

HARPER FACULTY ~ UNITY NEWSLETTER

Number 2 Cook County College Teachers Union ~ AFT Local 1600

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Useful Links:

www.harperfaculty.org
www.il.aft.org/local1600/
<http://www.dpeaflcio.org/index.cfm>

IN THE EVENT OF A STRIKE

By Perry Buckley, President AFT Local 1600

No one in Local 1600, no one at the negotiations table, and surely not I want another strike at Harper College. Sadly, however, we are looking at the possibility of just that. Believe me it is neither rhetoric nor hyperbole when I tell you that the only way we will be forced to leave our classrooms for the picket line is if the administration forces us to do so. This is a simple fact.

It has been years since any one of the 27 negotiation tables where we bargain with eight community college districts at 15 colleges have seen an administrative proposal with such drastic takeaways along with a lowball pay offer.

In the past year Local 1600 has successfully and amicably negotiated faculty contracts at Morton College, South Suburban College, Moraine Valley College and Triton College. We have also successfully and amicably negotiated contracts for support and professional staff at Triton, Morton, Moraine, Oakton... and here at Harper with our pro-tech chapter. No where has there been anything close to the devastating changes proposed with Harper faculty. It is unprecedented. It is unacceptable.

Of course, especially for those of you who have not been through this process before, the thought of a strike can be frightening and forbidding. Professionally we loath walking out of the classroom, and our students, whom we love so much. We worry about the financial repercussions. We worry for our careers, our families, and, yes, the Harper College we love and respect.

In that light please permit me to briefly tell you what must and will occur before we would go out on strike.

***** The first step has been taken. We have filed for a federal mediator with the Federal Mediation & Conciliation Service in Hinsdale, Illinois. We have done this through the Illinois Educational Labor Relations Board (IELRB).

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***** When a mediator has been assigned we will resume negotiations with the Harper team. Mediation is not binding; however it is the mediator's job to do whatever he/she can to bring both sides together to avoid a strike.

***** If your negotiation team feels mediation is not working, we would come back to you and ask for a strike authorization vote. The team would then set a strike date. Negotiations would continue with the mediator.

***** When we reach impasse we would set a strike date. I would, if at all possible, attend a meeting of the Harper College Board and make a final appeal to them personally.

***** We would then void our current contract (which has already expired) so that we would not be in violation of the "no strike" clause. And we would then go on strike.

***** We would continue to negotiate, with the mediator, while on strike. We would do so until we had an agreement we thought worthy of your vote. Upon ratification of that contract we would return to the classroom.

Be assured that in Illinois we have the legal right to strike. While the college could hire replacement teachers, they would be removed the minute we returned. Harper did not use replacement teachers last strike, and quite frankly, this has never worked anywhere else, including Chicago in 2004. Non-tenured faculty are also covered by the law. In the 43 year history of our Union, which covers 27 strikes, only one non-tenured faculty has ever been fired for Union activities and we won her job back with full pay and a sabbatical to boot.

While on strike all members would be entitled to loans through our credit union to the amount of your take home pay every pay period we were on strike. The AFT would reimburse all the interest on this loan. We gave over \$200,000 in loans during the Chicago strike of 2004.

In the event the college once again cancels your insurance you would be eligible for COBRA insurance. You will receive more information on this if needed on how the Union can help. Our lawyers tell us that the college is prohibited by law from canceling your insurance without a 30 day notification. However at Harper, and Chicago, they ignored that law. We would seek injunctive relief.

I will discuss all these issues in detail at our faculty meetings. For now let me simply say this: No one, especially me, wants to strike. But what is on the table is an insult to us as professionals and educators. Far more is at stake than money. It deals with working conditions and professional control of our classrooms. We have no choice but to fight these things.

As always, feel free to contact me at the Union if you have any questions or thoughts... I take and return all calls.

Faithfully and in solidarity,
Perry

**Summary of Negotiations Issues Discussed
at the All-Faculty Meeting Held on August 31st (part 1)**

| Unresolved Issues | Current Language | Proposed change | Board or Faculty Proposal? |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|------------------------------------|
| Reassigned Time for Senate Officers | 27 Hours per year (p. 4) | 12 hours per year | Board |
| Reassigned Time for Negotiating Team | None | 12 hours during contract negotiations semester | Faculty |
| Office hours | "Teaching faculty are to maintain regular office hours to readily serve the needs of the students" (p.11) | "The faculty member and the appropriate Dean will develop an office hour schedule..." | Board |
| Mandatory meetings | None | Faculty are required to attend 5 meetings each year - 4 called by the college president and must attend graduation | Board |
| Reassigned Time for On-going Projects | "Distribution of these hours (reassigned time) shall be made by the appropriate Vice-President..." (p. 14) | Establish a committee to determine criteria for re-assigned time | Faculty |
| Overload Pay | Page 44 | \$25/year/cell = approximately 3.2% per year | Board |
| Independent Study | Page 46 - \$30/credit hour | \$40/hour until FY09, \$50/hour after | Board Response to Faculty Proposal |
| Salary Schedule Movement | Page 38 | 2006-07 = 3.49%, .29% at top 2007-08 = 4.4%, 1.2% at top 2008-09 = 4.01%, .81% at top 2009-10 = 4.36%, 1.16% at top | Board |
| Professional Expense Benefit | Pages 49-50 (\$1,075 currently) | 2006-07 = \$1,075, 2007-08 = \$1100, 2008-09 = \$1100, 2009-10= \$1125 | Board |

**Summary of Negotiations Issues Discussed
at the All-Faculty Meeting Held on August 31st (part 2)**

| Unresolved Issues | Current Language | Proposed change | Board or Faculty Proposal? |
|----------------------------|---|---|-----------------------------------|
| Substitute Pay | Page 43 (\$25/hour) | \$35/hour | Faculty |
| Tuition Waiver | Page 54 (Currently Faculty and family receive full tuition waiver) | For CE courses, family member's only receive 75% tuition waiver in 2006-07, 50% in 07-08, 25% in 08-09, and 0% in 09-10. Summer INZONE is 50% each year | Board |
| Early Retirement Plan 1 | Page 55 (Faculty member receives 25% of salary for 5 years after retirement) | FACULTY WHO RETIRE : in 2006-07 receive 40% of salary for 3 years, in 2007-08 receive 30% of salary for 3 years, in 2008-09 receive 20% of salary for 3 years, and after 2009 no early retirement benefit | Board |
| Post-retirement insurance | Page 56 (Retirees can continue on Harper Insurance at same rate as faculty for 5 years) | After 2008, all retirees must move to state insurance program. Harper will only pay same amount as Harper employees | Board |
| Early Retirement Plan 3 | Page 67 (Salary is increased 20% during final 2 years of employment) | Program eliminated after 2008 | Board |
| Technology Grant | Page 69 (\$25,000/year to support the use of technology in the classroom) | Eliminate Technology Grant | Board |
| Post-retirement employment | Faculty Handbook (Retired faculty who work part-time are paid double the overload rate) | Retired faculty who work part-time are paid the same as an adjunct (or overload pay, whichever is greater) | Board |
| Domestic Partner Benefits | None | Harper College will offer benefits to domestic partners | Faculty |
| Unused Sick Leave | None | Faculty will be paid for unused sick leave at retirement | Faculty |