

November 2019

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What is the AFA?

It's *your*
union,
protecting and
fighting for the
rights of all
adjuncts
covered under

the bargaining agreement between the college and the AFA (anyone teaching at least six LHE's in any of the three previous terms).

This Term's Oakton Board of Trustees Meetings:

*November 19 in DP 1506
December 10 in DP 1506
All meet on Tuesdays
at 7:30*

Let the Board see the real people who make up the adjunct faculty.

Come join us

You are welcome to attend the monthly AFA Board meeting. This month we meet at 8:30 a.m. in the Far Side Room in Des Plaines.

Fall AFA Membership Meeting a Success

The Fall AFA Membership Meeting was a success. Many agreed that the late Friday afternoon 4 p.m. time was less intrusive on

their weekend than Sunday afternoon, and the Skokie campus location was convenient and a money saver for the union. The thirty-some members who attended dined on sandwiches and fruit and veggie trays, and the meeting ended almost promptly at 6:10. The budget was approved, questions answered, and discussions held.

Lots of information was shared: On-Line Learning Dean Ray Lawson announced that Oakton's contract with D2L ends in June 2020. He is asking adjuncts who teach at other schools for their opinions of other learning management systems they are familiar with. If there is one you particularly like, let Dean Lawson know. Our AFA contract ends in August 2021; in preparation for those negotiations, expect a survey from the AFA asking what your concerns are. There were other announcements as well. Ruth Whitney has been in charge of AFA elections; Ribhi Salhi will be taking over that responsibility in January. Ruth Whitney will also be handing over management of the AFA website to Gwyn Stupar. Barb Cohen has been running the Mentorship Program; Cari Paterno will be assuming that responsibility in January.

Wondering how you got bumped from a class in August? Someone asked how to see the seniority list. You are entitled to it. Division staff have to share that with you so you can see where you stand on that important list.

Benefits

I wrote my will last week. Like many of you, I presume, I put it off and put it off, until I found an easy solution. What is it, you ask? A benefit Oakton offers, to adjuncts included!! Through ACI Specialty Benefits, one can choose from a range of legal services such as document preparation,

landlord/tenant issues, mediation, or motor vehicle issues; one can get an initial assessment and then a 60-minute in-office or phone consultation. Support is also available for financial services, i.e. tax preparation, credit counseling, and lease/purchase issues. After nearly twenty years as an adjunct, I may check out their debt management help and look into the short-term therapy that is also covered. You too can get 30 days of

financial coaching and a 90-day Financial Wellness Action Plan at no cost. Where do you start? On the Oakton website, go *HR, Payroll, and CPD*. Then, in *Health & Wellness*, click on *Benefit Forms and Information*. Within that area, go to *Employee Assistance Program* at the very bottom of the list. All for *your* benefit.

You also might not know that adjuncts are entitled to free use of the Fitness Center; you just need to watch a 10-minute video before using it.

Miles Add Up

Have you been commuting between campuses for classes or meetings this term? You can be reimbursed for that one way 10-mile trip when you do. With the end of the term approaching, check your calendar and jot down the dates you have done this; make a note to yourself to submit it at the end of this academic year in May.

Talk to Your Colleagues

Did you know that as a result of the 'Janus' Supreme Court decision that public employee unions could no longer charge non-members a 'Fair Share' fee for union benefits they

receive, just *one* union member has asked to leave the AFA? However, the loss of added income does of course have an effect on the union coffers. Money aside, our current contract is up in August of 2021. When we go back to the bargaining table, the more members we have, the more seriously the administration will take us. Do you know of colleagues on the fence about joining the AFA? Could you remind them that we are the highest paid community college in the state? Could you mention that over \$300 is available for professional development outside the college? That we are paid to attend meetings and serve on committees? Like unions or not, these benefits exist for us because of the union. Won't they join?

The Gates Influence

Bill and Melinda Gates have had a long-standing interest in education; they were major funders behind Common Core. They now have The Gates Foundation's Postsecondary Value Commission, which is attempting to measure the value of certain degrees or certificates.

According to an article in AdjunctNation.com, this past summer Bill and Melinda Gates launched a lobbying arm, the Gates Policy Initiative. Its stated goal is to focus on 'educational outcomes of black, Latinx, and rural students' in order to bring them up from poverty and into employment. It wants to do this by focusing on skills that can be marketed immediately. What concerns Dr. Nickolas Tamplo, a political theorist who has researched education policy, is because the Initiative is a

501 (c)(4), a 'social welfare group,' they can now talk directly to legislators about laws. Tamplo asks if certain majors will be worth federal aid. With the Gates Foundation whispering in their ear,



could Congress make it harder for students in certain majors to get loans or grants?