

NCHE News

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: *TIME FOR CHANGE!*

In the context of sustained membership growth and the diversification of the challenges facing NEA Higher Education, the NCHE Executive Committee, at its summer retreat, voted to move a proposal to upgrade the NEA infrastructure from a program to a department structure consisting of a director and sufficient staff to enhance the presence of NEA on the national scene. This is a result of many discussions over the past couple of years dealing with NCHE's frustration with the higher education program not having the necessary staff to effectively work with higher education.

In addition, when NEA posted and subsequently filled a senior policy analyst for higher education, I was assured that the position vacated by Mark Smith (who took the new job) would be filled. This position remains unfilled, and even a temporary fill was denied. As a result, the program has one full-time staff organizer responsible for all field work, and she was deployed into the field this fall. I have met with President Van Roekel during every Super Week over the past year. We have had productive conversations, and he has agreed to have a meeting with the Executive Director and staff to talk about the situation.

I and other Executive Committee members are discussing this initiative at selected conferences, and we will be presenting our proposal to the budget committee and building consensus with NEA Directors who have large concentrations of NCHE members. If options for this new structure fail to materialize with NEA leadership, a new business item will be submitted to the RA floor in July 2010.

On another front, in August, NEA Higher Education convened two groups. A group of ESP and academic professional leaders, along with NEA staff, consultants and NCHE leaders, advised NEA on its respective priorities and needs. The Contingent group specifically advised the Research Department about the development of the NEA survey of contingent faculty to be conducted this fiscal year. Two additional meetings are planned for the end of October: a Higher Education Messaging Analysis Group and a Full-Time Faculty Advisory Group.

These are but a few things we are working on this year. As you can see, our plate is full and for dessert we get to wrestle with the rapid moving and multi-focused Obama higher education agenda.

Continue to keep us informed by phone 508-854-4336 or email <http://www.nea.org/home/32959.htm>

OHIO'S SUMMIT ON HIGHER EDUCATION

"Ohio and the nation are in a well-documented staffing crisis, and according to the most recent figures from the U.S. Department of Education, nearly 75 percent of the instructional workforce in higher education is contingent [sic] working off tenure-track, and the vast majority are part-time faculty members or graduate student employees."

So begins the first two bullets of the **Summit on Academic Staffing in Higher Education for Ohio** fact sheet. In an historic first step, the Ohio Education Association (OEA), the Ohio Federation of Teachers (OFT), and the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) sponsored a one-day conference to discuss the key role of higher education teaching faculty in ensuring the success of the Strategic Plan for Higher Education in Ohio (plan sponsored by Ohio Governor Ted Strickland).

Representatives from the Board of Higher Education and the state House and Senate heard the importance of contingent faculty getting collective bargaining rights. John B. Lee from JBL Associates provided research outlining reasons for the precipitous drop in the number of full-time tenured faculty in public higher education. (*Cont'd top of Page 2*)

"...now nearly 75 percent of the instructional workforce in higher education is contingent [sic] working off the tenure-track and the vast majority are part-time faculty members or graduate student employees."

The sponsors used this one-day conference to launch a statewide commitment to work with all the stakeholders in Ohio who are committed to a quality higher education system.



OEA AT HIGHER EDUCATION SUMMIT

First Row L-R: Cathy Boudreau, NCHE Vice President; Debi Maynard, OEA Staff Consultant; Christine Domhoff, OH, NCHE Secretary/Treasurer; Patricia Frost Books, OEA President; Bill Leibensperger, OEA Vice President; Darell Minor, Columbus State Community College **Second Row:** Valerie Wilk, NEA Staff; Jim Timlin, OEA Secretary-Treasurer; Patrick McLaughlin, Lakeland Community College; Marc Wayner, Hocking College **Third Row:** Fritz Fekete, OEA Manager; Steve Doster, Shawnee State University; Nancy White, Youngstown State University.

NEA HIGHER EDUCATION GOES INTERNATIONAL

This past July, Roger Davis from the University of Nebraska at Kearney and Valerie Wilk, organizational specialist from NEA's higher education program, represented the NEA as part of the Education International (EI) delegation to the UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education in Paris, France. What follows are some of Roger's observations [edited for space purposes] concerning his and Valerie's participation in the Conference, the pre-conference Education International meeting, and the subsequent one-day UNESCO/Microsoft Educational Leaders Forum (ELF).

"At the pre-conference meetings of Education International (EI) and an NGO (Non-Governmental Organizations) session, I met education leaders from 20 nations.

"House Speaker Tip O'Neill said, 'all politics is local.' Representative' voices from numerous countries identified essential challenges in their region—defending academic freedom, supporting tenure and job security for full-time and contingent faculty and staff, regulating the quality of on-line education, confronting the challenge of

educational corporatism, and, finally, recognizing the need for more effective support for public higher education. The goal of this conference was to write the final communiqué on public higher education concerns within the international community. In the end, the participants completed a document designed to provide guidelines for UNESCO member nations. From the opening session to the eventual presentation of the communiqué, the politics of the conference swirled around the work of the official Drafting Committee. The whole process felt like bargaining a contract, only on a grander scale.

The EI delegation played a crucial role in getting protections for higher education employees into the UNESCO conference final communiqué. For more information: www.unesco.org/en/wche2009/ and www.ei-ie.org/highereducation/en



"In the UNESCO/Microsoft session, *The Transformative Power of Technology for Higher Education*, speakers highlighted educational and technical programs and challenges, with Africa being a major focus. The challenges are formidable, including maintaining quality academic standards, assessing the appropriate role of for-profits, finding appropriate staffing and faculty, and paying particular attention to the 'domain' of public education, as opposed to commercialized education. Microsoft announced a \$50 million dollar grant to UNESCO for a Higher Education Task Force on Information and Communications Technology (ICT) to create a strategic plan of action to identify how ICT can be used by governments as a catalyst for change. An excellent experience to see just how global education issues are."

CONTINGENT FACULTY TASK FORCE

The contingent faculty's charge was to finalize the purpose of the FY 2009-10 contingent faculty study—to determine the scope, to address the major issues culled from focus groups, and to consider how the survey might fit into an overall research plan for higher education.



Contingent Faculty Task Force

First row L-R: Jim Rice, NCHE President; Brett Nair, OR; Janet Grenztko, Consultant, Abacus Associates
Second row: Phadra Williams, NEA/ELA; James Heniff, IL; Adrianna Kezar, Consultant, University of Southern Calif.; Valerie Martin Conley Consultant, Ohio University; John Lee, Consultant, JBL Associates; Con Lehane, NEA Cathy Boudreau, NCHE Vice President
Back row: John Cipora, MA; Frank Brooks, IL; Valerie Wilk, NEA; Rex Constanza, NEA

The discussions focused around the following broad topics:

- ✦ Finalizing the purpose of the survey; for example: How can the NEA successfully organize, recruit and retain contingent faculty on both unionized and on unorganized campuses? Are there differences in the motivation and in the emotional issues that lead to successful organizing based on the type of campus, organizing laws, and types of contingent faculty? What is the distribution of various types of contingent faculty?
- ✦ Determining the scope of the survey: The number of people surveyed, the number of groups being compared in the analysis, and how they are screened for inclusion.
- ✦ Confirming the types of contingent faculty to be included.
- ✦ Setting priorities for the specific contingent faculty issues identified in the focus groups and in other sources.
- ✦ Considering the use of the survey as the basis for a possible set of standard surveys that could be administered online to members to aid contract negotiations and membership drives.



ILLINOIS HIGHER EDUCATION CONFERENCE

Illinois held its annual Higher Education Conference, **Under One Umbrella**, in Bloomington, IL on October 2-3, 2009.

First row: L-R: Beverly Stewart, Vivian Zimmerman
Second row: Kristi Brownfield, Jenny Barrett
Back Row: Joanne Barsanti, Meredith Byers, Jeff Beaulieu, Jim Grimes, Tim Crawford, NEA; Frank Brooks

ESP AND ACADEMIC PROFESSIONALS TASK FORCE

A group of ESP and academic professional leaders were asked to participate in a facilitated discussion about what is happening in their local and state associations, what could happen, and what kind of help/support could the NEA higher education program provide. Topics discussed covered membership recruitment, leadership development, membership materials, bargaining issues, and health and safety issues.

The group also discussed other support that NEA could provide: What kind of research could NEA do to assist locals and states? What NEA materials are used with the rank and file members? What is the best way to distribute materials; e.g., online, electronic files, print, CD ROM? What kind of materials have locals/states developed and to whom and how are the materials distributed?

Also discussed were union training and mentoring, legislative policy issues, and how NEA Member Benefits can be incorporated into the local associations by NEA or the state affiliate.



ESP and Academic Professionals Task Force

First row: L-R Gretchen Osterman, PA; Michele Israel, MI; Jenny Barrett, IL; John Lee, JBL Associations **Second row:** Erma Hughes, AL; Phadra Williams, NEA; Dan Lalonde, ME; Bret Nair, OR; Tanya Burton, WI; Jim Rice, NCHE President; Maury Koffman, MI; Kerry Sullivan, ME; Vicki Rosser, NV; Cathy Boudreau, NCHE Vice President **Back row:** Steve Droesch, IL; Mark Smith, NEA; Valerie Wilk, NEA; Cory Wofford, NEA

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