

**SPECIAL
POINTS OF
INTEREST:**

- **Role of Full-time Faculty**
- **Community Service**
- **2020 Challenges**

**INSIDE THIS
ISSUE:**

College Operational Fund	2
Trustee Election	3
State House Election	3

REPORT ON STATE OF THE UNION

For a decade, these annual reports on the State of Local 1650 addressed administrative attacks on faculty and our contract – and were, quite frankly, quite bleak. While 2019 has been a very positive year at the College, several challenges lie before us in 2020.

Kavalhuna Administration

First the positive. President Kavalhuna continues to address successfully the severe morale issues he inherited from his predecessor. Faculty and staff now feel free to address issues of concern without fear of disrespect or retaliation. The College President is seeking the advice of experienced faculty, as evident in the renewal of the College operating millage. Relationships with the community that the College serves are no longer solely dependent on Local 1650’s connections and respect throughout the community. The “Lost Decade” at HFC has ended, but challenges still remain.

Full-time Faculty Lines

First, the College is contractually obligated to employ 200 full-time faculty by the Fall of 2020 – and time is running out. In its concessionary contract which played a major role in saving the College from bankruptcy in 2013, Local 1650 conceded \$29 million from its contract. The concessions included forfeiting scheduled pay increases, cutting EC rates, cutting full-time lines from 205 to 200, and delaying the hiring of 14 faculty who took a VESP until the Fall 2020 semester at the latest. Two hundred full-time lines minus 14 VESP departures should have resulted in 186 full-time lines in each of the last six years. The Administration, however, reduced full-time lines even further to 175. So, the \$29 million in agreed-upon savings skyrocketed by an additional nine fewer full-time lines in each of six years. Despite the repeated efforts of Local 1650 to have the Administration incrementally hire full-time lines over five years, it refused to do so – and now an “elephantine expenditure” is at the head of the “budgetary snake.” Of course, the Administration shudders at this “sudden” yet self-imposed impact on its budget.

College Operational Fund

The fiscal problem here is ultimately the product of former Boards of Trustees, as was the near bankruptcy of the College in 2013. Despite the advice of the Federation years ago to seek a voter-approved bond to match the State's funding of the Technical Building expansion and the College's energy reduction contract with Johnson Controls, Trustees unanimously rejected a bond proposal, with the then Chair stating publicly that the "voters would probably approve it." The opportunity to pass a bond passed. Thus, the College's foot-dragging regarding full-time staffing ensued, though managerial and supervisory hires continued. Witness the ever-expanding, overcrowded College Organizational Chart.

Enrollment and Faculty Lines

The Administration repeatedly expresses its concern about declining enrollment and faculty hires. It seeks to tie full-time hires to enrollment numbers. First, whether we have 15,000 students or 11,000, the important role of full-time faculty in developing cutting edge curriculum, assessing new pedagogies, serving on department committees, serving on college-wide committees, serving on Senate committees and sub-committees, serving on special HFC Task Forces does not diminish. A larger cohort of full-time faculty remains needed to provide expertise and college-wide perspectives in developing policy recommendations and the direction of the College. These roles do not disappear or diminish. Their burden, though, has become exacerbated at 175 versus 200 full-time faculty.

Role of Full-time Faculty

One further observation from a 1650 President with some seniority at the College – I have never heard the Administration assert that it needs to hire significant numbers of full-time faculty. When enrollment is low, the College can not hire faculty, though administrative and supervisory personnel increase in number. When enrollment is high, the College will not hire faculty because enrollment may fall. There is always a compelling reason not to hire faculty.

Presently, full-time faculty teach only 40% of the classes at HFC. Teaching is being assumed by adjunct faculty. Important governance work is falling on the shoulders of fewer and fewer faculty. As Brian Smith recently observed, "What are we leaving the next generation of faculty?" Very little – if the Union capitulates now.

To address the Trustees' self-imposed budgetary constraints, the Federation has proposed a contract extension with a definite number of annual full-time hires. Absent such, the College must hire some 25 faculty by 2020 or violate the contract the Trustees signed. Given the months needed to identify the Departments which will receive hires, form hiring committees, develop job descriptions, advertise

positions, select candidates for interviews, schedule interviews, conduct interviews, and process recommended hires through the Administration and Trustees, time is definitely running out to meet the Fall 2020 deadline. What remains for the Trustees is a good faith contract extension or a bad faith violation of our contract.

Trustee Election

Another challenge before us is the November ballot. Four HFC Trustee seats will be on that ballot. One election could well change the Board's perspective and priorities in education at the Dearborn Schools and at HFC. It is critical that open and fair-minded Trustees – that Trustees who support education funding and not oppose it – be elected. 1650 members must assist such candidates with political action funds and “boots on the ground.”

State House Election

While it may be more obvious at the local level, it is equally true at the State level. There too we are employees of politicians elected to office. Their decisions at the State level also determine the future of our professional lives and our profession at HFC.

One needs only to review the State Republican Party record and the Republicans' unfulfilled agenda to see this: major cuts in education funding yet to be restored, “right to work” for less legislation, insurance premium costs shifted to public employees through hard cap legislation, the constant diminishment of new hire State pension benefits, the taxation of public and private pensions, the K-12 loss of tenure, cuts in corporate taxes passed again and again, and the proposed use of education funding and State pension reserves to repair roads. The 2020 ballot will see all State House seats on the ballot as well as two Michigan Supreme Court seats, four State Board of Education seats, and six University Regent seats.

While Governor Whitmer has provided a long-needed “firewall” against the Republican anti-public education, anti-union agenda, absent at least the State House, she cannot effectively pursue legislation to reverse the Republican damage already done to education and unions. As the Governor recently observed at a reception at her home, she would rather be a “quarterback” than a “goalie.” We can only achieve a pro-education, pro-union “quarterback” by denying Republican ideologues control of the State House. This can only be done with political action funds and door-to-door campaigning.

Community Service

A less obvious but very important form of political action benefitting the College and Federation is community service. Yes, community service. While such service expresses the faculty's deep appreciation of the community and its unwavering support of HFC, it also gives a face to HFC faculty and the

Federation. The relationships already in place with community leaders and organizations have served the Federation well. The virtual universal support (minus one Trustee) of the recent HFC millage renewal is but one example. When the College or Federation faces challenges or threats, we can not make “cold calls” seeking community support. We need relationships at such times, and these come from a history of assisting the community and its leaders. Twenty hours of community service per year is not excessive, unless faculty, like students, delay such to the very end of the year. The opportunities to serve are many. Please see the list compiled by Chardin Claybourne. As you volunteer, build relationships with non-HFC volunteers and with the leadership of the organization you serve. It will build esteem for the College and Union.

2020 Challenges

Full-time faculty hires, political influence at the local and State levels, expanding community service and relationships – these are major Union challenges in 2020 – and you are the Union. The 1650 President, Executive Board, and Negotiating Team – not simply those few are the Union. All HFC faculty are the Union. We all have an obligation to face the challenges before us.

In doing so, we serve our students, serve our College, serve our Union, and serve our profession – now and for years to come.

John McDonald
January 27, 2020