



Help us build a strong AFO and a Better College

Adjunct Faculty Organization News

HFC-AFO
AFT, AFL-CIO
Local 337

April, 2019

Bargaining Committee Forming

By William Norris, Co-chair of the 2021 Contract Campaign Committee

The halfway point of our current four-year contract won't be reached until the end of June. We won't need a new contract until the summer of 2021.

Seems like plenty of time, doesn't it?

Well, not really. If we hope to win another great contract our next campaign needs to begin now.

Recognizing this, the AFO Executive Board approved a motion by President Lynn Boza to name myself and Grievance Officer Edgar Johns as co-chairs of the AFO's 2021 contract campaign bargaining committee.

If you have an hour or two every now and then to spend on union business, reach out to me, Edgar, or another Executive Board member or send an email to AFO@hfcc.edu. The AFO needs your help!

We want our bargaining committee to be as broadly representative as possible.

That means that not only should all four schools be represented, but different "kinds" of adjuncts should also be committee members. (See the list for examples of the kind of activists we are

Here are some of the "kinds" of adjuncts we need on our 2021 bargaining committee:

- Seasoned Senior Adjuncts
- Probationary Adjuncts
- "Road Warriors" who teach at multiple colleges
- Adjuncts working full-time jobs and teaching evenings or on Saturdays
- Adjuncts who have to balance their HFC position with unpaid work
- Online Instructors
- Adjuncts from all four schools
- Librarians, counselors, advisors, other non-classroom professionals
- Nurses who never step foot on the main campus
- Whatever kind of adjunct you are

looking for.)

Membership Survey Will Be First Task

Crafting proposed contractual language that all of our members can get behind may prove to be an impossible task, but that's not going to stop us from trying. The only way to know what our members like and don't like about our current contract and what they want and need to see in our next one is to ask them

So, the first task of our 2021 bargaining committee will be to de-

velop and approve a membership survey. Our goal is to form a committee this semester and to begin work immediately. We would like to finalize the survey by the end of the summer so that we can hit the ground running when the fall semester begins.

Bargaining committee members will be asked to help increase survey participation by

(See "Bargaining Committee" on Page 4)

Inside This Issue:

March 22 Membership Meeting	3
• Constitution Revisions Advanced	
• FY 2019-20 Budget Approved—Addresses Financial Problem	
• 2019-20 Elections Committee Named	

AFO Introduces "Organizing Fellowship" Program	5
--	---

Member Profile: Anthony Lai	6
-----------------------------	---

"Let's Celebrate" - Ten Year Anniversary	6
--	---

Op-Ed: Is the AFO a Political Organization?	7
---	---

President's Message: A Coalminer's Granddaughter	8
--	---

The *Adjunct Faculty Organization News* is the official newsletter of the HFC-AFO Adjunct Faculty Organization; American Federation of Teachers Local 337. AFL-CIO

AFO Executive Board

- **Lynn Boza, President**
- **William (Bill) Norris, Vice President**
- **Edgar Johns, Grievance Officer**
- **Eve Chowdhury, Treasurer**
- **Sherry Morgan, Financial Recording Secretary**
- **Margaret Green, Recording Secretary**

**HFC-AFO, Local 337
Henry Ford College
5101 Evergreen Road, N-006
Dearborn, MI 48128
313.845.9707
www.hfcc-afo.org**

You can contact any Executive Board member by office telephone (313.845-9707), email (AFO@hfcc.edu), or by sending a letter through either interoffice or U.S. mail.

AFO Office Hours—Winter 2019 Semester

The AFO Office is located in Room-N006, on the lower level of Building N, the Campus Safety Building.

Monday: 9:00 to 10:00, 12:00 to 2:00, 3:30 to 6:00 (W. Norris)
Tuesday: 10:00 to 3:00 (L. Boza)
Wednesday: 9:00 to 10:00, 12:00 to 2:00 (W. Norris)
Thursday: Office Closed
Friday: 9:00 to 10:00 (W. Norris)

Also by appointment.

We may be out of the office for a scheduled, or unscheduled, meeting during posted hours. In such instances or in case of an emergency, you can call or text Lynn Boza on her cell phone: 313-460-3631

March 22 General Membership Meeting

During her report to the membership, AFO President Lynn Boza explained how she has been working with other local presidents and AFT-Michigan's Lansing lobbyist to increase funding for community colleges. AFO members present advanced proposed amendments to the AFO Constitution to the second (and final) stage, approved the AFO's fiscal year 2019-20 budget, and elected the 2019-20 AFO Elections Committee.



Budget Addresses Financial Problem

The AFO is financially strong, but we do have a financial problem that is being addressed in the FY 2019-20 budget approved by members present during our March 22 General Membership Meeting.

Our income, both this year and next, is projected to be down \$28,000 from what it was last year. But rather than slash spending, the membership approved a budget with a very narrow operating margin.

There are three reasons for our declining income: (1) as the College's enrollment has gone down, the size of our bargaining unit has shrunk—we're the ones losing classes; (2) we can no longer require non-AFO members to pay fees as a condition of employment; and (3) our membership had declined to less than 80 percent (from its peak of above 90 percent).

To address the situation, the AFO has implemented an organizing fellow-

(Continued on page four)

Constitution Revision Advanced

It takes two meetings to amend the AFO Constitution. During the first meeting, members discuss any proposed amendment and are given an opportunity to make motions to modify it. Members at the first meeting also decide whether any proposed amendment should be approved by a referendum of the membership or by a voice vote at a subsequent membership meeting.

During our March 22 meeting, the membership discussed a significant revision to the AFO Constitution proposed by the AFO Executive Board. Members present amended the language slightly in one of the bylaws and then passed a motion to ratify the amended Constitution during our next meeting (next fall).

Members present at that meeting will vote to either accept or reject the proposed revisions. Proxy votes can be cast by any member in good standing who cannot attend the meeting.

If the amendments are accepted, the revised Constitution will go into effect immediately. If not, it's back to step one and it would take an-

other meeting to finalize.

The proposed revised Constitution is posted on the AFO website (under the Governance tab—contact us if you would like us to send you a link). A red-lined version comparing the revisions to our current Constitution (as amended by the Winter 2015 General Membership Meeting) is available to members by request.

Elections Committee

Three AFO activists were elected to the AFO's 2019-20 Elections Committee.—Patty Burns, Joyce Hovermale, and Chandra Towner, The Elections Committee is the most independent of the AFO's standing committees. By constitutional provision, the Elections Committee is elected at the Winter General Membership Meeting and serves until the next Winter General Membership Meeting. The Elections Committee appoints its own chair.

FY 2019-20 Budget Addresses Financial Problem

(Continued from page 3)

ship program that has already brought our membership level back above the 80 percent mark. See the article on the adjacent page for more detail, but for budget purposes it is important to note that two-thirds of the cost of the program is underwritten by AFT-Michigan and the AFT.

We are also giving non-AFO members who refuse membership the option of paying their “fair share” through voluntary payroll deductions. The college has agreed to deduct dues of 2.05% (\$20.50 for every \$1,000 earned) from the earnings of AFO members and is close to agreeing to deduct fair share fees of 1.4% (\$14 for every \$1,000 earned) from non-members who voluntarily agree to pay them.

Voluntary fair share fee payers can be proud of the fact that they are paying their fair share of the cost of negotiating and enforcing the contract that benefits them, but they do not have voting rights within the AFO. Only dues-paying members in good standing do.

We can hope that the decline in the College’s enrollment will be reversed. We can hope that voluntary fair share fees will replace some of the income we lost when Michigan’s right-to-work for less law ended our ability to require fees as a condition of employment. While we can hope we will recover some of our lost income, we shouldn’t budget for it.

However, it would be a mistake to panic and slash spending. There has never been much fat in our budget. If we expect to win and enforce great contracts and build a better college we’re going to have to spend money.

Fortunately, thanks to the fiscally conservative policies of the AFO, we have a cash balance of approximately \$168,000. We can afford to approve budgets with very little margin or even with deficits.



Bargaining Committee Forming

(Continued from front page)

meeting with members. We want one hundred percent of our members to participate!

From there, we will analyze the data and develop our bargaining platform. Once the bargaining committee approves a platform, it will be presented to the entire membership, ideally during the Fall 2020 General Membership Meeting. Once our platform is approved, we will notify the College that we wish to begin talks.

Three to five members of the bargaining team will be named to a negotiating team. On the first day of bargaining, we may ask to meet in a room large enough to accommodate our entire bargaining team. On most other days, only the core negotiating team will meet with the Board’s representatives.

Sometimes though, individual

bargaining team members may be asked to attend a meeting to tell their story. And if talks aren’t going particularly well we may pack a meeting room.

As is typical, we will agree to a set of conditions that may limit public discussion of contract negotiations. Such limitations will apply (at least to some extent) to communications between the negotiating team and the larger bargaining team, but before any tentative agreement can be presented to the membership it must first be reviewed and approved by the Executive Board and the full 2021 contract campaign bargaining committee.

For our part, we intend to continue our strategy of win-win bargaining. You can help us build a strong AFO and a better College by joining the 2021 contract campaign bargaining committee. Contact us at AFO@hfcc.edu.

AFO members who attend meetings and otherwise contribute their time are activists. Activists will serve on our 2021 Contract Campaign Bargaining Committee. Members at our March 22 meeting discussed issues they have with our current contract—particularly our class assignment system and our method for determining seniority.



AFO Introduces “Organizing Fellowship” Program

Organizing is like housework—it’s never done. Even in semesters when the College’s enrollment is shrinking and many Senior Adjuncts are losing classes, we have 40 or so newly hired probationary adjuncts.

When we were able to collect agency fees as a condition of employment, a high percentage of new hires chose AFO membership. Now that mandatory agency fees can no longer be charged, fewer new hires are choosing membership.

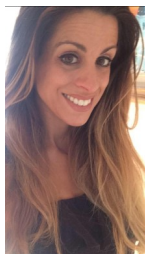
In addition to new hires, we have found that many veteran non-members, including a few senior adjuncts, are unaware of the value of the AFO contract and the importance of having a strong membership. If only half of us are members, we will be weak when it comes time to enforce the contract and when we enter into negotiations.

We need to convince non-members that membership is good for us both as individuals and as a group.

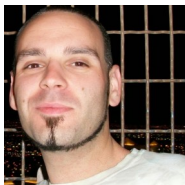
And believe it or not, not everyone reads our newsletters and emails or combs our webpage for hidden information. So, how are we going to sign new hires and convince non-members who have been around awhile that membership has value?

Face-to-face conversations continue to be the most effective—and time consuming—way of getting the job done. All of us on the Executive Board are expected to contribute to our organizing efforts in various ways, but it has always been a near impossible job without a dedicated organizer.

Fortunately for us, our state and national affiliates (AFT-Michigan and the AFT) offered us the opportunity to participate in an “organizing fellowship” program.



Bess Bertolis, Nursing



Jason Canfield, CIS



Ashley Hodge, Career Services



Russ Jones, Art History



Ken Shepherd, History



Shanna Simpson-Singleton, Math

In February, AFO President Lynn Boza sent a message seeking volunteers for the program. Members were told that “organizing fellows” would be trained by AFT-Michigan and that they would earn a modest stipend (underwritten by AFT-Michigan) for helping us organize.

A dozen adjuncts responded and ten attended an informational meeting. We sent six (the maximum) to training on March 2 and will send up to six more to the training early during the fall semester.

(Two members of our next organizing class have already been identified, but we will have room for others. Please contact us if you are interested in becoming an organizing fellow.)

The members of our first class of organizing fellows include Bess Bertolis (Nursing), Jason Canfield (CIS), Ashley Hodge (Career Service), Russell Jones (Art History), Ken Shepherd (History), and Shanna Simpson-Singleton (Math). All are outstanding organizers.

For three weeks, they have been loitering outside the classrooms of new hires and non-members. Besides enrolling new members, our organizers have heard wonderful stories from the people they have met.

Russ Jones (Art History) described the conversation he had with long-time Economics instructor LiMon Cheung. When Russ asked her why she was teaching, she exclaimed, “for my students!” And, Russ added, she had very specific ideas about how to make it possible for students to succeed.

“She’s the kind of member who will help us build a strong AFO and a better college,” Russ said.

We have set very ambitious organizing goals for next year and our robust team of organizing fellows is going to make achieving them possible. Email AFO@hfcc.edu if you’re interested in joining the team.

Featured Adjunct: Anthony Lai, Musician

By Lynn Boza, AFO President

Anthony Lai is a multi-faceted musician from Dearborn, Michigan. He is a member of *Phoenix Theory*, the band that headlines our 10th anniversary event. *Phoenix Theory* played at the Dearborn Homecoming, Sacred Heart Festival in Dearborn, Uptown Grille in Commerce Township, Waterfront Grille in Wyandotte, Cowley's in Farmington and many places around town. Anthony is also the music director for the Seaway Chorale and Orchestra in Trenton, Michigan and an instructor at Henry Ford College, where he teaches music theory, music technology, and the history of Rock and Though a child of the 80's, it was the music of the 60's and 70's that really formed his musical identity. His work as a bass player is most heavily influenced by Paul McCartney and Brian Wilson, and he has studied their approach extensively. Other notable influences include the music of Eric Clapton, Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers, Queen, Red Hot Chili Peppers, and several classical composers. After years of informal study/obsession with the music of the Beatles, he went on to earn degrees in music composition and orchestral conducting from Wayne State University.

With the Henry Ford Big Band, he performed at the 2015 Umbria Jazz Festival in Perugia, Italy and also at the 2009 Michigan Democratic Party's inaugural ball for President Obama in Washington DC. He joined with arranger and conductor Ed Lojeski in 2016 for a 4th of July performance aboard the USS Missouri in Honolulu. In 2012, he worked with members of Lynyrd Skynyrd in Nashville to record downriver native Sarah



AFO charter member Anthony Lai (far right) and his Phoenix Theory bandmates: Billy Deangelo (drums), Dan Mazur (guitar) and Allen David (keyboards)

Sherrard's EP *Where I Come From*.

In addition to his work as performer, Anthony is a professional composer and arranger. Nominated as "Outstanding Classical Composer" in the Detroit Music Awards in 2017, 2015, 2014, and

2012, his work has been commissioned by several notable parties including the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, the Detroit Red Wings, and University of Michigan professor Donald Sinta, a leading performer of contemporary classical saxophone repertoire.

Let's Celebrate!

Let's celebrate our 10th anniversary! Join AFO members and union leaders, past and present, at our 10th year Anniversary Celebration on May 11th for dinner and dancing at the Knights of Columbus Hall located at 23663 Park Street in Dearborn. Our celebration begins at 6 PM with a buffet dinner at no charge. There will be a cash bar. "Phoenix Theory" featuring adjunct instructor, Anthony Lia, will be playing all our all-time favorite songs along with current, popular selections, so wear your dancing shoes.

All AFO members in good standing and a guest are invited. Look for an email: RSVP by April 26

Is the AFO a Political Organization?

By William (Bill) Norris, AFO VP

You don't have to pass a political litmus test to become an AFO member. You can vote for Democrats, Republicans, or third party candidates. It's even okay if you don't vote. AFO members can dislike politics and all the noise that goes with it.

The only requirement for membership is a desire to help us build a strong AFO and a better college.

Building a better college, however, does sometimes require us to "get political." After all, one of our primary purposes is to "promote the professional, social, economic, and political well-being of the membership and thus improve the quality of education at Henry Ford Community College," (Section 3 of Article II of the AFO Constitution, emphasis added).

Well, then, how political should we get?

More than a few AFO members, perhaps some on the Executive Board, think it would be a good idea to distance the AFO from the labor movement's political agenda and to be less political. They point out that not everyone agrees with that agenda. Let's keep our heads down, they say, and de-emphasize our relationship with the AFT. Why alienate potential members? Especially when membership levels are of concern.

Some have even floated the idea of disaffiliating from the AFT. They look at our budget, realize our expenses would be reduced almost in half if we weren't paying dues (and insurances) to our affiliates and imagine that by being apolitical we might get close to 100 percent membership.

Sounds like a plan, doesn't it? Well, not so fast.

The AFO is chartered by the American Federation of Teachers and was recognized as the legal bargain-

ing agent for part-time instructors and professional employees of Henry Ford in an election supervised by the Michigan Employment Relations Commission.

To disaffiliate, a double-edged organizing campaign would be required—one to decertify the AFO as the legal bargaining agent and the other to create its replacement—presumably an independent local union. Such an organizing campaign would require gathering the requisite number of signatures, taking them to MERC, and holding your breath until the votes are counted.

Good luck with all that—especially since I and others will be resisting your campaign because we see great value in being part of the AFT.

The AFO has always enjoyed effective leadership, but those of us who have been involved in contract negotiations and the day-to-day management of our local know that we couldn't do it ourselves. We need the expertise and resources that our state and national affiliates make available to us.

Partisan or Non-Partisan?

Some members agree that the AFO needs to be political, but argue that we should be "non-partisan." On paper, the AFT and AFT-Michigan are non-partisan.

Their endorsements are made based on what is best for public education and public educators and their families and communities. However, it would be disingenuous to pretend that the labor movement is non-partisan.

In the recent past, the AFT (which endorses candidates for federal offices) and AFT-Michigan (which focuses on the state and regional lev-

els) have consistently endorsed Democrats with "progressive" political agendas. That is unlikely to change any time soon because, generally speaking Democrats are more likely to support public education (including community colleges) than are Republicans.

By ourselves we have little influence over what happens in Lansing and Washington, but by virtue of our affiliation with AFT-Michigan, the AFT, and the AFL-CIO, our voices are heard by decision-makers in those capitals. At least our voices can be heard IF we make them heard within the labor movement by becoming a self-consciously political organization. If we remain silent on political issues and keep our heads in the sand, others will shape organized labor's political agenda for us.

Does all of this mean that I and others who want the AFO to be a more self-consciously political organization wish to alienate adjuncts who don't agree with organized labor's agenda?

Of course not. I don't always agree with labor's agenda myself.

The AFO's win-win bargaining strategy has greatly improved the working conditions of all members of our bargaining unit and has benefited our students. We believe that even those adjuncts whose political perspectives run counter to those we endorse should see the value of our contract and should be willing to help pay for it.

If you have conservative political views, become a member and an activist. You will have the opportunity to share your views. They will be welcomed respectfully. It's possible to change minds if you participate—even mine (although I'm admittedly a stubborn old man).

Any AFO member in good standing is welcome to submit an op-ed to the AFO Executive Board for possible publication in the *Adjunct Faculty Organization News*

President's Message: A Coalminer's Granddaughter



After reading “Hillbilly Elegy” by J. D. Vance, I decided to share my tale, which may be similar to your story. I am the granddaughter of a West Virginia coalminer who sought a better life. My grandfather and his family migrated to Vanderbilt, Michigan during the 1930’s. He had a small dairy farm and forty acres of crop land down the road. My father worked the farm and picked up odd jobs, like lumbering in the Upper Peninsula. His goal was to attend college and he attended Ferris State for one semester before his mother became ill and he was needed back on the farm. When it was possible to leave, he moved to the Detroit area. He first worked as a machinist at an auto

supplier, then secured a job as a tool-and-die maker at General Motors’ Fleetwood plant in southwest Detroit. The United Auto Workers (UAW) union provided good pay with regular raises and benefits which grew with each contract. Although we lived through a few strikes and layoffs, my father never once pined after the long days and nights on the farm. He knew what he had here. My father paid for my education at Wayne State University—the education he wanted so badly for himself.

After college graduation, I began working for the State of Michigan as an Assistance Payments Worker. I joined the Welfare Employees Union and signed on to a grievance related to qualifications for promotion with two other union members. We won the grievance and within a year, all three of us were promoted as openings for which we were qualified unfolded.

The UAW organized state workers in the mid-80’s and, of course, I signed on. I only needed representation once and I was happy that it was there. In the late 80’s, I married my late husband, a Teamster. We enjoyed a great middle-class life and we instilled the value of union membership in his children. Continuing in this tradition, my stepson was a union steward in the public service sector and my stepdaughter is beginning an AFT organizing job at the end of the month. When Glenn O’Kray approached me about Adjunct Faculty Organization (AFO) membership, I was quick to sign on. As a founding member of the AFO, I believe that standing together we can achieve more than we can standing alone.

Much has changed. Many of our legislators and much of the public believe that unions are a waste of money and time. Union leaders seldom call a strike. The greatest growth in union membership appears to be in the health care arena. I say we should not forget the fights of the past, like safety standards in workplaces, increasing higher wages, and increased benefits. Fights against mandatory overtime for health professionals are still raging. We still have teachers in both K-12 and higher education working for long periods of time without contracts. We need to stay united as brothers and sisters in the fight for wage, working condition and benefit gains through collective bargaining. Once again, let me remind you of the gains from our last collective bargaining agreement. Stand together!