



Dial o g u e



November 18, 2004

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

THE AFA *Dial o g u e* 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 o g u e* WILL ENCOURAGE CONVERSATION AND PUBLISH OPINIONS ABOUT WORK PLACE ISSUES AND POLITICAL CONCERNS. WE INVITE ANY FACULTY MEMBER TO SUBMIT LETTERS, ARTICLES, OR OPINION PIECES. AFA RESERVES EDITORIAL PREROGATIVES.

Full-Time O Part-Time O

by Janet McCulloch, AFA President

The recent e-mail discussion of the “overload” issue has forced me to respond in a way that I hope will aid in a discussion of the facts rather than emotional bickering. The attempts to humiliate or embarrass some full-time faculty with regard to their overloads has done more harm than good, but that is simply my opinion. As usual, this is a much more complex problem than most people realize. The problem is that adjunct faculty come in many shapes and sizes, and the All Faculty Association represents all of them under the Contract (specifically, Article 16 with regards to this issue). For the purposes of this discussion I will not use instructor or department names since that kind of finger-pointing is childish and unnecessary.

As I, and several other Council members, have pointed out many times, the Load Report is notoriously inaccurate. On any given day it is at best a snapshot of an instructor’s load, and there are many reasons why that load might change from day to day.

An excellent real-life illustration of this is a particular department where all the instructors teach a wide variety of short courses with many different start dates. The contract instructors routinely sign up for overloads because they cannot predict which classes will not fill and consequently need to be cancelled. The practice of taking overloads in this area is meant to protect adjuncts from preparing for a class and then being “bumped” by a full-time colleague. I use the term “colleague” because I believe this practice is extremely humane and compassionate, recognizing that “bumping” is the ultimate insult to a qualified and dedicated adjunct faculty member. The Load Report published to the College might lead some to believe incorrectly that these full-time faculty are greedy or selfish while nothing could be further from the truth. At the end of the semester the report would show that these faculty did not actually teach any overload.

There are, however, reasons why a full-time faculty member

would be teaching an overload. Some departments (certainly not mine) have a difficult time finding qualified instructors. This is especially true in departments that have several specialized programs under one department chair. Full-time faculty who for the most part act as unpaid coordinators of these programs may need to teach an overload in order to serve their students. And sometimes this happens with department chairs—someone has to be chair, but there may not be enough adjunct faculty to staff the sections necessary for a full program for the students. The Vice President of Academic Affairs makes these decisions, not AFA. Once again, the answers to these dilemmas are not so simple, or maybe I should say simplistic.

Then there are the adjunct faculty whom we call “freeway flyers.” For five years I was one of those, teaching in three colleges and working as much as 170%. I did not enjoy this life, but it was one that I had chosen with the clear understanding that I was

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gaining experience that might lead to a full-time job. In the last year before I interviewed for this job I was also making plans to go back into private industry where I would certainly now be making much more money than I do as a community college instructor. I was extremely fortunate in getting this position especially in a highly competitive field. But for these dedicated faculty the real problem is a lack of full-time positions throughout the State of California. This is primarily a function of the problems with funding the Community College System and not with the amount of money the College spends on overloads. Yes, AB 1725 mandated the 75/25 ratio and, No, it has never been enforced either by the State or by any college.

Another kind of adjunct faculty member is the person who has a full-time job at another college, in the K-12 system, or in private industry. The biggest question is, "How are these faculty different from our own full-time faculty?" Under Federal and State law they are essentially the same. When faculty are hired we **cannot discriminate** against them simply because they have full-time employment elsewhere. The same is true when hourly assignment loads are offered to all hourly faculty, which leads to my last category—full-time faculty with overload assignments.

Here the question is one of moral expectation, and given the focus on so-called "morality" in the last election I would like to

refrain as much as possible from moral posturing. Some adjunct faculty believe that the full-time faculty should share their relative prosperity with the adjunct faculty in time of need, and that's the big problem. As we see there are so many different circumstances surrounding hourly employment that it's extremely difficult to determine how this "sharing" might occur. My husband is a sixth grade teacher, and yet my grandfather was a very wealthy man. Should I feel guilty about having a full-time position when I don't really have to worry about my retirement? Maybe, but right now I'm not feeling very good about "sharing" my lost salary increases with an adjunct faculty member who has a full-time job elsewhere. I'm also not too keen on sharing with someone who's retired from private industry and yet wants to teach a one-unit class in a field that represents their hobby interest. And what about a person whose husband or wife makes twice what mine does?

I refuse to make these kinds of moral judgements and instead choose to work for the betterment of all faculty salaries, benefits, and working conditions. This extremely divisive discussion of the overloads ultimately destroys the opportunity to focus our energies on issues at the State level. *The faculty at Santa Rosa Junior College has an hourly salary schedule that does not distinguish between full-time and part-time hourly wages; this is*

why the adjunct lecture hourly rate is fourth in the state, a point of great contention during negotiations with the District. Whether you are aware of this or not, this linkage is rather unusual across the State. *The hourly faculty at SRJC also has an unprecedented degree of protection under Article 16.* Again, many of you may not know that we negotiated this difficult article and other colleges have failed to achieve this goal. Most adjunct faculty across the State would love to have these kinds of guarantees. Finally, when full-time faculty at SRJC get a raise, EVERYONE gets a raise. This is sadly not the case for most adjunct faculty around the State. We will not unlink part-time and full-time wages, and I think the faculty should thank the AFA Negotiating Team for believing so strongly in the principle of equity. The All Faculty Association means exactly that—All Faculty, not full-time versus part-time. If we can't work together to better our circumstance then everyone loses.

ON THE BASIS OF THE BELIEF THAT ALL HUMAN BEINGS SHARE THE SAME DIVINE NATURE, WE HAVE A VERY STRONG GROUND, A VERY POWERFUL REASON, TO BELIEVE THAT IT IS POSSIBLE FOR EACH OF US TO DEVELOP A GENUINE SENSE OF EQUANIMITY TOWARD ALL BEINGS.

-HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA, "THE GOOD HEART"