



# Summer Newsletter July 2015

## Executive Board

Acting President: Jeff Kass

Vice-President: Jeff Kass

Treasurer: G. Hossein Azarbajani, Ph.D.

Secretary: Jodi Monday

Member-at-Large: Jerry Sommerville

Grievance Officer: Jodi Monday

Be sure to visit our new AAFMCC Website at [www.aafmcc.org](http://www.aafmcc.org). Here members can view the Contract, Constitution and Bylaws, officer and contact info, and important union news and benefits.

Also be sure to "like" us on Facebook. Just enter "Association of Adjunct Faculty of Macomb Community College."

## Tuition Reimbursement Program (TRP)

According to Section 15.3 of the 2012-2018 Contract MCC adjuncts are eligible for tuition reimbursement for classes taken at MCC. If you've been meaning to take a class at MCC but weren't sure if it was affordable this could be a great opportunity. The program is limited to AAFMCC members only and recipients can receive reimbursement for up to two (2) courses taken at MCC, or a maximum of \$750, per term. E-mail the TRP Administrator, Jeff Kass, at [aafmcc@gmail.com](mailto:aafmcc@gmail.com) for a complete list of rules and regulations. Be sure to put "TRP" in the subject line. Funds are limited so act soon.

## AAFMCC: A Brief History

*Routinely getting classes or having your schedule or textbook changed hours before a class started, and often after you'd made commitments to other jobs; sweetheart deals; inconsistent raise, peer review and administrative policies; lack of grievance procedures; working in fear that you had no other protection for your position than the good graces of your superiors and all the while whispering with colleagues in dark corners that there had to be a better way.*

Sound familiar? In 2002 two adjuncts decided on the only course of action that better way could take. Their names were John Bousamra, long-time adjunct in French, and former full-timer and Spanish adjunct, Joe Dipaola. At lunch one day they decided, "Let's form an adjunct union."

After approaching several higher ed parent unions, and often at their own expense, they started to work with the Michigan Education Association. It took months of legal battles as the college claimed we were "casual and temporary" labor, and therefore had no standing to form a union. The Michigan Employment Regulatory Commission [MERC] agreed with the MEA petitioners and granted a vote. That vote took place in the fall of 2003 and the response was overwhelming to form a union and the Macomb College Adjunct Faculty Association (MCAFA) was born. MCAFA became the first all adjunct union at a community college in the state of Michigan not accreted with their full time counterparts. The inaugural officers were John Bousamra, President, Joe Dipaola, Vice President, Physics Instructor, Dr. G. Hossein Azarbajani, Treasurer and History Instructor, Michael Johns, Secretary.

Now it was time to write an inaugural contract. It was the summer of 2004 and the bargaining team consisted of long-time union advocate and Instructor of Economics and Psychology, Joe Miller, English Instructor, Andrew Kos, head negotiator and MEA Uniserve Director for our MEA district, Aaron Sheposh, Joe Dipaola and Jeffrey T. Kass, History Instructor. It took almost two years of bargaining to write the entire contract. The largest stumbling block was the issue of seniority. It took months of side bars to hash out what we on the union side agreed was not "absolute" seniority but felt that it was the best we could get under the circumstances. That is the system described in Section 4 of the contract in place now. Andrew Kos and Aaron Sheposh represented MCAFA in the side bars. John Bousamra, Jeff Kass and German Instructor and special advisor to the bargaining team, Dr. Kendall Weeks, congregated in the South Campus Library each week, waiting like expectant fathers for news of a breakthrough. It finally came in 2005. It then took about another year to work out evaluation language, grievance, load limits, pay and some other issues. Finally in the spring of 2006 the membership ratified our first contract.

Also in 2006 John Bousamra and Joe Dipaola, believing the bulk of their work had been completed with the ratification of a contract, decided to step down before the end of their terms. In a special election Richard Filbey, Instructor of Mathematics, and Jeff Kass, inaugural bargainer and Instructor of History were elected president and vice-president, respectively. Dr. G. Hossein Azarbajani stayed on as Treasurer. Michael Johns also stepped down and was replaced temporarily with Philosophy adjunct, Theresa Catalano Reinhardt. Jodi Monday from Media and Communication Arts eventually came on board as Secretary and Grievance Officer. Since then Jerold Sommerville from the History department rounded out the Executive Board as its new Member-at-Large.

Meanwhile the relationship with the MEA, though strong at the beginning, began to deteriorate. The decision was made to hold a special election to decide whether the MCAFA should stay with MEA or go out on its own as an independent union. The membership voted to leave MEA in the summer of 2012. The union was renamed the AAFMCC, The Association of Adjunct Faculty of Macomb Community College. It soon became evident,

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however, that running a union with just a few officers was easier said than done. The AAFMCC leadership began negotiating with the American Federation of Teachers to become our new parent union. The final decision to go with the American Federation of Teachers (AFT-MI), though somewhat controversial since we just recently left the MEA, was made easier by political events when an increasingly hostile administration and legislature in Lansing passed Michigan's first "right-to-work" law which will eventually prove to be our greatest challenge yet. The membership agreed, voting in May of 2013 to join the AFT.

Our union is by no means perfect and organizing part-timers, most of whom have income from other sources, has been no easy task to say the least. We continue to work hard to improve seniority language, pay and hope to one day even provide benefits to at least some of our membership. But it's only with the growing support and help of the membership that this will be possible.

## Creation of AAFMCC Senate and Committees

In February the new long awaited AAFMCC Senate composed of its three sub-committees, Membership, Grievance and Budget, met for the first time with the AAFMCC Board. Enacted into the AAFMCC Bylaws at the last GMM we are hoping these committees will make us a stronger local and in turn, serve the membership better. The membership of the committees is as follows:

**Membership:** Jo Powers, Dolora Paull, Jackie Dalton  
**Grievance:** Darrett Pullins (*also Senate Chair*),  
Ron Katz, Mark Turo  
**Budget:** Greg Sims, Farhad Ghoddoussi, Michael Miller  
**Association Campus Representatives:**  
Dolora Paull for SC, Jackie Dalton for CC.

If you know any of these adjuncts or meet them in the performance of their new duties please thank them for lending their experience and expertise in helping to strengthen our local.

## ANNOUNCEMENT: 2016 AAFMCC ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The AAFMCC will be holding its next elections to the Executive Board (*President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Member-at-Large*) in the spring of 2016. New terms will begin on May 1st. According to Section VII of the AAFMCC constitution (available on website) the call for nominations will go out via MCC e-mail in January. The election will be conducted by mail ballot. Please check your college e-mail regularly for updates as the date approaches. An elections committee of three members in good standing must be appointed to conduct the election. Any members in good standing who wish to serve on the elections committee should contact the union at [aafmcc@gmail.com](mailto:aafmcc@gmail.com).



## AAFMCC Family Scholarship Being Considered

The AAFMCC is considering creating a scholarship fund for the immediate family members of union members based on need and scholarship. If created we would begin considering applicants perhaps as early as the Winter or Fall 2016 terms so be sure to check your MCC e-mail for updates

## Importance of Activating & Checking MCC E-Mail

We on the Exec Board would like to take this opportunity to remind members how important it is to activate their college e-mail and check it regularly. Not only is it a condition of employment here at MCC but an essential method of communicating with so many members as there are over 1200 adjuncts currently on the seniority list. This is an easy way to get reminders about: declaring availability (every September for winter and March for summer and fall), upcoming union meetings and elections and other important union announcements. Since the Distribution List (or DL) can only be sent from an existing employees' e-mail address be sure to look for any e-mails from Jeffrey Kass, AAFMCC Vice President and Communications Officer. So if you have not yet activated your MCC e-mail account please do so by contacting your department's Administrative Assistant or the college IT Help Desk at 586-445-7156 and please encourage your colleagues to do the same.

## Explanation of Dues & Election of the Fee Payer Option

Currently full members pay 1.8% of their gross pay while agency fee payers pay 1.6%. While the fee payer rate is subject to change each fiscal year the members' rate has been guaranteed not to go up for the duration of the current contract which expires in 2018. All adjuncts made the choice of whether to be *full members* or *agency fee payers* on their union form.

If you have not filled out a form you need to do so as a condition of employment. If you need a union form, or want to inquire if you filled one out, e-mail the union at [aafmcc@gmail.com](mailto:aafmcc@gmail.com) (put "attention: Jeff Kass" in subject line) and we will send you a form as an attachment. Furthermore, any member who declared themselves a fee payer and wishes to switch to a full member may also obtain a new form at the e-mail listed above. Meanwhile, any full member who wishes to become a fee payer may only change their status during a four week window from July 6–August 3, 2015, early enough before the start of fall term so HR can input the names in time for fall payroll.

## AAFMCC On-Campus Organizing Activities

In the coming weeks and months the AAFMCC Board, Senate and Campus Reps will be working with AFT Organizers to step up our on-campus organizing activities to deal with the potential threats of right-to-work and looming court cases regarding agency shop. We are urging members to cooperate with our organizing efforts whether it's something as simple as spreading the word about the union, how to contact it and its activities, or maybe something more involved like helping directly with on-campus organizing efforts. Those interested should contact the union at 313-680-6434 or e-mail us at [aafmcc@gmail.com](mailto:aafmcc@gmail.com)