

NORTH HARRIS COUNTY COLLEGE UNITED FACULTY

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THE ADVOCATE

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EDITED BY OLIN JOYNTON

THEME FOR THE YEAR: SENIOR FACULTY SHOULD NOT LOSE GROUND

Virginia Perrenod on NHCC United Faculty

Retiring political science instructor Virginia Perrenod received an AFT service award last December, and her thank-you note reads:

Solidarity forever! I wish I could adequately tell you how much it had meant to me to belong to NHCC United Faculty. I think our union should get some kind of award for the accomplishments of such a small group of dedicated people--electing two people to the Board in one election--giving awards to the Lt. Gov. and a noted representative--conducting a successful letter-writing campaign for community colleges--successfully defending colleagues and on and on. NHCC United Faculty has certainly demonstrated what a small hard-working group can accomplish! As a political scientist, I'm impressed, and as a friend and colleague I'm proud to be a member of that group. I shall always cherish my award and my continuing affiliation with NHCC United Faculty.

Thank you, Virginia!

AFT Officers Address Board on Senior Faculty

by Cher Brock

On February 8th President Alan Hall and Secretary Olin Joynton presented the AFT proposals for senior faculty to the Board of Trustees. These proposals, published in last month's Advocate, have since been endorsed by the South Campus Faculty Senate Executive Committee. The

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BOARDROOM RECAP: "CITIZENS HEARD"

"Education for Democracy — Democracy for Education"

main goal of these proposals is to keep senior faculty from losing ground financially due to the cap on the number of step increases. Secondly, the proposals aim to provide Step 16 faculty with performance-based incentives for extra compensation.

Alan reminded the Board that senior faculty who covered their families with College-sponsored health insurance took home less money last year than this. Junior faculty receiving step increases took home a little more in actual dollars after their health insurance premiums but hardly kept pace with the 3.8% inflation rate reported for Houston by the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Citing a recent Coordinating Board report, Alan pointed out that the College has slipped this year in meeting its professed goal of being in the top five in the state for average salaries. Our beginning salaries are 7th, our average salaries 12th, and our highest salaries 25th. Senior faculty at twenty-four Texas community colleges earn higher salaries than our limit of \$40,271; top salaries at several colleges are in the \$47-48,000 range. NHCC senior faculty are behind \$7-8,000 in part because of the cap on the number of step increases.

Alan reviewed our meetings with Dr. Airola, Dr. Marsee, and Ms. Tyson, which were based on the premises of avoiding additional steps, providing incentives for senior faculty growth, and recognizing outstanding performance and long-term service to the College.

Olin spoke on the need for senior faculty to remain focused on teaching as a career that continues to inspire their best efforts. There is a danger to this focus in a compensation schedule which causes, in a typical case, a faculty member to reach his or her peak earnings at around forty and then face another twenty-five years of taking home less and less each year. Some of the most talented and motivated among them will train for other, more rewarding careers--law, landscape architecture, and engineering, to cite three specific cases. Many of the rest risk succumbing to a time-serving mentality about their teaching duties, and our students will be the real losers when this happens.

Our presentation was short (kept to ten minutes at the Chancellor's request) but, we hope, effective. After lobbying with Board members individually on these issues, we were glad for the opportunity to make a formal presentation. In a letter dated February 12, Dr. Airola responded that he appreciated "the proposals put forth by the AFT." The closing comment indicates his belief that "we can find satisfactory answers to the problems of mutual concern dealing with compensation."

Membership Appeal

For ten years AFT has led the way to a better working environment for faculty at NHCC. We can better serve you if you will join us. Call Alan Hall (443-5544) for details on membership.