

RT.
AG

Whereas:

There is a planned cut in health and dental insurance benefits for 500 Clinical & technical part-time workers by Harvard University, and ^{case by ~~85%~~ 70 to 85%}

Whereas:

On Wed, Oct 30, 1996 an informational picket line was set up O/S Massachusetts Hall, now therefore be it

by ~~Harvard~~ Harv. Union of Clinical & Technical Workers

Resolved:

The City Council go on record in support of this informational picket line by the Harv. Union of Clinical & Technical Workers

VV/9



City of Cambridge

37.

IN CITY COUNCIL

November 4, 1996

COUNCILLOR TRIANTAFILLOU
COUNCILLOR GALLUCCIO

WHEREAS: There is a planned cut in healthcare by 70 to 85% and dental insurance benefits for 500 clerical and technical part-time workers by Harvard University; and

WHEREAS: On Wednesday, October 30, 1996 an informational picket line was set up by the Harvard Union of Clerical and Technical Workers outside Massachusetts Hall; now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the City Council go on record in support of this informational picket line by the Harvard Union of Clerical and Technical Workers.

In City Council November 4, 1996

Adopted by the affirmative vote of nine members.

Attest:- D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk.

A true copy;

ATTEST:-

D. Margaret Drury
D. Margaret Drury
City Clerk



Full-Time Picket Line for Part-Time Workers

Late order. # please draft a resolution of support in this for the next meeting. This is outrageous for a univ. w/ billion in endowment.

Beginning on Wednesday, October 30, HUCTW will set up an informational picket line outside Massachusetts Hall, continuing every working day until a dispute about health care benefits for part-time workers has been resolved.

After well more than a year of informal negotiation, HUCTW and the University have not reached any agreement on the contentious issue of Harvard's planned cuts in health and dental insurance benefits for 500 clerical and technical workers with part-time work schedules.

The University intends to reduce its contribution to health care premiums from 85% to 70% for all staff members working less than 28 hours per week. That cut, which would increase the workers' share of the premiums by up to \$700 per year, is scheduled for January 1, 1997.

The 500 HUCTW members who work part-time do so in nearly all cases because they are caring for children or aging parents, they have health problems of their own, they are balancing work and school, or they would like to work full-time at Harvard but can not get the hours.

In the two-and-a-half years since a Task Force of top Harvard administrators devised the part-time benefits cuts and other cost-saving policy changes, the University's benefits cost situation has improved dramatically. Harvard's health care costs for 1996 are running at \$8.5 million less than they were two years ago.

This part-time cut would save the University about \$200,000 per year. HUCTW has repeatedly offered several alternative approaches which would save Harvard that much money or more in benefits costs, without the financial injury to part-time workers. Those ideas have been discussed extensively in the newly-formed Joint Benefits Committee. Provost Al Carnesale has rejected each of those proposals.

There is no reason for Harvard's lowest-paid workers, mostly women and many with families, to be the primary target of cost-cutting efforts. If the University ever had a serious benefits cost problem, it does not have one now. There are far better ways to save \$200,000 per year, and they are on the table right now.

This picket is informational, and is not intended to prevent or discourage anyone from performing work.

33% of Harvard's part-time clerical and technical workers are caring for young children and family members when they are not working here.

25% are on part-time schedules against their will -- they would prefer to have full-time Harvard hours.

17% are pursuing the goal of continuing higher education.

Are these the right people to target for a \$200,000 savings out of a \$132 million benefits budget?

**What's wrong
with these numbers??**

Please call Provost Carnesale at 496-5100 and ask.

HUCTW Full-Time Picket Line For Part-Time Workers

Schedule of Events!!

The full-time picket line for part-time workers' benefits is officially in operation every working day for the indefinite future, from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. at Massachusetts Hall in Harvard Yard. Please call the HUCTW office at 661-8289 to sign up.

Upcoming Special Days:

Wednesday, Nov. 6: BRING YOUR KIDS

Part-time workers' health care is first and foremost a family issue. If you have children who can join our picket line, please bring them. Or enjoy other union members' cute kids! Snacks and fun for kids provided from 4:30 to 6:00 p.m.

Thursday, Nov. 7: HARD HATS DAY

Our friends in the Building Trades unions will join our picket line during the day. Free imitation hard hats for the first 50 picketers!

Friday, Nov. 8: SENIORS AND RETIREES

Grandparents and other senior citizens care about part-time workers' benefits, too. Please join them on the line at Mass Hall.

Tuesday, Nov. 12: E-MAIL AND FAXES TO THE PROVOST

Please express your electronic concerns about the issue of health care for part-time workers! The fax number for Provost Al Carnesale's office is 495-9473. His E-Mail address is a_carnesale@harvard.edu. How many messages will he get?!?

PRINTED BY UNION LABOR

This letter was prepared by leaders and staff of the

Harvard Union of Clerical and Technical Workers (HUCTW)
1306 Massachusetts Avenue, #203
Cambridge, MA 02138

With comments or questions, or to request additional copies, please call the
HUCTW office at

(617) 661-8289

n of Clerical and Technical Workers (HUCTW)
chusetts Avenue, #203
MA 02138

University Mail

Open Letter

to the Harvard Community

May 1996

The Value of Part-Time Work Extends to All Aspects of Life at the University

At some point in our lives, most of us will find it necessary to work part time. The reasons are many: a change in family situation, the need for further education, or, simply, the unavailability of full-time work. The ability to find and hold a part-time job is of vital importance in these situations. Moreover, it is critical that the job offer wages and benefits that make it possible for the individual to maintain herself and her family in a reasonable manner.

Part-time work is not a one way street: it also offers advantages to the employer. Part-time workers perform vital functions, at the same time that they receive less money than full-time workers. Although they put in less time, they have regular hours, they often work harder in the given time, and they are extremely productive.

It is puzzling, then, as to why Harvard administrators have chosen to focus some of their recent cost-cutting efforts on part-time workers. Certainly this is a segment of the community that can least afford to lose any amount of wages or benefits. At the same time, it is also a group of workers that the University cannot afford to lose. Finally, in an era when the economy in general is increasingly recognizing the need for flexibility in the workplace—to accommodate the many demands in our lives and our work—it is counterproductive for Harvard to single out workers who already have hard choices to make.

In this letter, we hope to address some of the issues behind part-time work, wages and benefits, and introduce some of the workers whose lives are closely tied to these matters.

Why do people choose to work part-time?

Working part-time is rarely, if ever, a lighthearted “choice” on the part of the individual. Nearly all those who work part-time do so because they feel a real and pressing need. In many cases, this is a demand from another part of their lives; in other cases, it is not a choice at all, but simply the result of being unable to find full-time work.

In an informal survey of HUCTW members who work part-time, we found a wide array of reasons for their situations.

- A woman whose child has birth defects struggles to juggle her work schedule with her husband's so they can care for the child around the clock.

- A single parent finds it impossible to work full-time, pay for full-time child care, and have a healthy relationship with her children.
- When a woman's elderly mother took ill, she and her siblings decided to take on the responsibility of providing full-time care for her in one of their homes. The woman needed to reduce her work schedule so she could do her part.
- A woman who faces health problems is unable to sit at a desk all day.
- Many are parents of newborns or infants, who believe their presence is vital to their children, at the same time that their income is critical to their families.

An increase in insurance costs means a reduction in an employee's take home pay.

Since part-time employees are among the least financially secure members of our community, **they will have to struggle to find ways to compensate for this loss.** For some, this may mean choosing inferior, but cheaper, forms of child care and health care. Others may opt to go without health insurance altogether, endangering the health of themselves and their families.

- A few years ago, a woman voluntarily cut her hours in order to deal with a family emergency; since then, she has been continuously trying to return to full-time work. She now holds a second job at night.
- Several employees have had their hours cut so their department could save money. In all cases, they are working other part-time jobs and hoping to return to full-time status.
- A man who wanted to build his skills and add to his credentials is attending school part-time; he needed to reduce his hours to handle the demands of both work and school.

In every case, working part-time is necessity, not a luxury. Also in every case, the wages and benefits that the worker earns play a vital role in the financial and physical health of herself and her family.

Who are the people who work part-time?

Part-time employees are all around us at Harvard. They account for approximately one of every six support staff; 80% are female; many are parents of young children. While HUCTW does not have access to data on exempt staff and faculty, it is evident that hundreds of them are also part-time, and that their situations are comparable.

Part-time positions run the gamut of responsibilities at Harvard: from library assistants to cafeteria workers to lab technicians. These jobs are integral to the running of the University, and the employees have talents that are vital and irreplaceable.

What is Harvard proposing in terms of cuts? How will this affect those working part-time?

Currently, all clerical and technical workers contribute the same amount toward their health insurance costs. The University is proposing that part-time employees should pay roughly double. In a policy change which Harvard plans to make effective January 1, 1997 for HUCTW members, the University's health care contribution would be reduced from 85% to 70% for anyone working fewer than 28 hours per week.

This is not a trivial matter to those part-time workers who are already struggling to get by on a part-time salary. The average part-time employee makes just under \$15,000 a year. For example, an eight-year employee in one of the libraries earns \$14,500 for a half-time schedule. As a member of the Tufts Health Plan with family coverage, her monthly premium would increase from \$101 to \$163 as a result of the policy change. The added cost would total \$744 per year, which is more than 5% of her gross salary.

What constitutes a minor saving for the University amounts to a major cost for workers who can hardly afford it.

How will these cuts affect the workplace in general?

Any threat to the livelihood of part-time workers obviously makes it increasingly untenable for them to continue in their positions. If Harvard does increase insurance costs to part-time workers, the effects will be far-reaching.

- An increase in insurance costs means a reduction in an employee's take home pay. Since part-time employees are among the least financially secure members of our community, they will have to struggle to find ways to compensate for

this loss. For some, this may mean choosing inferior, but cheaper, forms of child care and health care. Others may opt to go without health insurance altogether, endangering the health of themselves and their families.

- Although part-time jobs will continue to exist, Harvard will have a harder time attracting talented individuals to those positions.
- Employees who find themselves in a situation where they need to reduce their hours will find it increasingly difficult to do so. Not only will they hesitate to risk the loss of benefits, they may also risk the loss of a certain degree of respectability.
- Staff members who currently work less than 28 hours will feel compelled to increase their hours, so they can become eligible for full benefits. Again, this may compromise their lives at home, their family's well being, or their own health. (It could also result in unanticipated costs for the University, as part-time workers shift to full-time schedules—even if their work load doesn't change.)
- At a time when many in the U.S. economy find themselves in a precarious position—threatened by downsizing, reduction in wages and benefits, increasing costs for the basics of life—any cuts in benefits will create an atmosphere of fear and vulnerability. Many part-time (as well as full-time) workers belong to families where other members are nervous about their job situations; the benefits of the part-time workers offer a thin, but critical, cushion for these families.
- Finally, it is clear that the Harvard family will lose some of its part-time workers if it succeeds in cutting their benefits. Such a development entails not just the loss of the person and her skills; it also changes the environment in which we all work. We will all feel less secure, less valuable, and, ultimately, less invested in our life at Harvard.

Why is Harvard choosing to move backward at this time?

While we understand that the Harvard community is compelled to discuss and review employee benefits, we believe that the attempt to cut the benefits of part-time workers is the wrong path to take. There is more at stake here than a few dollars. The University will suffer the loss not just of valued members, but also of a certain spirit of community and loyalty.

On the one hand, Harvard's most valued employees—and with them their time and skills. We need their expertise when we are able to and grow along with them. As part-time employees drift away, to similar (or full-time) more generous compensation, the University will find itself trying to replace them with inexperienced and seasoned workers.

On the other hand, the proposed policy are not just about benefits; they are about the value of part-time work. And the atmosphere at the University. Workers will have good reason to be punished for working part-time, afraid to opt for a situation where they can take care of themselves, their families, and their careers.

Finally, at a time when the rest of the economy is increasingly becoming more flexible, Harvard's choice in advocating a loss of such choice is a growing consensus that the world must become more adaptable to meet the challenges of the next century: industries must advance in technology; workers must solve problems as they arise (rather than rigid rules); and, as many families are used so that all adult members must be able to accommodate their lives. Part-time work is, in many ways, a more option to allow us to live our lives.

The world of work and family life at the University cannot stop the trend. Employment is a vital part of the future. Our choice now is whether we change what is happening around us, or whether we make it easier—not harder—to balance families, health, and work.

Is there a better way to proceed?

Certainly this is an era when we should take a long hard look at costs; but it is not an era when we should proceed with care. The University must find areas where there are real expenses where there is waste.

It is our hope that the Joint Committee will take the time to find a better solution—one that will save money for the University, while still honoring our ideals and safeguarding some of our most valued members.



City of Cambridge

37.

IN CITY COUNCIL

November 4, 1996

COUNCILLOR TRIANTAFILLOU
COUNCILLOR GALLUCCIO

WHEREAS: There is a planned cut in healthcare by 70 to 85% and dental insurance benefits for 500 clerical and technical part-time workers by Harvard University; and

WHEREAS: On Wednesday, October 30, 1996 an informational picket line was set up by the Harvard Union of Clerical and Technical Workers outside Massachusetts Hall; now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the City Council go on record in support of this informational picket line by the Harvard Union of Clerical and Technical Workers.

In City Council November 4, 1996
Adopted by the affirmative vote of nine members.
Attest:- D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk.

A true copy;

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "D. Margaret Drury".

ATTEST:-

D. Margaret Drury
City Clerk

Consent ORder #37

R-1142

Councillors Triantafillou and Galluccio
re: An informational picket line by the
Harvard Union of Clerical and Technical
Workers is set up outside of Massachusetts
Hall because of the planned cut in healthcare
and dental insurance benefits to 500 workers..

In City Council November 4, 1996

ORDER ADOPTED

Order adopted