

# 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---FACULTY COMPENSATION

The union has worked hard to highlight the problems of Step 16, arguing that senior faculty should not be losing ground financially. Since the union made this issue a primary focus, a number of events have occurred.

First, Dr. Airola appointed a Faculty Compensation Committee to study the problem and make recommendations. The committee met regularly in the Fall of 1990 and Spring of 1991 and arrived at several proposals. Since Dr. Airola retired in the meantime, the committee submitted its report to Dr. Pickelman, and committee chair Brenda Steuer has met with him. Dr. Pickelman's plans now are to review the entire compensation system. He will appoint a task force to review the issue of Step 16 as well as others. It would seem appropriate for Dr. Pickelman to invite the members of the Faculty Compensation Committee to serve on his task force. Those members are well-acquainted not only with Step 16 issues, but others as well. The committee's recommendations went beyond Step 16 issues to include recommendations on the entire salary structure. Lest that committee's work disappear into the same dark hole as many other committee reports, its members' expertise should be used on the task force. Let's not re-invent the wheel again.

An issue that Dr. Pickelman wants to add to the task force's job is a look at summer pay. He has expressed concern that faculty may not put in as many hours in the summer, and, therefore, the rate of summer pay may be inappropriate. My guess is that an investigation will reveal little, if any, measurable difference in the amount of work. To focus on that issue alone, is to oversimplify. The task force should consider the following points:

NHMCCD has an excellent reputation, and Dr. Pickelman wants to

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build it into a national one. That move may be inconsistent with cutting summer salaries

Many students and parents in the District have praised our summer program because of the high number of full-time faculty who teach the courses. The students recognize that they are in a quality program. Many of them are transients from universities who comment upon our excellent level of instruction. The District has many fine part-timers (some of them are union members) who are regulars returning each semester. The AFT is not suggesting part-timers do not do an excellent job, but we all know that division chairs are often desperately "looking for a warm body" to place in a classroom at the last minute. We have also seen the problems that result. The more we can prevent these problems, the better the District's reputation, and perhaps that goal is best accomplished by using as many full-time faculty as wish to teach and pulling from that pool of good part-time regulars.

Some faculty have indicated that a reduction in summer compensation would cause them to have to seek part-time employment elsewhere. This move would then reduce the quality that they would be able to offer students. Being forced to part-time status would naturally reduce the time and energy that they could devote to serving students.

Since 1973, an attractive element of District employment has been summer compensation. Reducing it may make it harder to attract the best faculty. In order to best serve students, we must continue to attract the best faculty.

Finally, a reduction in summer compensation could have a negative impact on faculty morale, again a move that would not best serve the students.

Alan Hall

#### CONGRATULATIONS

The AFT congratulates Dr. Nellie Thorogood, Dr. Pat Pate, and Dr. Joyce Boatright as they assume their vice-chancellor positions. We are excited about the appointments of Dr. Steve Head and Dr. Sandy Shugart as college presidents. The union already has a good working relationship with several of these officeholders and anticipates good things to come in this next phase of the District's history.

We are also especially proud to announce the promotion of Greg Mitchell, PSRP District President, to the position of Coordinator of Police Services, Kingwood College. Greg offers excellent leadership to the support staff union, and we are pleased that the District recognizes his talents as well.

Alan Hall

## STAFF PRESIDENT'S COLUMN---CHANGES

As many great philosophers have stated, change is the only unchangeable thing. Since the end of last spring, we have gained Dr. Nellie Thorogood, Dr. Pat Pate, and Dr. Joyce Boatright as vice-chancellors. Dr. Pate and Dr. Thorogood have new jobs. Dr. Boatright has a new employer and a new job.

There are two new presidents. Dr. Stephen Head is president of the newly named Kingwood College and Dr. Sandy Shugart is president of the newly named North Harris College, all of which is included in the newly named North Harris Montgomery Community College District.

Other changes involve two new Board members--Dan Hauser of Conroe and Randy Bates of Aldine. The classified employees applaud this action of the Board as Republican Representative Kevin Brady of the Woodlands attempted to make both new members his constituents by appearing before the Board. Democratic Representative Kevin Bailey is applauded by favoring the inclusion of a member from Aldine.

The Board recently announced that there will be a faculty member at meetings to give a faculty perspective. This is viewed as very positive and progressive. It is hoped that in the future a classified employee would have the same opportunity.

In brief, the changes that have occurred are viewed in a very positive light by the classified employees. There are those that resist risk and change, but both are necessary for improvement which at this time appears at hand. In closing, I've chosen a quote that the union leadership (myself certainly included) should spend a great deal of time considering: "Progress is impossible without change and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything." (George Bernard Shaw)

Greg Mitchell

## BOARD EXPANSION

At its August 15 meeting, the Board expanded its membership to nine, appointing to Position 8, Randy Bates, an attorney from Aldine, and to Position 9, Dan Hauser, a banker from Conroe. The union has been advocating the importance of minority representation from southern Aldine, representation which had been neglected. Initially, the Board planned to appoint two new members from Montgomery County, but a little over a month ago, Elmer Beckendorf, chair of the search committee, informed me that the Board had decided instead to appoint one member from Montgomery County and one from southern Aldine in order to get "more balanced representation based on population."

The union is pleased to see the move, one that we helped initiate with an article in The Advocate last June. It was also helped along by pressure from State Representative Kevin Bailey, former union president. If one looks at the District's services in the community, our focus has been north of the Sam Houston Beltway,



ignoring the needs of the southern end of the District, which is populated primarily by minority and blue-collar citizens. For years, the union has emphasized to Board members the crying needs of this area. I know each Board member theoretically represents the entire District, but I felt deep satisfaction finally witnessing a black from Aldine take a seat at the table.

Alan Hall

### EDITORIAL THOUGHTS

This issue of The Advocate is being prepared at the end of an amazing week. In the Soviet Union, the forces of popular democracy turned back the efforts of Stalinist reactionaries to reverse that country's course of revolutionary change. As trade unionists, we should all be proud of labor's contribution to the overthrow of the coup. Early in the process, Boris Yeltsin called upon Soviet workers to respond with a general strike to thwart the consolidation of power by the coup leaders. The militant and determined efforts of the Soviet masses in the streets restored Gorbachev and relegated Gennady Yenyayev and his ilk to the dustbin of history.

All supporters of democracy celebrate this result. Indeed, we await the day that our own political leaders--most of whom have never supported a strike this side of Kennebunkport, Maine--learn the lessons of these developments. Around the world, the enemies of freedom and the enemies of trade unionism are one and the same. It is the Gennady Yenyayevs and Frank Lorenzos of every society--cynical, conservative men--who seek to monopolize power and stifle the aspirations of the common people. Our own society is in desperate need of radical internal change. A powerful and vibrant trade union movement will be a necessary component in the struggle for an American version of perestroika.

Closer to home, recent developments at NHMCCD have been enormously encouraging. Faculty members at Monday's in-service were delighted not to have to pledge allegiance to anything or to engage in other practices that have made prior gatherings resemble a public school pep rally. Dr. Pickelman's address displayed wit, vision, and intelligence. What member of the faculty could not respond emotionally and positively to the announcement of being "unleashed"? As far as AFT is concerned, it is clear that there are now progressive and enlightened administrators at all levels who do not view union membership as an act of disloyalty and who are willing to work with us in a positive way.

At this point on Friday afternoon, vanloads of crazed employees from Kingwood College are departing for the Midnight Rodeo, lured by the promise of free liquor. Someone in the District Office apparently thinks employees, at the end of a hard week in the trenches, can partake of alcoholic beverages at a school-sponsored function without losing their professional dignity. Could there be a more welcome or pleasing measure of change?

Things are looking up. Join our union and we'll fight to make things as good as they can be.

Steve Davis (359-1645)