

The SCFA Sentinel

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. . . by, for, and about the united faculty of Sierra College

March, 2004

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From the Editor's Desk...

Late yesterday, just as the light was darkening toward evening, I saw my first robin of the season dancing on the hillside. Just one, solitary robin. Hoping, I suspect, for Spring.

And while the weather has certainly felt like Spring lately, I'm reminded of the beautiful day in early May when I planted my vegetable garden...and woke up the next morning to six inches of SNOW!

This time of year is famous for surprises, not all of them entirely pleasant—a little like the election we just endured.

Certainly, most of us were hoping for a "win" on Measure E...and the disappointment in many quarters is palpable. Some suggest that the district forge ahead full-speed and float another bond in November, believing that we will do better next time. Others counsel restraint, pointing to the voters' rejection of the proposal as a measure of their uncertainty.

Whatever your personal feelings, I'd like to leave you with the comments of our Truckee Dean, Frank DeCourten:

"The campaign for Measure E was hard work, and it forced many of us academics into the alien landscape of local politics, where I discovered how highly regarded Sierra College is by the people we serve. Perhaps the winds of political fashion blew against us on March 2nd, but I know that what we do has great value to the people in our classrooms, to our local communities, and to society. The only thing that equals my disappointment about the outcome is my determination to aid the people who so desperately need our services. Those people aren't going away...and neither will our resolve to help them."

**Joan Merriam
Editor**



President's Report

by SCFA President Winsome Jackson

"Good News and Bad News"

Well, much has happened at the state and local level that affects us both positively and negatively. The good news is that the voters of California overwhelmingly supported Propositions 55 and 57, which bodes well for our state's community colleges.

While the passage of these propositions in no way signifies that the state is out of its fiscal crisis, it does mean that we can be very optimistic about the budget revision process in May (May Revise). Since the governor promised that he would "fully fund the community colleges under Proposition 98," the passage of Proposition 57 will help to shore up that promise, which should translate into healthy appropriations to the district.

Now, let's turn our attention to the *not* so good news. You are all aware by now that Measure E, our local bond measure, went down in defeat decisively. So what does this mean for the district? The first charge will probably be to regroup, assess, analyze, then come up with a plan of action for the future. We will certainly keep you apprised of developments on this front as they occur.

While a great deal of our focus has been on the state and local political landscape of late, your SCFA representatives have also been hard at work taking care of day-to-day business.

The first order of that business is to complete the all-faculty survey regarding the Compressed Calendar and return it to the Faculty Senate no later than March 17, 2004. While this survey in no way represents an official vote, it will provide us with valuable insight from all our faculty. Official ballots for the Compressed Calendar will be mailed soon, so be sure to keep an eye on your mailbox.

Secondly, by now SCFA members should have received a ballot with three options on which to vote: the SCFA Bylaws and Constitution, the Post '94 Trustee, and forming an SCFA-sponsored PAC. Please be sure to respond to all three items and sign the back of the envelope before returning it to SCFA.

Thirdly, our membership drive is in full swing. By now,

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everyone should have received a packet in your mailbox which explains the many benefits of membership.

If you are not a member of SCFA, we encourage you to complete the application and return it to any member of the Executive Board. The important work we do requires resources, so we are counting on your support.

Fourthly, at the last Joint Labor Management Council (JLMC) meeting, the district healthcare representative presented a myriad of health insurance options for our review. These options will be forwarded to the Health Insurance Task Force for further review, consideration and recommendations to the JLMC. The committee will need to work expeditiously in order to assist the JLMC in selecting a plan that meets a multiplicity of interests.

We are also working on revising the Department Chair Article. We will include the feedback that was ascertained from the survey conducted in 2003 as well as the interests raised by different constituent groups. If you have any concerns or recommendations, please do not hesitate to inform a member of the SCFA Executive Board.

Last but certainly not least, the Executive Board has appointed three new members to our team. Scott Bramlett was appointed to serve out the remainder of Johnnie Terry's term, and Margo Marvin will complete the rest of Bonnie Allert's term. Jim Forkum was also appointed to replace Deb Sutphen during the Fall '04 semester while she is teaching in Austria. Jim's actual term of office will commence on May 28.

Welcome, everyone!



Notes from the Negotiating Table

by SCFA Chief Negotiator Luis Sanchez

From time to time, SCFA members and other faculty will ask SCFA to reexamine (that being, of course, a euphemism for "increase") the amount of our doctoral stipend, which is currently \$1450.00. This amount has not been increased for several years, and quite frankly pales in comparison to the doctoral stipend paid by many other community colleges.

A good argument can be made that an institution of higher learning should enthusiastically reward the educational achievements of its faculty. I have brought this matter to our Executive Board for guidance, but since not only I but also several members of the Board would benefit personally from a doctoral stipend increase, we are reluctant to pursue this goal without the widespread support of our membership.

We are also periodically asked to reexamine (once again, a euphemistic expression which equates to "increase") our lab loading formula. Here, too, I believe one can make a good argument that lab hours should be loaded exactly as are lecture hours. The traditional reason for the differential treatment is that lecture hours assume a greater amount of preparation than do lab hours—but that is not always the case, and I can certainly think of no compelling reason to compensate office hours more highly than lab hours.

However, changing the loading rate for lab hours would be very costly to the District, and thus any such change would have to be done incrementally under the auspices of our anticipated income formula (which remains at the table under discussion).

As always, I encourage all faculty to contact me or any member of your SCFA Executive Board with your concerns, suggestions, and ideas on these and any other subjects. We do our very best to represent your interests, but can only do so if you communicate those interests to us.

Transitions

Concerns... We've just recently heard that NCC Counselor **Lynn Schiffner's** older brother is struggling with esophageal cancer. Please keep Lynn and her family in your thoughts.

And the day we went to press with this issue, we learned that CIS instructor **Bonnie Stephens** (also at NCC) was in an auto accident and broke her femur. Hopefully she'll be home from the hospital by the time you receive this.

If you have news of celebrations, sorrows, or other important life transitions within our Sierra College family of faculty and staff, please send a note or e-mail with the details to Sentinel Editor Joan Merriam.



Companion Campus Connections

NEVADA COUNTY CAMPUS



Neal Albee appears to be settling quite well into his position of Dean of Instruction for NCC...and if you haven't yet met him, make an effort to do so. Neal is very available to faculty, and always willing to step in and look for solutions for issues you may have such as scheduling, room assignments, etc.

Speaking of great people on our staff, hopefully by now everyone has seen the "new" Donna Brazil: she's a mere shadow of her former self, having lost some

NINETY pounds over the last year! Congratulations, Donna!

TRUCKEE CENTER



enrollment is up **8.1%** over last year, with a total student headcount up to 389!

Including students served through Community Education, Contract Ed, SBDC, and short-term classes that begin later in the semester, the Truckee Center will probably serve close to 650 people this semester.

Spring census numbers are in, and they show that the Truckee Center's

FTES is also up by nearly 16%, indicating that more people are taking more courses. These numbers reflect the expansion and broadening of the curriculum here, and—as we mentioned in last month's column—the dedication of our counseling guru Cindy Flores. Her encouragement of individual students along with her familiarity with the community is at the heart of our success here.

As a consequence of the increasing enrollment, we now have 30 part-time faculty and 1 full-time NCC faculty teaching at the Truckee Center...an all-time high!

ROSEVILLE GATEWAY

...WHERE ARE YOU?????

WEB SITES

A gathering of hopefully-helpful Web resources on, about, and for those of us in the world of Higher Education

◆ GLOSSARIST.COM

www.glossarist.com

With literally thousands of links to online glossaries and topical dictionaries, this website can help you tell the difference between Forfar Bridies and Bannocks (both are traditional Scottish foods).

◆ THE MULTICULTURAL PAVILION

www.edchange.org/multicultural/

This site includes a wide variety of resources dealing with equity in education, including classroom awareness activities, tools and fact sheets, forums, a book and film store, social justice speeches, film reviews, and a multicultural poetry and song index.

◆ EVERYDAY MYSTERIES (FROM THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS RESEARCH CENTERS)

www.loc.gov/rr/scitech/mysteries

This innovative site can answer questions both weird and wonderful...for instance, can you tell the temperature by listening to the chirp of a cricket? (The answer is yes: the frequency of chirping varies according to temperature. To get a rough estimate, count the number of chirps in 15 seconds and add 37. The resulting number is an approximation of the outside temperature in Fahrenheit.)

◆ ACRONYM FINDER

acronymfinder.com

If you've ever wondered what an abbreviation or an acronym stands for, this is the place to look: this site contains almost 400,000 definitions, abbreviations, and acronyms from the world of business, science, education, government, and more. (For instance, did you know that "EDU" also stands for "Engine Diagnostic Unit," or that "CTA" also stands for "Center for Transportation Analysis"?)

Another "March in March"

Once again this year, California's community colleges will be making their collective voices heard via a "March in March" on the state Capitol on March 15.

While our new Governor has proposed a budget that contains nowhere near the Dickensian cuts that community colleges faced in 2003, and goes a long way toward solving many of the longstanding funding problems faced by our colleges, it has a long way to go before enactment.

And as good as the budget is to community colleges, it also cuts our slice of Proposition 98 funding by **\$400 million**.

Worst of all, it assumes that nearly 40,000 current community

college students will be turned away to make room for UC and CSU students.

There also remains some support in the legislature for slashing community college funding in line with the Legislative Analyst's Office recommendation that eliminates the \$80 million for equalization, cuts \$30 million for financial aid and outreach, and raises fees to \$2,400 per year.

Plus, there remains the looming issue of categorical funding of many part-time programs, including equity and health care. The concern among part-time activists is that once the funding for these programs is decategorized—that is, included into each district's

base funding—there is nothing to insure that districts will continue to spend the money on the programs for which it was originally intended.

When talking about the need for another March in March, state Senator John Vasconcellos said it best: "We took notice when 10,000 students marched on the Capitol, and you need to do it again this year if you want to survive this budget."

The March starts at 10AM at Raley Field, and proceeds down Capitol Mall to the Capitol steps.

Participants are advised to park at Raley Field, as spots near the Capitol are both scarce and expensive. Prepare to arrive by 8AM if possible.

NCC Faculty Caucus Rescheduled

The NCC All-Faculty Caucus, originally scheduled for March 12, will instead be held on:

Friday, March 26

from 5 to 8PM in the NCC cafeteria.

All NCC faculty—both full- and part-time—are welcome to attend this Flex event, which features *FREE* pizza and sodas, courtesy of SCFA.

Special guest for the first half of the meeting will be NCC Provost Dr. Tina Ludutsky-Taylor, who will be on hand to answer and address faculty questions and concerns about NCC.

An open forum among faculty members will follow.

The **SCFA Sentinel** is published by the SIERRA COLLEGE FACULTY ASSOCIATION in Rocklin, California. We welcome your comments, suggestions, and letters; please contact SCFA Editor Joan Merriam, c/o Sierra College Nevada County Campus, 250 Sierra College Drive, Grass Valley 95945

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