

The SCFA Sentinel

published by the Sierra College Faculty Association

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

October/November, 2002

Volume 5, Issue 2

From the Editor's Desk...

Here in the low mountains above Nevada City, you can both hear and smell the approach of a new season, just as much as you can feel it by a sudden crispness in October's afternoon air or see it in the greening branches of an April dogwood.

This morning I awoke to the chortling of wild turkeys as they foraged for summer-fattened beetles and spilled sunflower seeds beneath the bird feeder on my deck. Last night, the air was scented with the sweet-spicy aroma of burning oak and cedar from a chilly neighbor's fireplace.

Fall has arrived.

And suddenly, we're more than halfway through the semester. Everyone seems to agree that these last weeks have sped by in an extraordinary blur. Perhaps it's the worldwide state of chaos we've been experiencing—possible war with Iraq, another escalation of the conflict in Israel, a lethal bombing in Bali, murderous snipers near the nation's capitol, the tragic death of Senator Wellstone—that it seems impossible so much could have happened in so short a time. Or perhaps Einstein was wrong, and time actually is speeding up. You never know.....

Frankly, time did get away from us recently, in that we simply ran out of it and had to consolidate the October and November issues of the Sentinel. Hopefully, all the news and tidbits we've packed into this issue will make up for it.

And speaking of news, if you're interested in being a "correspondent" for the Sentinel, please let me know! We've expanded the former "NCC Campus Connections" to include all of our satellite campuses, which means I could really use some extra eyes and ears to let me know what's going on. I'm also always open to new ideas for columns and stories.

No pay, but LOTS of glory!

Joan Merriam
Editor



President's Report

by SCFA President Don Cosper

I want to start this column by thanking the SCFA Executive Board for its several nights of work interviewing candidates for the four seats available on Sierra's Board of Trustees. We focused our interviews on the following themes:

- Commitment to resolving the post-retirement medical issue for all employees hired after 1994
- Commitment to advancing part-time faculty equity
- Commitment to full collaboration in governance
- Commitment to interest-based negotiations
- Commitment to advancing a Sierra College bond issue
- Desire to work with SCFA as an authoritative voice for faculty
- Willingness to put students first in setting Board policies

Each candidate who was endorsed responded positively to our questions on these seven themes. Each was also careful to qualify their commitments by making clear their actions as a Board member would always be constrained by the fiscal realities faced in our District.

I believe the SCFA Executive Board did an outstanding, professional job of interviewing and made excellent decisions on whom to endorse. I want to especially thank Jim Weir for his unstinting work. It was Jim who insisted that any endorsement must be accompanied by a willingness to raise funds and volunteer labor to aid our candidates. As he pointed out, an endorsement is of little value to anyone if the candidate does not win. Thanks to Jim, Sierra College faculty members have been passing out flyers at selected supermarket and mall sites.

Because SCFA does not have an official Political Action Committee (PAC), it cannot directly contribute funds to any political campaign. However, we encourage you as individuals to contribute directly to each candidate. We also applied to CCA, our parent organization, for funding for all four candidates. Although two of our requests were screened out, we persisted and ultimately received a small amount of CCA funding for two of our endorsees. We learned a great deal from this process, and I am confident any future elections will see SCFA becoming an even more effective voice for the faculty.

October was the open enrollment period for selecting your medical coverage. We are sorry that Blue Shield rates put some of you above cap. While the Joint Labor Management Council (JLMC) tried to seek out less expensive plans with comparable coverage, many providers looked at Blue Shield's package and declined to bid because they could do no better. The JLMC did ,

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(Continued from page 1)

however, commit to continue its efforts to find a long-range solution. One small positive note is that Mr. Lee, our insurance consultant, predicts that our current experience rating will improve enough this year to provide a cost reduction next year. This should put us back below cap in October of 2003.

Negotiations are continuing on compensation issues. Applying the formula this year is proving difficult given the unforeseen costs of STRS retirement contributions, the fact that the reserves will shrink this year, the huge number of students we serve who are not state-funded, and the contradictory desires to expand full-time

faculty ranks while increasing salaries. All of this is further compounded by a weakening State economy.

Despite all this, I remain confident we will secure a modest salary increase for this year.

In closing, I want to thank the faculty who brought to SCFA's attention the errors in the new student survey forms used for faculty evaluations. As a result, the District and SCFA have agreed to suspend use of the new forms, and to return to a graduated set of responses as utilized in the old forms.

You may recall that last year we ratified a "faculty manual of forms" as well as the specific language of the evaluation process itself. As we use this new

process and the new forms, other flaws well may become evident. Accordingly, SCFA will poll all faculty this Spring to determine if other items need to be refined.

Clearly, it is difficult to create an evaluation process that both protects high standards and assures new faculty that they will receive the support necessary to meet those standards. It is also difficult to create a process that is both easy and efficient.

However, with your input as well as the combined efforts of the District and SCFA to create the best possible process, we should succeed. Of course, any substantial revisions to the process will be brought before the faculty for ratification.

Faculty Association Endorses Trustee Hopefuls

After a lengthy series of interviews with ten of the eleven candidates vying for four seats on the Sierra College Board of Trustees, the Sierra College Faculty Association last month gave its endorsement to three incumbents and one newcomer.

Each candidate who appeared before the Board was given time for a personal statement, after which Board members asked a wide-ranging series of questions, including the candidate's views on the role of the community college, their position on equity, and their opinion on the post-'94 medical benefits issue.

In the end, the Board chose to endorse the candidacies of current trustees David Creek,

David Ferrari, and Nancy Palmer. Of the four individuals vying for the seat formerly held by Sally Robison, who passed away in April, SCFA named Jerry Simmons as its endorsee.

While trustees must reside in specific areas, they are elected district-wide—which means that all voters vote for all candidates.

SCFA encourages every member of Sierra's faculty and staff to cast their votes for Sierra College Trustee for:

- ✓ Nancy Palmer
- ✓ David Ferrari
- ✓ David Creek
- ✓ Jerry Simmons

John McFarland Strikes Again

Unless you've been living in a cave—or are new to Sierra—you remember well the wickedly droll pen of former English professor John McFarland. In fact, you may have even been among the countless "beneficiaries" of his sardonic reparté.

Despite his retirement, John's relentless quest to expose the absurdities of academia goes on...specifically, in the pages of his new book, *Faculty Phillipics: The Mischievous Malice of John McFarland*. Here, he takes the reader on a guided tour of the history of the state's community college system...as only John can do.

Purchase information is available on the website of the Faculty Association of California Community Colleges at www.faccc.org.



Companion Campus Connections

NEVADA COUNTY CAMPUS

It's that time of year again: flu season. Flu shots are now available at the NCC Health Center. The real news? They're \$10 cheaper than the shots being offered on the Rocklin campus! (Call the NCC Health Center at 530-274-5317 to schedule an appointment.)

By all accounts, the Gillian Hodge Outdoor Sculpture Exhibition at NCC, held from late August through November 1, was a great success. The exhibition drew interest from throughout the region, while several of the more unusual and eclectic pieces sparked some lively classroom debate...and not just in art classes!

In honor of October's national Domestic Violence Awareness Month, NCC was also home to the "Silent Witness" display from the Nevada County Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Coalition. Scattered throughout the campus were life-sized black cutout figures of women, children, and men, standing in mute testimony to the thousands of lives lost to and impacted by domestic violence.

TRUCKEE CENTER

Yes, Virginia, we have a dean...! After an exhaustive search and interview process, Frank DeCourten—a paleontologist from Sierra's Math and Sciences Division—has been named Dean of the Truckee Center. We're thrilled that one of "our own" was chosen for this leadership position, and look forward to the future under his guidance. (Next month, we'll feature

an in-depth interview with Frank about his vision for Sierra's newest campus.)

Although the Truckee Center's new building in the Pioneer Commercial Center is complete, the contractor is just now in the final stages of outfitting the interior, with computers and networking set for hookup in November. As a result, this semester's courses are still being conducted at the local high school and other locations scattered throughout the region.

January's spring semester will herald the official opening of classes in the newly completed building—something that *everyone* is looking forward to!

ROSEVILLE GATEWAY

Believe it or not, Roseville Gateway is now home to some 125 faculty and staff! This "auxiliary" center is quickly growing into one of Sierra's most active and well-utilized campuses: at present, the main departments of Nursing, Administration of Justice, ESL, Fire Technology, Real Estate, and Technical Education are located there, plus the entire AA/One program.

Do you work at Gateway, Twelve Bridges, or the Truckee Center? In the know about what's happening on your campus? Then let us know, so we keep everyone informed!
Just send an email with your news to SCFA Sentinel Editor Joan Merriam at jcm@foothill.net

I Wonder 3



Why...

...so few people seem interested in the political process until they have a complaint, or until something doesn't go their way they think it should have?

It's not just "outside" politics I'm talking about—candidate elections, state and local legislation, or national policy issues—but also the politics of our own district and college.

How many faculty and staff normally attend Board of Trustee meetings? How many show up for SCFA Board meetings, or meetings of the Faculty Senate? (Hint: think of a number between zero and one, and you'll be close.)

We're all just too busy or preoccupied or disinterested to get involved, just as long as the railroad is running OK...but let something happen on our own section of track, and suddenly we find both the time and our voice.

"Why didn't you consult with us?" comes the cry, followed shortly by, "We would have liked to be involved."

The thing is, we can't have it both ways. If we want our voices to be heard, we need to *participate* in the process. We need to attend meetings...to talk with the people we elect...to serve on campus committees...to run for seats on the Faculty Senate or SCFA Board...to read the flyers in our mailboxes and articles in the *Sentinel*.

We need to care enough to be involved.

Even when we *don't* have a complaint.

PART-TIMERS

The Parity Disparity

Excerpted from the Santa Monica College "Hourly ADVOCATE" - October, 2002

By Martin M. Goldstein

The official "recognition" by Sacramento of the unfair disparity in wages between full-time and part-time faculty members of the CCCs has given us the \$57 million in parity money this year, money that has already gone into our paychecks.

We feel vindicated, and even slightly compensated for this egregious unfairness. We're getting there.

But with this victory comes the sometimes-perplexing issue of just where "there" is. Where, or what, is "parity"?

It's not a moot point, since the enabling legislation says the \$57 million equity money can only be spent on part-time salaries until parity is reached, and then it can be used by the Administration in other ways. Many administrators would thus like to set parity as low as possible, so they can get their hands on the money sooner.

Here's how the reasoning goes: part-timers should continue being paid less than full-timers because their working conditions and obligations are different; i.e., they're not required to be on campus as much, they don't serve on hiring committees, or contribute to departmental work as much, etc. If they don't do as much work, they don't deserve

as much much pay.

This is a porous argument for many reasons, but here's the answer in a nutshell: teaching is teaching, and teachers are teachers, and we all do just about the same amount of work per class that we teach.

Some of us do it in departmental meetings, and some do it after class with students, but we all usually put in more than our fair share of time per class—only part-timers are paid *less* for it.

One solution is for parity to be a 100% correlation between the full-time and part-time pay. Since the state is going to make up the difference, it makes no sense to ask for anything less than 100% parity: the less you ask for, the less you have to settle for in the end.

Recent arguments suggest that even at 100% parity, we may be selling ourselves short. There is an economic price to be paid for working part-time, and that has to enter into the equation if parity means "fair."

What's the price of the anxiety and insecurity of part-time contingent employment, of commuting between campuses trying to stitch together a halfway decent living? And

what's the price of not being able to participate fully in the professional and collegial life of your department or college?

Perhaps what's "fair" might be over 100% parity.

In other countries such as France and Japan, this is exactly the case: part-time teachers earn more per class hour than full-timers, to compensate for the fewer hours they work, the career opportunities they've lost, and the insecurity with which they live.

Security is such an issue that some schools have even put a price on it. At DeSales University, tenure-track faculty are offered five-year contracts at a 15% bonus, if the teacher doesn't ask for tenure. Take tenure, however, and you don't get the money—but you *do* get the security. Boston University has a similar program in its Business School.

So here we have full-timers getting a bonus for giving up security...but for part-timers, it's merely insult added to injury: we have no security, *and* we get paid less for the privilege.

In the end, one thing is certain: what's going on now in California's community colleges is not fair. A lot people statewide, nationwide, and worldwide know it, and are working to make it better.

And none of them are going to stop until we get at least 100% parity.

"Once 'parity' is reached, the district gets to pocket the difference...and you can bet your last shekel that it won't go into the pot for salaries for anyone, part-time or full-time."

*Christine Goudy
Pasadena City College*

PAGES

Featuring News of Special Interest
to Sierra's Part-time Faculty

Flexibility: The New "F" Word

We've heard the song and dance before: colleges and universities need to employ part-time instructors because they give the institution flexibility in scheduling.

And so, from a recent issue of the Chronicle of Higher Education, we bring you these words of wisdom from a spokesman for the UC system, explaining during the recent strike by UC lecturers why the institution utilizes these underpaid classroom instructors instead of higher-paid full-time professors:

Paul Schwartz, a spokesman for the University of California system, said the university needs the flexibility that short-term positions provide. "The lecturer position was not meant to be a permanent career position," he added. . . .

"Part of the university's teaching mission is to make sure that fluctuating academic needs and a healthy exchange and flow of ideas and perspectives is maintained," said Mr. Schwartz.

*Oh, now I get it: only poorly-paid, part-time workers with no job security can be "**FLEXIBLE**" enough to ensure a "healthy exchange and flow of ideas and perspectives."*

And all this time I thought it was a matter of economics.

Silly me.

Be Glad You Don't Live in Illinois

Talk about being forced to ride in the back of the bus.

Up to now, part-time faculty in Illinois' community colleges have been prohibited from having union representation. In fact, according to an article in the *NEA Higher Education ADVOCATE*, community college part-timers have been the only group of educators in that state to be denied such rights.

Surprisingly, Illinois has the third-largest community college system in the nation. It also has one of the worst part-time to full-time faculty ratios in the nation: over 75% of Illinois community college faculty are part-time.

Yet a large portion of those part-time faculty aren't even considered educators: in the eyes of Illinois law, an "educational employee" is defined as someone teaching six or more hours per week. So what are the poor folks teaching *less* than six hours a week? Chopped liver?

Well, it looks as if Illinois Governor George Ryan has seen the light in at least one area: he just signed legislation allowing the state's community college part-time instructors—at least, the 20,000 or so who teach six or more hours per week—the right to be represented by or to organize a union.

Welcome to the 21st century, Governor Ryan.

Get Informed, Get Involved

...by joining the Sierra College Part-time E-mail Forum!

What is it? It's a free, completely *private* e-mail list where you can communicate openly and honestly with fellow Sierra part-timers about issues and events that concern you as a part-time faculty member.

How do you join? It's easy: just send an email with your name, e-mail address, and teaching department to Joan Merriam at jcm@foothill.net or put your name on one of the sign-up sheets posted in the mailrooms.

Just remember: you must have a private email account to join the Forum (you can't use your Sierra College e-mail account).

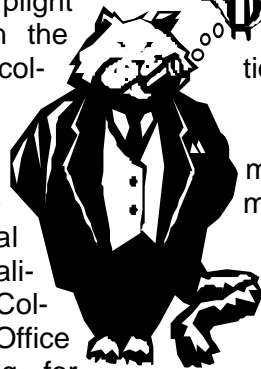
See you online!



6 **\$\$omething to Ponder**

As you consider the disastrous effects of the state's financial woes—massive corporate layoffs, cities and municipalities slicing essential services, businesses going *out* of business, community-based organizations closing their doors—you might also consider the “plight” of administrators in the state's community colleges.

According to the most recent published report on average educational salaries from the California Community College Chancellor's Office (Report on Staffing for Fall, 2000), few community college administrators are in imminent danger of needing to apply for a second mortgage to pay



the grocery bill.

The average salary of the state's 1,845 educational administrators is \$91,117 a year. Statewide, the average salary for part-time faculty is only 25% of that for administrators.

Even full-timers' average salaries are just 69% of the average earnings for educational administrators.

What about here at Sierra?

Those numbers are even more enlightening...not to mention disturbing.

The average annual salary for Sierra's twenty educational administrators is **\$99,535.45.**

Only THIRTEEN of the state's 56 community college districts have a higher average salary for their administrators...among them, affluent dis-

tricts such as San Francisco, Foothill-DeAnza, and Contra Costa.

The average tenure/tenure-track faculty member at Sierra earns just 57½ cents for every dollar earned by our administrators—the SECOND LOWEST ratio in the state.

Adding insult to injury, Sierra ranks 15th from the bottom in average salary for full-time, tenure/tenure-track faculty.

Let's see.....15th from the *bottom* for faculty, 14th from the *top* for administrators.

Something to ponder, indeed.

(Data Source: CCC Chancellor's Office MIS database for the first census week reporting period Fall 2000)

Compressed Calendar, Part II

Changes, changes, and more changes.

Mandy Davies, Chair of Sierra's Calendar Committee, has just returned from a meeting with representatives from CSUS, Los Rios, Yuba, and Delta colleges to discuss implementation of the compressed calendar. *(See the Sept., 2002 issue of The Sentinel for more information about the compressed academic calendar.)*

In light of some of the problems that have cropped up in southern California, with colleges making unilateral changes to their academic calendars with no regard for how those changes might impact enrollment at neighboring colleges, the attendees at this month's

meeting have decided to attack the issue on a coordinated basis.

By establishing a regional enrollment management plan, all of the schools and districts in the region—including feeder high schools—would be able to coordinate their academic calendars, thus easing transfers and co-enrollment between institutions.

This kind of cooperative effort, however, will take time...so all of the participants agreed to put off implementing any type of compressed calendar until the 2005/2006 school year.

Another meeting is scheduled for January; it is hoped that representatives from Butte College and CSU Chico and

Stanislaus will join the other colleges for this and future meetings.

In the meantime, Sierra's Calendar Committee has drafted a student survey, which should be ready for distribution later this semester, outlining the various options of a compressed calendar.

The Committee plans to survey Sierra's faculty during the upcoming Spring semester.





WEB SITES

A gathering of some of the best and most helpful sites the Web has to offer on and about the world of Higher Education

- **MERLOT** www.merlot.org
No, it's not a site for wine connoisseurs..."MERLOT" stands for Multimedia Educational Resource for Learning and Online Teaching. This excellent site offers reference materials, resources, online collections, lectures & presentations, and interactive demonstrations and simulations in the arts, humanities, social sciences, business, math, science/technology, and education.
- **TEACH-NOLOGY** www.teach-nology.com
Calling itself "The Web Portal for Educators," this site indeed contains a dizzying array of information on teaching...however, as with many education-related sites, this one is aimed primarily at the K-12 audience. It does contain a helpful section on higher education, and many of the resources—including tutorials, rubric-creators, and lesson plans—are adaptable to college level teaching.
- **@ONE** www.one.evc.edu
Subtitled a "Learning Community for Educators," this newly-up-and-running site includes a resource database where documents in a wide variety of categories can be downloaded, internet resources, curricula designed to help instructors integrate technology into their classrooms, and online professional training.
- **AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION** www.acenet.edu
This official website serves as a forum for the dissemination of major news related to higher education. As an organization, A.C.E. provides leadership and advocacy, representing the views of the higher and adult education community to both state and nation policy makers. This site includes information on major issues and current policy initiatives, as well as an online bookstore.

The Challenge of Excellence

Excerpted and adapted from North Seattle Community College's "A Brief Summary of the Best Practices in College Teaching," compiled by Tom Drummond

We are, whether wish it or not, models of personal development to our students. A teacher faces interpersonal challenges in every action he or she takes to engage, facilitate, catalyze, and give life to the opportunity of learning.

If we fail to embrace the delight, illumination, and even rapture of learning, we fail our students. The attitudinal qualities of being emotionally connected to learning have been described in many ways, but perhaps none have done so more clearly and eloquently than Carl Rogers.

- **BE OPEN TO EXPERIENCES IN THE HERE AND NOW**
This involves being genuine, being truthful, and being in touch with your own feelings and current experiences
- **DISPLAY UNCONDITIONAL POSITIVE REGARD FOR OTHERS**
Allow yourself to trust deeply in the underlying goodness of each person, despite how they appear...and cultivate your capacity to explicitly express your belief in each student's ability to learn and grow
- **INTEGRATE INTO YOURSELF THE PROCESS OF CHANGE**
Discover how to be open to learning opportunities...how to believe in yourself as an effective learner...and how to model this learning—mistakes and all—visibly to your students

Above all, remember that great teachers teach by example. It is the truly authentic life that instructs.



...and a warm and happy Hanukkah!



SCFA Wants YOU...

...to cast your vote for:

- ✓ **DAVID FERRARI**
- ✓ **NANCY PALMER**
- ✓ **DAVID CREEK**
- ✓ **JERRY SIMMONS**

for election to the Sierra College Board of Trustees

VOTE NOV. 5

◆ SIERRA COLLEGE FACULTY ASSOCIATION ◆

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