

ADJUNCT FACULTY SPECIAL ISSUE

SUCCESS In Preserving Adjunct Faculty Pensions

On January 3rd, the Council learned that the NJ Division of Pensions and Benefits withdrew its proposed changes to the rules by which the state accrues your pension credits throughout your teaching career.

The Council credits this significant victory to its successful political lobbying and to the grass roots efforts of its members.

Insofar as how the state calculates your earned pension credits, you will continue to be treated the same

as full time faculty. You will continue to receive one year of pension credit for every academic year you work. If the Trenton bureaucrats had their way, you would have only received credit for actual months worked. That means instead of earning 12 months of pension credit, your pension account would have been chiseled down to as little as 8 months of credit. Summer sessions would have been discounted entirely and periods of May, December and January would have been at risk because the proposed rules

would have taken away service credit in any month in which you did not work at least 10 days. These changes, had they been enacted, would have reduced your pension by 33%!

The Council and your local leadership did their part in halting the state's ludicrous proposal; but the most powerful voice in the Council – its membership – protected its interests by engaging directly in a successful letter-writing campaign.

Kudos to all!

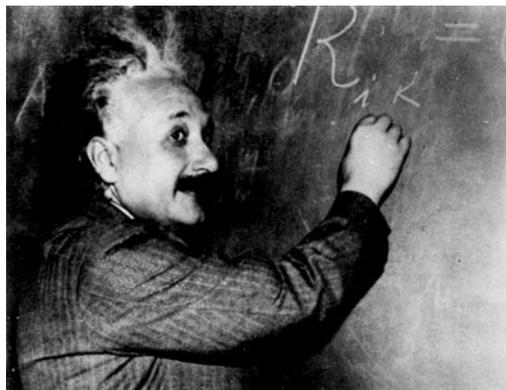
It's NOT Unprofessional to Join Other Professionals in a Union

Albert Einstein (yes – *that* Albert Einstein) was an AFT member and a vigorous advocate of unionism for college and university faculty and professional staff. Here's why, in his own words:

"I consider it important, indeed urgently necessary, for intellectual workers to get together both to protect their own economic status and also to secure their influence in the political field"

If you think that it's "unprofessional" to join a union and that somehow personal initiative and freedom of academic expression are incompatible with union membership – consider this:

Recently, the AFT defeated the Division of Pension and Benefits when it wanted to cut pension credit earnings for adjunct faculty. The only apparent basis for the Division's reasoning in this matter was that it considers adjunct faculty to be no different than "hourly," "per diem," "on-call," or "as-needed" employees (These are direct citations from the proposed changes). To characterize adjunct



faculty in those terms flies in the face of reality and reflects a view that you are not to be regarded as professionals, but rather like "day laborers." Many adjuncts have been employed by the same institutions for years, if not decades, teaching two courses a semester, advising students and regularly interacting with full-time faculty, librarians and professional staff. To lump you in with "per diem" or "on-call" employees is both inaccurate and disrespectful.

However righteous your personal indignation might be of the State's view of your professionalism, it is undeniable that the most effective way to fight for dignity is through the collective strength of unionism.

Who defends your professionalism, bargains for your salary increases and fights to keep your pension benefits? Who provides a platform of effective self-expression in this issue? Your union – of course.

If you're not a member yet - JOIN US TODAY!

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Successful Pension Preservation Highlights the AFT at its Best

For those adjunct faculty who still have yet to join the AFT, the Council's recent defense of adjunct pensions demonstrates why we should belong to this union.

Absent the collective empowerment we achieve through union solidarity, faceless bureaucrats in Trenton would have gotten away with saving a few bucks – by subtracting them from your retirement earnings.

The AFT's record of accomplishments on your behalf isn't just "good" – it is excellent.

Our accomplishments for adjuncts during the past ten years, and more recently with the preservation of your pension – and self-respect – are now a matter of record.

Of course, we want to do more, and there is plenty left to accomplish.

Frankly, the absence of your name from the AFT's membership rolls impedes prog-

ress on your behalf. Non-member adjuncts already pay 85% of full dues – for a little bit more and the time it takes to fill out the enclosed authorization card, seal the prepaid envelope and drop it in a mailbox – you can stand together with us for the improvement of wages, working conditions, and pension benefits.

You may teach as an adjunct in addition to working full-time or may be an adjunct who teaches in several different state institutions or you may be a retiree who loves to teach. Whatever the case may be, you are a teaching professional and you are entitled to be treated accordingly. Joining the AFT makes a personal statement about your own self-worth and enables you to realize your goals through the collective power of a union of professionals. Visit www.cnjscl.org for more information.

Don't put it off – send in the card and join now.

Local Union phone numbers	
Kean	908-737-5940
MSU	973-956-7228 (contact Vijay Sargis)
NJCU	201-200-3487
Ramapo	201-684-7108
Rowan	856-256-4511
Stockton	609-652-4399
TCNJ	609-771-2783
WPUNJ	973-720-2988

Understanding the Health Insurance Issue

Prior to the passage of A-3424, the legislation that provides adjunct faculty with the right to enroll in the New Jersey State Health Benefits program, adjuncts had no rights of any kind to State health benefits. However, after five years of the AFT's political lobbying, adjunct faculty may participate in NJPLUS – by paying the same premium as the State pays for this insurance.

The AFT views this as an important political victory. It's part of a multi-step process that will ultimately lead to employer-paid contributions towards adjunct faculty health benefits. In other words, when we negotiate our next contract, the AFT may bargain over employer paid contributions to this benefit.

This is important legislation. Adjunct faculty in New Jersey's state colleges/universities know that shopping for health insurance in New Jersey is no fun. Our state has

some of the highest health insurance rates in the country. Now, with the right to "buy in" to NJPLUS, you will find NJPLUS to be more comprehensive and about one-third lower in cost than what is commonly available to employees in the private sector. Undeniably, we have made progress concerning adjunct faculty rights.

What difference does your membership mean to the AFT's goals for adjunct faculty? As employees of a state college/university, you are represented by a Union that must negotiate with political appointees and lobby elected officials. These are people who understand membership numbers and who listen to their constituencies. Simply stated, strong AFT membership means the Union increases its chances of obtaining benefits like health care - and defending benefits already achieved, such as your pensions.