

NORTH HARRIS COUNTY COLLEGE UNITED FACULTY

2700 W. W. THORNE DRIVE • SUITE A-217 • HOUSTON, TEXAS 77073

THE ADVOCATE

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President's Column

By Alan Hall

I LOST GROUND financially from last year to this year. So did all other senior faculty members who covered their families with the college's group medical insurance.

Let's define LOSING GROUND as taking home less money at NHCC as a result of one's raise being smaller than the increase of group family medical insurance rates offered as a benefit by the College. My salary increase did not make up for the increase in my family coverage because I reached Step 16 last year and did not receive an annual increment. I did receive a small incremental increase of \$856.00. Premiums for dependent coverage from September 1988 to September 1989 increased \$111.62/month, or \$1339.44 for the year. My first paycheck on my 1989-90 contract reflected a LOSS in monthly net income of \$40.29, or \$483.48 for the year. I am in pay category III; senior faculty in pay categories I and II lost more ground than I did.

No senior administrator LOST GROUND from last year to this year. Every senior administrator received substantially more money for 1989-90 than it would take to make up for the family medical premium increase. The minimum salary increase for any senior administrator (Deans, Directors and above) for 1989-90 was \$2100. The range for administrative increases went as high as \$6982.

My point isn't that faculty should begrudge senior administrators their salary increases. Many senior administrators work hard and perform their jobs well. The extra ability to perform which each passing year of experience gives them should be recognized by means of a significant salary increase. Their loyalty to the College and to the cause of education, when many of them could find more lucrative employment elsewhere, needs to be acknowledged by the Board of Trustees.

Moreover, I'm not laying the blame for the increases in health

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"Education for Democracy — Democracy for Education"

premiums at the feet of the senior administration, the Insurance Committee, or the Board. Clearly, health care is a national crisis, and the Insurance Committee has put in a lot of work to try to curb our costs. Spiralling health care costs appear to be a fact of life, at least for the short term.

My point is that senior administrators were protected against these increased costs while senior faculty were not. When this happens, it's time to question whether administering or teaching is considered more important by the Board. I can't count how many times I've been told how teaching students is the most important job at NHCC. However, when the most experienced and loyal administrators are protected from LOSING GROUND, while the most experienced and loyal teachers are not, the true priorities at NHCC are clear enough.

It's time for a change. The leadership of NHCC United Faculty have resolved to make its theme for the year that SENIOR FACULTY SHOULD NOT LOSE GROUND. We intend to present our case to the Chancellor, who makes salary and benefits recommendation to the Board. Afterwards we intend personally to lobby the Board members on this issue. Six out of seven of them received the AFT endorsement and campaign support when they were elected, and all six of these made campaign pledges to hear our point of view and take it into account. We will also make this theme the central focus of this year's issues of the Advocate. Next year at this time we will report on the results of our efforts.

All faculty members who intend to stay here have a stake in this issue. Unless you have already experienced the honor of "topping out" of the step system, you will be senior faculty in a few years. You can help by joining AFT and by contributing your expertise to our efforts to make this case convincing to the Chancellor and to the Board.

AFT Members Receive Writing Awards

Congratulations to AFT members Virginia Perrenod and Marilyn Rhinehart for winning Writing Awards last Spring. Marilyn also completed the requirements for her Ph.D. in history last spring. We are proud of these outstanding accomplishments of our members.

Membership

You can join our efforts to defend the interests of faculty at NHCC by sending your first month's dues (\$18.35 for full-time faculty, \$9.35 for adjunct faculty) to our Treasurer, Allen Vogt, A-264, South Campus. Your check should be made out to NHCC United Faculty. If you have questions about the benefits of membership, including the automatic professional liability insurance, call Alan Hall on the South Campus at 443-5547. Dues paid to NHCC United Faculty are not deductible for federal income tax purposes; however, under certain circumstances dues may qualify as a business expense.