

NORTH HARRIS COUNTY COLLEGE UNITED FACULTY

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THE ADVOCATE

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Edited by Steve Davis,
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President's Column

By Alan Hall

The summer of 1990 saw some movement from Dr. Airola and the Board of Trustees on Step 16. Upon Dr. Airola's approval, the Board approved salary increases for non-Step 16 faculty that will range from 4% to 6%; this range includes the step increment. Step 16 faculty in Categories I through III, without the step increment, will see an approximately 2% increase. For Step 16 faculty in Categories IV and V, the Board granted a one-time supplement of \$500 in addition to the 2% increase. The reason for the exclusion of Step 16 faculty in Categories I through III is Dr. Airola's conviction that a faculty member who has not earned a doctorate, or at least achieved ABD status, has not really exhausted his or her options for salary gains.

It is regrettable that more could not be done for Step 16 faculty this year. Not everyone agrees with the Chancellor's view on Categories I-III. Until we can get a fair, equitable and affordable plan to deal with this issue, it seems unfortunate for the one-time supplement of \$500 not to be extended to Step 16, Categories I-III faculty who lost ground last year as a result of the cap on their annual increment. The AFT believes that these faculty members, who have provided dedicated, long-term service to NHCC, will be hard pressed to remain enthusiastic about teaching in the face of inflation's eroding effect on their income. Simply put, something must be done for all faculty at Step 16.

The AFT is pleased to see at least some movement on this issue. It is, however, only temporary relief for a fraction of those losing ground. We certainly are not declaring that a solution has been

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"Education for Democracy — Democracy for Education"

found. We worked hard last year to publicize this issue and worked with the administration and Board in an attempt to find a solution. We are not where we need to be. The AFT will redouble its efforts on this issue, including a new proposal.

PSRP NEWS

By Greg Michell

To all our members who were not present during the summer--welcome back. As those of you who were here and active in our union know, the growth has continued. This growth should be a source of encouragement to all members when it is taken into consideration that there are employees who are attempting to make union membership adversarial. It has been reported by one union officer that some potential members were told that it would cost \$45.00 to join the union as a PSRP. That figure is more than 400% too high; fortunately, the correct information was passed along, and we gained members as a result of the mistaken communication.

Another communication problem brought to the leadership's attention was that in some areas full-time employees were only being allowed to take one sick day a month. If by chance that employee was sick more than one day in a month, the ill employee was docked pay for any additional missed days. Bernice Tyson was contacted about this and was helpful enough to explain that full-time employees can take more than one sick day consecutively without being denied pay. The number of sick days taken can equal the number accrued as long as it meets all other criteria required by the College Policies and Procedures Manual. We need to become aware of our rights as stated in the Manual. There would be many fewer misunderstandings if we informed ourselves thoroughly.

The Statewide Convention of PSRP of the AFT will be held at the Holiday Inn on Sam Houston Parkway on October 20th and 21st beginning at 9:00 a.m. each day. This should be very informative and helpful as programs are to be presented intended to educate the membership of their rights under the Texas and U. S. Constitutions. Workshops in the different trades and crafts of our membership will address differences as well as similarities. If at all possible, try to attend as a show of solidarity as well as a source of information.

Remember the importance of recruitment. Uninformed or misinformed employees tend not to join. Tell your co-workers during lunch or during your breaks about the insurance, legal benefits, discounts, etc. that membership provides.

Anyone who did not get a chance to read the in-house newsletter, which included a copy of the NHCC Five Year Plan, should do so. Of particular interest are the first four beliefs listed in the Five Year Plan. Some would say that the Five Year Plan--if put in practice--would certainly be a new deal. Members willing to volunteer for work in the Conroe action should contact their campus leadership as soon as possible. Organizing can never start too

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early. Any questions or comments should be directed to the Union leadership listed on our masthead. As long as the questions and comments keep coming, we can continue to improve our dialogue; with improved dialogue, we will better our working conditions and enjoy fuller respect and human rights.

Guest Editorial

When was the last time the word Negroes was used to describe Americans of African descent? Was it in the early '60's when integration first occurred in the South, or was it immediately after Dr. Martin Luther King's famous March on Washington? Though the final public use of this word cannot be clearly pinpointed, most would agree that it has neither appeared in print nor been vocalized in public in approximately twenty years. Therefore, the faculty and staff at NHCC were appalled to see the word Negro used in the July Board minutes. Are members of the faculty and staff still using this outdated term privately even though they have not heard it publically in twenty years? Shouldn't the responsibilities of the Public information Office include keeping informed of accepted terms of reference to ethnic groups? When an inappropriate reference to a particular group is used, all faculty and staff should be offended--not just the group that is the object of the reference.

The NHCC-UF calls for the appointment of a district editor to prevent future blunders of this nature as well as the kinds of grammatical and stylistic gaffes we see so frequently in memos, letters, and directives from the District Office that can cause public embarrassment.