



THE ADVOCATE

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Employee Federation of NHMCCD

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**Education for
Democracy—
Democracy for
Education**

THE CLEAR PICTURE: Adjunct Employment in Higher Education

During the week of October 28—November 3, major faculty unions, associations, and organizations from the US and Canada celebrated Campus Equity Week. Campus Equity Week, an organized effort to educate the public and policymakers about the pay and working conditions of part-time (adjunct) faculty and non-tenure track faculty, focused on issues of fairness and quality of education. As a part of Campus Equity Week, much attention was focused on the national picture concerning adjunct faculty statistics. The *AFT Higher Education* released a “Part-Time Faculty National Data Sheet” which offered background information on the national statistics of adjunct employment to be used as a backdrop for the more important perspectives of the local adjunct pictures. We asked HR to provide us with the same data so that we could compare the national picture to our local picture, and the results are as follows:

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GENERAL DEMOGRAPHICS

National Statistics: There are approximately 421,000 part-time faculty members teaching in institutions of higher education in the United States. Adjuncts represent 43% of the total number of faculty.

Public research institutions have the highest percentage of full-time faculty (79.7%), while community colleges have the highest percentage of part-time faculty (63.9%).

Women represent approximately 36% of full-time faculty, but make up 48% of part-time faculty.

NHMCCD Statistics: Approximately 821 part-time faculty members are teaching at NHMCCD in the Fall 2001 semester, versus 432 full-time faculty, which means adjuncts represent 65.5% of the total population. The breakdown of numbers by college, as provided by Human Resources, is as follows:

AFT Eligibility

Full and part-time faculty, professional staff, and support staff are eligible to join the union. All employees up through the associate dean/director level are eligible.

COLLEGE	FULL-TIME FACULTY	ADJUNCT FACULTY
North Harris	192	269 (58.3%)
Kingwood	69	159 (69.7%)
Tomball	98	211 (68.2%)
Montgomery	73	182 (71.3%)



The Clear Picture: Adjunct Employment in Higher Education (cont'd)

The breakdown of the number of sections taught by full-time versus adjunct is:

COLLEGE	FULL-TIME FACULTY	ADJUNCT FACULTY
North Harris	777	571 (42.3%)
Kingwood	321	334 (50.9%)
Tomball	439	466 (51.4%)
Montgomery	341	422 (55.3%)

With the exception of summer classes, which are generally taught by full-time faculty, the percentage of sections taught by adjuncts in the district has remained around 50% over the last three years.

In our district, women represent 54.8% of full-time faculty and 51% of part-time faculty.

PAY

National Statistics: Nationally, annual pay breaks down as follows:

	<u>Average Salary from Institution</u>
Part-Time Faculty	\$11,641
Full-Time Faculty	\$56,851

As the National Data Sheet says, there may be several reasons for differences in pay, such as the difference in the number of hours in the classroom. Part-time faculty average 7.3 hours per week in the classroom, while full-time faculty average 11 hours per week. However, since the discrepancy in pay is far greater than the discrepancy in classroom hours, a more likely factor is the amount of money paid to part-time faculty for their instructional responsibilities. In fact, a recent study by The Coalition of the Academic Workforce (CAW) showed that 72% of adjunct faculty in their study are paid at a rate of less than \$3,000 per course.

NHMCCD Statistics: Locally, the 9-month pay of full-time versus adjunct faculty at NHMCCD is reflected as:

	<u>Average Salary from NHMCCD</u>
Part-Time Faculty	\$7,440
Full-Time Faculty	\$46,385

The adjunct rate is based on half the teaching load of a full-time faculty member. However, even if you double the adjunct salary to reflect a full-time teaching load, you can see the discrepancy in pay. The average adjunct faculty member at NHMCCD earns \$31 per contact hour, which totals \$1488 per course. The percentage increase in full-time and adjunct salaries since 1995 has remained close to the same, with a total increase of 22.3% for adjuncts and 23.7% for full-timers.

BENEFITS

National Statistics: Although there has been no national study which focuses on statistical information on faculty benefits, the CAW study mentioned above uncovered some statistics. Of those who responded to the CAW study, only 27% reported that part-time faculty members are offered *any* benefits, including health, retirement, or life insurance. The remaining 63% reported that part-timers are offered no benefits whatsoever.

NHMCCD Statistics: Adjunct faculty are not eligible for health benefits or life insurance. However, adjuncts do participate in the TIAA/ CREF retirement plan. An adjunct contributes 6.2% of his/her earnings, and the District contributes an additional 1.3%. In addition, an adjunct is 100% vested in retirement on day 1 of employment, including both the individual and the District portion. Also, adjuncts are eligible to contribute to tax deferred annuities to supplement their retirement.

Dawn Baxley

Adjunct Excellence

Adjunct faculty are extremely important to the success of our students and our academic institution, and unfortunately, their contributions often go unrecognized. Therefore, the union is proud to see that all four NHMCCD campuses now recognize many of our outstanding adjuncts through Adjunct Excellence Awards. Although the most recent round of awards were given this past spring, we would again like to spotlight the adjunct recipients. The Adjunct Excellence Award winners for 2000-01 are as follows:

<u>North Harris College</u>	<u>Kingwood College</u>	<u>Tomball College</u>	<u>Montgomery College</u>
Karen Buckman	Jeremy Garcia	Sherry Lucas	Judith Whitecotton
Pamela Pak	Shielda Welling	Andrew Ewoh	John Burke
Peter Schreiber	Judy Johle	Susan Little	
	Sheryl Benavides	Shirley Smith	
	Marlene Burkhardt		
	Brenda Harrell		
	Margery Grammer		

SOLIDARNOŚĆ Long Live Solidarity

Dr. David Sam and I were meeting a few months ago on some issues when he told me of the possibility that Lech Walesa would come to NHC to speak. NHC Professor Dr. Theresa McGinley had heard him speak at the Houston World Affairs Council three years ago and invited him to speak at our college. Dr. Sam said that Walesa was returning to the area to begin a nationwide lecture tour, and HWAC called Theresa to see if we were still interested. Dr. Sam promised to let me know if arrangements worked out. A few weeks later, Dr. Sam called to inform me that Walesa had accepted and would be speaking on September 27, the first stop of his U.S. National tour. Dr. Sam asked if the union would be interested in being an underwriting sponsor. Interested? The leader of the Solidarity Movement, the first democratically elected president of Poland, and Nobel Peace prize laureate? Absolutely! We were, indeed, interested.

In the 1980's, when Walesa was organizing the shipyard workers in Gdansk, he had close ties with and received assistance from our national organization, The American Federation of Teachers, then under the leadership of the late Al Shanker. According to a staff member in the national office, our union used an underground network to send equipment and money to Solidarity. We would know that he received it when the Washington office would get a note from Walesa that read, "Thanks, Al." The AFT has maintained close ties with him.

Based on this history with Walesa and Solidarity, I was sure that our local union would proudly help underwrite, and, in fact, our executive committee approved a generous contribution.

I was fortunate to be invited to a small reception for Walesa before his lecture. When I saw him step from Mayor Brown's limo that afternoon, I was in awe. There stood an unassuming, jolly man who began warmly greeting individuals in our crowd. There stood the electrician who changed the world. Slowly he made his way from person to person being introduced through his interpreter. I watched him as he took a few moments with each one, chatting, smiling, and making that person feel that he or she was Walesa's sole interest. When he approached me, I introduced myself as the local AFT president and reminded him of our union's long relationship with him and support of Solidarity. He smiled broadly as I asked if he remembered Al Shanker. I didn't have to wait for his interpreter. I could tell by the dance in his eyes. He remembered. I'll never forget his response: "We all worked hard, very hard, back then to topple communism. Together we were able to end the cold war. Now, we must take advantage of the peace we were able to create and use it to our benefit." We went on to speak for another few moments, and he seemed in no hurry to move on. However, there were other people patiently waiting for the opportunity to meet him. Knowing that the whole event was on a tight schedule, I encouraged him to move on to greet them.

SOLIDARNOŚĆ

Long Live Solidarity (cont'd)

It was a proud moment for me to get to meet a hero of mine, an event made more gratifying by his personal connection to the AFT. As I watched him greet board members, vice chancellors, college presidents and students, I thought of our board and administration of twenty years ago. While that group was busy praising the work of Waleśa in Poland, ironically they were busy fighting our union here at the college. In fact, they hired union busting consultants at taxpayers' expense to crush us because they seemed to think that we were communists. They seemed oblivious to the mission printed on our stationery: "Education for Democracy---Democracy for Education." It seems appropriate to begin to include that mission statement in The Advocate immediately following a lecture by one of the world's greatest champions of democracy and a brother in our cause. As I stood there in that room watching events unfold, I marveled at how times have change for the AFT in this district.

The AFT is pleased to have played a role in bringing this distinguished winner of the Nobel Peace Prize to campus. Our congratulations to Professor McGinley, Dr. Sam, Cece Sutphen and NHC External Affairs, and Dede Rios who worked so hard to bring this event to the college. It was a great day for NHC, for NHMCCD, and for the AFT.

Long live Solidarity!

Alan Hall

Legislative Update

In the last session of the legislature, our state organization, the Texas Federation of Teachers, worked diligently representing the interests of educational employees in Texas, including those of us in higher education. Our legislative specialists are held in high regard in the state capitol and are consulted frequently on issues and listened to. Sometimes our successes are not only measured in the good bills that we help to pass, but also by the bills harmful to educational employees or higher ed in general that we are able to defeat. The negative ones are too numerous to list, and we would rather focus on the positive ones.

HB 2397 by Rep. Norma Chavez (D-El Paso) requires the state's higher-education agency (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board) to study pay and benefit disparities between part-time faculty and full-time faculty and report findings to the legislature well before the 2003 legislative session. That schedule means that our legislative allies will have time to use the findings as a springboard for legislation to address problems that come to light. Part-time faculty members from TFT's Austin Community College affiliate spoke out strongly for the bill in legislative hearings, and their advocacy is a prime reason this new law is now on the books. Thanks are owed as well to Rep. Chavez and to the Senate sponsor of the bill, Sen. Judith Zaffirini (D-Laredo). HB 2397 took effect on September 1, 2001.

HB 1127 by Rep. Irma Rangel (D-Kingsville) and Senate sponsor Teel Bivins (R-Amarillo) mandates automatic renewal of a non-tenured faculty member's employment if notice of contract non-renewal is not given by a prescribed deadline. The basic rule is that the institution of higher education must offer the faculty member a written contract for the upcoming academic year no later than 30 days before the first day of the academic year. The law gives institutions some latitude for missing that deadline, but the latitude has limits. If the institution fails to offer the faculty member a written contract before the 61st day after the first day of the academic year and the institution retains the faculty member for that academic year without a written contract, then the institution must retain the faculty member for that academic year on terms at least as favorable as those for the previous year. HB 1127 takes effect on January 1, 2002, and applies to a contract for an academic year that begins after that date.

SB 273 by Sen. Ken Armbrister (D-Victoria) and Rep. Dale Tillery (D-Dallas) raised the TRS multiplier to 2.3 for active and retired K-12 and higher-ed employees. That boost in the multiplier from the previous level of 2.2 gives actives a pension increase of 4.5 percent. Those already retired get even more from SB 273. They receive a 10.8-percent increase (the combined effect of the 2.3 multiplier and an ad-hoc, cost-of-living adjustment). The bill took effect September 1.

Staff

Professionals and Unions

Why would self-employed psychologists want to join a union? That's a question I was asked many times when the New York State Psychological Association announced plans to affiliate with the AFT. These psychologists are highly educated professionals. They are entrepreneurs. What can union membership do for them?

Part of the answer is easy. Teachers are professionals, and they have been unionized for almost a century. Members of the nursing profession have been joining unions for at least 70 years and have been in the AFT for two decades. Professionals are just as interested in decent working conditions and decent wages as other workers. They want what unions fight for: health benefits, a dignified retirement, and voice. And they value the contact that a union gives them with other professionals- people who have faced similar workplace problems and have solutions to share.

However, there *is* something new and- to some- surprising about psychologists becoming members of a union. First, they are self-employed- entrepreneurs, really. They don't work under a contract or engage in collective bargaining. But as any member of a professional union will tell you, unions also support professionals' efforts to live up to the standards of their profession and do the best possible job for their clients- ideally through a cooperative relationship with management.

Psychologists are a perfect example. Like nurses and doctors, they find that managed health care has put them into a very tough position. Their patients, many of whom are suffering from debilitating illnesses, depend on their therapist's professional expertise to help them recover. But managed-care companies have come between the professional and the patient. If administrators say that someone with a particular condition is eligible for only five visits, their word is law- even though they have never seen the patient and have no way of judging the patient's particular needs. Of course, this is a bread-and-butter issue as well, but most psychologists are far more concerned about the overriding of their professional judgment, and they are outraged about the harm it can do to some of their patients.

The world of professional psychologists has changed dramatically. On their own, psychologists are hampered in their ability to act in the best interests of their patients. Union affiliation will help them get back their professional autonomy so they are once more free to act according to the standards of their profession. When the AFT's other professional workers- K-12 and college teachers, paraprofessionals, nurses and public employees- add their voices to those of New York State Psychological Association members, the psychologists will have a better chance of being heard.

We can't be sure exactly what the workplace of the 21st century will look like, but we know it will include many new and unfamiliar labor arrangements. The psychologists, who are self-employed professionals but whose terms of employment and ability to serve their clients depend on massive for-profit companies, are just one example. We'll also see many more project workers, some of them highly skilled and educated people, who have no regular connection to a company and therefore no benefits, no pensions and no clout. Portable health and pension benefits, assistance in moving from one temporary job to another and help in developing their professional expertise- unions can assist with these.

In education, too, the workplace is changing. But professionals, who care about the service they provide and whose first concern is the well-being of the people they serve (including children), want to maximize their ability to exercise their professionalism. They can't do it alone. That's where unions come in.

Sandra Feldman

Reprinted with permission from the February 2000 "Where We Stand" monthly column of the American Federation of Teachers.

Rewarding Longevity

For years, college employees have heard the administration talk about how the college district values us. In fact, NHMCCD'S "Value Statements" include the following comment: "We believe that the most important resources of the North Harris Montgomery Community College District are the individual faculty and staff members [. . .]." Faculty salaries appear to reflect this value statement. The longer faculty members work for the district, the more their salaries rise significantly above entry levels. However, staff salaries have contradicted this value statement for years. Many staff members have encountered situations where they have been employed for better than a decade only to see a new employee hired in the same or a similar position for the same salary, sometimes at a higher salary. The AFT has long questioned how the college could allow such an inequity to exist. We have had several conversations with the administration about remedying it. I met recently with Dr. Sam on a number of issues, including this one. He informed me that NHC is now piloting a method of rewarding longevity that he referred to as a "ladder system." The pilot is operating in a couple of areas, including the business office. According to his description, the system provides a means for staff to move up in job categories and improve their salaries. Steve Megregian provided a copy of the organizational chart being used in the business office. The chart includes job titles that range from B-8 to C-17. If a vacancy occurs somewhere in the middle of the range, say a C-14 position, the plan is to promote from within and hire a new person at B-8, preventing situations where new hires start at the same salary as long-term employees. The college has always claimed this practice of promoting from within as its preference but has never formally followed it. In theory, the plan appears to address the value of rewarding longevity among staff. If it works as intended, and no new problems are created by the system, the whole district should quickly move from this pilot to making it standard practice. The AFT will follow the pilot and review it in a future newsletter.

Alan Hall

MEMORIES

On Thursday afternoon, September 27, 2001, labor union history, in person, arrived at NHC and provided us with a lifetime of memories.

To me, as a history teacher and labor member, Lech Walesa (pronounces VA-WHEN-ZA, according to my history colleague and proud Polish American, Theresa McGinley) was never a total stranger. In the early 1980s, I joined much of the world in following, with a mixture of hope and pride, the efforts of Walesa and SOLIDARNOŚĆ (THE Solidarity Labor Movement) to challenge the communist establishment in Poland, which was supposedly a Marxist “workers’ paradise” but instead functioned to systematically repress workers’ rights and organizations because they threatened Soviet interests.

The media reports passed before us like snapshots in an evolving drama—the efforts of a modest electrician named Walesa to organize Gdansk shipyard workers into a labor union called Solidarity; the spread of the labor movement, despite the teargassing of Solidarity demonstrators and other forms of intimidation and violence; Walesa’s arrest; and finally the series of triumphs, including the official state recognition and sanctioning of Solidarity and Walesa’s personal achievements of receiving the Nobel Peace Prize and serving as Poland’s first democratically elected President.

All of these images came happily flooding back as this great labor hero, Lech Walesa, exited his limousine and began his September 27 visit here at NHC, a visit during which he became a personal acquaintance with whom I spoke and shook hands. The photograph of the handshake (talk about a Kodak moment!) is now a treasured possession, for, as U.S. Congressman Kevin Brady said, the whole event was “like touching history.”

While speaking in our PAT on “Democracy: The Never Ending Battle,” Walesa spoke with a credibility resulting from his being, in Theresa McGinley’s accurate words, “a symbol of freedom to the world.” He delivered, in the view of one reporter, “a message of peace and political lucidity” laced with priceless rhetorical gems, such as labelling Cuba the “Jurassic Park” of communism; suggesting the sending of American Generals to aid the democratizing process in Poland—General Motors, General Electric, etc.; and accusing many modern politicians of trading vision for television. The audience also appreciated Walesa’s unexpected revelation that, under communist rule, Polish workers were allowed to produce only half of an automobile, subsequently to be shipped to the Soviet Union for completion and possible return for sale and use in Poland! Leave it to the Soviet Communists to act like an Economic Taliban and turn symbiosis into thrombosis! Or perhaps it was, as Stalin himself once said, that “communism fits Poland like a saddle fits a cow.”

It certainly would be no half-truth or unfitting judgment to declare Lech Walesa’s visit a profound moment in NHC’s history. The obvious is to note the awe and excitement of merely being in the presence of a genuine international hero. Beyond that, I believe Walesa’s visit provides two other points of significance for us to ponder.

First, it forcefully reminds us of the importance of the individual in influencing history, thus further exposing as a lie the “my one vote doesn’t matter” lament. British historian Thomas Carlyle once wrote, “In all epochs of the world’s history we shall find the Great Man to have been the indispensable savior of his epoch; - the lightning, without which the fuel would never have burnt.” If few are still willing to accept this extreme interpretation of the individual person’s role in history, then let’s at least consider the belief of the poet Longfellow, that

Lives of great mind all remind us,
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us,
Footprints on the sands of time.

Lech Walesa’s footprints have left an empire in their wake. The struggles of this one individual of charisma and revolutionary seal, of patience and sacrifice, have kindled, to quote Dostoyevsky, “a fire in the minds of men.” So for one brief shining moment, with Walesa’s presence on campus, we at NHC recalled the glory of ourselves as individuals who can and will make a difference.

Second, Walesa’s visit reminds us of the vital importance of an active, viable labor movement. After all, Walesa is a LABOR leader struggling on behalf of workers’ rights, and his Solidarity organization was born as an independent trade UNION, which engaged in strikes and other forms of peaceful mass protest on behalf of workers’ rights. Proud of these labor roots, even while wearing a “leader’s hat,” Walesa says, “My hat will always be a worker’s hat.... It’s a leader’s hat but it shall always be a common hat, used by common people for common purposes.” So for one brief shining moment, with Walesa’s presence on campus, we at NHC were all part of the labor movement.

The latter observation brings to mind not a little sense of irony. In his Walesa article, our union President Alan Hall calls attention to the earlier irony of our board and administration lauding Walesa’s union efforts in Poland while doggedly opposing a union right here in the college district. I will allude to the current irony of there having been so much faculty and staff enthusiasm for UNION leader Walesa’s visit while nonetheless so some of the enthusiasts remain outside our local union looking in as “satisfied” non-members and/or carping critics of the NHMCCD Employee Federation.

MEMORIES (cont'd)

But why not let the September moment of labor solidarity pass? To those who feel no current need for such togetherness, I submit several points to consider. The efforts of Walesa and Solidarity had to be expended in Poland exactly because the Marxist-Communist proclaimed “workers’ utopia” was anything but. Closer to home, my history colleague John Eudy, despite being one of the founding faculty of NHMCCD, has been the victim of unrelenting administrative harassment for over five years, with no end in sight. He has been accused—yes accused—of hiding behind policies and procedures! Thus, invoking procedural due process—a guaranteed legal/constitutional right—seems to have become another sort of “crime” in NHMCCD.

Finally, what about these early retirement offers and guilt trips aimed at senior employees? At most places of employment, experienced and loyal employees are treasured and made to feel wanted and needed; here, where the list includes excellence award winners and campus and community activists, we are apparently being cast as a financial burden and made to feel like grasping, selfish hangers-on. Think about it.

Democracy, indeed, is a never ending battle.

For this battle, supplementary financial, advisory, moral, and other forms of support are available—for those who join the union. No promises of victory, but promises of otherwise unavailable support. There have been many victories, but remember it’s a “never ending battle.” The events of September 11 have shown us, in many respects, the perils of apathy and disunity. My personal hopes for and faith in my fellow NHMCCD workers lead me to believe that more of you than ever will see beyond the apathy and disunity of the past, beyond the misinformation and petty personal vendettas, to make labor solidarity as real here as in Poland.

Poland’s story—through Walesa and Solidarity—is also an American story: a Samuel Gompers/AFL story; a John L. Lewis/CIO story; a Cesar Chavez/UFW story; an AL Shanker/AFT story; and a NHMCCD Employee Federation story. As for Solidarity? The word just happens to be a part of the title, “Solidarity Forever,” of Ralph Chaplin’s unofficial anthem of the American labor movement, a song which asserts

When the union’s inspiration through the worker’s blood shall run,
There can be no power greater anywhere beneath the sun...
[For] the union makes us strong.
Solidarity Forever! SOLIDARNOŚĆ NA ZAWCZE!

Lech Walesa, thanks for the memories. DZIEKUJE ZA VIZYTE, KTORA ZOSTANIE NA ZAWCZE W NASZEJ PAMIECI!

Allen R. Vogt

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

DO IT RIGHT—EVERYTIME

Human Resources administers the most important aspect of our lives, in regard to our ability to provide for our family, by how they handle our salaries and our benefits.

Dawn Baxley was denied the salary posted for the position she applied for “because Board policy had not been followed.” Board policy is followed only when HR wants to follow Board policy. The Administration uses it when it suits their purposes, but ignores it when it does not provide the outcome they want.

In the past, HR has “overlooked” Board policy in the area of benefits. Board policy specifically states that the awarding of short-term disability must be consistent across the District. No exceptions and only HR can **choose** to award it. It is **not** always awarded after you have used your compensatory time.

I am aware of a situation where someone was allowed to save two and one-half weeks of vacation before going on short-term disability. How many other people did not get to save their vacation because HR did not overrule Board policy for them? I know of two and I am sure there are many more.

Administrators have given me several reasons. The first one I spoke with said there was no one in charge of HR at the time. A second administrator said it was not a Civil Rights violation. Another administrator said it was a mistake. Another one said the District could do whatever was best for the District.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR (cont'd)

In addition, the same individual was given increased hours of vacation per month by moving this individual from the 8 hours per month to 10.67 hours per month, 14 months before this person was entitled to the increase according to Board policy. The reason given for this was the person had worked here part time. Has anyone else been given additional vacation for part time work? Not any of the people I have spoken with.

It is illegal to give one employee more vacation, or any other benefit, than everyone else gets. It is frightening to know that the people who handle our benefits do so in such a cavalier manner. I believe that it is an abuse of power by someone. "HR needs to remember Vice Chancellor McMullan's promise to correct immediately any inequity created by HR." This was a vacation inequity created by HR.

Question: What would motivate someone to twice break Board policy to illegally give additional vacation to someone? Before the paperwork was turned in, HR was told that it was against Board policy.

Who in the secular world will set the standard for integrity, ethics and morality if Education does not? Should not Education be the example in every facet of our public life?

Carol Lucas



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