

P-fac NEWS

Serving the Part-time teaching community at Columbia College

October, 2002

The Dues Story, continued

Jack Behrend

As everyone must know by now, **P-fac** has negotiated a fair-share agreement with the college. Freely translated, that means that everyone pays their share toward the support of the union, whether they choose to join it or not. Even so, when the semester ended last May more than 200 people still owed one or more semester's dues. The college agreed that teachers must pay their dues before they could teach this fall. But there were many names of people on the list who had signed the payroll deduction form, had dues deducted in the most recent semester, but still owed for a prior semester. There were also some people who signed the form too late to have dues deducted last spring. We agreed that people who owed for just one semester could still teach if the college would make every effort to get them to pay after the semester started. There are about 41 people on that list. They will be hearing from their departments shortly after school starts, giving them a November 1st deadline to pay in order to be rehired for the spring semester. When dues are collected from this new list, we will have received close to \$30,000 in old dues; enough to avoid having to raise dues for everyone else for some time. ■

Elections!

by Christopher Thale

Human energy shortages are a constant threat to any group like **P-fac**. Keeping an organization going requires a surprising amount of energy, and doing it responsibly requires thoughtfulness and dedication. And we can't do a good job representing the part-time faculty without lots of feedback from and participation by the members. So it's important to get lots of part-timers involved in electing Department Representatives and steering committee members during the next two months. The steering committee is the association's basic governing body. It chooses most **P-fac** "officials" (many from its own ranks), and manages the organization on a day-to-day basis. This is important work, requiring time as well as dedication to the college and to the cause of the part-time faculty. Nominations are due October 23 for four at-large members. We're asking nominees to send a statement (400 words max) of qualifications and reasons for seeking the post; these will be sent out with ballots and will be posted at www.pfac.org.

The Department Reps are elected

by department members to articulate part-timer faculty concerns within each department, and collectively the Reps constitute an assembly which makes a number of important decisions for **P-fac**. They'll meet as a group on November 16, to discuss issues, set general policies, and select three more steering committee members. Any **P-fac** member is eligible to nominate and/or be nominated. (You may nominate yourself.) Nominating forms should arrive by October 1, or you may telephone nominations to the Elections Chair, Christopher Thale, at 847-864-6345. Please make sure your nominee really wants the job! In the late fall, Columbia part-timers will elect delegates to the Illinois Education Association (IEA), with which **P-fac** is affiliated. The IEA has great expertise and resources, and has helped us in innumerable ways. Currently it is assisting part-time faculty at other colleges to organize and bargain collectively for a better deal. All are urged to take part; to vote, to nominate, or (best of all) to devote some time and energy to these jobs. ■

The Steering Committee

We're sad to announce the resignations of two members of the Steering Committee: Monica Grayless and Jack Behrend; in both cases they have begun working full time elsewhere and are no longer teaching at Columbia. In both cases they will be missed. Monica has served as vice-president over the past year and we have benefitted from her enthusiasm and organizing ability. Jack, who has taught at the college for more than 25 years, has worked with great dedication to our union since it was first founded, serving on the steering committee, on the negotiating teams for both contracts, and devoting extraordinary amounts of time and effort to getting our financial structure in order (a task which has only recently been in the main completed).

Jonathan Visona, who teaches in Academic Computing, has volunteered, and been selected by the Steering Committee, to fill out the remainder of Monica's term. The vacancy created by Jack's absence has not yet been filled. ■

The National Education Association Representative Assembly - 2002

by Mary Lou Wade

There were many inspiring moments at the National Education Association Representative Assembly in Dallas during the week of the Fourth of July, 2002. I was proud to be one of the almost 10,000 nationwide delegates, representing the nation's largest professional employee organization, with 2.7 members. This is a short report to share some highlights. Though this was my second Annual Assembly (I was your Representative in Los Angeles last year) the thrill continued at the Dallas Convention Center. Our Illinois Caucus had already meet three times in our hotel before the Assembly was called to order on Tuesday, July second, so we were prepared for some of the business, but not for the celebration of teachers from every state coming together in an orderly democratic fashion. Sally McBrayer, Executive Director of California's Children's Initiative, summed it up: "I am never more proud to stand in any group in the world." We campaigned for, and elected Reg Weaver to a three year term as President of the Association. The Chicago area 35 year middle school science teacher and six year VP of the NEA, is an ideal person to hold the challenging position. In a past newsletter, I wrote that he should be President of the U.S., but most grateful he was chosen for the Washington based office. He will be a strong, resourceful leader, tackling the teacher shortage, raising salaries and enrollment, strengthening our image, fighting standardized testing, opposing Bush's voucher reform plan, and motivating members to speak out and work harder for the good of all students and teachers. We were emotionally moved by Chauncey Veatch, a retired Army Colonel, and the 2002 National Teacher of the Year. He passionately shared enduring examples of his experiences in his California classroom. "There is no work that I have done that is more patriotic than to be a teacher. The most potent weapon that we have in our armament is education."

Other elections were held, Legislative Amendments and 109 New Business Items were discussed, adapted, dismissed, and voted on, before the Assembly was adjourned on Friday night after 10 PM. The NEA Web site will provide further information. Issues of Higher Education will begin to take more prominent attention as our membership grows, and we are very fortunate to be part of this strong and dedicated Union. Both Columbia's **P-Fac** President, Joe Laicono, and myself, an English Department Representative, are available for any questions. We're most willing to share our enthusiastic energy with all of you! ■

Our Negotiating Process

by Arnie Raiff

The **P-Fac** negotiating team met with the administration's team from September 2001 to May of 2002, to hammer out an agreement through the collective bargaining process. While the goal was to use Interest Based Bargaining, an approach in which both parties work from common interests, the process itself

sometimes required positional bargaining approaches, especially in the areas of job security and wages. Benefits is still an issue that is difficult to broach because the union represents over 700 part-time teachers and finding a solution to health benefits has been virtually impossible so far. We do now have, though, one sick day per semester for each class being taught for part-time faculty.

This was a bargaining process which lasted longer than usual, and in the months we met the tone and direction of the meetings had a natural evolution. At times neither party was prepared to entertain the other's positions on key issues. But the negotiating process requires a kind of merging of minds on these points that will eventually leave each party with the opportunity to speak to their constituents with a sense of purpose and clarity that their constituents can accept. The union returns to its members for ratification and the administration returns to the Board of Trustees for their approval. The negotiating committees can then put to rest the process for the length of the contract, or close to it.

It's important that part-time teachers read the contract to prepare themselves to assert their rights. Asserting your rights should not intimidate you, and the union will back you in doing so. ■

P-fac Office

Our office is on the sixth floor of the Congress Building, #613, and is staffed 10am-3pm Monday through Thursday. The phone is (312) 344-7485. Call or stop by with questions, dues payments, etc. You can also leave a message on this phone or on our web site, www.pfac.org.

Food for Thought

According to a recent article in the New York Times, a number of young professors, especially women, have been complaining that they have been refused tenure in American colleges and universities on the grounds of a lack of sufficient collegiality. According to Martin Snyder of the American Association of University Professors, in many recent cases involving women "What comes through is the sense that these are aggressive women who are seen as uppity."

What do you think? Is "collegiality" a valid criterion for hiring and firing? What does it mean?

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