Election Results

Ballots for officers and Executive Committee members were counted on Feb. 19, at the RIC/AFT office. A total of 125 valid ballots were cast. Thanks to Richard Olmsted, Chair of the Nominating Committee, and Liz Rowell, Claus Hofhansel and Anne Quinn for tallying and certifying the results:

Officers (two year terms)
- President       *Jason Blank  108 votes
- Vice President  *Robert Cvnorvnek  111 votes
- Secretary       *Quenby Hughes  112 votes
- Treasurer       *Jane Przybyla  112 votes

Executive Committee (one year terms)
- *Karl Benzinger  82 votes
- *Joan Dagle  95 votes
- *Jeanne Haser-Lafond  69 votes
- *Fran Leazes  95 votes
- Jeannine Olson  53 votes
- *Christopher Texeira  83 votes
- Joseph Zornado  65 votes

*Elected

Thanks to all for running for office, voting for union leaders, and continuing to support the RIC/AFT.

Sick Leave Bank Established

Under Article 9.21 of the Contract and the Memorandum of Understanding, the Sick Leave Bank was finally established last week. One hundred fifteen faculty members contributed one day each to the bank. In the most unfortunate circumstance, a person would have to expend all of his/her accumulated sick leave days, and any disability leave, and would have had to contribute to the bank before accessing days from the bank. According to the MOU, contributions can be made to the bank only during the annual deposit period, approximately the first week of the fall semester. Deposits in the bank do not carry over from year to year, so a faculty-wide recruitment campaign will be held each August. The establishment of the bank resulted from four years of work by the president of the union and the recent support of President Carriuolo.
Medical Plan Changes

On February 1, 2009, the medical plan affecting faculty changed, not for the good, resulting from the negotiations between the state and Council 94 (AFSCME). A direct consequence for us is that some prescription drug co-pays increased. In addition, United Health altered refill policies and tier levels. The results of these changes are: tier two co-pay increased from $10 to $20 per refill; tier three co-pay increased from $30 to $40; and refill supplies are now limited to 31 days.

Faculty members may access mail-order network pharmacies for a three month supply of prescription medication, for two co-payments, effectively splitting the difference. In order to arrange for three month refills, go to www.employeebenefits.ri.gov/Medical.php.

Other regrettable changes, emanating from Council 94’s negotiations, are co-pays for medical specialists increased from $10 to $20, and emergency room fees increased from $25 to $100.

Under the Contract, state higher education unions were limited to negotiating the “impact” of these changes, meaning we could not challenge approved medical plan changes, but the coalition of unions is still trying to ameliorate the additional costs. Examples include the “wellness program incentive” and the Recreation Center membership. [Appendix B.2: “In the event of mid-contract changes in plan design, the parties agree to reopen the contract to negotiate the impact of those changes.”]

Reminders

• A new benefit negotiated to take effect during the current contract states that an individual may carry over up to four load credits, to reduce teaching responsibilities in the following year, at the faculty member’s discretion, effective spring 2010 for the fall of 2011 or spring of 2012. The 48 hour load requirement terminates this semester, and a new 48 credit clock begins in the fall of 2009. Compensation for overload credits will increase on July 1, 2009. For additional information contact the Union office.

• RIC/AFT dues for the year ending December 31, 2008 were $592.22 for full-time members, and $509.66 for agency fee faculty. If you began your service after January 1, 2008, and/or changed your status (between full member and agency fee), please call the Union office (9842) for an accurate statement of your 2008 dues.

• If you have questions or concerns or suggestions for Union action, please call the office (9842) or email www.ric.edu/ricaft. Volunteers are needed for Union committees and activities. For information, contact the office.

Jason L. Blank, President