



Dial ologue



March 8, 2005

• An Open Forum for Faculty at Santa Rosa Junior College •

The *AFA Dial ologue* has been created to air concerns of all faculty. The *AFA Update* will continue to be the factual voice of the AFA, while the *AFA Dial ologue* will encourage conversation and publish opinions about workplace issues and political concerns. We invite any faculty member to submit letters, articles, or opinion pieces. AFA reserves editorial prerogatives.

Art Department Letter Supports Adjunct Faculty Health Benefits

February 19, 2005

Dear A.F.A. Executive Council Members:

As the California state budget crisis continues into its third year, all faculty and staff at SRJC have experienced its effects. Our students have felt the impact of the budget crisis due to increased tuition, larger classes and the elimination of certain courses. But it is the adjunct faculty especially who have borne the brunt of this crisis. Recent news from AFA that adjunct medical benefits may be eliminated compels this department to respond.

The Art Department has depended on the work of adjunct faculty increasingly over the last fifteen years. They have curated many exhibitions for the Art Gallery, assisted in the reorganization and maintenance of various studios, served on departmental committees, presented workshops for P.D.A. days, and participated in the Academic Senate, Day Under The Oaks, the Arts & Lectures Committee, and the A.F.A. They have served the

department and the college even though they are not contractually obligated to do so, often without extra pay.

The possible cuts to adjunct medical benefits for those who teach 40% or more represents a serious crisis for adjunct faculty. At a recent Art Department meeting, one adjunct faculty member who has taught at SRJC for over fifteen years pointed out that the threat to adjunct health benefit represents not only a pay cut for those who depend on it, but a perpetuation of a system that devalues adjunct faculty. During the same meeting, several adjunct faculty members, all of whom have taught here over ten years, mentioned how much they depend on this benefit, how much more of their paycheck would have to go toward paying for health care if it is cut, and how receiving the medical benefit reimbursement has added dignity to the job of adjunct faculty member.

While it is unknown how many adjunct faculty in Art actually use the adjunct health benefit, figures show how crucial adjunct

faculty members are to the functioning of this department. The Art Department made teaching assignments for Fall 2005 to 60 faculty members, of whom 10 are full-time. Sixty percent of the remaining 50 adjunct faculty members will teach at 40% or more in the fall.

At the very moment when we have been asked to rally, to teach well, and to accept more students into our classrooms, reader money has been cut, supply budgets have been limited and adjunct activity hours funding has been restricted. Uncertainty about scheduling has also lowered morale among some adjunct faculty members. SRJC depends on adjunct faculty for their expertise, professionalism, flexibility and passion for teaching. They should not be treated like second-class citizens, but as true colleagues.

The Art Department urges you to do everything possible to preserve health benefits for SRJC adjunct faculty!

Respectfully submitted,
Art Department Faculty

CONSIDERING ALL THAT HAS BEEN GOING ON RECENTLY, MAYBE WE SHOULD TAKE COMFORT IN THIS CONTRACTUAL PROTECTION . . .

Article 9: Academic Freedom

- 9.01 PREAMBLE:** As the Supreme Court said in *Keyishian v. Board of Regents* 385 U.S. 589 (1967), “Our Nation is deeply committed to safeguarding academic freedom, which is of transcendent value to all of us and not merely to the teachers concerned. That freedom is therefore a special concern of the First Amendment, which does not tolerate laws that cast a pall of orthodoxy over the classroom.”
- 9.02 NECESSITY:** AFA and the District recognize that academic freedom is included within the freedom of expression and is necessary to the pursuit of truth. These freedoms are irreplaceable elements of the faculty teaching experience and the student learning experience in the California Community Colleges. Though tenure has historically helped to ensure these freedoms, all faculty members — regular, probationary, temporary and adjunct, tenured or non-tenured — shall enjoy the protections offered by this Article.
- 9.03 CONTEXT:** Academic freedom as a form of freedom of expression shall exist within the general framework of the United States Constitution, the California State Constitution, requirements of the California Education Code, California Community College regulations, and official course descriptions. Academic freedom and freedom of expression shall be maintained in all media (printed, oral, visual, and electronic) and in all interactions with students, faculty, staff, and administration.
- 9.04 ACADEMIC FREEDOM**
- A. Inquiry and Instructional Freedoms:** Academic freedom as a form of freedom of expression includes freedom of inquiry and instruction for every faculty member, including freedom in presenting and discussing subjects. Academic freedom also includes, but is not limited to, freedom to:
1. explore and teach difficult and controversial material within official course descriptions;
 2. model and encourage critical thinking, foster and defend intellectual honesty;
 3. present all viewpoints in the teaching and learning process; and
 4. express differences of opinion and interact with students, faculty, staff, and administration in an environment free of intimidation and censorship.
- B. Inquiry and Instructional Responsibilities:** With the exercise of these freedoms comes the responsibility of considering controversial issues objectively and acknowledging the existence of, and showing respect for, opposing opinions. Every faculty member also has the responsibility of making clear what is personal opinion and what is considered general knowledge.

- C. Freedom to Exercise Assignment Responsibilities:** Every faculty member shall have the freedom to exercise the responsibilities inherent in his/her assignments and as described in the Regular, Probationary, Temporary, Adjunct Faculty, and Department Chair Job Descriptions (See Article 17).
- D. Freedom in Scholarship and Environment:** Every faculty member is a member of a learned profession and shall have academic freedom in pursuit and expression of his/her personal scholarship, and in the teaching-learning environment.
- E. Freedom to Express Differences:** Academic freedom as a form of freedom of expression includes the right to express differences of opinion regarding interpretation of Program, Department, and/or College/District policies. Such differences of opinion are to be expected in an academic environment and shall not result in the mistreatment, disciplining, or reassignment of faculty members.
- F. Academic Freedom for Students:**
1. Academic freedom as a form of freedom of expression also exists for students and includes, but is not limited to, freedom to:
 - a. inquire;
 - b. access the full range of information available;
 - c. explore difficult and controversial material;
 - d. express differing opinions;
 - e. develop and practice critical thinking skills;
 - f. defend intellectual honesty; and
 - g. learn in an environment free of intimidation and censorship.
 2. Maintaining these reciprocal freedoms for students is the responsibility of every faculty member.
- 9.05 GRADING:** Every faculty member shall maintain the exclusive right and responsibility to determine grades based upon professional judgment. The determination of the student's grade shall be made by the course instructor and — in the absence of mistake, fraud, bad faith, unlawful discrimination, or incompetence — shall be final.
- 9.06 FACULTY AS MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:** Every faculty member is a member of the public. When a faculty member speaks or writes as a member of the public, he/she may be identified as an employee of the College/District, but shall not construe him/herself to be a representative of the College/District and shall be free from institutional censorship or obligations.
- 9.07 DISTRICT SUPPORT:** The District shall actively support the principles of academic freedom enunciated herein.



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Meet Noreen Evans
on St. Patrick's Day
Thursday, March 17
5:15 pm – 6:15 pm
Newman Auditorium

Set aside St. Patrick's Day, Thursday, March 17 from 5:15 pm to 6:15 pm, in Newman Auditorium, to meet Noreen Evans, our 7th District Assemblymember to the California State Legislature. Noreen plans to let us know her thoughts and hear our concerns about four items in the proposed 2005-06 State budget:

- the Adjunct Medical Benefits Program;
- adjunct office hours;
- adjunct parity pay; and
- changes to the CalSTRS Defined Benefit Plan.

She will take questions as time permits.

FACCC
Lobby Day
Monday,
March 14

Join the Faculty Association
of California Community
Colleges (FACCC) in
State Capitol Room 112

Speakers include
State Senators and
and Assemblymembers

Lobby Day is free. See the
Lobby Day Agenda
at www.faccc.org.

Call (916) 447-8555
for more information.