

NHCC United Faculty

October 1985

What Has the Union Done for You?

With the beginning of each fall semester the NHCC United Faculty tries to interest more faculty members in union membership. Some of you have expressed your support and encouragement for years without ever joining. Others of you are new and have not heard about the union. Several of you did join last year. But why should anyone join?

The answer is that we work diligently and effectively to further your interests in providing quality education to our students. We are proud of the following list of union accomplishments over the past year.

- 1) Due largely to our efforts, two pro-faculty candidates were elected to the NHCC Board of Trustees last January. Don Stewart and Blaine Mann have raised their voices against unwise, ill-timed building programs and consequent tax increases. They believe that expansion to further campus sites will be justified when the Houston economy picks up and our population begins to grow as it once did. Until then, they are committed to the improvement of existing facilities and work conditions.
- 2) We have monitored Board meetings and long-range planning meetings to gain more insight into College governance and find ways to make constructive suggestions.
- 3) We have investigated conflict of interest allegations relating to the College's land acquisitions and construction programs.
- 4) We have provided advice and assistance to several faculty members -- none of them union members at the time -- who felt that their job security was threatened.
- 5) We have published the Advocate and distributed it free of charge to all faculty members. Last year we addressed issues like computer services for counseling, the Board of Trustees race, the separate District Office, the inservice programs, and the expansion to the Tomball campus. Our writers have included both union and nonunion faculty and administrators.

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- 6) We supported Walter Hinojosa's bid for the State Legislature. Hinojosa, a former teacher, came in first in the general election but lost in the runoff. We felt that he would have represented faculty interests well on the state level, and we were sorry to see him lose. Even so, we made many valuable political contacts during the campaign.
- 7) Intangibly, but just as certainly, we have made our presence felt in the informal system of checks and balances that makes the College work. Chancellor Airola has told us that he appreciates our participation in the political process, our way of bringing up issues that need to be brought up. Though the Board has stated vigorously its absolute imperviousness to special interest groups, we think it doth protest too much! In colleges without unions, the faculty fare a lot worse than we do.

If you would like to support efforts like these, please give us a call. President Alan Hall (x544) or Treasurer Bob Locander (x592) will be happy to discuss union membership with you.

Changes in the Merit Travel Fund

by Olin Joynton

This is the story of the article that wasn't. Last week I had an article all prepared righteously lamenting the apparent disappearance of merit travel money -- only to find out that there never had been any designated as such. I circulated an advance draft of the article to Dean McMillian, who soon thereafter attended a high-level meeting of District administrators. At that meeting Director of Finance Marsee went looking in the budget and lo! found \$4000 for merit travel: \$3000 for South, \$500 for East, and \$500 to float.

The NHCC United Faculty applauds this provision for faculty members who strive for professional excellence and recognition. Yes, we know that this is a teaching institution. But faculty members who read papers, chair panels, and publish their work always find these activities to pay dividends in the classroom. Research interests, pursued in moderation, enhance teaching by stimulating the instructor's enthusiasm for his or her field.

Union members, claiming 50% of this year's writing awards, have for some time been conspicuous leaders in placing NHCC's name before our colleagues nationwide. Thus we have a special concern about merit travel money. We appreciate this timely response to our concerns.