



EMPLOYEE FEDERATION

of

North Harris Montgomery
Community College District

2700 W. W. Thorne • Suite A-217 • Houston, Texas 77073



THE ADVOCATE

AUGUST, 1994

BUREAUCRACY

We've been listening to major concerns of the administration and Board of Trustees regarding tight budget. These concerns are understandable, for the District has spent a lot of money of late, enrollment has flattened, and state revenue is always uncertain. Here in the district recently, rumors flew--that we might not get a salary increase this September, for a while there was talk of a hiring freeze. One truth is that some departments that need to add full-time faculty will have to wait yet another year.

With these ideas in mind, I was surprised to read the Chancellor's "End of the Semester Update" for the spring semester, in which he announced another new administrative position, Vice Chancellor for Educational and Student Development. One might wonder just how many vice-chancellors, assistant, and associate vice chancellors we need. Obviously, questions arise. First, "development, implementation, and evaluation of curriculum, instruction, and student development programs" has been a college focus, with coordination through the vice presidents and various administrative teams. Do we really need to add another bureaucrat to "oversee" this activity? For the money that the district will spend on this new vice-chancellor, we could hire two full-time faculty members in departments that need to increase full-time positions. We could hire three staff members to reduce the burdens in departments stretched so thinly it is amazing that they are able to operate. If instructing and serving students is our primary mission, it seems that goal could best be met by spending the money on faculty or staff who deal directly with students.

It is clear the administration and Board have made up their minds--we will have this new administrator. The Federation has tolerantly watched the burgeoning bureaucracy, recognizing that some of the new positions in the last few years have been necessary, but this new position is enough.

As long as we must have the position, the district should seize on an opportunity--this position should be filled by a minority. We read everywhere that the college is a multicultural community, yet one look at our administration quickly belies this commitment as a major one. This position gives the college an opportunity to move in the right direction.

Alan Hall
English Professor, NHC
Federation District President

THE COST OF EXCELLENCE

I have been "reflecting on excellence." Of course, my attention was drawn to the Second Annual District-Wide Spring Conference held in February at Tomball College. How much did the day cost NHMCCD? I have been looking over the program to determine which sessions justify the cost of the activity.

I see at least three general categories of expenses: money spent to pay for the conference; time spent by full time employees to plan, develop, and implement the program; instructional time lost from the main goal of the college--namely to teach. The easiest to calculate is the first. I learned that \$19,000 had been budgeted for the affair. I am sure a detailed breakdown of each expense will be provided when requested. The cost for the other two areas is not as easy to ascertain.

What did we, NHMCCD instructors and support staff, receive for these expenses? Was it worth the time and money? Could we have received the same for less? I have no doubt that a number of the sessions were beneficial. I am glad I attended the session entitled "INTERNET-Hands On," but I do remember having a similar opportunity at North Harris College.

NHMCCD personnel presented approximately thirty-one sessions. Who among the presenters was paid part of the budgeted \$19,000? Commercial concerns presented five sessions, and computer people presented another seven. NHMCCD certainly didn't have to pay anything for these sessions.

Community Education schedules classes/seminars on topics such as retirement, income tax, health, gang violence, and sexual harassment during the course of the year. Did NHMCCD have to pay for any of the 26 similar presentations? NHMCCD faculty and staff attend many of these courses through CE free or at a reduced rate.

Only three other categories appear to remain: guest speakers, food, and printing. Two outside speakers were invited; one didn't attend. I don't know how others received JoAnn Nash-Brown's message, but I liked it. In fact, she is an exceptional speaker. Was the food good? I don't know because I ate with colleagues whom I don't have the opportunity to see frequently. It must have been superb. And although I couldn't find a conference schedule when I needed one, I must have received several schedules before and on the day of the conference.

What was the cost of food preparation? What was the outside speaker paid? How can the college survey the faculty and staff to determine if the benefits of such meetings justify the expense and an additional line on an administrative resume? In these days of revenue shortfall and budgetary constraints, public institutions like NHMCCD owe it to their various constituencies to address such questions before squandering scarce resources on what may be unneeded things.

David Dahnke
ESL Professor, NHC

LETTERS COLUMN: GLOSS REVISITED

The recent article by Alan Hall and Allen Vogt defending the formation of a gay/lesbian student organization (GLOSS) at NHC generated an enormous amount of commentary. The written responses the authors received were overwhelmingly positive. A sampling of these follows. Two writers strongly objected to the piece. One of these letters was a confidential communication; the text of the other is printed below in its entirety.

Around the district (including NHC, where the controversy was centered), some readers were puzzled as to what had prompted such a lengthy and impassioned analysis of this matter. The original idea was for The Advocate to run a short statement applauding GLOSS's appearance as announced in The Paper. Alan Hall and I agreed in our conversations that GLOSS's presence was a progressive step for the college--one that might not have been tolerated by the administration five or ten years ago. Then came word that a faculty member at NHC was so incensed by GLOSS's recognition as an official student body that he planned to fight it. This individual, apparently religiously-motivated and convinced that GLOSS's purpose was to "promote homosexuality," took his protest initially to Sandy Shugart, and then to John Pickelman. Not receiving satisfaction at those levels, he then intended to take his case before the next public meeting of the Board of Trustees. At this point, the union leadership decided to launch its own counterattack, using The Advocate as its bully pulpit. We were concerned to let the administration and the Board know how strongly many employees supported the concept of a gay students organization. We wanted to exert counterpressure to keep NHMCCD leadership from potentially caving in to the rantings of a handful of fanatics on this issue. We knew that if the Chancellor and the presidents obeyed their most progressive instincts and stood firm on the question of GLOSS's legitimacy, then the Board would likely adopt the same perspective. Hence the length, content, and tone of the article that was published.

Was it appropriate for a union newsletter to address such a subject? You bet it was! Some people think unions should stick to traditional bread-and-butter concerns--wages, benefits, working conditions. On the glorious day when public employees in Texas gain collective bargaining rights (something that decent societies commonly recognize), perhaps the Federation will narrow its focus and turn to negotiating and maintaining a contract. Until then, we intend to continue our function here as watchdog and conscience for the institution. No school-related issues are off-limits in these pages. That means The Advocate will be, among other things, a voice for the voiceless, a true advocate for the screwed-over and the dispossessed. In this light, we owe it to our gay friends (in and out of the closet) among faculty, staff, and administration at NHMCCD to speak out loudly when their worth and dignity is assaulted on mean and ignorant grounds. Many of our gay employees naturally have grave reservations about going into print to defend themselves.

There are special reasons for members of the NHMCCD community to think of the deadly consequences of homophobic intolerance. From geographical extremes in our district, young men from high schools we service--McCullough and Aldine--have traveled into Montrose to rob and murder two young gay men. The individuals who committed these outrages could easily have turned up as students in our classes. Can there be any doubt that they and other hate-crime perpetrators soaked up the conviction that homosexual lives are disposable from their family, church, and school environments? All of us must therefore be missionaries in

our private and professional lives for acceptance of human difference. We owe no less to the memories of Paul Broussard and Michael Burzinski.

Steve Davis

And now, the letters:

I would like to commend you [Alan Hall] and Allen Vogt on the WONDERFUL article you wrote in the last Advocate. It was not only enjoyable and intelligent, but more importantly, incredibly necessary and timely. That we even have to deal with this issue in 1994 at a supposedly progressive institution is incredible. Thank you for taking on this task. **RAQUEL HENRY** (Psychology Professor, KC)

Thanks to both of you for your article. Unfortunately, those who need to read it either won't, or quite possibly won't understand it. This is often more an emotional issue than an intellectual one, and unfortunately strong emotions often interfere with critical thought. **DON STANLEY** (Psychology Professor, NHC)

Thank you for your timely and well-written article "A Nightmare and a Dream." Your article has my full support. We can only hope that the proponents of homophobia, religious bigotry, and intolerance are but a miniscule faction at NHC. We must further hope that they somehow come to realize that they are free to perpetuate the nightmare only because the vast majority believe in and support the dream of freedom. Yes, even the freedom to espouse bigotry. **JOE McMILLIAN** (Dean of Arts and Letters, NHC)

Thank you! Thank you! A wonderful piece--I hadn't heard about the reaction to the organization, but when I heard one was forming, I knew the screams would be fast on its heels. You done good, guys. **REBA KOCHERSPERGER** (Division Head, KC)

The six-page harangue in April's Advocate was unbelievable! I know it must have been well-intentioned. Using the Advocate as a podium for a six-page expose about homophobic harassment on NHMCCD campuses and quoting Biblical scripture is beyond comprehension. A Reverend King you are not!

To use the Advocate to invent the supposed civil liberty harassment of homosexuals is not the original intent of the Advocate. This does not belong in a college union newspaper. I know of no college administrators, instructors, or staff who are being attacked or treated in a biased manner because of their sexual preference. All NHMCCD employees have co-existed peacefully together without "persuasion" harassment. This being the case, why was this amount of space allocated in the Advocate on this subject?

I see this article as an "inner-circle" free podium that wouldn't be accorded any other article submission and certainly not without restrictive editing as to content by its president and editor. The inner "clique" wouldn't have allowed it. It is a six-page, single-spaced expose on the justification of homosexuality, not harassment, with incorrect Biblical interpretations--your interpretations. The "right of assembly" could have been addressed in one page.

Some of us believe this article did not need to be included under the aegis of the Advocate--but perhaps it should have been submitted to The Paper as students were mentioned also in your article? To submit it to the Advocate attacks bias on the part of NHMCCD personnel. I know of no college administrators, instructors, or staff being harassed by other personnel because of their persuasion. Are there other responses to this article other than mine? Whose rights are being harassed? If you are referring to the formation of a certain club some months ago, it is now "old news." Why devote the whole Advocate to it now?

Maybe it is time to form a new staff organization? With the present administration open to equality and fairness, I cannot see the need, as I originally did under the old administration (when calling the staff union organizational meeting in Humble years ago), to attach ourselves to the Union. The dues have risen almost \$4 since then and are now prohibitive to most staff. A committee of staff could be formed under the aegis of a District Staff Arbitration Committee somewhat similar to the unencumbered Faculty Senate.

This committee would be familiar with personnel concerns of each college and its representational quorum would meet with administrators to openly address situations which arise and arbitrate fair solutions before needing a lawyer. That is the staff's attraction to the Union--free access to a lawyer. We are taxpayers to this college. The staff need to know that when REAL intrinsic labor rights have been violated, any lawyer will take a case. The formation of a District Staff Arbitration Committee to equitably address particular situations could circumvent this "fatal attraction." **JACQUELINE LYONS** (Faculty Secretary, NHC)

Great job Alan and Allen! I think the article may have a much larger impact on the community even outside of NHMCCD. I have supported such issues in the past as the education director of a community-based AIDS education/support program before coming to Kingwood College. I continue to support these issues in both of my classes--Sociology and Human Sexuality--acknowledging that this is not "value-free" education. Marx was one of the first to argue that it is the social scientist's duty and responsibility, because of our unique understanding of the social world, to actively pursue that which is right. I for one do that on a regular basis even if it goes against Max Weber's "value-free" science and education. **TONY FOSTER** (Sociology Professor, KC)

Enjoyed your "Nightmare and a Dream." I've never liked homophobia, religious bigotry, or intolerance either. Are administrators eligible to become Federation members??? **ROSARIO MARTINEZ** (Director of the Aldine Center)

Wow!! Good Stuff. I hope the E-mail/V-mail systems don't melt down as a result of the discussions this will surely generate. **BOB WILLIAMS** (VP for Administrative Services, NHC)

I wanted to thank both of you for the position you took in your article about the response we have seen from some of our staff and faculty about the creation of GLOSS. You did a fine job of pointing out the flaws in the arguments being used to defend not having the organization and the dangers of supporting such arguments. Unfortunately, I fear those whom we would hope to realize the error of their bigotry will read only the lines they feel will support their false beliefs. Nonetheless, I support your position and thank you again for taking a stand for what is right. **EARL CAMP** (Special Populations Coordinator, NHC)

Thank you for the beautifully written, cogent defense of tolerance in an academic environment. It is, of course, patently ridiculous to have to remind people of the threat intolerance toward any can pose to the freedom of each of us. I appreciate your erudite response. **SANDRA LLOYD** (Developmental Studies Professor, TC)

I need Cliff's Notes! **RICH ALMSTEDT** (Physical Education Professor, KC)

MINI-TERM EQUITY

In the April-May Advocate, Tim Howard maintains that faculty teaching two mini-term courses should be credited with the same amount of work as faculty teaching two regular summer session courses. His primary evidence is that the amount of classroom teaching is the same, and he alludes in a minor way to two other supporting points: it is doubtful whether a non-teaching hour on campus should count the same as a teaching hour, and mini-term faculty bear a heavy burden of class preparation on top of teaching six hours a day. To heat up the rhetoric, he pretends to be touched that Dr. McMillian and Dr. Richards have worried that the faculty might object to counting the two loads equally. He suggests that the faculty worry about such things themselves by taking the issue up in the Faculty Senate.

Tim is right that the faculty should be concerned about such issues. This example is only one of many workload equity problems for faculty across the district. The occ/tech faculty spend many more hours in the classroom than the academic faculty. English faculty believe that grading papers is so time-consuming that their teaching load should be reduced, and the science faculty make the same point about setting up labs. Faculty in counseling and library services are required to work days that other faculty are off. In 1991, Dr. Pickelman charged the District Faculty Compensation Committee to examine workload equity, and the committee members (myself included) became so overwhelmed by the complexities of the problem that they never got started working on it. In the meantime, a couple of changes in the district have made the relevant facts even harder to quantify. First, we have become more flexible about the length of time a student needs to spend with the course material: we now have terms of three weeks, five and one-half weeks, eight weeks, ten weeks, twelve weeks, and sixteen weeks. Second, Dr. Pickelman has led the way to a more professional understanding of faculty responsibilities by expressing skepticism about the thirty-five hour requirement. His attitude is to trust faculty to get the job done in the best possible way, regardless of when or where, and to deal individually with faculty who aren't pulling their weight.

I look forward to the time when Dr. Pickelman turns this attitude into a Board recommendation, but for now the thirty-five hour requirement is policy. Let's see how it would affect the problem that Brother Tim raises. The following chart compares a faculty member teaching two courses in the mini-term to one teaching two courses in a regular summer session.

	Number of Weeks	Teaching Hours Per Week	Total Teaching Hours	Non-teaching Hours Per Week	Total Non-Teaching Hours
Mini-term	3	30	90	5	15
Regular Summer Session	5.5	16	88	19	104.5

While the teaching hours are nearly the same, the non-teaching hours are dramatically different. Compared to the mini-term faculty member, the faculty member teaching a regular summer session spends *almost seven times* as many hours holding office hours, being available for students who wander in, working on committees, attending departmental meetings, consulting with support staff and administrators, and receiving members of the community (assuming thirty-five hours a week on campus). This year I am signed up to teach one regular summer session. I don't suspect Tim and other mini-term faculty of trying to "get away with something," as he puts it. I do, however, believe that they will render less service to the institution than I do, and I don't think it's fair for them to be credited with the same amount of work.

Tim's case boils down to this: "I'm in the classroom the same amount of time, so I should be paid the same." He evidently forgets the apoplexy triggered three years ago when Dr. Pickelman voiced workload-related questions about the summer pay schedule. To ignore the difference in non-teaching hours would be the height of political folly. In the year of a \$500,000 appropriations cut from the state and a 7% enrollment decline for NHC, you can bet that the institution's bean counters are looking for ways to reduce costs. Full-time faculty at most community colleges around the nation are paid adjunct rates for summer work, based on the assumption that non-teaching duties are mostly suspended. We are paid *pro rata* based on the expectation that non-teaching duties will be discharged as usual. The faculty have a fine tradition of fulfilling this expectation: a lot of committee work and curriculum development work gets accomplished over the summer. We have an important economic stake in maintaining the same level of service to the institution through the summer as we do during the long semesters.

Olin Joynton
Philosophy Professor, NHC

A RESPONSE

When this institution decided years ago to pay full-time faculty a percentage of their regular pay if they choose to teach in the summer, what it basically said was that hours in class and hours in the office are more important than "non-teaching hours." That the advantages of having full-time faculty available to summer students outweighed the cost, and in fact, full-time faculty may attract more summer students than would be the case otherwise.

In Olyn's response, he basically equates an hour in class with a "non-teaching" hour. I would argue they should not count the same. I would assert an hour in class is worth more than an

hour on campus. In the 104.5 non-teaching hours on campus, office hours are thrown in with on-campus hours. I think office hours should count for more than campus hours as well. If mini-semester teachers were required to put in two office hours per day for three weeks, this would make the office hours the same as one hour per day for six weeks.

So the class hours are the same, the office hours are the same, which would then leave on-campus hours for "service to the institution," which means, I guess, staring at walls, harassing the secretaries, washing the windows, playing basketball in the gym, sending E-mail to colleagues in faraway lands, etc.

I compensated for fewer hours on campus by, for example, making my home telephone number available to these mini students. I do not do so normally. I have received more phone calls at home than in my office concerning questions about class.

Missing in Olyn's response is any reference made to the needs/wants and desires of the students. It's not the students who want us chained up on campus 65 hours per week, it's the administrators and certain faculty. **Would mini-semester students be better served to be taught by adjunct faculty earning adjunct pay, or being taught by a full-time instructor?** Let's ask them! Not the administrators, not the tech folks, not the staff, let's ask students if they want full-time faculty to teach mini-semester courses. We've all worked registration. Which classes are typically the first to fill, the ones with full-time instructors listed or ones where no name appears, meaning an adjunct?

I would also argue the idea that you must be physically on site to perform work, or provide service to the institution is an antiquated concept. The chancellor recognizes this. Many employees are coming to recognize this. The punchclock mentality is being replaced by a new concept of work. You don't actually have to stand by as if working on an assembly line. The trend is for people to do more work from their homes, and spend less time on site, and that's a good thing.

I think ultimately any decision regarding mini-pay should be based on what is good for the students. We are here to service students, not "institutions." Let's ask mini-semester students if they feel slighted at all by having taken a three-week course. Did their instructors cut corners, did they not learn as much? Would they have rather had the class taught by an adjunct? I assume I am paid more than an adjunct NOT simply because I must service the institution, (which brings up images of sacrificing a goat on an altar) but because I am a better teacher. There's a lot of instructors, full and part-time who simply could not handle an intensive three-week course. Teaching a mini-class requires a higher degree of skill than teaching in a regular or summer semester.

How much more intensive is a three-week class? Using Olyn's numbers, in a regular summer session, an instructor spends 46% of his time instructing. In a mini-session, an instructor is instructing 86% of the time. In business, if you give the boss the option of getting the job done in six weeks and working 46% of the time vs. getting the job done in three weeks working 86% of the time, which option do you think the boss will pick? If the county contracts someone to build a bridge, and they build the bridge in three months rather than six, does the county pay the contractor less for having it built so quickly? Usually, contractors would earn a bonus for getting the job in ahead of time.

The last I checked, mini-semester credits students earn count the same as credits they accumulate over a fifteen week class, or over a six week period. I think the instructor teaching them deserves the same consideration. Maybe I'm way out of line here, but I think the greatest service I can perform for this institution is to be an outstanding instructor, and to continue to improve upon those skills over time. If administration has a problem with this, maybe they need to spend less time servicing the institution, and more time servicing the students.

Tim Howard
Government Professor, NHC

A GOOD RETIREMENT

Longtime union member Doug Wiechmann retired at the end of the spring semester. At his retirement party the Federation recognized Doug's twelve years of service and presented him with a gift in appreciation of his membership.

The Federation is grateful to Judy Conley for her help in making Doug's retirement a smooth one. Currently, staff vacation days are posted every six months. Doug's retirement date was going to cause him to miss the next posting, which could mean that he would lose those days. Many businesses and the State of Texas pro-rate vacation days, allowing employees to claim a portion of their vacation rather than lose them upon retirement. The union had learned that the college is about to establish a new system in which vacation will be posted monthly, but not in time to help Doug. With the Federation's assistance, Doug wrote a letter to Judy requesting that the college award him the vacation time that he would have coming if the new system were in place. Judy took the request and secured approval for a procedural change which would allow the college to pay Doug for five days of vacation time, a nice gift with which to begin retirement. The Federation appreciates Judy's help, and Doug wants employees to recognize the benefits of union membership. This one had a happy ending.

Alan Hall

JOIN THE AFT!

The Employee Federation welcomes the new employees of NHMCCD. For nearly fifteen years, this local of the American Federation of Teachers has led the fight to make this a better place to work and teach. No other organization or publication at NHMCCD takes our kind of independent, critical approach to District affairs. If you agree with our perspective, show your solidarity by becoming a member. All faculty and staff are eligible. Monthly dues rates are \$20.75 for full-time faculty, \$13.60 for full-time staff and adjunct faculty, and \$10.50 for part-time staff. Discuss membership with **Alan Hall**, District President (443-5544, 353-8634); **Angela Cezar**, District Staff President; or any other member (Tony Foster, Bob Locander, Mel McFadden, Greg Mitchell, Patricia Plunk, Velma Smith, Allen Vogt, Steve Davis) of the Federation Executive Committee. Also, please consider writing for this publication. Send submissions to the Editor, Steve Davis, at Kingwood College.