

P-fac NEWS

Serving the Part-time teaching community at Columbia College

May, 2002

Approved by Union Members, Contract Goes to Trustees

The new contract, overwhelmingly approved by **P-fac** membership in a 231 to 3 vote count, now goes to Columbia's Board of Trustees for their approval on May 23. The contract is retroactive for the current semester, and part-timers covered by the contract will receive their pay raises in the last spring paycheck, on May 31.

The Dues Story

Jack Behrend, P-fac Treasurer

Four years ago, when **P-fac** began as a local of the Illinois Education Association, we got huge support from the IEA in the form of organizing know-how and the financial resources necessary to do what had to be done to form the union. When we went into negotiations on our first contract, IEA was there again with a high level staff person sitting in at every negotiating session and committee meeting, a process that went on for almost a year. When legal questions arose, they were answered usually with a phone call.

Our second contract took longer to negotiate, but IEA was still there with the same much-needed help. No one from Springfield has ever questioned the time, effort or money that we have needed. There attitude has always been: "What can we do to help?"

During the four years of getting organized, IEA put us on what they call an "organizing dues program." Now they consider us organized and we have to act that way.

All part-time instructors who have taught one semester and are not grad students or staff members, are automatically in the Bargaining Unit (BU). Our contract with the college provides that "each employee in the BU must, as a condition of employment, satisfy a financial obligation to the Association as the unit's exclusive bargaining representative" (Article III).

As a BU member, you have 3 choices:

1. Join the union (**P-fac**) and pay your dues (currently \$100).
2. Sign up as a fee payer and pay your dues minus the money used for political action (currently \$10.00/semester). So as a fee payer, your payment would be \$90/semester.
3. Conscientious objector status. After

documenting your reason, you would pay \$100 to one of the charities listed in the contract. If this is the case, we strongly recommend the Columbia College Scholarship Fund.

In each of these cases, payments are made directly to **P-fac**. There are two payment methods: cash (check) or payroll deduction. From our point of view, the only sensible choice is payroll deduction. Please consider that collecting dues from many of our BU members is like pulling teeth but the half dozen people who have been record keeping for the past four years have not been paid like dentists. PLEASE FILL OUT A PAYROLL DEDUCTION FORM IF YOU HAVEN'T ALREADY DONE SO.

After dues are deducted from the 6th pay check, our estimate is that about 400 BU members will still owe money on dues. Some members who are now having their dues deducted, still owe from prior semesters before they signed for payroll deduction.

The process of collecting will go like this: We are sending statements to everyone who owes back dues. It took two people one day to run the statements, it will take 10 days to fold and stuff envelopes. As money comes in it must be recorded and deposited.

On June 1st we will give the college a list of everyone who owes money, whether new or old. I am afraid that it is going to be an awesome list. The college then must contact each of those people and let them know that unless the money is paid promptly, they can't teach in the fall.

No one is happy about this but think of it this way – the raise we just negotiated for you pays much more than the dues you owe, no matter how long you have gone without paying. ■

Illinois Labor Law Amended: Big Boost for P-T Organizing

After three years of hard work by the IEA Higher Education Council and IEA lobbyists and staff, as well as hundreds of rank-and-file part-timers who put pressure on their state senators and representatives, the Illinois legislature has finally passed House Bill 1720, which amends the state labor law in such a way as to make it possible for part-time faculty at public colleges and universities to organize to form unions and bargain collectively, as we have been able to do at Columbia. (Since this is an independent college, we are governed by federal labor law.) The bill now goes to governor Ryan, who is expected to sign it. The greatest effect will be at community colleges, with their very large proportions of part-time faculty, and we are likely to see great strides forward in organizing and justice for Illinois part-timers in the next few years. (In related news, the organizing committee for part-time faculty at Chicago City Colleges, which are also covered by this law, recently voted to launch a union drive in association with the IEA.) ■

FAQs about DUES

by Christopher Thale

How much are the dues?

Dues have gone up to \$100 per semester in which you teach (excluding summer), but they're still a bargain. Our pay raises this semester will run to five times that much, and the contract provides all of us with annual increases of double that amount in the following years.

Why do I have to pay dues?

If only union members who paid their dues got the benefits of a union contract, every part time faculty member would rush to sign up and pay up without much reminding. But **P-fac** bargains for part-time faculty in general, excluding only newcomers and some others (administrators, staff, grad students) who aren't in the "bargaining unit." That's how it works under the federal labor laws. (And **P-fac** has always tried to represent the part-time faculty as a whole.) We think there's a moral obligation to contribute to the costs of the organization, much as there's an obligation to contribute to the fire department and public library. And in any case, the obligation is part of our contract with the college.

What are my dues for? Where do they go?

Some of our dues is "local" and pays for postage, mailing labels, a web site, and the like. (The college provides us with an office – now at Congress 611 – as part of our agreement.) The bulk of our dues go to the Illinois Education Association (IEA), which we affiliated with in 1997. We get a "return" on this in the form of negotiating advice, legal expertise, conferences on college faculty bargaining, and other services that help us represent our members. With over 100,000 members, the IEA can provide specialized help that we couldn't afford by ourselves, and it can provide it in big doses when needed. The IEA also lobbies public officials, including on behalf of the part-time organizing bill which was just passed (see accompanying article). Finally, another piece of the dues goes to the National Education Association (NEA), which links us to college faculty unionists around the country and provides some highly specialized information and assistance.

Why do I get bills, when I signed up for dues deduction?

Usually this means that you didn't sign the dues checkoff form until too late in the semester, and so you still owe for that semester. It may possibly mean that you signed the membership form but forgot the "dues deduction" box. If you have a question, call the **P-fac** office, 611 Congress Bldg. (312) 744-7485.

What if I'm not in the bargaining unit?

The Part-time Faculty Association can't bargain on your behalf if you're not in the bargaining unit. If you just started teaching here, of course, you'll be in the unit next semester. We're optimistic that the contract will bring improvements for other non-unit faculty, however, by establishing norms that benefit all. Check your final paycheck! ■

Delegate Report from Rep Assembly

by Mary Lou Wade

There are over 115,000 member in the Illinois Education Association and the annual Representative Assembly (the RA) was held at the Hyatt Hotel in Rosemont this March. I was selected as a delegate from Columbia College to represent our part-time faculty members, along with 1,100 other delegates. Though the percentage of higher education teachers is small, it is on the rise, as is all membership in the organization. Many issues are covered in the two and a half day meeting. A forty million dollar budget; the fact that 13,000 Illinois teachers leave the profession every year due to retirement and other reasons; health care issues; political awareness; our connection with the National Education Association; testing in schools – were all part of the agenda for the 149-year-old Association. President Anne Davis runs a very cohesive and efficient parliamentary procedure program. Former IEA President, Reg Weaver, is a candidate for President of the NEA, and that election will take place in Dallas in July. As a keynote speaker he challenged us to make the voices of teachers heard, and said his spirit is lifted in Illinois, contrasted with the unreal world in Washington DC. He cited defense budgets, economic programs, airlines bailouts, and tax cuts that total 1.4 trillion dollars, all issued without hesitation, and he wonders why teachers have to scramble for increases. He dared us to wake the sleeping giant as educators, spokespersons and advocates for change and said that people at the top know "who's who" but we know "what's what!" After hearing his uplifting and compassionate speech, I wish he were running for President of the United States! Governor George Ryan, an earlier speaker, was accompanied by the Chicago Emerald Society Band and exclaimed he wasn't getting much of a welcome anywhere these days, but he was still working hard for education funding. Proposed Bylaws, Resolutions and New Business Items were voted on and an IEA Strategic Plan was discussed. Gathering at meetings and meals with over one thousand delegates is a heady and humbling experience and I'm pleased to represent all of you! ■

Filling out the union membership form

The member form we ask you to fill out was not designed by us but by the IEA, and reflects their needs and priorities. There are many lines and boxes, but you only need fill out the following:

- Name, address, phone, e-mail (if you have it), and social security number
- Payment method (please check "deduction," which allows Columbia to deduct dues from your paycheck, which simplifies things enormously)
- Sign and date the form

Feel free to fill out or leave blank all other boxes, as you wish. (Note: Newer forms are less confusing.)

P-fac NEWS

For more information call our office:
611 Congress Bldg. (312) 344-7485.

WEBSITE: WWW.PFAC.ORG

EMAIL: INFO@PFAC.ORG

We are always looking for feedback and contributions. Editor: John Stevenson; Design: Jeanne Reilly
P-FAC IEA/NEA