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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 WORK PLACE ISSUES AND POLITICAL CONCERNS. WE INVITE ANY FACULTY MEMBER TO SUBMIT LETTERS, ARTICLES, OR OPINION PIECES. AFA RESERVES EDITORIAL PREROGATIVES.

UNITED WE STAND

by Lara Branen-Ahumada, Adjunct Faculty in
P.E., Dance & Athletics and Theatre Arts

Understanding the other person's needs doesn't mean you have to give up your own needs. It does mean demonstrating to the other person that you are interested in both your needs and theirs. When they trust that, there's much more likelihood of everyone's needs being met.

~ Marshall Rosenberg

Over the past several months since the announcement of schedule cuts for fall, as an AFA council member I have observed

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ALL FOR ONE & ONE FOR ALL?

by Janet McCulloch, Regular Faculty in English

The other day I was talking to a good friend who is finishing a doctoral program in psychotherapy. I said to her that although it seemed like a cliché, the faculty and staff at SRJC are working through the four classic stages of grieving — Denial, Anger, Bargaining, and Acceptance. Our college is confronting some very difficult choices because of the state and national financial crisis, and that is obviously painful. The real problem is that so many people seem to be at different stages of the grieving process.

Those who are still in Denial of the state's financial crisis write to DL.STAFF.ALL about their personal financial situations as if no one else is suffering. Some go on about regular faculty benefits with no regard for the adjunct faculty who have lost their jobs and the 50% paid benefits they had prior to lay off. These same people who have tenure completely overlook the temporary nature of adjunct faculty and the classified STNC's. Classified staff point

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MEMBERS SAY

YES TO TA

by Warren Ruud,
Regular Faculty in Mathematics

Last week, AFA membership overwhelmingly approved the Tentative Agreement (TA) negotiated by the District and AFA in August. Of the 432 faculty voting, 79.9% were in favor of the TA. Adjunct faculty cast 56% of the total number of ballots, while regular faculty accounted for 44%.

On behalf of the entire AFA Executive Council, I want to thank AFA Chief Negotiator Janet McCulloch and the other members of the 2008-09 AFA Negotiating Team — John Daly, Ted Crowell, Michael Kaufmann, and Lara Branen-Ahumada — for their work over the last twelve months. This year's round of negotiations was among the most difficult in the history of AFA, and the team came up with many hard-fought victories and creative solutions to protect and extend the rights of all SRJC faculty in these challenging times.

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to the faculty and rail about their furloughs when faculty can only furlough two days under the Ed Code. They also don't realize that the reduction to the schedule of classes resulted in a \$4 million cut to adjunct faculty salaries. Faculty members who gave up sabbaticals to help pay for faculty medical benefits, adjunct and regular alike, have received very few thanks for their sacrifices. And then Denial turns to Anger.

Those who are angry are blaming everyone else for a generally bad situation. One group calls another group selfish. Individuals blame the AFA Negotiating Team. Other individuals blame the administration. No one blames the insurance companies for their rapacious greed in providing what many consider a basic human right. Very few turn their anger on the government because it's so much easier to blame someone close to home. None of this anger is very productive, but it is part of the process. And Anger begins to turn to Bargaining.

Those who have reached this stage are sending out messages that show little understanding of the way community college funding works, or the laws that govern

our system. All in all, these messages show a very parochial view of our system, and fail to look at the larger picture and its many constituents. Some faculty want to compare SRJC to the CSU system which has much greater flexibility to

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balance their budgets. Some regular faculty want to take salary cuts while others want to see adjunct faculty laid off in larger numbers. Some regular faculty want to trade away their benefits to save jobs and others want to sacrifice the classified staff who also greatly serve our students. Some faculty are looking at eliminating programs and services outside their own departments, but don't want to down-size their own area. This kind of bargaining can lead to bad decisions that will negatively impact our students.

And that's the most important thing—our students' needs, not our own. I don't know when we can ever get to Acceptance.

Acceptance doesn't mean rolling over in despair and giving up. It means accepting the circumstances and beginning to problem solve in order to serve the greatest number of people to the best of our ability. As I've said before it seems like we are grieving for the college that we once had, and that's a result of grieving for a California that we once had — a place where the citizens and the government valued education enough to properly fund our institutions. I don't have to like it, but the truth is that the legislature and the

governor care about education during the election cycle, and if there happens to be money available after paying the prison guards we might get a smaller piece of the pie than is mandated under Prop 98. And if you don't understand Prop 98, then you are not seeing the larger picture.

I have heard some faculty members say that we are one big family, and we need to work together to solve this problem, a problem that isn't as temporary as some want to believe.

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UNITED WE STAND *(cont. from page 1)*

that — in what seems the blink of an eye — relations between full-timers and part-timers have gone south. The two groups have drifted into separate camps intent on defending and protecting their own interests.

We are now two groups in conflict. Therefore, in order to gain some insight, I have of late turned to the words of Marshall Rosenberg, founder and director of educational services for the Center for Nonviolent Communication, an international peace keeping organization¹ and author of Nonviolent Communication, A Language of Life. I believe Rosenberg's concepts on non-violent communication (NVC) could be useful for us. Rosenberg talks about "needs" and in interest-based bargaining we speak in terms of "interests" — two strikingly similar concepts. My take is that interests come out of universal needs.

Full-timers and part-timers do not have to agree on everything and it would be surprising if we did. However, for both to come out of this budget crisis with mutually acceptable outcomes, I believe we need to learn to communicate

differently and make an effort to understand one another.

Looking at what is going on under the surface, adjunct instructors are afraid — afraid of losing jobs, afraid of losing health benefits and afraid that

“FULL-TIMERS AND PART-TIMERS DO NOT HAVE TO AGREE ON EVERYTHING AND IT WOULD BE SURPRISING IF WE DID. HOWEVER, FOR BOTH TO COME OUT OF THIS BUDGET CRISIS WITH MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE OUTCOMES, I BELIEVE WE NEED TO LEARN TO COMMUNICATE DIFFERENTLY AND MAKE AN EFFORT TO UNDERSTAND ONE ANOTHER.”

with an already reduced load their pay will be cut. It's scary and we feel more insecure than ever. Full-timers are also afraid of losing part of their income, part of their retirement, and in the back of their minds, maybe they are afraid of losing their jobs as well — perhaps a program will be discontinued. Maybe the college will even go under if things do not improve. We're all

afraid. And fear does not bring out the best in people. Some may think — I'm not afraid I'm just angry! But behind the anger are sadness and fear. And behind those feelings lie our needs — primarily the need for security, for the necessities of life that money buys.

We have other needs in this situation as well. The need for fairness is high on the list for adjunct faculty. While we know that we are not "equal" in terms of the status of our employment, (yes, we know we are temporary although, for faculty like myself, after 20 years on the faculty it's hard to regard your job as temporary), when we say we want equality, we want proportional equity. We simply don't want to bear the burden of the budget crisis disproportionately — it doesn't seem fair.

High on the full-time faculty's list I am guessing is the need for respect. The full-time faculty is the core of the college. Full-time instructors work 40 hours a week at SRJC, they run departments and serve on committees — they earned their full-time positions and with those positions, they were given rewards that they well deserve.

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ONE FOR ALL?

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This is a noble idea, but it's only an idea until people set aside their personal and highly emotional grievances in order to begin the tough job of negotiating. And that's the final thing I want to address — negotiating. The Latin root of the word "negotiate" means "to trade." It's important to understand that in the work place we trade our services for cash and other considerations such as job security and other working conditions. And we can only trade in proportion to the cash that's available. The AFA Executive Council and the Negotiating Team are very smart people who do see the larger picture. You have to trust us to trade on your behalf with the full knowledge that we cannot please everyone all the time. We are doing the best we can under terrible conditions, balancing the needs and interests of so many different kinds of faculty. We are the **ALL** Faculty Association with strength in our numbers and our diversity.

UNITED WE STAND

(cont. from page 3)

It is clear (to me) that adjunct faculty need the goodwill of the full-time faculty. It may be less clear that the full-time faculty needs the goodwill of adjunct faculty as well.. But clearly we all need and want an atmosphere of mutual respect in the workplace. We work side by side — we all have a need for harmonious work relationships.

Both faculty groups are necessary to the very existence of the college. Neither deserves to have its pay cut, to lose assignments, to lose out financially in any way — and no one wants to lose. However, it appears to me as an adjunct AFA councilor and as a member of the negotiating team that for both the interests of full and part-time faculty to be taken into consideration fairly, there will need to be painful sacrifices from both part-time and full-time. Recently a friend well-versed in NVC said to me, "If both parties walk away from a deal feeling as if they gave up a little too much, then it's probably about right." This applies to negotiations with the District in general and, during this unprecedented budget disaster, it applies to the two faculty groups. We will all have to give up "a little too much" to be fair to everyone, but I am hopeful we will not give up on staying unified as a faculty and as the AFA council.

¹: Rosenberg, Nonviolent Communication, p 220

Works Cited:

Rosenberg, Marshall B., Ph.D. We Can Work It Out. Encinitas, CA: PuddleDancer Press, 2005.

Rosenberg, Marshall B., Ph.D. Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life. Encinitas, CA: PuddleDancer Press, 2003.

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