Contract Approved

By a vote of 143-42, the RIC/AFT membership ratified the new Contract, a one year extension which will expire on June 30, 2004. The 185 returned ballots amounted to a 55% return rate. The membership totals 335.

As reported in the January 26 Newsletter and in two membership meetings, the Agreement between the RIC/AFT and Board of Governors for Higher Education is a one-page document consisting of six items:

1. “Extend the 2000-2003 collective bargaining agreement through June 30, 2004, with no across the board salary increases and continuation of existing health insurance benefits offered through the Department of Administration (including the prescription drug co-payment schedule negotiated with the health insurance provider).” This item is a continuation of the language of the previous contract and obviously does not include the negotiated reimbursement for drug co-payments. This means that current co-payment levels will remain in effect at least through June 30, 2004.

2. “The Board of Governors shall establish a system-wide labor management committee on health insurance. The RIC/AFT agrees to participate on this committee and will appoint two members to it. This committee will be charged with studying ways to achieve cost efficiencies, improve the health insurance plans, and improve benefit utilization. The committee will engage consultants to assist in its work. This committee shall complete its charge and make recommendations to the Board and the Unions for the negotiation of successor agreements no later than April 1, 2004.” The full committee will include representatives of the BoG and all the unions which negotiate with the Board. This is the first time we will be able to affect change and be full partners in the negotiations of health benefits.

3. “Faculty Development Fund - $75,000, implemented as per 2000-2003 Agreement.” The provisions for the implementation of this item can be found on Page 67 of the 2000-2003 Contract. In addition, the criteria that were negotiated and the committee structure that was negotiated, will remain in effect. This means that faculty will apply to the committee (three faculty members and two administrators), individually or in groups, for grants. Most importantly, faculty can apply for grants for activities which began any time after July 1, 2003!! Application procedures will be announced very soon.

4. “President’s Salary Adjustments Fund - $100,000, to be awarded as per 2000-2003 Agreement.” See Page 63 of the 2000-2003 Agreement. Please note that such increments accrue to the members’ salary base.

5. “Tuition remission for domestic partners.”
6. “The Board agrees that in the event any across the board increases are negotiated with any other Board bargaining unit during the 2003-2004 fiscal year, the same proposal will be offered to the RIC/AFT.” This parity clause appears in every contract. To date, no union has received any across-the-board increases.

I want to thank President Nazarian for expediting the negotiations, Make Mullane (RIFTHP staff representative) for providing leadership as chief negotiator, and Vice President Lenore DeLucia, for representing the College in the deliberations. I also wish to thank the RIC/AFT Executive Committee for its continued support, advice and persistence during the process.

Faculty Development Fund

As promised, the day after the Contract was ratified by the membership, President Nazarian and I sent out to all faculty members, an application packet for the Faculty Development Fund. The deadline for submitting proposals/reimbursements is March 15, 2004. Vice President Dan King’s office will serve as a repository for proposals submitted to the Faculty Development, comprised of Joan Glazer (chair), Randy DeSimone, Pierre Morenon, Richard Keogh and Assistant Vice President James McCrosky. The entire $75,000 will be allocated on or about March 31, 2004. The process was implemented very well over the last three years, and will remain unchanged. All goals, objectives, guidelines and procedures are included in the packets. If you have any questions, call the Union office, ext. 9842.

Next Round Begins Now

It is important to note that this Contract expires in just four months. We are going to need the support of all Union members as we prepare for new negotiations, which we anticipate will be beginning before classes end. I am calling for volunteers to serve on several pre-negotiations committees, including program (polling members for their priorities) and merit (exploratory). Please call the RIC/AFT, ext. 9842, to volunteer.

Thanks to Jason

The Executive Committee recognizes the enormous effort invested by RIC/AFT President, Jason Blank, in bringing the new Contract to reality. Jason acknowledged the contributions of President Nazarian and others both here and at the RIFTHP, but we wish to note the role he played in monitoring the state situation and providing leadership to the process.

Dan Weisman, Editor

Announcement from Adams Library

Faculty who need to do photocopying of library materials can now do it without charge on the photocopier in the Document Delivery Office on the main level of the library. The DD Office (AL 305) is normally open 9-5 Monday - Friday so just come in and sign in. We will ask you to record the number of copies you made but will not charge you for them. Just one more way in which the Adams Library is making life a little easier for our RIC faculty!

Tjalda Nauta, Library Director

Income Tax Information

For the year 2003, RIC/AFT members paid $486.40 in union dues. Agency fee members paid $431.74. These expenses may be deductible for income tax purposes. Please check with your preparer.