

# P-fac NEWS

Serving the Part-time teaching community at Columbia College

May, 2001

## PARITY FOR PART-TIMERS!

By Christopher Thale

We are now beginning to approach the end of our historic first contract, which terminates at the end of the first semester next year. As we approach the time for new contract negotiations, which will begin in the fall, it's worth thinking about our overall goals.

Back in 1997 - shortly before **P-fac** took the big step towards collective bargaining - we expressed our long-range goals in a set of proposals for improving the lot of the part-time faculty and the state of the college. At heart, we insisted on equal treatment with the full-time faculty. We called for parity in pay, pro-rated benefits, job security, and participation in all decision-making. We argued that discrimination on the grounds of being part-time is invidious, that our qualifications match or exceed those of the full-time faculty, and that second-class treatment is fundamentally unjust as well as educationally unsound.

Those proposals make as much sense now as they did four years ago; discrimination based on part-time employment status has no moral or pedagogical justification. Two years ago our efforts bore fruit. We and the administration agreed to a considerably improved schedule of compensation. It was an impressive agreement, but we still have a ways to go. A few things have changed, but they only add to the force of our original argument. The cost of living has risen a bit; so have the salaries of full time faculty. Despite warnings that increased part-time compensation - resulting from our first contract - might cut into

urgent programs, the college is still buying and remodeling buildings. And tuition keeps rising, so that - like four years ago - less than 10% of student tuition goes to pay the part-timers who teach over two thirds of the classes. Columbia College clearly has the resources to fully meet its moral obligations to the part-time faculty.

The pedagogical issues are no less urgent. Inadequate pay is an educational problem. Turnover is still substantial, and inadequate compensation is one reason. The market for teaching labor is tight by historical standards, and chairs and coordinators are still obliged to go hunting frequently for replacement faculty. That's likely to continue even if the economy as a whole loses steam. Part-time faculty in Chicago and throughout the country are demanding a better deal, and as more unionize, standards will rise, and competition for faculty will stiffen.

Discrimination pervades the part-time faculty experience at Columbia. Our jobs are at the mercy of enrollment swings, and even the most senior among us are excluded from the protections of the tenure system which our full-time colleagues recently won. Discrimination affects governance as well. Part-time faculty now have very modest rights to take part in making the basic decisions that affect their work lives and that shape the college and the education of our students. Though we escape the burdens of attending meetings (a burden concentrated on the numerically much smaller full-time faculty), a great untapped reservoir of ideas and energies is wasted,

denying the aspirations of many part-time faculty to exercise the responsibilities of full-fledged members of a community of scholars and artists.

Looking ahead to our prospects in a new contract, we have a right to be optimistic for several reasons. **P-fac** is in a good position to articulate part-time faculty concerns effectively. As an organization, we have grown in numbers and activity. It's true that some of our activity consists of straightening out mailing lists and the like, but we're sticking together, and interest in the association, and commitment to it, have grown over the years. And our arguments resonate well with the public (including, notably, our colleagues outside of Columbia College) and the college community. Within the college, we hear support from full-time colleagues, coordinators, chairs, and staff (perhaps most notably on the compensation issue); we have little doubt that donors and alumni would agree that further improvements are needed. Students in particular are likely to be concerned - as before - about losing good part-time teachers. Many are shocked to discover that so little of their tuition money goes to their teachers. Though intangible, a favorable climate of opinion will shape the discussions of the negotiators. Finally, though it is conceivable that we will be obliged to fight an uphill battle against traditional penny-pinching, status-conscious managers, this seems unlikely. The fact that so many of our interests overlap with the educational interests of the college will, we hope, prove persuasive.

## ROOSEVELT UNIONISTS NEAR GOAL

The Roosevelt Adjunct Faculty Organization (RAFO) and the university have reached or are very near agreement on a first contract which will increase part-time salaries by an average of 57.5% over the life of the three-year contract.

RAFO's goal has been to reach, by the third year, a pay scale equivalent to 60% of an average assistant professor's salary at the university. "That sixty percent figure," the union says, "reflects the portion of full-time faculty work spent directly on teaching in the classroom."

According to the union, Roosevelt University does not want to express the pay figures within the contract as proportions of full-time salary; but they have agreed to draft a joint letter with RAFO dealing with this and other issues.

The contract also has provisions for securing access to group health insurance through the National Adjunct Faculty Guild's program, an hourly rate for attending required meetings, pay for other instructional activities (such as directing Master's theses or proctoring placement exams), and stipends for those involved in administering the contract. There are also provisions for course assignments and a \$225 fee for cancellation of a course; in addition, if the class is cancelled after having already met, the instructor will receive proportional pay for that portion of the course.

Finally, in lieu of making the salary scale retroactive, Roosevelt agreed to a "signing bonus" of \$270 for each member of the bargaining unit.

Congratulations to our sister union!

# P-fac MEMBERSHIP MEETING

by Greg Scholten

"What happens if they give a war and nobody shows up?" Do any of you remember that saying? If so, you're not only dating yourself (as I am), but you will also know the somewhat disappointing results of our semi-annual membership meeting that we held on March 31, with only about fifty people in attendance - out of a total membership of about 750 people! (On the bright side, the coffee and donuts were good.)

The meeting agenda included a quick report from each of the seven members of the Steering Committee, as well as one from our IEA Representative and one from the elections chair. Here are the highlights of those reports.

President Jack Behrend reported on a successful meeting that the Steering Committee had with President Carter. Treasurer John Stevenson calculated that our cash balance will be approximately \$6,000 after we pay our IEA/NEA dues. Negotiations Chair Bob Pilskaln reported the results of the recent membership survey concerning the new contract that we will negotiate in the fall - it should be no surprise that the number one desire is better pay. Bob also said that the Committee was looking into the possibilities on health insurance. IEA Representative Joe Laiacona said that the amount of money we will have to start paying to the IEA/NEA will increase in the fall; dovetailing on this, John added that we would need to increase the amount of dues assessment for our members. Elections Chair Chris Thale said that there were several elections coming due during the next couple of months.

After a short break, we then held a meeting of the Departmental Representatives. Of the roughly 80

representatives that have been elected, about 25 were in attendance. A few reported problems in arranging for the meetings with Departmental Chairs. According to our contract, these meetings are mandatory, so if Chairs are recalcitrant about holding them, we would have a grievance. However, I am pleased to report that the majority of the representatives reported very good rapport with their Chairs. A couple of the representatives also reported that their departments have established departmental guidelines which address and include part-timers as an integral part of the teaching team. I will be making copies of these items and getting them out to all departments in the near future.

All-in-all, we had a very good meeting - but we can only make the union work if we have better participation. This means not only on the part of the membership at large, but also that of the Departmental Representatives. We will be having departmental elections soon - find out who your current reps are and what they have been doing. Nominate further people - we are entitled to one representative for each ten members (or fraction thereof) within the departments. Bring ideas to your reps - have them work on your needs, and give them a hand, too. In short: get involved!

## THE NEGOTIATIONS COMMITTEE

The Negotiations Committee has been meeting regularly and will continue to meet during the summer. If you would like to be part of planning and preparing for our negotiations for a new contract (these negotiations will begin in the fall), please get in touch. Contact your departmental rep, call the **P-fac** hotline (773/281-0975), or send an e-mail (info@pfac.org).

## A Bit Extra For Some

Some of you no doubt noticed that your pay has been a little higher this semester than it should be according to the contract. What happened is this: a consultant hired by the college, in working on a database, managed to reenter, and thereby double, the number of credit hours some part-timers have taught. This had the effect of upping their pay this semester — a result the college has decided to let stand for the remainder of the current semester. So congrats to those who benefitted, on your good luck, and to the college, for its good judgment and generous stance!

### DEPARTMENT REPRESENTATIVES

Thomas Antonio  
(773) 973-3368  
Science Institute  
Dept. Rep

David Arieti  
(847) 677-9174  
Science & Math

William Ashley  
(630) 887-0699  
Science & Math

Jack Behrend  
(773) 989-9848  
Film & Video

Bonnie Booth  
(773) 561-6673  
Journalism

Kris Brailey  
(773) 506-9669  
Email: KHBrailey@earthlink.net  
Film

Vittorio Carli  
(708) 599-6193  
carlivit@hotmail.com  
English

Liz Chilsen  
(708) 763-3101  
LChilsen@aol.com  
Photography

Malcolm Chisholm  
(773) 525-0180  
Sound

Bette Coulson  
(773) 588-6243

Music  
Sharon Doering  
(773) 388-9497  
Science & Math

Peter Donoghue  
(773) 348-8999  
Film & Video

Edward Fellin  
(847) 566-6320  
Management

Lynn Floriano  
(847) 675-8340  
Art & Design

Bill Glader  
(847) 866-9860  
Television

Monica Grayless  
(312) 829-2213

Email:famefactory@bigfoot.com  
Management

Baheej Khleif  
(847) 836-1608  
Liberal Education

Fred Kopp  
(312) 666-9608  
Liberal Education

Herbert M. Kraus  
(773) 472-1587  
Marketing  
Communication

Joseph F. Laiacona  
(773) 281-0417  
joseph@laiacona.org  
Academic Computing

Judy Lomperis  
(708) 383-8718  
Art & Design

Marie Louise LeBourgeois  
(773) 274-9714  
Art & Design

Clare Nolan  
(773) 472-9518  
Theater

Joe O'Rourke  
(708) 366-1783  
Liberal Education

Linda C. Odum  
(773) 274-3636  
Science & Math

Joan Parkin  
(773) 324-6476  
parkinjoan@aol.com  
English

Robert Pilskaln  
(312) 654.2691  
keeplibert@mindspring.com  
Liberal Education

Igor Pismensky  
(773) 583-8863  
Academic Computing

Arnold Raiff  
(773) 279-1349  
Fiction Writing

Brian Ritchard  
(312) 440-1904  
Art & Design

Elaine Ross  
(630) 833-5273  
Science & Math

Robert Savage  
(312) 783-2370  
Academic Computing

Gregory J. Scholten  
(708) 366-4650  
catface49@earthlink.net  
Liberal Education

Molly Shanahan  
(773) 743-8014  
Dance

John Stevenson  
(773) 743-3728  
Liberal Education

Susan Strong-Dowd  
(773) 866-9578  
Fiction Writing

Suzanne Thompson  
(773) 274-2383  
Theater

Mary Lou Wade  
(773) 693-7584  
MLW5431@aol.com  
English

Danguole Variakojis  
(773) 776-4668  
Liberal Education

## P-fac NEWS

For more information call our hotline: 773-281-0975 WEBSITE: WWW.PFAC.ORG EMAIL: INFO@PFAC.ORG We are always looking for feedback and contributions. Editor: John Stevenson; designer: Jeanne Reilly P-FAC IEA/NEA