

# NCHE News

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: *MAJOR CHANGES*



I hope everyone's semester began well.

Much has happened over the past months, especially in higher education, and this issue, broken into segments, will be one large update.

NEA has gone through a restructuring with a major focus on organizing. The Constituent Relations Department, where higher education and NHCE resided for many years, was disbanded. NCHE and higher education will head to separate areas. NCHE, and other caucuses, has been relocated to the Governance headed by Daaiyah Bilal-Threats. Michael Edward from Governance will work directly with NCHE.

Some of the higher education staff have been reassigned. The organizational specialists have moved to the Center of Organizing: Valerie Wilk to the Midwest, (doing higher education organizing work in Missouri); Phadra Williams-Tuitt to

the Mid-Atlantic; and Bryant Warren to the Pacific. As of this publication date, Mark Smith and Mary Ellen Flannery have yet to be officially assigned.

During the RA, the NCHE Executive Committee met with Barby Halstead-Worrell and Daaiyah Bilal-Threats to talk about the organizational changes and how they would impact higher education and NCHE. At the time of the RA meeting, Barby Halstead-Worrell had been appointed as the head of the Center for Organizing. Soon after the RA, however, we learned she was retiring effective August 31. Subsequently, we learned that Jim Testerman would lead the Center for Organizing, and a Director of Organizing had yet to be appointed.

In August, a long conference call took place with Daaiyah Bilal-Threats and Michael Edward with NCHE Vice President Cathy Boudreau and myself to discuss numerous issues, including the NCHE/NEA contract. It was a productive meeting, but since the reorganization had not been finalized, many questions remained. By the October Board meeting and the NCHE Retreat, I anticipate we will have lots of answers. Our discussions will also include if there will be a specific higher education program within NEA and, most importantly, the details of the higher education conference.

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### ***NCHE Retreat***

Usually, the NCHE Executive Committee has its annual retreat during the summer. Since so many questions remained, the retreat was postponed. It will be held in Washington at the NEA on October 7 and 8. On October 8, the NCHE Executive Committee will meet with the Michael Edwards to further discuss NCHE issues. During the NEA Board, we hope to also meet with Center for Organizing Manager, Jim Testerman and the newly hired Director of the Center for Organizing.

### ***NEA Higher Education Conference***

Though we have been assured there will be a higher education conference this year, we still do not have any definitive information on time or place. I certainly understand that the reorganization transition on September 1 has consumed peoples' attention, but I am hoping that we will have a time and location very soon in order to have a quality higher education conference.

### ***Emerging Leaders Academy***

The 2012 NEA Higher Education Emerging Leaders Academy has 22 participants from sixteen states who will participate in the 11<sup>th</sup> year of this program. Participants will engage in training and will participate in a field experience with a local affiliate similar to the field experience last year California Community College Association.

## NEA Higher Education Organizing Update\*

### Election Victories

In addition to building membership in existing locals over the past year, NEA has organized new higher education locals in:

- ✚ **California**—The California Community College Association, CCA/CTA, organized a local of 65 full-time Education Support Professionals at Lake Tahoe Community College.
- ✚ **Illinois**—IEA had a contingent faculty win at East-West University, a private university in Chicago with a bargaining unit is 93 faculty members.
- ✚ **Montana**—MEA-MFT won an election for a unit of some 540 graduate assistants at Montana State University (Bozeman). The tenured/tenure track and adjunct faculty voted to unionize with MEA-MFT in 2009.
- ✚ **New York** —NYSUT won an election for a unit of 221 part-time faculty at Manhattanville College in Purchase, NY.
- ✚ **Oregon**—OEA added an ESP unit at Mt. Hood Community College by affiliating an independent union.
- ✚ **Rhode Island**—NEA-Rhode Island organized a unit of 21 skilled trades workers at the Rhode Island School of Design. NEA-Rhode Island already represents the tenured/tenure track and contingent faculty and the professional/technical staff at RISD.
- ✚ **Texas**—The Texas Faculty Association established a new chapter at the University of Texas-El Paso and is building membership.

### Unionization Campaigns

NEA affiliates have union representation campaigns in full swing in:

- ✚ **Missouri**—Missouri NEA has two organizing efforts underway in higher ed: a unit of approximately 190 FT and PT faculty at Harris Stowe State University in St. Louis; and a unit of approximately 750 FT faculty at Missouri State University in Springfield. Organizing committees of faculty leaders are working at both institutions, and MNEA and midwest regional team organizers are assisting. Leaders from both universities attended our higher ed conference in Chicago. In Missouri, there is a constitutional right to bargain, but no collective bargaining law for teachers or higher ed faculty. Employees forming a union must pressure the employer to bargaining with them. Valerie Wilk has been assigned to this organizing campaign.
- ✚ **Vermont**—Vermont-NEA filed their union election petition for a unit of 815 administrative and laboratory technical employees, and the election is expected this September. An unaffiliated organization is an intervener and will be on the ballot as well. In addition, Vermont-NEA is continuing a card campaign for an election for a second unit of the remaining unorganized professional staff at UVM (some 800-1000 employees) later in 2012 or 2013. That unit will include, among others, IT, admissions, continuing education, residential life, and research staff.

### Funding

In FY10-12, NEA funded higher education organizing and membership development projects in 19 states: In the Northeast region (ME, VT, and MA); in the Southeast region (FL and AL); in the Mid-Atlantic region (OH); in the Midwest region (IL, MI, MO, MN, SD, and WI); in the Western region (NE, WY, and TX); and in the Pacific region (CA, HI, MT, and WA).

Funds were awarded to affiliates for work with all sectors of our higher education membership through the Competitive State Project planning process between the state affiliates and the NEA regional offices.

- ✚ NEA's Constituent Relations Department provided financial support for organizing and membership development through state and local projects, salary campaigns, contingent action plan funding.
- ✚ A UniServ developmental grant went to ten states (AL, CA, FL, ME, MI, NE, SD, TX, VT, and WA).
- ✚ NEA's Membership and Organizing Dept. also funded some state affiliates for higher ed work in CA, IL, MI, MN, MT, OH, SD, VT, WI, and WY.
- ✚ NEA Collective Bargaining/Member Advocacy and Information Technology Services departments funded higher ed salary campaigns, bargaining, and technology projects in ME, NE, WA, and HI.
- ✚ NEA regional offices also provided funds for special organizing opportunities.

## Contingent Academic Worker Action Plan

NEA continues its work to implement the recommendations in the Contingent Action Plan. Over the past two years, the NEA has focused predominantly on funding organizing and membership development efforts in the states (CA, FL, IL, MN, MO, MT, and WA) and on conducting a survey of contingent faculty union members in six states (CA, IL, MA, MI, OR, and WA). In conjunction with NEA Research, the higher education staff will share the results with these six state affiliates as well as publish a Research Update on the study later this year. Results will be used to assist state affiliates and locals with data for organizing, member recruitment, and bargaining work.

NEA regional staff and the higher education organizational specialists have spent significant time organizing on campuses and assisting locals with membership, union representation, ballot initiative campaigns, job actions, and staff and member training in CA, FL, IL, ME, MI, MO, NE, OH, and VT. Higher ed local leaders, including our Emerging Leaders Academy members, and state affiliate higher ed staff have augmented our efforts as well in CA, FL, IL, OH, and VT.

During the FY2010-12 cycle, NEA higher ed organizing funding totaled almost \$2 million.

*\*This organizing update was presented at an NCHE caucus meeting at the RA by Valerie Wilk.*

## Higher Education Update in the Policy/Congress \*

NEA has an ambitious policy agenda for higher education

- ✚ Ensure adequate funding for higher education
- ✚ Resist attacks on the rights of public employees to have a voice in their working conditions.
- ✚ Ensure standards such as the “gainful employment” regulations for career education programs to protect the integrity of student aid programs.
- ✚ Resist so-called accountability programs that erode faculty and staff responsibility for the quality of academic programs.
- ✚ Ensure appropriate alignment and articulation agreements between all levels of education, encompassing a seamless web of education from pre-Kindergarten through graduate school.

At the federal level, a reversal of the recent trend of moving toward restoring the value of student aid over the past three years includes:

- ✚ Increases in the amount of the Pell Grant maximum award with movement toward a stable funding base for the program.
- ✚ Conversion of federal student loans into the Direct Loan program.
- ✚ Prevention of the doubling of the interest rate on subsidized federal student loans.

The challenge will be to protect these basic programs, but, on the other side, we have not had discernable success in achieving our major objective—to re-invest in the basic funding for colleges and universities to provide adequate numbers of staff and faculty to operate the institutions and properly carry out the academic mission. The overuse and under-support of contingent faculty continues to exploit those individuals, threaten the academic integrity of programs, and impact negatively the education students need and deserve.

## Teacher Education

Teacher Education is one of the major issues facing the Association and offers the NEA an opportunity to integrate the interests of our members into a broad common position. While we are not going to see a new ESEA from the current Congress, the House majority draft of the bill this year incorporates all provisions affecting teacher preparation into the ESEA. Current law splits these provisions between Title II of ESEA and Title II of HEA.

Earlier this year, the DOE held a negotiated rulemaking process on teacher education programs to try to establish rules based on the *Our Teachers, Our Future* initiative [online at <http://www.ed.gov/sites/default/files/our-future-our-teachers.pdf>], which NEA supported. NEA had a seat at the table with Segun Eubanks, Director of Teacher Quality who serves as the NEA representative. Our main goal was to formally include faculty and staff in the development of processes determining the evaluation of teacher preparation programs.

### NEA's Higher Ed Legislative Activities

- ✓ 2012 Transportation Bill (includes cap on student loan interest rates)
- ✓ 2013 Budget/Appropriations Legislation
- ✓ Workforce Investment Act [WIA]
- ✓ Career Tech Education [Perkins]
- ✓ Elementary and Secondary Education
- ✓ Higher Education Act

## Teacher Education Faculty—*We need your help!*

As this issue gains traction, it will be important that we can draw on the expertise of a broad range of higher education faculty and staff involved in teacher education. If you are interested in sharing your expertise, or know colleagues involved in colleges of education who would like to share their expertise in these matters, please make sure we get these names by sending them [marksmith@nea.org](mailto:marksmith@nea.org). Submit name, institution, position, and type of expertise. This will help NEA higher education members become part of the Association's efforts to lead this area of our profession.

## Additional Projects

The Professional Organization Development (POD) Network in Higher Education and the Historically Black Colleges Faculty Development Network (HBCUFD) boards met in April and May to discuss a proposal to solicit project proposals from campuses in their networks to support professional development, research, mentoring and other projects that would improve student achievement in the targeted NEA Priority Schools sites. The HBCUFD agreed to solicit proposals from their organizational members at NCA&T, Cheney University, Central State University, Wilberforce University, Payne College and Alabama State University. These campuses have Priority Schools target sites in their areas. The POD Network has agreed to pilot a project in Michigan. This work is a result of a year-long partnership effort between the NEA Office of Higher Education and the POD and HBCUFD Networks. \*[Mark Smith, Senior Policy Analyst and Nancy O'Brien presented these updates at the NCHE caucus at the RA.](#)

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## NEA Higher Education Conference

There will be a Higher Education Conference in spring 2013. Location and dates are being finalized and will be announced soon!