

1650 REPORT

Henry Ford Community College Federation of Teachers
LOCAL 1650, A. F. of T.

Dearborn

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Board Study Session on Future of HFCC
Presentation by Local 1650 President

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Others tonight will address such issues as curriculum and program as well as the question of how the College can meet the needs of students for the remaining years of this decade and those of the last decade of this century. There will be tonight discussion of the rapid social and technological changes with which this College and its educators must contend. The challenge for educators coping with such changes is compounded by the community college's traditional mission of educating a broad spectrum of students with varying abilities and aspirations.

That HFCC educators have met such challenges in the past, and that they continue to do so, is demonstrated by the growth and reputation this College has achieved. This Study Session affords College teachers the opportunity to explore with you how such challenges shall be met in the future. Before they do so, let me observe that these teachers, and those of the departments they represent tonight, have built and maintained the outstanding programs and reputation that Henry Ford Community College enjoys.

My purpose is to speak as President of the Henry Ford Community College Federation of Teachers, AFT Local 1650, as a representative of the entire HFCC teaching staff, who are ultimately responsible for the quality and reputation of this College, a College that, in turn, makes a vital contribution to the quality and reputation of the Dearborn community.

My view of the "future of HFCC," any view of its future, must rely in the last analysis upon the quality of its teaching staff. The reputation this College enjoys derives from the fact that it has attracted and retained outstanding teachers. This College's future depends on whether it will continue to do so.

This College has historically attracted and retained its excellent teaching staff because it has historically offered very attractive salaries. A major question before us is whether or not this College will continue to be economically attractive to the best of those people who have selected education as a career. While it may sound callous, let me observe, nevertheless, that money attracts talent. In education as in any other field, be it the law, municipal government, or private industry, wages and wage increases constitute a measure of career advancement, bolster employee morale by acknowledging successful performance, and address an employee's need to enhance the opportunities available to his or her family.

Given the recent Tax Tribunal Ruling, the question of compensation and its obvious impact on budget is a most sensitive one. Nevertheless, I intend to tread, in customary fashion, where angels fear.

It is a matter of record that historically teacher salaries at HFCC have ranked among those of the top ten school districts and community colleges of Metropolitan Detroit. This was the case almost without interruption until 1983. In 1983-84, however, HFCC ranks 22nd in a tri-county ranking of educators with Master's degrees. Given the 1984-85 contracts already settled, HFCC ranks quite nearly 30th. Educators with Master's degrees in a great many school districts receive salary superior to that at HFCC. Oakland County Community College's compensation, both contractual and extra-contractual, is superior to that of HFCC. In 1984-85, Macomb County Community College's compensation, both contractual and extra-contractual will be superior to that of HFCC. While Wayne County Community College's compensation is not yet superior to that of HFCC, Wayne County teachers recently reached a three year agreement providing a 14%

increase in salary.

The issue before this College is whether or not it will be able to compete in the market place for the best people available during the remainder of this decade. Fully 25% of the teachers at HFCC will retire by 1990. These must be replaced, and the College is in obvious need of staff additions.

Not only must these replacements and additions be considered, but many currently employed HFCC teachers have talents and skills highly sought after in private industry. Let me observe that there is no glut of teachers in Science and Math, in Nursing and many Technological fields. With respect to those fields where there exists an abundance of applicants, will the HFCC salary schedule attract the excellent or simply the average teacher? There are school districts and community colleges in the metropolitan Detroit area and in other locales, which are and will be far more competitive than HFCC, and this College must compete for personnel with institutions of higher education beyond the metro Detroit area.

If HFCC's competitive salary standing is allowed to erode for a long period of time, consider the severe economic burden of the eventual adjustment in salaries which must be made, if the institution is to regain a competitive standing. At some point, the issue of competitive salaries must be addressed. If we postpone salary adjustments, if we relegate them to the future, the correction, when it comes, will be all the more severe.

Not far removed from the question of compensation for full-time teachers is the very question of whether this College will be staffed primarily by full-time teachers. Will the trend of the last ten years continue? Will the growth in the number of part-time teachers and the percentage of contact hours taught by them continue unchecked?

Between 1972 and 1983, there was at HFCC a 44% increase in students, a 40% increase in FYES, a 26% increase in Administrators and Supervisors, a 59% increase in support

personnel, a 11.6% increase in full-time teachers, and a 228% increase in part-time teachers. Today there are 212 full-time teachers at HFCC, and some 600 part-time teachers. Currently the ratio of part-time to full-time at HFCC is 2.8:1. Oakland County CC has a ratio of 1.5:1, Macomb 1.4:1, and Schoolcraft 1.5:1.

In 1975, the College Administration reported to the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools that 65% of the student contact hours were taught by full-time teachers. By 1983, the percentage of student contact hours taught by full-time teachers had dropped to 55%.

Let me offer one final illustration of this growth in part-time. In 1971, there were the equivalent of two full-time positions taught by part-time teachers in the English Department during the day program. In 1983-84, the equivalent of eleven full-time positions are taught by part-timers during the day program. The growth in part-time has not been confined to the evening program, and it has not been confined to the English Department.

In its 1975 report, North Central made the following observations regarding the extent of part-time instruction at the College. In its list of concerns which North Central called for the College to address, I quote: "The part-time/full-time ratio of faculty (more than 2:1) is extremely high for effective instruction, commitment. It should be noted, however, that 65 percent of all classroom hours per week are taught by full-time faculty...." In its "Summary and Recommendations," North Central recommends "That the ratio of part-time to full-time should be examined and if possible, reduced." The disturbing fact is that the number of part-timers has been increased, not reduced, since North Central's last visit, as the Association will discover when it returns for its 1985 accreditation visit.

The last issue I wish to raise with respect to the College's future is that of independence from the Dearborn Public School District. I have no recommendation to make, nor does Local 1650. It should be noted, however, that it has been ten years

since this question was last given extensive study. In 1974, the Board and a majority of the College community favored an independent College. The electorate did not. At that time, many felt the College needed a Board of Trustees whose exclusive area of concern would be the College and its effective operation. Such an arrangement it was felt, would benefit the College, not to mention Board of Education members on a treadmill of Board meeting after Board meeting. Moreover, the College and P-12 often have divergent needs and circumstances, and too often one unit or the other runs into the impediment of "District wide implications," one recent example being the issue of Early Retirement Incentive. Certainly, the implications of College independence go beyond the two I have cited, as a new extensive review of the issue of College independence would reveal.

The subject of tonight's study session is the College's future and long-range planning. From the Union's perspective, HFCC's long-range future will be largely determined by what actions the Board of Trustees takes and permits the College to take in the very near future.

John McDonald