

The Union News



A Newsletter by and for HEC Instructors, Assistant Teachers & OT, PT, Speech Assistants
September 2004



**UNDER
CONSTRUCTION:
HEC UNION
CONTRACT**

BARGAINING UPDATE

HEC Union Bargaining Committee

As you may know, your HEC union bargaining committee has already begun the process of meeting with HEC management to bargain for our first union contract. There have been two bargaining sessions so far. The first was on August 18th, the most recent took place on September 2nd, and the next session is scheduled for September 20th.

Present at both meetings were members of the union bargaining committee which consists of Bob Simons (MALP 1), Stacey Burdick (MALP 2), Jim Wakefield (Tech. Specialist, AT), Antigoni Tzoumakas (TALP 3), Kelly Thibodeau (TALP 3), Randall Furash-Stewart (TALP 4), and Ken Humphreys (VALP). Also present at the meetings was Henry Figalkowski who is our expert union negotiator and Tim Scott, our UAW representative.

HEC management has made Mike Ciesla, CFO, their representative. Management has also chosen to hire Ralph Abott, a lawyer with Skoler Abott & Presser, who has a reputation for providing employment-related advice to employers, and assisting clients in remaining "union-free" (ch-ching! ch-ching!).

Since the successful union election last June 15th, the bargaining committee, chosen by the membership, has met on a regular basis throughout the summer to draft proposals concerning our wages, benefits, hours of work and working conditions in preparation for the contract negotiations which are now in progress. Currently, non-economic aspects of our working conditions are being bargained over. Items of a more financial nature will follow later on in the process. All HEC union members are welcome and encouraged to review union proposals

and attend bargaining sessions. If interested please contact a member of the bargaining committee.

It is important to note that while the UAW representative's assist in familiarizing us with bargaining procedures and protocol they do not have the power to make decisions. Decisions are made through the bargaining committee with input from the membership (all HEC Asst. Teachers, Instructors: a.k.a. paraprofessionals 1-3, OT, PT and Speech Assistants and regular substitutes.) That is why it is essential and in the best interest of anyone holding these job titles to keep in contact with a co-worker on the bargaining committee with whom you are most familiar and comfortable. Also, please take any opportunity to attend future membership meetings; during which contract proposals, questions and concerns are discussed. Mailings will be sent out, as well as reminder phone calls before membership meetings. There was a membership meeting on Monday August 14, before our first bargaining session, but unfortunately few could attend because it was held during vacation.

We look forward to hearing from anyone with questions, concerns, issues, etc. As this is an inclusive process, please do not hesitate to speak up. This is YOUR UNION!

What's up with getting paid?

Ken Humphreys, VALP

As you all know, HEC has split the September 17th paycheck to advance us half, as of September 3rd. Many union members expressed concern that living on one paycheck spread over the entire month of September placed a severe burden on them.

At our last bargaining meeting, your union reps. on the bargaining committee discussed possible solutions to that problem. We looked at the calendar and realized we had three paychecks in October. So, at our next bargaining session, we proposed that HEC advance half of the mid-October paycheck to Sept. 17th. Thus we would have one and a half paychecks in Sept. and two and a half in October. As representative for HEC management, CFO Mike Ciesla said, he would investigate that possibility and get back to us. The next day, he contacted your bargaining committee and informed us that after researching our proposal and speaking with senior HEC management; HEC would not advance any money to September 17th, for any of its staff. He cited bookkeeping and data entry as two key reasons for this decision.

Your HEC Union Bargaining Committee

Please contact us and tell us how you would like to improve our work, our workplace, and the education of our students at the Hampshire Educational Collaborative!



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