

May 2025

Why I Joined the AFA

What is the AFA?

It's your union, protecting and fighting for the rights of all adjunct faculty members. We are affiliated with the Illinois Education Association, a state affiliate of the National Education Association.

SPRING 2025 Payroll Dates

5/9/, 5/23

SUMMER Payroll Dates

6/20, 7/4, 7/18, 8/1

Oakton Board of Trustees Mtgs

5/20, 6/24, 8/19

at 6 p.m. in the DP Board Room

AFA Member Meeting

August 13, Wednesday

4 -5:15 on [Zoom](#)

AFA Open Office Hours

TBA

While I have dashed off an email to the powers that be when a paycheck is screwed up, and have spoken up at a Board meeting when I disagreed with a policy (I was so ticked at the annuitant situation years ago), these kinds of actions make me feel better but don't make much of a dent.

What makes a dent? Coming together as a unit, a collection of voices recognized by the administration as a representative of the people who teach most of the classes around here. The administration is not obligated to listen to me, but it is obligated to deal with the AFA. My voice won't change policy, but policy can be changed when the union brings concerns to the negotiation table. Policies like what? The money available for professional development salary increases. The right to representation when there is a complaint made against one of us. Having an advocate when you feel as if you have been treated unfairly. These did not automatically spring from the goodwill of the college. Adjunct faculty voiced concerns and these were brought to the negotiating table. These did not automatically spring from the good will of the college. Adjuncts voiced concerns and these were brought to the negotiating table.

I began writing the newsletter several years ago. I teach writing, but can I write for the AFA? Writing for public consumption never crossed my mind until former AFA president Barb Dayton reached out to me in the hallway one day and invited me to. So across cyberspace, I am inviting you to join the union that represents adjunct faculty. Individuals don't get heard, but a union of people does. Join us.

Contract Negotiations

Our negotiating team has been hard at work for months. They hope negotiations with the college on the new contract will be concluded by the end of the summer. An



information session on the new contract will be held in hybrid format on Monday, August 11, of Orientation Week from 4 to 5:15.

The Mentorship Program

Remember that first year at Oakton? Think how much easier it would have been with a mentor to show you the ropes. You can be that person for someone else now. The AFA Mentorship Program is looking for mentors to help newly hired adjunct faculty acclimate to working at Oakton. Any adjunct faculty with at least three years of teaching experience are encouraged to apply. Adjunct David Jakalski will match you with a new adjunct in your field. This is another program initiated by adjuncts through the AFA; you are paid for participation. Contact David at djakalski@oakton.edu.

HIP Awards Committee

The **Adjunct Faculty High-Impact Teaching Award** recognizes adjunct Faculty who have done exemplary work in implementing high-impact practices into their courses. Some of these practices are active learning, collaborative projects, research activities and developing electronic portfolios. Think back over the year – what have you done that is lined to these practices? You can nominate yourself or a colleague. Here is the application for a [High Impact Practice\(s\)](#) award for AY 2025/2026. [Click here](#) for details. The [application](#) is due **by 5:00 pm on May 16, 2025**.

Sign Up for the Fall Persistence Project

Early bird [registration](#) for the Fall term will last until **May 20th**. If you sign up now, you won't have to remember later. Faculty who register by the early bird date will have their sections tagged with a PP tag in Banner and have information about their course shared with the advisers for the summer advising appointments by June 1.

The Persistence Project is great for students. What do *you* agree to do? Faculty who participate in the Persistence Project agree to

1. learn all of the students' names (preferably by the end of week 3)
2. meet with 75% of the students in your class by the end of week 4
3. communicate high and clear expectations in your course syllabus with the room for situational grace
4. provide feedback on a significant content assessment by the end of week 5

And per our contract, you are paid as well. If you have any questions about the Persistence Project, contact Nicole Perry (nperry@oakton.edu) or Shannon Sloan-Spice (ssloansp@oakton.edu).

Adjunct Faculty Needed to Serve on Committees

Shared governance is an essential pillar of higher education. At Oakton, this takes the form of committees often. As a member of the AFA, you can be a valued presence on a committee and give your fellow adjunct faculty members a voice – and vote. Not only that, but you will meet new people and be compensated for your time. Is that not enough? Then think about this:

It's Good to Participate.

Barbara Cohen writes, “Please consider being an AFA rep on an Oakton committee. In the past 20 years, I represented my fellow adjuncts on committees such as Search for New Administrators; Senior Lecturer; High Impact Award; Political Action; and Curriculum. All experiences were positive: meeting new personnel (full-timers, staff and admin), having my vote count and seeing the results of my actions years later. The choices are varied, the time commitment is very specific and other than one committee, I was paid. Contact Mary Hope Griffin or Mary Obernesser if you have any interest.”

Adjunct Faculty Are Needed to Serve on These Committees:

- High Impact Practice (HIP) Awards Selection Committee. The committee meets in June.
- Professional Development Committee
- OPAL (Assessment Team)

Contact Mary Hope Griffin (mgriffin@oakton.edu) or Mary Obernesser (mobernesser@oakton.edu) for details. All Committee appointments are paid.

Mandatory Training The mandatory Cybersecurity Awareness training through Vector LMS is due **June 9**. The four segments will take just over an hour to complete; you have been receiving emails reminding you of the training; click on “training” to begin.

Teaching in Skokie this summer? Need a break from classes or another thousand steps? You can easily walk from the back parking lot (near the bee hives) to the lovely Emily Oaks Nature Center.

