

Statement to the Harper College Board of Trustees, April 26, 2005
By Arlene Bublick, President of the Harper College Adjunct Faculty Association

Today is definitely a Harper day. I began my day this morning having breakfast with Dr. Breuder and the presidents of the 4 other unions at Harper College. The breakfast was very symbolic to me. In my family, the concept of breaking bread together has always been a very important and binding one. That one simple breakfast reinforced my belief that all at Harper College can sit down and work together for a common good. For that gesture of inclusion, I'd particularly like to thank Dr. Breuder.

My name is Arlene Bublick. As president of the Harper College Adjunct Faculty Association, the largest union at Harper College, I want to speak with you about the need for consolidating bargaining units for all adjunct faculty. Adjunct Faculty are part-time faculty. Today, we represent over 300 adjuncts. But today, these adjuncts have to deal with three separate bargaining units, which is not only a hassle to them but is also a huge unnecessary expense to you and the community.

I am confident that we have found a solution to this problem which will have a positive outcome for everyone involved. It is a solution which I believe you will support. Let me tell you a little more about it. This week, our Association submitted a petition with the Labor Board to consolidate the three adjunct bargaining units into one. I'm sure it has become very apparent to you that the members of the three adjunct bargaining units consider themselves one. Several times now, you have heard adjuncts talk of their moving in and out of the three units with the change of a semester.

As it stands now, the Harper College Adjunct Faculty Association is negotiating for 162 adjuncts who have taught at least 3 credit hours for each of the last 4 semesters; we are also negotiating for 133 adjuncts who have taught at least 6 credit hours for each of the last 4 semesters, and we are negotiating for 12 adjuncts who are either librarians or counselors. In all, we are negotiating for over 300 adjuncts.

It is our goal to negotiate a unified contract for all adjunct staff at the College. Members of the three bargaining units must have the opportunity to vote for consolidation, and if a majority of those voting approve, then the Labor Board will certify us as a single bargaining unit for all future relations with Harper College.

The Harper College Board has the option of objecting to the Association's request before a vote is taken. It is my opinion, that an objection to our request will benefit no one. My appeal is that the Board take the position not to oppose the Association's action. Up to the point of our forming a union, all adjuncts were treated uniformly. That should not change.

Consolidating bargaining units would be beneficial to both the adjuncts and Harper College for many reasons.

First, money would be saved. Here is how that would happen. Negotiations could move more quickly. Fewer contracts would have to be managed. A parallel structure between the full-time and part-time academic staff would be established. The number of administrative staff involved in the process would be reduced.

Second, there would be a unified cost structure for part-time academic staff. The structure would reflect simplicity and uniformity rather than complexity and inconsistency.

Third, expensive litigation would be avoided.

Fourth, publicity about cooperation with us would be better for Harper's image than publicity about the total lack of cooperation. And adjuncts would have a greater feeling of being respected by the College.

We know that Harper College needs us. Adjuncts teach half of the classes at Harper College and are in large part responsible for Harper College's reputation for quality education. Show us that the words that are spoken by the board and the administration about our importance to Harper College are backed by thoughtful action. Support consolidation.

Thank you.