benefits for students?

“One thing we do, and if you talk to Phil Burdick at Harper he'll tell you this is true, our Union is very, very politically active.... Very often what we're lobbying for directly helps our colleges and subsequently our students. One example – we were down in Springfield fighting for these MAP funds.... We do many things that are good for students. We try to bring in funding; we try to bring in grants. We work for the students.... We go down to Springfield all the time fighting for what's right.... We fight for accessibility and funding for our students.”

“There's a whole host of things we do. The Tenure Act, we wrote the Tenure Act.... There was never tenure for community college teachers in the state of Illinois. Norm Swenson and Gil Feldman and other people in the IFT went down and wrote legislation and tried to get tenure for community colleges, and we got it.... Just giving community college teachers tenure so that they have academic freedom, they don't need to worry about what they say in a classroom, so that they don't need to worry about somebody wanting to get rid of them just because of what they may say politically – that makes for better faculty members and obviously, I believe it helps our students as well.”

Q: What are some of the big political things, other than the MAP Grants, happening in Washington and Springfield, that you want people to know about?

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Importance of Teachers Unions Continued from page 7

“The real area of concern that we have right now, is the attack on pensions.” “This is just totally immoral as far as I’m concerned.” “The maxim in negotiating is get what you need, keep what you got. Well, we’re far more in keep what you got mode right now.” “All of those things work to help not just our faculty, but helps to keep good faculty...and that always helps the students.”

Q: What recommendations would you give someone who wants to get more involved with the Union?

“The number one maxim in this business is ‘all politics are local’. The good place to start is right with your local chapter....There’s always room for you; there’s always room for hands....All you need to do is start at Harper and get involved....We are constantly looking for good new people.”

“We do a lobby day once a year. Take that personal day and go down for Lobby Day in Springfield....There’s always things to do.”

“I will say this, what we look for are people who believe in what we do.... I am very impressed with Sean and Dave and Tom; they believe in what we do.”

Local 1600 – The Best of Both Worlds (?)

By David Richmond

There has been a long-standing debate within the labor movement over the best structure for a union. The two main options are industrial unions versus craft unions (aka trades unions). In the American labor movement, the question is now entering its second century without a clear answer. And just to be clear from the beginning, the Harper Faculty Senate is a craft union.

Craft unions organize workers by the specific job that they do or skill they possess, such as FT faculty at Harper College. Historically, this was the model of the American Federation of Labor (AFL) prior to the AFL-CIO merger in 1955. In addition to working for better wages, hours, and conditions for their members, craft unions also see part of their role to protect the integrity of their profession. Craft unions establish standards of professionalism for their members through mechanisms like apprenticeships, hiring standards, licensing, and requiring continual professional development. Proponents of craft unions argue that only a union that truly understands the profession can best represent its members.

Industrial unions attempt to organize all workers in an industry or a worksite regardless of the job or skill of the worker. This form of labor organization was historically best represented by national unions such as the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) and the United Auto Workers (UAW). The advantage of industrial unions is in the numbers.

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Best of Both Worlds Continued from page 8

An industrial union potentially has far more members than a craft union, giving rise to slogans such as, “The longer the picket line, the shorter the strike.” It is easier to completely shut down a business during a strike if all the employees are part of the same union. Industrial unions also have the advantage of numbers when working in the political arena – lobbying for legislation or endorsing politicians. Industrial unions try to create a strong sense of worker solidarity and a truly national (and international) labor movement. If we had an industrial union at Harper, all of Harper’s employees – FT faculty, adjuncts, pro-techs, grounds crew, electricians, secretaries, etc. – would be under the same contract - except administrators, of course.

At Harper College, the Faculty Senate does its best to function as a craft union. Not only does the Senate negotiate and protect the contractual rights of the FT faculty, but it also tries to protect the quality of the education provided to the students. Therefore, the Senate, working with the administration and the Board, works to ensure appropriate levels of faculty input into the decisions of the college. The Senate labors to make sure FT faculty are involved in shared governance, hiring decisions, mentoring programs, professional development, curriculum development, academic standards, etc. The Senate also struggles to find a balance between the needs of its members and the needs of the institution.

While the Faculty Senate is structured more along the trade union model, as a federated local, CCCTU (Local 1600) provides us with many of the advantages of an industrial union while preserving the autonomy and advantages of the craft union. Local 1600 attempts to organize all employee groups at its worksites. As members of Local 1600, we share our union with employees from 14 other community colleges in Cook County. In addition to FT faculty, Local 1600 has chapters that represent adjuncts, pro-techs, classified staff, public safety, and just about every non-administration job category.

With nearly 5,000 members, we are one of the largest higher education unions in the AFT. This collective organization gives us access to greater legal and political resources than any one of our chapters could muster by themselves. It also gives us a seat at the table when decisions are being made that affect our work. President Perry Buckley is a VP of the Illinois Federation of Teachers and sits on nearly all of the important Higher Ed Councils of the AFT. Illinois politicians seek us out for endorsements and financial support, but also for advice that often includes writing legislation in Springfield and appointments to key political committees.

By taking the best of both worlds – the professionalism of the craft union and the solidarity of the industrial union – we are in the strongest position to provide quality working conditions for our members and quality education for our students. Of course, it doesn’t matter what structures we have or models we follow unless our members work collectively. There are many ways to get involved and they’re all important. Look for opportunities and step up. We’re all in this together.

Harper Works Because We Work
American Federation of Teachers Local 1600

Mark Your Calendars!

**Faculty Are Warmly Invited To The
Faculty Senate Holiday Lunch on
Friday December 11, 2009.**

**Lunch is Scheduled Begin at Noon
Look for more details coming soon!**

Anthem Grill

**704 West Euclid Avenue * Palatine,
IL * 847.963-8920**

"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