

Pete R. Sutliff – for Secretary of AFT2000

Position Statement

My name is Pete Sutliff and I would like to be your local 2000 secretary. We need more involvement from the majority of instructors at WCCCD that are part time instructors. Without that we can expect only a weak union, and from a weak union we can only expect a weak contract and continued abuse of contracts by the college that we have seen for the 12+ years I have worked here.

So, I am running for a position that has traditionally been held by a full time instructor, as has the entire executive committee except for the 2nd vice president which the constitution mandates be held by a part timer for some nominal representation among the union leadership. The problem is that with the massive growth of the ranks of the part timers there was no parallel growth of representation at the top. One blatant example of the effects of this imbalance is that, for years, part timers had to starve over the winter from their last paycheck on December 15th until their next one on February 15th. This reality was completely ignored for years even though it would cost the college virtually nothing to pay us earlier in the semester. But, because I repeatedly advocated for this earlier pay at union meetings and we invited part timers to observe contract negotiations (Yes, you can do that!) it was finally proposed to the administration, and part timers got paid on January 30th this year.

I have made other proposals for part timers that were ignored by a full timer president, Wallace Peace. I submitted a 50 signature petition (just as the constitution specifies) to have *a vote* to amend the constitution to add one more part time faculty representative to the Negotiating Team. Some of you may recall what happened at that meeting. Mr. Peace said the petition was “out of order”, folded it up and put it in his pocket, where I can only assume it still resides because it never saw the light of day again. Because of this I resigned from the Chair of the Constitution Committee. We need a president who respects the constitution and an executive committee, and membership

who will make sure that he or she does respect it or loses good standing in the union.

There are various strategies we can take to strengthen the union even after Right-To-Work laws have come into effect. Wayne State's Union employed one last year and is now the strongest it has ever been. All it takes is willpower and allocation of resources. But if you're making over a hundred grand a year as most full timers are, life is pretty good and the will power to strengthen the union is just not there. While Joanne Wittbrodt was a good president - very respectful of the constitution and very resourceful at gathering data on the state of the college - we did not do very well in the last contract negotiations. What was missing was the power of the people. So, we started asserting that power in the last Board of Trustees election and captured all 3 of the open seats by mobilizing just a handful of members, including myself, to knock on doors and get out the vote for our candidates. Largely because of this, the college finally hired some new full timers in January, many from the ranks of the part timers. So, clearly it is vital to have member involvement in our union. ALL OF US will see the fruits of a stronger union and it will get stronger if people feel represented, so please join me in supporting the candidacy of part timer Emanuel Chambers for the office of president of local 2000 (Yes, a part timer can be president of our union!) And, don't forget to vote for me for secretary!

Yours, in solidarity,

-Pete Sutliff