

Spring 2009 • An Open Forum for Faculty at Santa Rosa Junior College • March 26, 2009

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 PERSONAL OPINIONS ABOUT WORKPLACE ISSUES AND POLITICAL CONCERNS. WE INVITE ANY FACULTY MEMBER TO SUBMIT LETTERS, ARTICLES, OR OPINION PIECES. AFA RESERVES EDITORIAL PREROGATIVES.

## READERS WRITE BACK

*With the authors' permission, we have reprinted letters and e-mails received in response to recent articles in the AFA Dialogue.*

### MESSAGE FROM THE AFA PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

*The following responses were not edited and are printed in their entirety, as AFA is committed to presenting all responses and conflicting opinions that we receive. The views expressed in every piece published in the AFA Dialogue are those of the author alone. While AFA neither condones nor condemns the opinions expressed in the March 3rd article written by "Justin Adjunct," we would like to make it clear that the AFA Publications Committee published the piece with the understanding that the author (to be pronounced "just an adjunct") wrote it as a satire. We did not intend to offend anyone.*

*Also, although the focus of the March 3rd "Don't Work for Free" article was on part-time faculty, AFA discourages ANY faculty member from "working for free."*

*Lastly, in the interest of academic freedom, the Publications Committee assures its readers that we will continue to publish articles that are sent to us — whether signed or not. While we encourage submitters to sign their names, we believe it is worthwhile to include responses from those who choose to identify themselves, as well as from those who prefer to remain nameless.*

#### IN RESPONSE TO "ADJUNCTS — STILL CONFUSED AS TO YOUR CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS?"

"Justin Adjunct," a pseudonym, authored an article about the myths and realities of adjunct faculty working for free. There is little doubt that the myths and realities in five of the six examples are accurate. No one, including "Justin" and me, believes anyone should be forced or expected to work for free.

However, I must disagree with "Justin's" third myth in which he suggests that adjunct faculty who do any extra work would be subject to physical violence at the hands of their fellow adjunct faculty. I find this particular suggestion repugnant, distasteful, disrespectful, and, yes, a subtle threat, to all adjunct faculty. I do not believe that this reflects the view or actions of our adjunct colleagues except perhaps "Justin" and it certainly does not reflect my view of the relationship between and amongst the members of our adjunct faculty.

It has been suggested that this was an attempt at satire. If

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#### IN RESPONSE TO "DON'T WORK FOR FREE"

I would like to thank and praise the writers of the *AFA Dialogue* released 3/3/09. As an adjunct faculty at SRJC for nearly 10 years now, I have often felt the pressure of the "work for free" issue as something I had better do in order to receive some sort of priority and/or advancement in my department. Also, I have always preferred to be referred to as "part time" as "adjunct" has always sounded a little negative to me. It was so relieving and validating to have these issues addressed in such concise and specific verbal terms. It made me feel some sort of relief that I am not alone and I have the right to say "no" without fear of suffering some sort of negative consequences.

Unfortunately, I feel that some full time faculty and administrators don't always realize that us adjuncts have very busy lives, just as they do, but that for us, we are busy with other jobs that take up most of our time when we are not fulfilling our SRJC teaching assignments. This lack of understanding often results in full timers placing pressure

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#### IN RESPONSE TO BOTH "ADJUNCTS — STILL CONFUSED?" & "DON'T WORK FOR FREE"

I am controlling my urge to email the campus regarding the offensive note sent from AFA addressed to Adjunct telling them "don't work for free." I felt this was a very inflammatory piece that serves only to make Adjunct and Regular faculty into adversaries. The implication in addressing this only to Adjuncts was that it's OK for Regular faculty to "work for free", but not adjunct. Or, are we to refuse to work for Day Under the Oaks? Refuse to come in over summer to interview and hire Adjunct for the fall? Refuse to come in over the summer to work with Adjuncts to help ensure they have what's needed to be successful for their first teaching assignment? While this may not be the case for all Regular faculty, MANY of us work far more than 40 hours/week during the regular semesters. If we didn't, students wouldn't get the kind of quality education that they do. If students were better prepared, perhaps this wouldn't be the case, but they are

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## READERS WRITE BACK *(cont. from page 1)*

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### IN RESPONSE TO "STILL CONFUSED?"

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it was, it is a very poor example as the other Myths and Realities "Justin" offered contain no other examples of satirical humor. Had "Justin" included satirical humor elsewhere, I would agree with the suggestion.

As "Justin" stated in Myth #6, "... we need not fear speaking our minds nor recoil from taking full ownership of our words and actions." This comes from a person using an alias and whose identity remains hidden behind the veil of secrecy thrown up by the AFA's Publications Committee!

I take full ownership of my words and my position on this matter. Adjunct faculty are valued and respected colleagues who provide an invaluable service to our college. Adjunct faculty need not fear violence for taking the extra step to help a student or to improve our programs. The days of subtle threats spread through innuendo and articles like "Justin's" are long over! It is time for 'Justin Adjunct' to step from the shadows, identify himself and accept public ownership of his words. I call upon "Justin" to set the record straight by repudiating any suggestion of violence. Anything less is not acceptable.

*~ Mike Meese, Regular Faculty,  
Administration of Justice*

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### ANOTHER RESPONSE TO "STILL CONFUSED?"

With regard to Myth #5 about the instructor putting extra time and effort into helping struggling students: the response is "it's a guilt trip." What are the instructional and student learning goals of our college? Isn't it the goal of an instructor (full-time or otherwise) to effectively help students to learn to the best of his or her ability (which should include SLO's)? It is unbelievable to me that a faculty member would take the stance that spending extra time helping struggling students is a "guilt trip." Moreover, who is being accused of imposing this guilt trip, anyway?

*~ Name withheld by request*

### IN RESPONSE TO "DON'T WORK FOR FREE"

*(cont. from page 1, column 2)*

or "guilt", whether conscious or not, on adjuncts to feel obligated to perform duties and tasks above and beyond our teaching contracts. Most adjuncts just simply don't have the time and can't afford to "work for free." I have often felt the consequence of saying no to working for free is that I am then looked at as less dedicated or worthy to receive the same priority or praise that full timers receive for performing these duties that they ARE paid for; such as, serving on committees, etc. I recently applied for a full time position in my department and one of the reasons I was told that I did not even receive an interview, as an internal adjunct candidate, was because I had not served on any committees at the JC, thus I had not "worked for free".

It seems only right and necessary that adjuncts be treated fairly since we are such an integral part of making the community college run smoothly and efficiently. The work we are paid for, teaching the classes and interacting with students, is the same as full timers. We are all in this together, part time and full time alike, we all want to serve our students and our community to the best of our instructional ability, but nobody should be pressured into "working for free" in order to make that happen.

I am so grateful to the AFA for advocating for us part time instructors on so many issues that need attention. Such as, health benefits, pay equity, and keeping us informed of policy, procedure and rights. Keep up the great work!

*~ Name withheld by request*

**AFA WELCOMES  
YOUR FEEDBACK!**

**SUBMIT COMMENTS,  
LETTERS, AND/OR  
ARTICLES  
VIA EMAIL TO  
AFA@SANTAROSA.EDU  
OR VIA FAX TO  
(707) 524-1762**

### IN RESPONSE TO BOTH ARTICLES

*(cont. from page 1, column 3)*

who they are. If we ignored the writing that we see and turned to all multiple choice perhaps we'd get down to a 40-hour week.

I could go on, but I hope you see some of my point. I feel strongly that I'd like the anti-Regular, pro-Adjunct barrages to cease and desist. Anything you could do to bring this issue to the attention of those on the other side would be appreciated. I love and value the expertise of some of my Adjunct colleagues and do not want them absent from Day Under the Oaks, department meetings, etc. just because the district doesn't have the funds to reimburse all 20-30 of the Adjuncts in my department for these types of activities.

*~ Name withheld by request*

Postscript: The main thing that prompted my email is the feeling of being attacked and hurt when I hear and/or read about how poorly Adjunct faculty are treated on this or other CC campuses. I was an Adjunct myself at two different colleges for a few years before being hired as a Regular faculty. I never felt abused and, if I had, I certainly wouldn't have blamed it on the Regular faculty, whom I considered colleagues, whether I got paid for our collaborative time together or not.

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### ANOTHER RESPONSE TO "DON'T WORK FOR FREE"

Some departments have little or no participation by full-time faculty on committees (part of their job requirement for college service). How many full-time faculty members put in their college service hours? It is one thing to ask adjuncts to not work for free, but shouldn't we be requiring the full-timers to put in the time for which they *are* being paid? (Or transfer that % of their to pay to part-time faculty who *are* willing to participate!)

*~ Name withheld by request*