



DIALOGUE



Spring 2007 • An Open Forum for Faculty at Santa Rosa Junior College • March 12, 2007

THE AFA DIALOGUE 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 DIALOGUE 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.

FACULTY SPEAK OUT

AFA has received numerous letters, e-mails and phone calls from both regular and adjunct faculty in response to recent articles in the *AFA Update* and *AFA Dialogue*. With their authors' permission, we have reprinted them here on the pages of this issue of the *AFA Dialogue*.

IN RESPONSE TO: RANK TEN? NOT LATELY!

Dear Janet,

Thank you for sharing the information on salary rankings. For the first time in my 26 years at SRJC, I feel betrayed. When I served as salary committee chairman in the early '80's (just before the inception of AFA), it was always evident that the board, faculty, and administration were together in our commitment to the high standards the college has maintained. So when Dr. Agrella asked the SRJC community to pull together and sacrifice a few years ago, it was consistent for us to do so, and sacrifice we did. When the reader budget was eliminated, I was forced either to lower my standards and accessibility to students or to pay for readers out of my own pocket. My choice was essentially a pay cut, not a "workload issue." I travel to conferences (in my 1997 Ford Aspire), paying for all expenses,

and learn that my colleagues from other colleges have seen their travel budgets restored. And now I find out that our longstanding agreement to be placed at rank 10 is no longer being honored. I can't imagine your frustration, and all I can offer is my unconditional support to you. Please know that I am behind whatever you feel you must do to restore the excellence that I have known here for half of my life.

Terry Shell
Reg. Fac. (Former Chair),
Mathematics

AFA Negotiations Team -

I greatly appreciate all the work you all are doing for the faculty. I know from experience that it is not easy or fun to negotiate. However, with all due respect...

So am I to understand from the AFA Update that these **contractual** policies are not being upheld? The reason there is a common misconception that COLA is automatically applied to salaries is because that is what the contract says happens! I read the contract before I was hired and applied for the position here believing that this is how things were done. Please, either enforce the contract or make it accurate. (I prefer the former.)

~Anonymous

Dear AFA,

Yes, we need to get back to Rank 10. I am shocked that our salary schedule rank has fallen to between 29 and 41. I agree that we need to be competitive to attract and retain outstanding faculty and we need to think about current faculty many of whom will retire soon. Current faculty have given up salary gains during hard fiscal periods. Now it's time for the college to give back to the faculty.

Liz Tynan
Adj. Fac., Library & Info. Res.

AFA Council and Negotiators,

Thank you for your service to the faculty at SRJC. Having served in the early years of AFA on the Executive Council I know how time consuming and important your work and the results are to the faculty.

I am disappointed with the District and the loss of Rank 10 in our salary schedule. We should be #1 for the quality of our service and the programs we have built at SRJC. I believe we have the finest faculty in the state and that we should not settle for anything less than the Rank 10 we worked so hard to maintain over the years. It is time for the District to recognize our contributions to the excellence at SRJC and for our

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THE PRESIDENT AND BOARD NO LONGER CARE

by Greg Sheldon, Regular Faculty in the Counseling Department
and Member of the AFA Executive Council

(A response to the last *AFA Dialogue and AFA Update*.)

I have been working on this Campus since 1977. As a faculty member I used to feel important and respected by the President and Board. Something has drastically changed. The only things I feel now are the pressure of enrollment management and giving one to the gipper. I have been giving and giving and giving to save the ship in bad times. Now when the District is getting more money than they have ever gotten before, they are still telling me to give. I am no longer important enough to be paid in the top ten, 30+ looks good to them. And my retirement at 40th in the State is also okay. And why not keep our new faculty at Rank 40? This must be because attracting the best is no longer important, or is it because it is so cheap to live in Sonoma County? I'm angry.

For the first 20 years of employment at SRJC I felt like I belonged to an important family. With Maggini and Bertolini at the helm of the Board and, yes, even Mikalson, they brought an interest in making this institution the best. But their philosophy was to build this greatness through the faculty. Attract the best, pay them well and provide them with a good benefit. Boy has this philosophy changed. Now it is—increase their workload by wait lists and increased class sizes, take away their readers and support, decrease their salaries and make them pay for their own benefits. Things have changed. The last ten years things have gone down hill.

When the budget was tough, over

the last few years, we, the faculty, sacrificed to protect our resources and keep this institution strong. I personally increased my class size from 25 to 40 students. Now, when the District is getting more money from the State than they have ever gotten before, they are still telling me to sacrifice. Working with FACCC, I know what moneys they've got. We have over 10 million dollars in new money coming in every year from this point forward just because of the new equalization calculation. Plus, we have new money for the non-credit funding. Each percent increase in faculty wages costs the District about \$480,000. To get us back to Rank 10 would be about 6%. That would be less than 30% of this new ongoing money. But what did they do with the money? Well, we have two reserves now. The one that we all are aware of has about 12 million dollars in it, the new one called the "GASB 45" has about 7 million dollars in it. So what is GASB? This is prepaid liability for retirement payments. Now, the State told the District they needed to report what their unpaid liabilities might be—not fund it for 50 years. That is a lot of \$150 a month for retired faculty. So they now have almost 20 million dollars in reserves. Maybe it is being saved for the Agrella, Zumwalt or Burdo building.

I was used. I gave up money and increased my workload for the good of the institution. Now they are telling me I am no longer important enough nor do they respect my sacrifices in bad times to pay me a fair wage and benefits. What seems to be important are the buildings and reserves.

I have a solution; if I am only worth 40th-in-the-State salary at retirement and 30th at Step C6, maybe that is how I should treat my job. If the faculty is only valued at this level, maybe this is the level we should work to. Maybe I can find a scantron way to teach my Career Planning classes; after all, grading written assignments takes a lot of time. In the crunch time of drop-in counseling, I will strive to only see two students per hour instead of the mark of four. Working to the level of 40th in the State at retirement sounds like working just hard enough not to get fired. This must be the new institutional philosophy they are looking for. Not to be the best community college in the State, but the 40th. Why am I trying so hard to be the best counselor and faculty member I can be when I am now longer respected or valued? I will work to be a good 40th.

It sounds like it is time to put myself on cruise control and spend the next 6 or 7 years I have left semi-retired—just not actually tell the District. The Board and President no longer want me to feel valued or important. I will work to be 40th of 72 districts in the State, not Number One, because that is what they feel I deserve. I will give them what they ask for. I think I feel a cold coming on. I need to take a few days off and take care of myself.

Thank you for your ear.
Greg Sheldon (*Angry, tired, old and needing a few extra days off. I think I get 10 sick days a year. I have not taken a total of 10 sick days off in 30 years. I wonder what the next 7 years will be like. Should we all take our 10 days in the same weeks?*)

FACULTY SPEAK OUT *(cont. from page 1)*

willingness to make concessions during the times of challenging budgets. We have delivered with the increased enrollments and have patiently waited for the District to “show us the money.”

Bev Henningsen
Reg. Fac., Work Experience

Dear Team Members,

I want to thank you for the informative newsletter regarding our salary placement, and encourage you to do all you can to bring us back to Rank 10. As a former member of the negotiating committee, I am well aware of the time and energy you put into gathering statistics, formulating arguments, and scheduling meetings. I am appalled that a district as wealthy and large as ours is so far down the rankings and I know you will take a firm stand with administration to be sure we reap the benefits of restored funding.

Anne Ysunza
Reg. Fac., English

Hi Janet

Thanks for the great AFA newsletter update. Thank you VERY much for all you do. I am always impressed with your viewpoints and overall general newsletter writings. I see you asked for some comments, thus my email.

I'm holding on for a couple of more years, so I can secure the medical plan from the college—the one you get to take with you at 15 years. Many years ago I was a union organizer and aide to camp to the AFL/CIO/SEIU during the general strike of 1972 in San Francisco. Harry Bridges, who started the Long Shoremen's Union, held out for a deal that got his workers a lot of money the first year and less the

later years of a three-year contract. He did so as he wanted to address a hidden fact that many of the current rank and file under him were of retirement age and he saw it as a way to get them a bigger retirement boost so that some could retire the first year of the contract with the most money. Later when we all found out about it, we said, “Gosh, what a sharp cookie.” All the other unions settled for a three-year contract with even increases over three years . . . thus, my point.

If I could get a bigger raise sooner rather than later, I'd be able to leave sooner. My 15th year with previous adjunct credit is 2008. In some ways, it looks like this year may be our best chance at getting our best wage increase ever. The tea leaves tell me we're heading into a severe recession if the US ends its involvement in Iraq sooner. That final tab has to be paid soon. And, as a rule, California is always one year behind rough times, generally speaking economic-wise, when they first hit the overall U.S. Conversely, California always comes out of it one year later than the rest of the country.

Anything you can do will be most appreciated. Keep up the grand work and thank you again for all you do. I have been there and know the hard work and long boring hours.

Dr. J. Davis Mannino
Reg. Fac., Behavioral Sciences

IN RESPONSE TO R-E-S-P-E-C-T: WHAT'S IT MEAN TO SRJC?

Thanks for your terrific piece in AFA's *Dialogue*. An Educational Plan based on the college's mission and changing county demographics—what a concept.

~ Anonymous

John -

A great article in the *Dialogue*. I think it hit the nail on the head. I hope the administration gets the message. We need to learn from College of Marin's building program at Indian Valley not to become like them.

Diane Larson
Reg. Fac., Counseling

John -

I think that this is well written and correct in its conceptual context. Thanks for doing it.

Bob Rubin
Reg. Fac., Life Sciences

John -

Thank you for all you're doing. I appreciated reading your article and all your efforts to bring the administration back to the importance of the people/faculty in the buildings. All this “building out” and not enough emphasis on who is going to be there. I respect what you and the team are doing to refocus the administration.

Brenda Flys with hawks
Reg. Fac., Behavioral Sciences
(Former Academic Senate Pres.)

John,

Thank you for your comments in the recent *AFA Dialogue* in regards to the College's lack of support for ESL. I've been at the JC since '91, and I'm continually surprised by how understaffed and under-resourced we continue to be.

As you know, there has been a lot of talk about knocking down Barnett Hall. Barnett provides 5 classrooms and ESL offices for 8 contract faculty, numerous adjunct faculty, and 4 staff, and 2 resources rooms— one for credit faculty

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FACULTY SPEAK OUT *(cont. from page 3)*

IN RESPONSE TO R-E-S-P-E-C-T: WHAT'S IT MEAN TO SRJC? *(cont.)*

and one for non-credit faculty. I was informed today by our department chair that she recently heard from Mary Kay that ESL will move back to Emeritus Hall. Once the new Barnett is ready, someone will move out of Emeritus and into the new Barnett. ESL will then move back. However, where ESL will move while Barnett is torn down and built is unknown. A measure of how the College deals with ESL can be found in its "plan" for where we will go.

Ron Balsamo
Reg. Fac., ESL

Hi John,

I read your *Dialogue* piece and I say BRAVO! You really pulled together all the info about the dramatic change which has come over the campus in the past several years. I've been a part of SRJC since 1973, when the late John Bigby asked me to come on campus and teach Broadcasting classes. In 1984 I went to full-time. In all, I've had a 34 year association with the JC. I've seen the school go from a "community" ambience to a "corporate" model. Teaching is a second career for me. I came from the private sector to SRJC so I'm very familiar with the way business works. The uniqueness of SRJC was that we all worked together, (administration and staff) to maintain the school's reputation for quality and collegiality. Over the years I've watched that uniqueness disappear. As the campus has expanded and physical facilities have been added, the actual number of

full-time staff has declined. With no disrespect intended here, the inherent quality of the institution is vested in the work of the full-time faculty and classified people. I personally know of departments, including my own, where full-timers, as they retire, have not been replaced. It's impossible to run a full-time, complete, first-rate program with folks who need to work elsewhere to pay the rent. I sometimes have the sense the administration would really be happier if full-timers, in all areas, just went away. We represent a problem, because we are HERE.

This brings me to the subject of "shared governance." This is, of course, a joke. In a corporate model decisions are made at the top, not by committee. The ILLUSION of participation, of win/win negotiation is seductive, but it is an ILLUSION. I have learned in the past 15 years that sitting on any participatory, allegedly decision-making committee, is a waste of time. The bottom line here is that decisions come from the front office with the consent of the Board. Nothing you or I say makes a damn bit of difference. We may THINK it does so we find some comfort in that...but it really doesn't. The bottom line for me is that I love teaching. I love the classroom and I always will. For the administration it seems to be maximum income (enrollments), minimum outgo (salaries and benefits), a real corporate model, complete with a CEO. However, no one ever said they loved SRJC because of the swell new parking garage.

Ed La France
Reg. Fac.,
Communication Studies

John,

I wanted to thank you for your words in support of the ESL program and services for Latino students. It's great to see this dialogue come out into the open.

I also hope that AFA will have a strong presence in the accreditation self study process so that some of these concerns can become part of the report and lead to institutional priorities.

Gary Allen
Reg. Fac., ESL

John,

There is no question that I and many others feel that the "Board and top administration" have changed their view on faculty and staff. Faculty and staff are looking at other jobs throughout Sonoma County and the State, a major change from SRJC's place in the community during my time on the campus. Secondly, your comments on pay and equipment are at the heart of the issue. The salaries of both faculty and staff has been somewhat flat over the past few years, while other institutions have passed SRJC many times over. Staff positions and equipment have not been replaced due to a stated "lack of money." So staff are working in locations that had one or two other employees years ago. Is Santa Rosa Junior College declining before our very eyes? Sadly I must say YES. Who is to blame? I leave that up to the reader.

Greg Granderson
Reg. Fac., Counseling
(Past President and Current
Interim President,
Academic Senate)