



March 2020

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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:

- March 17*
- April 21*
- May 12*
- June 30*

Meetings are in Rm. 1506 in DP at 7:30 p.m.

The Board needs to see the real people who they make decisions about.

Come to AFA Board Meetings

You are welcome to attend the monthly AFA Board meeting. The next meeting will be on Tuesday, March 24, at 4 p.m. in Room 1264 in Des Plaines.

Spring Membership Meeting

Friday, April 3, 4 to 6 In RHC

The Spring AFA Membership meeting will be held in Room P103 in Skokie. Come learn about what your union has been doing, enjoy some appetizers and sandwiches, and cast your vote for the next AFA president, vice president, secretary,

and treasurer. You can also learn how adjuncts can make presentations through the CPD, resources our library has for teachers of on-line courses, and what is going on in the various committees adjuncts serve on.

Nominations for AFA Board

Every three years elections are held for the Executive Board of the AFA: the offices of President, Vice-president, Secretary, and Treasurer. Nominations are needed! AFA members may nominate themselves or someone else. If you are nominating someone else, be sure to check with that person to make sure they actually *want* to be nominated, are able to be an active participant of the union and are aware that offices are for a three-year term beginning in the coming academic year. If nominating someone else, you'll need their address, telephone number, and email. The nomination form can be downloaded from the AFA website at oaktonadjuncts.com; nominations are to be sent to Nelson Wainwright via his email at nwainwr@gmail.com and must arrive by midnight Monday, March 16.

More elections

Each July we send representatives to the Representative Assembly of the NEA (National Education Association). This is a huge assembly of representatives from unions from all over the nation that will meet in Atlanta to approve the NEA budget, set the dues amount, and modify the legislative platform and the NEA by-laws. The election for a representative to attend will be held on both campuses on Tuesday, April 21.

"Serfs of Academe"?

The March 12 issue of *The New York Review of Books* features a lengthy review of eleven books related to adjuncts and higher education. They range from a 'satire-cum-horror-comedy' *Adjunct*

(our lives in a nut-shell?) to *The Meritocracy Trap: How America's Foundational Myth Feeds Inequality, Dismantles the Middle Class, and Devours the Elite*. For those of us who still have hopes of a full-time position, the article notes that in 2017-2018, there were an average of 122 applicants for every tenure-track position open, in a system resembling "a lottery." It states that the most obvious cause of adjuncts' lack of security and poor salaries is the 'decline in public support for higher education,' noting that the state investment for each student fell by 26 % between 1990 and 2010, so that the wide gains in salary and working conditions gained by unions hardly keep up.

Meet the Trustees

You will have a chance to meet and talk with the Oakton Board of Trustees at a reception organized by the AFA. Administrators too often attend. It will be in Des Plaines before the regular Tuesday evening April 21 Board meeting. It is a rare to chat with the Board members one on one, to share your views and to hear theirs. More details to come next month.

Paper vs Screens

The current issue of on-line *AdjunctNation* features some research on comprehension differences between reading on paper vs reading on digital media. Students certainly prefer reading on their screens, and of course there are benefits to less use of paper. However, in three studies, students were asked to read text in print and on a device. They were then asked to report the main ideas of the reading, list the key points, and give any other information they thought was important. They were also asked how well they thought they had done. They did indeed read faster on screens and felt that their comprehension was better. When questions were general – questions such as what the main idea is - the students' comprehension was better

on the screens. On the other hand, when students read the printed texts, they comprehended more when asked specific questions.

Email your senators

Email your senator to support S. J. Res. 56, a bipartisan resolution introduced by Dick Durbin that has passed the House in Washington and is now headed to the Senate. According to NEA, this bill would undo Betsy DeVos's policy of making "it more difficult for students defrauded by unscrupulous colleges to cancel their federal student debt." If passed by the Senate, it will take effect on July 1 of this year. DeVos's policy puts the burden of proof on students and ends automatic loan relief for students whose colleges close before they graduate.

Wedding Bells

are ringing over Spring break for English lecturer Kate Magnuson. Congratulations, Kate!