

# P-fac NEWS

Serving the Part-time teaching community at Columbia College

December, 2001

## Report from Departmental Representatives' Assembly

by Pete Insley

*The representatives met Saturday November 10, 2001 at 10 a.m. at Joe Laiacona's house to do some union business. Here's what happened.*

The steering committee was reconstituted from the election:

President	Joe Laiacona	(773) 281-0417
Vice President	Monica Drayless	(847) 675-6326
Secretary	Judy Lomperis	(708) 383-8718
Treasurer	Jack Behrend	(773) 989-9848

and the representatives elected:

John Stevenson	Publicity	(773) 743-3728
Pete Insley	Membership	(773) 283-0528
Arnie Raiff	Negotiating	(773) 279-1349

The representatives considered a dues increase for the Spring semester and voted to raise the semester dues from \$60 to \$100 per semester. Here are the reasons for the dues increase:

1. The IEA/NEA has had us on partial dues while we got on our financial feet. This September they charged us regular dues \$66.13 per semester, so we are now losing \$6.13 each semester. This doesn't count our own expenses.
2. Our own expenses: We've been running for the last few years on volunteer help. We've had to hire an accountant to keep track of dues (\$3600 per year), and we've started to cover people's expenses when they were doing union business. Add in postage, office supplies, etc. and we figure this all comes to about \$30 per semester, so we thought we'd add \$4 to be on the safe side and round the dues off to \$100.
3. The question came up "What do we get from IEA/NEA anyway that's worth \$66 a semester?" Well, we get training in

running a union; we get support in negotiating, we get legal support, and they are there for us in other ways. However, the main thing in my mind is that we got the union itself.

Back when we were organizing (and getting less than \$1500 for a 3-hour course), the IEA spent hundreds of thousands of dollars in legal and organizing work helping us get started. We haven't begun to pay them back what they invested in us.

4. We put the increase off until Spring semester so people could use part of the pay raise we hope to get to pay for their dues increase.

5. What's **P-fac** done for us lately? Besides the fact that you would be making about \$1700 per 3-credit course without **P-fac**, we are now negotiating a new contract with (we hope) a better salary and some new provisions to give part-time faculty a larger share in the life of the College. In many of the departments the representatives have been able to help part-time faculty get the things they need.

We heard a report from the negotiating team on the progress of negotiations. They've met six times with the College negotiators. Progress has been good, but, as usual in negotiations, nothing is really settled until the last paragraph is agreed to. Besides a new and improved salary schedule, they are working on issues of job security and other issues that have been brought to the negotiating committee over the years.

Finally, we heard from some department representatives about issues they had taken up with their department chairs. One common issue seemed to be computer usage for part-time faculty. Of course there were many others.

## Arbitrary Treatment which Affects Us All

Judy Lomperis — a part-time instructor and **P-fac** departmental representative in Art and Design who is also a member of the union's steering committee has recently been told by the department's chair, Jay Wolke, that she will not be rehired as of next semester. This dismissal, according to the chair, is based on complaints from certain staff members about Judy. He maintained that he works and depends on staff every day whereas part-timers come and go once a week and often don't stay at Columbia.

When Judy was able to examine her departmental file, she found that it

contained nothing except her resume.

There was no record of complaints, nor were there any evaluations, although she has been teaching at Columbia for eight years. During this time there has been no question about Judy's teaching, and she has developed a new workshop class which is now on the schedule.

Judy is now using the grievance process established by our current contract to appeal this decision to higher levels, as well as exploring legal remedies. As a first step, accompanied by steering committee member Pete Insley (Science/Math), she met with Wolke, who said that he was acting solely on the basis of complaints he had received, that he had no obligation to put records of such

complaints in her file, and that his action was not related to Judy's teaching or her union activity. In a subsequent communication, he reiterated his original decision.

This is the sort of injustice which none of us should suffer, arbitrary dismissal on the basis of secret and undisclosed communications. It is one of our aims as a union to minimize the job insecurity to which we are all subject and which Judy's case so vividly illustrates. One of our goals in the negotiations for a new contract is gain a greater measure of security in our work as instructors at this institution.

# Report from Faculty Retreat

On October 26 - 27, 2001, four members of **P-fac** created some looks of surprise at Lake Lawn Resort, in Delavan, Wisconsin. This was the first time part-time teachers had been included in the Annual Faculty Retreat since its beginning in 1980. Jack Behrend, Herb Kraus, Monica Drayless, part-time faculty from the Film, Marketing Communication, and AEMM departments, and myself, English Department, were invited to participate and we were accepted warmly and graciously. Our presence was a reminder that we part-timers number 982 of the 1,252 teaching faculty in Columbia College as of the fall of 2001 semester.

The events began on Friday with Registration and Lunch and a welcome by Jan Garfield, Associate Provost. Break-out sessions and sabbatical reports took place in the afternoon, and, after a lovely dinner, President Carter welcomed everyone and spoke about enrollment, growth and building plans. This was followed by Faculty Exhibits and Readings and a most enjoyable jazz interlude by faculty from the Department of Music which ended the evening.

Saturday's sessions began with an early breakfast and an inspiring talk by Steven Kapelke, Columbia's new Provost, on the subject of "Learning and Civic Engagement." The newly-created Schools of Graduate & Continuing Education, of Media Arts, of Fine & Performing Arts, and of Liberal Arts & Sciences, were assigned separate rooms and a suggested

## The Negotiating Teams

The part-timers' bargaining team consists of Joe Laiacona (Academic Computing), Jack Behrend (Film), Pete Insley (Science/Math), and Arnie Raiff (Fiction Writing); Judy Lomperis (Art/Design) is alternate. Diane Davis of the Illinois Education Association (a college psychology teacher herself, with much bargaining experience) is on the **P-fac** team as well. On the administration side are Bert Gall (Executive VP), Steve Kopelke (Academic VP), Paul Johnson (Human Resources Director), Randy Albers (Fiction Chair), and Roger Schinness (who represents president Carter).

Reports from our team are that negotiations have been going fairly well. Discussions have only just begun on monetary issues. We are expecting that a new and better contract can be hammered out before the beginning of the spring semester.

discussion topic, "Civic Engagement and the Arts, Liberal Arts, and Media." After a luncheon break, Vice Presidents Mike DeSalle, Bert Gall, Mark Kelly and Woodie White gave a report and closing remarks were delivered by Jan Garfield.

It was stimulating and enjoyable to be in attendance on this late fall Wisconsin weekend and I look forward to all of you at some time sharing the experience!

- Mary Lou Wade,  
English Department Representative

## BARGAINING

by Christopher Thale

**P-fac's** negotiating team has been meeting weekly with college administrators since the beginning of the semester, aiming for a new agreement that, we hope, will result in a more equitable deal for part-time faculty and a more stable and collegial environment for teaching. One of the earliest agreements was to keep quiet about specifics being negotiated, since a tentative agreement made early in the game may need to be altered in light of

later agreements, and early announcements can be misleading as well as undermining the negotiating process.

As was the case three years ago, the teams agreed to "interest-based" bargaining, an approach that begins by considering each side's big concerns or interests and then tries to zero in on practical ways of addressing those concerns. Specific contract language and dollar figures comes at the end of each discussion, not at the start.

Whatever the style, the underlying idea hasn't changed since we came together four years ago to "bargain collectively." The Part-time Faculty Association was formed to address our low rate of pay and the school's lack of accountability.

Things have improved since the bad old days, and without our having to paint any picket signs. We've also got a ways to go before we can fully reach the great goals of equitable compensation; job security; benefits proportional to our involvement in the college; and participation in decision-making. We're confident, however, that these goals are achievable. And though we offer no predictions, we suspect we'll be able to do it with some speed, and reasonably, and in ways that will benefit the college as a whole.

## YOUR STUDENTS' TUITION — YOUR PAYCHECK: A WORKSHEET

Back in the twentieth century we argued that we (part-time faculty) were getting only 7% of the money our students paid in tuition. Since then, **P-fac** negotiated a contract that raised pay levels significantly. But our students pay hefty tuition to attend Columbia, and the amount has risen rapidly over the last several years. The result is that the proportion /percentage hasn't changed much.

Do the math for yourself. Here's a worksheet for figuring what your students pay the college — and what the college pays you.

- 1) number of students you teach at Columbia (all classes) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) multiply by \$ 417 x number of credit hours \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(total amount your students pay)  
(av. per student per credit; \$1252 for 3-credit class)
- 3) amount you are paid this semester by Columbia \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) line 3 as % of line 2 \_\_\_\_\_ (rate of exploitation)
- 5) line 2 minus line 3 \$ \_\_\_\_\_ ("profit" on your labor)

The proportion of tuition going to your salary will depend on how many students you have. That in turn varies considerably by department. We doubt the college is in danger losing money on any of its part-time teachers. If we're wrong, please let us know.

**Warning:** If you are a member of the Bargaining Unit (and are receiving at least 1850 per 3-credit course instead of 1500) you need to pay your share of the costs of negotiation. If you have not signed up for dues deduction be sure to get your check in. Call P-fac at 773/344-7485 for more information.

## P-fac NEWS

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