



# **THE HARPER ADJUNCT ADVOCATE**

**HARPER COLLEGE ADJUNCT FACULTY ASSOCIATION  
NEWSLETTER**

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## **DEADLINE APPROACHING. BUT IT'S NOT TOO LATE FOR HCAFA MEMBERSTO USE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT MONEY IN THE SUMMER!**

Summer is the perfect time to take that college credit class or seminar you have always wanted to take or to complete that certification or degree program that you haven't had time for.

The HCAFA contract with the college states that if *an adjunct employee has an assignment during the spring semester, he/she may request (prior to the end of the spring semester) reimbursement for pre-approved professional development which occurs during the summer term. Professional development activities must be specific to the adjunct employee's assignment at Harper.*

- Each adjunct is eligible to receive \$400 or more. (If you plan to take a course that costs more than \$400, you should petition your Dean for additional money from the fund.)
- You may apply for money for a summer activity even if you have already obtained \$400 for past activities during this school year (fall and spring).
- Do not pay for the activity until you have applied for and received pre-approval.
- Librarians and Counselors are eligible for the professional development money.
- *To access the professional development form, go to [www.harperadjuncts.org](http://www.harperadjuncts.org) and click on the "Document" tab at the top; then go to "Form on the Harper Portal" under the heading "Professional Development."*

**\$17,000 Remains in Our Professional Development Fund.  
The fund is a use-it-or-lose-it fund. Money not used will revert to the college.**

# **SURS IS CHANGING DUE TO PENSION REFORM!**

## **If You Are Eligible To Retire, Make Sure That You Know Your Options!**

### **Learn the Facts about Pension Reform**

Posted on the SURS website: March 24, 2014

On Dec. 5, 2013, Gov. Quinn signed SB 1, the comprehensive pension reform bill, into law (**Public Act 98-599**). The bill's components, mostly based on an earlier conference committee report, represent compromise language hashed-out by legislative leaders. Both chambers approved the bill almost simultaneously on Dec. 3, 2013. (*The House voted 62-53 and the Senate voted 30-24.*)



The main elements of the reform package include:

- Reduction of the Automatic Annual Increase for current and future Tier 1 retirees (retirees who began SURS before 1/1/11).
- Automatic Annual Increase deferments for future Tier 1 retirees
- Capping pensionable earnings for Tier 1 participants
- Delaying the retirement age for current Tier 1 state workers under age 45
- Eliminating the use of sick and vacation days for service credit or pensionable earnings for future participants
- Changes to the Effective Rate of Interest
- Reduction of employee contributions (1%) for Tier 1 participants
- Funding guarantees
- The option for 5% of present Tier 1 participants to join a new defined-contribution plan

The law is being challenged in court, but unless a stay is granted by the courts, it will go into effect on June 1, 2014,

SURS continues to analyze the 327-page law to determine its full impact on members, employers and the System in general. We have prepared a synopsis of the bill, a Webinar Presentation and a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) to help members make informed decisions.... SURS staff is also preparing *Special Edition Advocate* newsletters outlining how pension reform provisions affect our different member groups. The editions will target annuitants/survivors, Tier 1 members, Tier 2 members, and SMP members.

In addition, SURS Outreach Department is hosting on-campus presentations and webinars, as well as working with SUAA on annuitant seminars.

The Northern Illinois University Human Resources Website adds the following information.

**“Perhaps the most significant point of concern among many participants throughout the system is the effect of these amendments on the Money Purchase formula calculation, which has a July 1 effective date. Employees considering retirement options in advance of the effective dates of PA 98-599 should participate in one or more informational forums and/or make contact with SURS as soon as possible. Individual cases vary considerably depending on each individual’s earnings history and/or the retirement date selected for a retirement estimate.”**

### **What Can I Do to Become Informed As Soon As Possible?**

- **Attend the SURS information meeting at Harper, in E107, on Wednesday, April 30 from 1:00 – 3:00.** SURS recommends members bring a copy of their 2013 Benefit Summary Statement to the presentation. Members can print the statement from their member account at [www.surs.org](http://www.surs.org).
- **Go to the SURS website, [www.surs.org](http://www.surs.org) and watch webinars.**
- **Use the SURS retirement estimator on the SURS website.**
- **Make an appointment to talk with a SURS counselor as soon as possible.**

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

### HCAFA AWARDED NEA GRANT!

HCAFA was selected to be one of a dozen unions across the country to receive a National Education Association grant for Presidential Release Time beginning this fall. In early April we received the following information from the NEA Center for Organizing about the grant application that we had filed in December:

“Congratulations! Harper College Adjunct Faculty Association has been selected to receive a Part-time Local President Release Time Program (LPRTP) Grant, beginning with the 2014-15 program year. During the first and second years of the program, NEA will fund \$2,250; during the third year, NEA will fund \$1,500.” The Illinois Education Association also will be contributing \$500 for the first and second years of the program, and \$350 for the third year. In their award letter, the NEA Center for Organizing continued to say “Your grant application was selected because it contained a focus on fewer goals, ambitious goals, and focus on membership growth and retention. The committee suggests that you focus on your agency-fee members and set some goals and/or benchmarks to help guide your work.”

President Charmian Tashjian and our IEA UniServe Director, Amy Kunz, will be going to Washington, D.C. in October for special training. The grant is limited to three years, but the grant application required HCAFA to plan for the next five years. Your vote at the March 2014 general meeting to increase local membership dues, starting this fall, will help HCAFA meet its required matching financial responsibilities for this grant. This grant will serve as our strategic plan for the next five years. In the letter of application for the grant, Charmian had this to say:

“The Harper College Adjunct Faculty Association (HCAFA) and I appreciate your consideration of our grant application. At this point in time, the tenth anniversary of HCAFA’s inception as a Union, we are proud to still be in existence and going strong. IEA was there working for us even before we were officially able to unionize, overturning the law that at that time made it impossible for part-time educators to come together as a union. This grant would make it possible for us to improve our membership in numbers and in engagement through more activities and publicity. It will also help to keep HCAFA’s leadership revitalized by identifying and developing new leaders. And finally, it will assist us in having more time and opportunities to meet and strategize with other unions, both at Harper and in our local area, and to support one another. I can’t think of any better ways to ensure HCAFA’s future!”

We look forward to working on and meeting the goals outlined in the grant. We hope that you will help us in doing so. The goals are not lofty; they have been identified as ones which will benefit all members of HCAFA, both now and in the future. Thank you!

In solidarity,  
*Charmian*

## HOW DOES HCAFA CONTACT ADJUNCTS? & HOW CAN ADJUNCTS CONTACT HCAFA?

### HCAFA contacts adjuncts by:

- Personal email or phone if we've been given the information and the information is current.
- Harper email if we do not have the adjunct's personal information.

### Adjuncts can contact HCAFA by:

- HCAFA email. (Contact information is listed on the last page of this newsletter & on our website., [www.harperadjuncts.org](http://www.harperadjuncts.org).)
- Calling the IEA office at 847 359-0300 and speaking with Amy or Sonya. If you call at a time when Amy and Sonya are not in, please leave a clear message with your name and contact information.

**Update Your Contact Information!** HCAFA's preferred means of communication are by personal email, phone, and HCAFA's website, [www.harperadjuncts.org](http://www.harperadjuncts.org). HCAFA frequently sends reminders, newsletters, and important information via email. We simultaneously post the information on our website. If you know someone who has not received union emails, please ask them to update their contact information by sending their current information to Gary Wilson, membership chair, at [hcafamembership@gmail.com](mailto:hcafamembership@gmail.com).

### **Problem?**

If you have a problem, contact Taimi Wilk, HCAFA grievance chair, at [hcafagrievance@gmail.com](mailto:hcafagrievance@gmail.com) as soon as possible. If we don't know about your problem, we may not be able to meet the deadlines in our contract to help you.

### **WHAT ARE MY WEINGARTEN RIGHTS?**

If you are ever in a situation that you believe could lead to any kind of disciplinary action, you have the right to have a union representative with you. In a situation like that, to protect yourself, say, "If this discussion could in any way lead to my being disciplined or terminated, or affect my personal working conditions, I respectfully request that my union representative be present at the meeting. Without representation, I choose not to answer any questions." Under no circumstances should you lose your cool or walk out of the meeting.

For a more complete explanation of these very important rights, go to the HCAFA website, [www.harperadjuncts.org](http://www.harperadjuncts.org), and click on "union representation" under the "documents" tab.

**THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO STAY CONNECTED TO HCAFA!**  
**Come to HCAFA Executive Committee Meetings.**  
**Read *The Harper Adjunct Advocate***  
**Check out our bulletin boards in F, L, J, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of A,**  
**Contact your division reps or officers.**  
**Visit Our Website, [WWW.HARPERADJUNCTS.ORG](http://WWW.HARPERADJUNCTS.ORG).**

**HCAFA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
OFFICERS**

President: Charmian Tashjian	hcafapresident@gmail.com
Vice President/Grievance Chair: Taimi Wilk	hcafagrievance@gmail.com
Treasurer: Rob Alexander	hcafatreasurer@gmail.com
Membership Records Chair: Gary Wilson Janice Cutler	hcafamembership@gmail.com
Secretaries: Arlene Bublick Joanne Meyerhoff	hcafasecretary@gmail.com hcafasecretary@gmail.com
IEA/NEA Uniserv Director: Amy Kunz	amy.kunz@ieanea.org (847 359-0300)

**DIVISION REPRESENTATIVES**

AEE:		MS:	
Rob Alexander	hcafaels1@gmail.com	Gary Wilson	hcafamath1@gmail.com
Taimi Wilk	hcafaels2@gmail.com		
		COUNSELORS	
CP:		Joanne Meyerhoff	hcafalibcoun1@gmail.com
Danuta Malczewska	hcafacp1@gmail.com		
		LIBRARIANS	
LIBARTS:		Dwain Thomas	hcafalibcoun1@gmail.com
Larry Price	hcafalibarts3@gmail.com		

*Note: For divisions without reps, we'll do our best to keep you informed. If you are in BUSS, please consider becoming a rep and join us for our monthly meetings. It will be to your advantage and your union's.*



*HCAFA wishes you a great summer!*