

**SPECIAL  
POINTS OF  
INTEREST:**

- Fed Stimulus
- MEA Pension Boost
- Shared Governance
- Disruptive Behavior
- Scholarships

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## FED STIMULUS PACKAGE AND HFCC

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) recently passed the U.S. House, with not one Republican legislator in support. The Senate version passed with but three Republican votes in support and then only after severe cuts of \$67 billion in education funding and \$40 billion in assistance to the States. The measure now heads for a tough fight in Conference Committee.

The House ARRA provides \$550 billion primarily directed toward investment in education, medicare support, and infrastructure measures, as well as \$275 billion in tax cuts, all designed to resurrect the U.S. economy and secure it long term.

The College has already submitted several infrastructure projects for consideration under the ARRA, focusing on the SME Building, a parking structure, and adaptation of a facility adjacent to M-TEC for the Nursing program.

If the College is successful in securing funds for these projects, amounting to \$20.5 million, it will take a great deal of pressure off the College’s operating budget. With that pressure diminished, greater funds will be available for the expansion of course offerings and programs to address the College’s soaring enrollment and the needs of displaced workers; the hiring of additional, much needed full-time faculty; and providing equity to the College’s underpaid adjunct faculty.

The ARRA is intended to generate employment growth near-term with “shovel-in-the-ground” projects and long-term by educating and training students for high skill jobs. What is not explicit in the current debate and bill is that a major jobs program is needed for those who will educate and train these students.

A jobs program is needed for full-time faculty, whose numbers have plummeted over the last 25 years. Today, over one-half of the instruction at most of the nation’s colleges and universities is performed by contingent faculty, most being underpaid adjunct faculty. At many institutions, this percentage approaches 70%. Over a period of 25 years, college faculty have become largely a profession of “displaced workers.”

## Fed Stimulus (page 1)

The ARRA provides a very “high stakes” opportunity to relieve the College’s severe local and State revenue shortfall, but only if Local 1650 members engage in the legislative arena, where the fate of these “high stakes” and HFCC’s future will be determined.

Shortly, the Local’s Legislative/Political Action Committee will call upon each Local 1650 member to call, e-mail, write, and visit with your State legislators. Your decision to do so – or not to do so – will profoundly impact our College, our students, your professional lives, and your livelihoods.

John McDonald

## 1650 WELCOMES NEW TEACHERS

Local 1650 extends a very warm welcome to two teachers new to the College this Winter semester: Samer Hanna and Lathika Moragoda.

An orientation session will be scheduled for new teachers to meet and socialize with members of the Local 1650 Executive Board, to get some background on the Local’s role on campus and in the Dearborn community, and to review key features of the contract.

All teachers new to the College are encouraged to become active in Local 1650, by attending the monthly membership meetings and by joining one or more of the Local’s committees: Insurance, Political/Legislative, Solidarity or Technology.

Local 1650 General Membership Meetings are held the third Monday of the month at 3:15 p.m., in room L-311 of the Liberal Arts Building.

## MEA CALLS FOR PENSION BOOST

The MEA is seeking to introduce legislation that would induce early retirements by increasing the factor used in computing a MPSERS pension, and thus pensions themselves, by one-third. The MEA proposal is a one-time offering, applies only to K-12 school employees, and is offered as a measure to reduce deficits confronting K-12 schools districts.

AFT-Michigan has not supported the MEA proposal for the following reasons:

1. MPSERS is not presently fully

funded and has experienced significant losses in its stock portfolio during the recent stock market free fall. The proposed increase in the pension fund’s liability would significantly exceed the actuarial assumptions underpinning the System.

2. This retirement incentive legislation would almost certainly be tied-barred to measures calling for the elimination of the current defined benefit system, as befell State employees in the past; or tied-barred to permission for all districts to opt out of MPSERS, as recently introduced by Senator

Wayne Kuipers (R. Grand Haven); or tied-barred to the elimination of health benefits for all new MPSERS participants.

When so many in the private sector are losing retiree health benefits and pensions themselves, with unemployment and foreclosures soaring, and with 401k’s/403b’s plummeting, a call to improve MPSERS pensions at this time is ill-advised.

John McDonald

## FACULTY CONCERNS ABOUT SHARED GOVERNANCE

Nearly 50 Local 1650 members voiced concern at the Federation's January General Membership Meeting regarding the current state of shared governance at HFCC.

The meeting began with Local 1650 President John McDonald providing a history of shared governance at the College. President McDonald also pointed out that shared governance entails far more than a participatory management style and that the opportunity for faculty to provide input is only a part of shared governance.

Under the Constitution for the College Organization, the faculty and administration share responsibility for matter of educational policy, meaning that all educational policies, following opportunities for faculty input, are subject to debate and a vote of approval or dissent by the College Organization or Senate. Educational policies then proceed to the Trustees for action, carrying with them such approval or dissent.

In the discussion which ensued, members raised the following concerns:

1. On occasion some administrators characterize shared governance as slowing the College in instituting policies and programs. Those in attendance contended that the Senate has a strong history of addressing administrative issues and initiatives promptly, often in 30 days or less, with special meetings of the Senate and/or College Organization if necessary.

Concern was also expressed that a "culture of haste" does not necessarily lend itself to sound institutional decisions or policy.

2. Concern was expressed regarding the large number of institutional initiatives now underway and the ability of the limited number of full-time faculty to provide leadership in effectively addressing all of them.

The view was voiced that the number and importance of these initiatives, along with dramatic enrollment increases, call for additional full-time faculty lines at the College.

3. Concerns were raised about probationary faculty feeling pressure to comply, when approached by the administration to assume leadership for major divisional or institutional initiatives.

J. McDonald indicated that while probationary faculty have contractual obligations relative to course development and division curricula, they are not obligated to undertake leadership in major divisional or institutional initiatives, particularly in light of their recent arrival at the College and their need to prepare courses and fulfill routine divisional committee functions.

President McDonald also indicated that in the highly unlikely event that a probationary teacher's performance evaluation is affected negatively by declining to assume leadership in a major divisional or College initiative, the teacher should confer with the Federation.

4. Faculty participating on selection (hiring) committees observed that they have felt pressure to forward more than one candidate name per position to the Administration. Considerable concern was expressed about administrative "intrusion" into the purview of a selection committee.

## Shared Governance (page 3)

The consensus of opinion, consistent with the longstanding practice at the College, was that each selection committee has the right to determine the number of candidate names per position to be forwarded to the Administration (none, one, two, or more) and whether to rank the candidates. If one name is forwarded and does not meet with administrative approval, a selection committee could then forward a second.

If members of a selection committee believe undue pressure has been brought to bear upon them or that Administration has compelling reasons for a selection committee to forward a specified number of names per position, the issue should be brought to the Senate for consideration and concurrence.

## LOCAL 1650 AND SHARED GOVERNANCE — THE HISTORY

The Constitution for the College Organization, the controlling document of shared governance at HFCC, was the product of Local 1650's first contract. In September 1966, Local 1650 was the first faculty collective bargaining union in the country to go on strike. That strike was largely undertaken to overcome the Administration's refusal to codify the principles of shared governance in a constitution and its refusal to sanction what was then called a faculty senate.

The two week strike produced the Local's first contract and the Constitution delineating shared governance, protected by Article IV.C. and the grievance procedure of the contract, with a Senate distinct from Local 1650 and separate from the Local's operating structure.

For at least two decades following the establishment of the

Constitution, the College Administration repeatedly attempted to negotiate it and the Senate out of existence. The Administration felt that Union should take over the governance structure, but the Union refused. The Federation believed then and believes now that the College is best served with two institutions representing its faculty: the Union on matters of wages, hours, and conditions of employment – and the Senate on matters of educational and institutional policy.

Ultimately both the Local 1650 contract and the Constitution for the College Organization are documents which empower faculty. Both documents define the rights of faculty, one in matters of employment and the other in matters of professional standing. In doing so, both limit the authority of management.

Both documents provide checks and balances and the opportunity for broad and substantive faculty engagement in decision making at the College. This limitation on managerial power and the broad engagement of many minds in decision making produce labor, educational, and institutional policies that are far sounder and more broadly embraced than would policies deriving from a few in a unilateral, hierarchical system.

HFCC's full-time faculty have come to the College and spent their careers here in part because of the strength and benefits of the Local 1650 contract. Equally important, though, has been the professional standing and professional fulfillment conferred to faculty by HFCC's shared governance tradition and its controlling document.

John McDonald

## COLLEGE ADDRESSES STUDENT BEHAVIOR CONCERNS

The College Administration is currently examining its policies and procedures relative to disruptive and threatening student behavior, with the objective of creating a “response team” and standards to evaluate and address such matters.

In light of the focus of the recent Professional Issues Conference focusing on civility and academic integrity and the concerns voiced by faculty and staff during the Conference, this is an important, timely, and welcome Administrative initiative.

The Chairs of the Professional Issues Conference, Eric Rader and Roger Weekes, will be submitting to the Administration the questions and concerns

voiced by conference participants for consideration and response by those reviewing the College’s policies and procedures.

If you believe your concerns/suggestions might not have been captured in the Conference workshop sessions or you now have additional input to provide, please forward such to Eric or Roger for inclusion in their submission to the Administration.

If you have specific concerns regarding specific incidents and what policies/procedures should be considered to address them, please forward these to John McDonald.

## AFT MICHIGAN ROLLIE HOPGOOD SCHOLARSHIPS

AFT Michigan offers two \$1,000 scholarships to graduating high school seniors whose future goal is to become a teacher. Students can either be a son or daughter of an AFT Michigan member or be graduating from a high school whose staff is represented by an AFT Michigan local. The application deadline is May 1, 2009. Applications are available through the Local 1650 office.

## AFT ROBERT PORTER SCHOLARSHIP

March 31 is the application deadline for the AFT's 2009 Robert G. Porter Scholars Program. The program offers two types of scholarships: four-year, \$8,000 post-secondary scholarships for graduating high school seniors who are dependents of an AFT member; and one-time, \$1,000 grants for AFT members to pursue courses related to their field of work.

The scholarship program was established by the AFT Executive Council in 1992 to honor the contributions of Porter, the Union's longtime Secretary-Treasurer, who died in 1991.

Applications and information are available at the AFT website: [www.aft.org](http://www.aft.org).