

Presentations to Harper Board – June 23, 2005 –
Janice Cutler – HCAFA Treasurer

Good evening. My name is Janice Cutler. I am a resident of Palatine, a tax payer, a voter in Harper College elections, and a member of the adjunct faculty bargaining unit and bargaining team. I have been employed as an adjunct faculty member in the mathematics department for six years. For the last 5 years, I have taught 3 courses every fall semester and 2 or 3 courses every spring semester.

I am here with my colleagues tonight because, after a year of negotiations, we are on the verge of reaching an agreement. But now we feel we must urge you to act by providing your negotiation team with the flexibility needed to finalize the agreement this month. If you take such action, we will reach an agreement which would be fair to both sides and which would build community pride in this college and its faculty.

Our negotiating team came to the bargaining table on June 29, 2004 with high hopes. We had seen the changes in working conditions achieved by other local adjunct unions which improved both their lives and the quality of their institutions. We were eager to work to achieve similar improvements at Harper. Most of us had little idea of what to expect. So the last year has been a learning experience.

- We learned how the negotiation process works.
- We learned the various parts of a labor contract, the impact of slight changes in wording, and how long it can take to settle the smallest point.
- We passed the 100 hour mark a few weeks ago – that is, we have spent over 100 hours at the bargaining table. The hours we spent in

addition to those hours cannot be counted. And unlike the college team, our team members are not paid for the hours spent.

- In short, we learned, we listened, we matured and changed, which is what we understand the negotiating process to be all about.

Maybe to their credit, the same can't be said about the College's negotiating team. In yesterday's negotiating session, the college told us that they came to the table last summer with definite ideas of what is appropriate for the contract, and over the course of a year at the negotiating table, they have felt that they successfully had not changed their position. They have negotiated well on your behalf by listening to our interests. They changed very little, and only after we proposed changes incorporating your interests or by our applying pressure on the team through our public presentations to you.

In almost all areas where we have reached tentative agreements, it has been because our team has agreed to accept the College's version of various clauses. This includes Academic Freedom, Non-Discrimination – where the college even rejected standard language protecting the rights of minorities, Discipline, Seniority, and Access to Personnel Records. If you would like to see how unbalanced this process has been, please review our initial proposals, together with the final agreed-on versions, which are all available on our web site.

After yesterday's session two major issues remain to be resolved, along with two minor sections. The minor issues demonstrate how inflexible the College has been. One of the minor issues is our request to provide adjuncts with the same rights for tuition reimbursement for family members, as is given to all other employees. The other is to increase the rate for substitute pay by only five dollars as a good faith effort to try to settle the contract.

Considering how far we have come in negotiations, we ask only that, in order for the contract to be settled, the College act in good faith by at least moving beyond

their positions on the two important items to the Association – fair share and compensation. The next two speakers will explain why we feel it is the right thing for this board to do at this time.

Thank you.

HCAFA presentation to the Harper College
Board of Trustees - June 23, 2003
Paul Casbarian, HCAFA Vice President

Good evening. I'm Paul Casbarian, Vice President of the Harper College Adjunct Faculty Association. I'm here tonight to talk about the first of the two critical remaining issues blocking our ability to settle our first contract with the college. That issue is called Fair Share.

The Association has asked that the contract include a fair share provision. Fair share was established by the Illinois legislature to allow education unions to collect a fee from non-union members. The fee pays for the services that the union is required to provide them by virtue of the union assignment as the sole bargaining unit representative.

Let me explain the nature of fair share with a comparable metaphor. By virtue of moving into the Harper College District, by law I become eligible to receive services from the College. I may or may not choose to use those services. Regardless of whether I use the services, I still must pay taxes to the college.

Fair share is exactly the same principle. When an employer covered under the state labor act recognizes a union to represent members of that bargaining unit, the union must provide services to all the members of the unit. In fact the college is prohibited from negotiating individually with any member of that bargaining unit. However, the employee doesn't really choose to use the union's services, because at a minimum, the union represents that employee's interests during negotiations. And if other problems arise, such as ones requiring a grievance, the union must be available to provide representation. Fair share is the tax that pays for the cost of these services.

In response to our request for fair share, your negotiators have responded that the elections leading to representation were poorly attended. In fact, they were much better attended than those resulting in your elections and even resulting in increasing taxes for the district. Well over 50 percent of the 3 hour adjuncts voted in the initial representation election. HCAFA won by over 70 percent. It is true that our other elections had lower turnouts. But there are a number of reasons this happened other than a claim that the union was unwanted. For instance, the last election to unify the units was conducted with only about 3 days notice. However, just as in a tax referendum, if people do not show up to vote, it is a tacit statement that they are willing to accept the decision of those who do – including the decision to be represented.

We know that this college is not actually against fair share. There are 4 other unions on campus. All but one, the smallest with about 10 members, have fair share. We don't know why the Police do not have fair share, but, not counting the

adjuncts, 90% of eligible Harper employees are covered by fair share agreements.

Contrary to some of the prevailing notions, fair share is a good deal for the College. It helps with the college's competitiveness, management, the professional stature of its faculty, and promotion of much of its agenda.

Consider the issue of competitiveness. At this point, all of the area colleges where adjuncts are organized have fair share – and that's just about all of them. Fair share is no longer a competitive loss when recruiting adjuncts. Instead, since adjuncts work at multiple colleges, unionization and including fair share helps them feel confident that their rights and needs will be protected. By the way, if an adjunct teaches in more than one college represented by the IEA, they only pay the state and national fee once, covering all of their locations.

Fair share also helps the administration with problems that are particular to adjunct conditions. Your negotiators have told us on multiple occasions about the problems they have tracking adjuncts. They are unable to even determine the actual start dates and number of hours taught by some of our adjuncts. Fair share allows us to also track these individuals. And since money is involved, we know we'll do a good job.

The Administration also has recognized the problems that they have communicating with all adjuncts. Without fair share, we only have the obligation to communicate information to union members on most issues. But with fair share we become a second and dedicated communication channel for the College.

Union membership without fair share sometimes serves to divide the faculty. Fair share enhances faculty relations by unifying the group. It also leads to additional professional development opportunities for all as HCAFA works with adjunct unions from other community colleges to gain resources for its members and fee payers.

Finally, fair share gives us strength in working with the College on promoting the College's public agenda. HCAFA is part of the Illinois Education Association and National Education Association. We, the adjunct faculty, and by extension, Harper College, have the backing of not only the largest teachers union in the country and state, but also one of the largest unions, in general. Through our vast resources, we can be heard loudly in Springfield and in Washington D.C. This Spring, we stood side by side in Springfield with representatives from your state association of trustees to fight to defend the SURS pension system and demand improved funding for community colleges. In fact, because our representatives were in the room when the recent SURS changes were negotiated we were instrumental in saving SURS from deep cuts. We were also

able to instruct our Higher Ed leadership on the changes the week after the law changed.

Some of you may have heard this week from one of the members of your trustee association who supports Fair Share. She offered and attempted to contact some of you because she has seen its value at her college. She hopes that you do not wait until a future contract to experience the benefits that she and your peers experience elsewhere.

No sooner will we enter into this contract, then we will begin negotiations for the new contract. In my talk about fair share, I hope that I have demonstrated to you that Harper College will benefit from agreeing to Fair Share in this contract. I urge you to help us settle this contract by instructing your negotiating team to agree to the Fair Share provisions that we have offered for the contract.

Statement to the Harper College Board of Trustees, June 23, 2005
By Arlene Bublick, President of the Harper College Adjunct Faculty Association

My name is Arlene Bublick. I am here again to speak with you as the President of the Harper College Adjunct Faculty Association. I am here to urge you to give the College bargaining team the flexibility to reach a quick end to our drawn-out negotiations. Your actions will recognize the fact that our negotiating team has come a long way in taking concrete and responsible action to reach an agreement with the College.

We believe that the two remaining issues represent a difference in the understanding of the concept of fairness. Paul has already spoken about fairness as it relates to the concept of fair share. I will discuss the term as it relates to the compensation proposals.

It has been made clear to us at the negotiating table that the issue of compensation is not an issue of money. The audited fund balance for Harper College has been increasing annually because of the great job increasing enrollment, or the great job of the Foundation, or the fact that we have a growing tax base. You and I have heard at previous meetings the stellar status of the College's finances.

Our estimated cost of the College's proposal is about \$145 thousand dollars for 300 people – that's less than the salaries of some individuals at Harper. The cost of our proposal is only about \$465 thousand dollars over a period of two years. That is less than 3 tenths of one percent of Harper's \$168 million dollar budget in 2004. So we agree with what we've been told that the issue is not that of money.

What we have been told at the bargaining table is that the Board sees the compensation issue as one of fairness, and that the Board has defined fairness as giving all bargaining units the same percent increase for the coming year. This position has limited what the College's bargaining team has been able to negotiate. So my goal is to encourage you to recognize a different understanding of fairness.

One way to look at fairness would be to say that since adjuncts do the same work as full-time faculty, we should receive the same pay on a per credit hour basis. This was our original proposal and will remain our long term goal.

Another way to define fairness could be to pay lower-paid employees the same dollar increase as the higher-paid employees. That is because when everyone gets the same percent increase, the group at the lowest end actually receives a minimal increase in terms of real dollars compared with those at the upper end of the system. For example, five percent of \$8,000 is \$400, while 5% of \$60,000 is \$3000. As time goes on, this difference multiplies. That is what has happened at Harper over the years. We would be happy to agree on this definition of fairness,

but because there are so many adjuncts, this, too would begin to cause financial problems for the College.

We have offered a middle road at the negotiating table. To define fairness, we have looked for a benchmark rate for a realistic comparison to the full-time rate--one that was competitive, affordable, and justifiable. We have found an answer by reviewing other schools and considering their adjunct rates as a function of their full-time rates. At the same time, we considered affordability in terms of the tax base of the institution. What we found was Oakton Community College.

Oakton's tax base in terms of equalized assessed valuation is actually a little less than, but comparable, to Harper's. And it turns out that the salary schedule for Oakton's full-time faculty is virtually the same as that for Harper's. It makes sense to us that having an adjunct salary comparable to Oakton's represents both a fair and affordable solution to our negotiations.

Based on our discussions with the College, we expect that later you will hear that Oakton's adjunct faculty compensation rate is the highest in the state. But the administration's information is based on comparing apples to oranges. Their source, the ICCB (Illinois Community College Board) just gives a comparison of average rates and does not consider other benefits or the distribution of salaries on the schedules. Oakton's benefits are similar to what we have on the table. But other schools with lower pay rates have higher benefits. For instance, Elgin's adjuncts receive health insurance. We would very much like health insurance, but we gave up that important demand in our negotiations in order to reach a settlement. When both salaries and benefits are considered, Elgin's is much greater than Oakton's.

Finally, there is another way to consider fairness that takes into consideration how much the Board and College values adjuncts. This spring we met with three of you and heard how strongly you value the contribution of our members to the college's success. We are now asking that you demonstrate your feelings.

If Harper's full-time faculty are paid on the same scale as Oakton's, shouldn't that be the same for the adjuncts as well. Ask yourselves, "Do our adjuncts contribute any less to this college than Oakton's? Is the quality of our adjuncts any less than the quality of adjuncts teaching at Oakton?"

You will have an opportunity to demonstrate your pride and the pride of our community in our college during your closed session. We ask that you accept a new understanding of fairness and open up the parameters for your bargaining team so that we can reach a fair settlement in the next few days.

Thank you again for your time and support.

www.Harperadjuncts.org