

April 14, 1999

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APR 14 1999

Chairman Gidwitz, members of the Board, Chancellor Watson, friends, guests and members of the public:

As our president is ill and unable to be here today, my name is Earl Silbar, and I'm here to speak on behalf of the 800 + teachers of ALSP, represented by AFSCME Local 3506, and to explain, briefly, why your policies are driving us ever closer to going on strike:

First, your continued gross underpayment in money and benefits for our valuable services,

Second, your continued and growing assignment of work for which we are held accountable yet not paid, and

Third, your continued and growing practice of cutting our classes and, thus, our students' educational opportunities.

One. Regarding pay and benefits, we want nothing more, nor less, than Equity for ALSP. We seek equal pay and benefits with City College teachers who instruct in such classes as ESL, Cosmetology and Auto Shop. Surely, when we all go to get our hair cut or our cars fixed, we want competent people doing that work. And surely, when you want employees doing your work, you want competent people doing that work, understanding and expressing themselves clearly. We all benefit from having better educated members of society. Our work in ALSP - teaching literacy, preparing adults for the GED exam, and teaching English to immigrants - is surely no less important than our colleagues, yet our compensation is miserable and your negotiators are offering to keep us right there. Let me illustrate:

These teachers, our City Colleges peers, working under the title "Full Time Training Specialist, start at about \$25 classroom hour or \$29,000 a year. We start at \$15.50 an hour or \$17,000 a year. They receive 1 hour paid for preparation time for every 4 hours in the classroom; we get about 10 minutes for every 4 hours. They get 1 paid sick day per month; we get none. They pay about \$15/month towards individual health insurance; we pay \$135 - \$155 a month. Furthermore, in LA, San F. and New York, our peers start at \$30 - 35/hr..

Is there adequate money to pay for our just and equitable goals? Yes, there is.

We generate direct revenues of between \$19 and \$23 Million a year, depending on whether one accepts the City Colleges' or Chicago Tribune figures. If we add the indirect revenues we generate, you can add another \$32 Million for a total of between \$51 and \$55 Million a year. Our entire payroll amounts to about \$14 Million. Please understand that we are not asking for all the money we generate be returned to us for our work. Even if we received equal pay and benefits for equal work, that would still leave well over 1/2 of the funds we generate for other City College expenditures.

Two, your administrators pile additional work requirements upon us, almost daily, unpaid, and then grow that list of unpaid work which our jobs are held hostage to! let me read to you an abbreviated, outdated list of such requirements at just a few campuses- Wright, Kennedy-King, and Olive-Harvey:

1. Provide written lesson plans and course syllabus.
2. Evaluate students' progress and keep updated records of all students' achievements.
3. Participates in registration, testing, recruitment and retention of students.
4. Prepares assignments for Apple, PALS, and math labs.
5. Gives individualized instruction and keeps separate records for every individual student.
6. Gives and grades state mandated testing information; prepares progress test request forms and results.

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Finally, your negotiators refuse give us the same classroom protections which you extend to our peers in your Board Rules - to return to our policy of many years, wherein the Board guaranteed that our classes would continue 48 weeks per year, so long as there were students, money, a location and we continued to offer such courses. Instead, we have seen classes cut from 2 to 4 weeks in the past several years. That includes cuts of 4 weeks for over 40 teachers on my campus, Truman and 2 weeks off this coming Summer at KK. And this does not include the 4 weeks we all lose already every year, with nearly no compensation. In addition, all our teachers at one campus (Malcolm X) have been cut from 24 hours to 16 hours per week, with the loss of many classes We have no guarantees that our fine work and important classes can or will continue. We are treated as at will employees, yet asked to perform as full-time professionals. You can't have it both ways, ladies and gentlemen.

To sum up, Mr. Chairman, Board members and Chancellor Watson, your policies continue to undercompensate and overwork us, subject us to daily uncertainty and turmoil, and undermine our valuable and precious program - one of the largest and most successful in the country. We are nearing a crucial time in negotiations and it is only fair that I tell you that, as an ALSP teacher who just completed my 20th year teaching GED and active from the first days of our union 10 years ago ,I have never experienced such widespread desire for meaningful change by teachers of all backgrounds and philosophical persuasions. To be blunt, we are increasingly fed up and we are preparing to take action.. We took a vote recently, asking the teachers whether they wished to authorize their negotiators to call a strike if we didn't receive a fair and reasonable offer. That vote carried by a margin of 5:1. Furthermore, we had the largest number of teachers participating than in any vote I can remember.

On April 28th, we will await your negotiators' complete response to our proposals. We have been negotiating since last June, and we are approaching a time of decision. Later this month, you will read about or see us taking preliminary public action. We hope that you will instruct your negotiators' voices to be the voice of reason and fairness. We fear that your hired voices will continue their intransigent stands and force us to take actions which we, frankly, do not desire.

Thank you for your attention. I will be happy to respond to your questions and concerns.

EARL SILBAR

Teachers say their wages are 2nd-class

Adult-program faculty in City Colleges protest

By Michael Ko
TRIBUNE STAFF WRITER

Bob Shiel calls it the job of his dreams, and six times a week, in exhausting four-hour chunks, he patiently explains to about two dozen new emigrants from nearly a dozen countries the nuances of the English language. He also gives the adults instructions on such basics as filling out forms, deciphering street signs and hunting down jobs and apartments.

"I call it 'Survival English,'" Shiel says. "It's dynamic and it's absolutely rewarding.

"Still, it would be nice to pay the bills."

Shiel is a teacher at Truman College with the Adult Learning Skills Program—which offers instruction in English as a second language, GED preparation and remedial literacy. Based on enrollment, it's easily the most popular program within the seven City Colleges of Chicago.

The program's students make up 42 percent of the overall City Colleges population (69,000 students of the 164,000 who enrolled last year). At Truman, the number is more than 60 percent.

All those involved with the program agree on its importance. Truman President Phoebe K. Helm calls it the "single greatest economic contribution [the school] makes to Chicago."

But the problem is money. The program's teachers said they're not getting enough of it. And administrators said there just isn't enough of it to give out.

Clifton Daniel, director of public relations for Truman College, said City Colleges of Chicago receives \$9.2 million yearly from federal, state and local funds to run the learning-skills program at its seven schools.



Teachers protest
Adult education instructors at Truman College say their low wages belie their importance in the City Colleges system. Page 3.



Tribune photo by Chuck Berry

Bob Shiel teaches English as a second language in the Adult Learning Skills Program at Truman College. Teachers in the City Colleges program, designed primarily for immigrants, are classified as part-time worker

"That's what we've got, and we can only work with what we've got," he said.

Daniel also said most students don't pay tuition for the program, designed primarily for immigrants on a first-come, first-served basis.

Accordingly, City Colleges classifies adult educators—who regularly have master's degrees and often work as many hours as their accredited counterparts—as part-time employees.

However, besides the \$9.2 million, the Illinois Community College Board said City Colleges also receives \$6.3 million in special population grants and \$7.6 million in restricted grants for adult education from the Illinois State Board of Education.

"If we were not committed to the program, it would not have grown to the size it is now," Daniel said.

In total, City Colleges receives more than \$61 million in federal and state grants each year, said a community college board spokeswoman. That's roughly a third of City Colleges' overall budget, said Ed Smith, an associate

'I guess we live under the illusion that somehow our efforts and achievements will be rewarded.'

Bob Shiel, Adult Learning Skills Program teacher, Truman College

director of the board, who said the rest is made up of equal parts tuition and local property taxes.

Considering that figure, adult educators can't understand why the schools refuse to spend more on their biggest program.

During the last contract, which expired July 1, first-year adult educators said they were paid \$15.50 an hour only for class hours taught, amounting to \$17,000 a year. Teachers said they received no sick days and were sometimes paid 75 cents per hour of preparation, with a maximum of \$3 a day. Teachers said they were paid for holidays only if they fell on a teaching day.

This year, Shiel makes \$21 an hour for his 24 weekly class hours. He has no sick days, no pay for prep time and got no pay when he left work to attend his mother's funeral this spring.

Yvonne Davila, director of public relations for the City Colleges administration, declined to comment on any issue regarding the Adult Learning Skills Program, its teachers because of the current contract negotiations.

Demanding sick benefits and "equal pay for equal work," the program's teachers staged several protests last week. A demonstration Wednesday in front of Truman, where students from 100 countries speak 59 languages, drew a particularly enthusiastic crowd of about 150 people, who held up signs in at least seven languages.

"I guess we live under the illusion that somehow our efforts and achievements will be rewarded," Shiel said. "We'd just like to be treated with some professor respect."

November 10, 1998 - Tribune