



EMPLOYEE FEDERATION

of

North Harris Montgomery
Community College District

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



THE ADVOCATE

APRIL 1995

QUESTIONS ANSWERED

In the January issue of The Advocate, the Federation published a list of questions that had been submitted to us by concerned support staff and faculty. We asked that appropriate administrators provide us with responses so we might publish them in the next issue. In the February/March issue, we indicated our dismay that no responses were forwarded and promised to pursue answers to these questions through freedom of information.

I am pleased to report that since the second issue we have received two responses, one from Dr. Joe McMillian regarding salaries of administrators who returned to teaching and responses from Dr. Pickelman who asked Bob Brown to gather data on each of the questions.

The questions are repeated here, followed by the responses that the Federation received.

Question #1

**How many new administrators have been added in the last three years?
How many additional support staff positions have been hired for them?
Which positions are new? Which positions have been eliminated?**

The net number of administrators has declined by four (not including Montgomery) since 1992/93. Montgomery has added 13 administrators. Question two of item: I am unable to answer that question because of a lack of clarity of the question. To my knowledge, support staff are hired to support the mission of the District and not hired to support individuals. The total number support staff added in the same period is six. Thirty three full-time faculty have been added in the same period.

Question #2

How much have these increases cost the college in salaries, expenses (offices, equipment), transportation (college cars), and memberships?

From 1992/93, the costs for administration and student services have changed from \$5,334,782 to \$7,260,567. (Please note that \$740,000 is administrative cost for Montgomery College.)

Using the most recent data provided by the Texas Research League (a private research group not affiliated with the District or any other college), the following items are offered:

NHMCCD Expenditures per Contract Hour for Administration and Student Services are \$.79. The State mean expenditures per contact hour are \$.93. Thirty-five of Texas' 50 colleges spend more on a per contact hour basis for administration than does the NHMCCD. All five of the Texas Community College Districts that are larger than the NHMCCD spend more per contact hour on administration than does the NHMCCD.

Question #3

Since enrollment has been a bit shaky, what have these increased costs accomplished? Isn't our primary goal to serve students?

Section three seems to imply that enrollment is shaky. This is not supported by the facts. With the exception of the past two semesters, the District has experienced a decade of continually-growing enrollments. Perhaps this section may be relating specifically to North Harris College, which has seen six consecutive semesters of enrollment decline.)

Section three also alludes to the change in administrative costs as being unrelated to serving students. This again is an erroneous assumption. For one example, the decision to provide administrative leadership for financial aid at each campus has helped to increase access to student financial aid. Last year 1300 more students received PELL grants than did in 1992/93.

Question #4

Does everyone, including the chancellor, have to report itemized expenses for college related business? Are these expenses public knowledge? If not, why?

Yes, expenses are reported and are public documents.

Question #5

Have the administrators who have returned to teaching or other duties kept their administrative salaries?

Four administrators returned to teaching or other duties with lowered salaries, while two did so with the same salaries.

Question #6

The college spent down some of the reserve, added Conroe to the tax roll, raised district taxes, added a technical fee, and last semester raised both in-district and out-of-district tuition after the schedules had already been published. Is it wise to have a bond election on the heels of so many increases in revenue?

A bond issue is needed. The District can fund almost \$82.5 million in major renovation and construction with modest changes to taxes. (Average annual incremental cost to the average homeowner of \$28.22.)

The Federation appreciates these responses and looks forward to regular, open communications in the future.

ALAN HALL

"OTHER DUTIES AS ASSIGNED"

Another registration commentary, provoked by news of a new, expanded registration process.

Several years back (April 1989), I wrote an admittedly not-so-polite memo to then registrar Teresa Phillips complaining about faculty duties expected during the registration process. Hopefully, this updated version will be considered more polite, but it will be no less indicative of apprehension and consternation on my part!

At the time of the 1989 memo, a so-called "holistic" approach to faculty registration involvement was apparently being promoted - a process whereby a faculty member was to be available not only for routine registration assignments (directing people, receiving tuition/fee payments, etc.) and course advising and registering in his/her own field but also for "sensitive, life-molding" (wording from my 1989 memo) GENERAL ADVISING, involving assistance of students in career choices, degree plans, general course selection (OUTSIDE the faculty member's own field), personal counseling, transfer questions, etc. (now, of course, including TASP questions). I expressed deep concern and discomfort about this "holistic" approach, involving GENERAL ADVISING outside my field of expertise (history teaching), then, as I do now, on the grounds that individual faculty, such as myself, are NOT TRAINED ADVISORS AND COUNSELORS; we are UNQUALIFIED and UNCERTIFIED in these areas and therefore are prone to - or at least constantly fearful of - making serious mistakes impacting other people's lives. I felt then, as I feel now, that to be forced into the GENERAL ADVISING mode would force me to violate my own "professional and personal ethics."

I appreciate the argument that complex academic issues and personal counseling matters "could be referred to a counselor" (last phrase from Dr. McMillian's 1989

memo to me). But what constructive and/or productive purpose is served when a faculty member, such as myself, is constantly - and inevitably - put into the position of referring students to a counselor? And what impression should we imagine that this "pass the buck" process has on prospective students? Finally, are there not possible legal ramifications for the College District through its de facto misrepresentation to the public of faculty, engaged in general advising (even if mistake-free), as professional, certified, and/or extensively trained advisors/counselors?

I also appreciate the argument that I can read certain materials and attend certain training sessions, which might provide me with more information. But such activities can never train and certainly never QUALIFY and CERTIFY me for these expanded advising/counseling duties; at least I would think it takes years of college work and practical experience (as it does for history teaching, for example) to become "qualified" and/or "certified" to perform professionally as a general advisor/counselor. And "professional" assistance is what students need!

I note, for example, that, according to the 1994-95 NHMCCD catalog, there are eighteen counselors listed (eleven at NHC, four at KC, and three at TC), EACH identified as faculty and EACH possessing a Master's Degree. In addition, the catalog lists a "diagnostician" among the NHC "professional" staff. And, when one includes the Admissions/Registrar and Counseling "professional" and support staffs, the appropriate professionalization of and focus on general registration/advising/counseling work is at least indicated.

I believe it also necessary and proper to point out that, according to the 1994-1995 NHMCCD catalog, admissions applications, assessment testing, TASP testing information, course transferability questions, career exploration, general educational-academic counseling (e.g., selecting a major, degree plan, and course load), and new student orientation sessions are ALL listed as available from either the Admissions Office or the Counseling Office - NOT FACULTY OFFICES!

Of course, both the catalog and, especially the NHMCCD Policies and Procedures Handbook state that faculty will "assist" in advising and registration of students"; that much is beyond argument. However, my own personal, professional, and ethical perspectives compel me to dis-believe that these policy statements should be interpreted as requiring all faculty to advise students in academic and occupational areas alien to his/her own field of expertise. I am not prepared to comprehend how a historian can, or should be forced to, assist "in advising students in educational and occupational areas" (catalog wording) such as automotive or drafting technology, nursing, or real estate; and/or in areas like marketing, mathematics, or music. In my 1989 memo, I likened such activities to "sending a person to me with a heart ailment or mental dysfunction." If such wording over-reached the mark, it at least had the virtue of conveying a deep, abiding concern about this whole faculty-as-general-advisor issue.

My 1989 memo had additional virtue of gaining for me, in my office, personal visits from registrar Phillips and Dean McMillian. Both of them assured me - practically "guaranteed" - that not only was my position understood but that NEITHER I, NOR

ANY OTHER FACULTY MEMBER, WOULD EVER BE FORCED (REQUIRED) - on pain of dismissal - to perform GENERAL ADVISING duties, at a central location or in faculty offices. On this point of GENERAL ADVISING (and that only), VOLUNTARISM and not COMPULSION was to be the rule. That is the "guarantee" or "rule" that I have been allowed to cling to all these years while dutifully performing - NOT DODGING - other registration/advising duties (e.g., working in the gym during regular registration and serving as the campus history advisor).

But now, with all the recent hoopla about expanded registration and expanded advising assignments and schedules for faculty (e.g., Dr. Richards' recent E-mail message), what I fear is that the previously prevailing "rule" of voluntary participation in GENERAL ADVISING has now been arbitrarily rescinded (I for one had no voice in this) and GENERAL ADVISING is now REQUIRED - on pain of dismissal - for ALL faculty, including therefore myself.

I sincerely hope this is not true. I also sincerely hope the valid concerns and questions raised in this commentary will receive appropriate and timely administrative consideration.

In the meantime, I will conclude with a final succinct quote from my 1989 memo: "If the educational mission of this college includes the providing of appropriate services by and to the appropriate people, then consider how this mission would be illogically and unethically violated in the arbitrary requirement that unqualified and unwilling personnel attempt to perform some of the most sensitive educational services - advising and counseling."

ALAN VOGT, Ph.D.
PROFESSOR OF HISTORY
NHC

MORE ADJUNCT WOES

I've been an adjunct instructor at NHC for the last 5 semesters and have noticed an irritating trend. The compulsory pension deduction (TIAA/CREF) from each paycheck takes between 2 weeks to 1 1/2 months to be deposited in my retirement account. I discovered this by calling the automated phone system. The 2/15 paycheck deduction has not been deposited as of this writing. (3/31) The ever present excuse "we have just implemented a new computer system" is the likely culprit.

This lag results in a perhaps negligible loss of interest income for adjunct faculty members. NHC does add 20% to each paycheck deduction which somewhat compensates for the lag. I suspect the college wants to hold our money as long as possible in their interest bearing instruments. If they would just use this additional interest income to give us adjuncters a raise, I would obey the first gag order issued.

NAME WITHHELD BY REQUEST

NEW STAFF PRESIDENT

The Federation is pleased to announce the appointment of Velma Trammell as the District President for the staff chapter of the union. Velma replaces Angela Caesar, who resigned the college to pursue business interests.

AWARD WINNERS

WRITING AWARDS

Carol Crowder

Allen Vogt

FACULTY EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Carolyn Davis

Jim Skelton

SERVICE AWARDS

5 YEAR

Robert Emerson

Gloria Ferguson

Timothy Howard

Phyllis Smith

10 YEAR

Richard Becker

Jack Dixon

Lauren Stewart

Claude Taylor

Glenn Ware

15 YEAR

Wes Doyle

20 YEAR

Alan Hall

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I have major problems with what Tim Howard says. His article insinuates we had a Compaq system. The system we had prior to the HP mainframe was called Novadyne. This system used dumb terminals connected with it. Maybe Mr. Howard does not recall, but the old system has gone down during registration. Not that this is an excuse, but the hardware and Unix is new. I personally have found this platform more reliable than the old. Maybe from Mr. Howard's point-of-view it is not because he had everything on his C drive. That, however, did not give him mainframe access of shared access to any network information. I have heard of multiple problems with North Harris' file server being down. I have neither the knowledge or expertise to determine what those causes are. However, I do know we have not had this magnitude of problems at District and I have not heard of any such problems at the other colleges. Mr. Howard mentioned that "administrators were told not to hook up more than 200 terminals". I am not sure where Mr. Howard got his information, but since the HP mainframe is a networked machine, we do not "hook up ...terminals". Anyone who has network access, potentially has

we do not "hook up ...terminals". Anyone who has network access, potentially has HP mainframe access. There is virtually no easy way of denying access except to remove [an individual's login] from the HP login. Would you want that? I fully understand Mr. Howard's frustration. What can be done with-in the current framework is certain software packages can be loaded into his C drive (e.g. Microsoft Office). He can also specify saving his work on his C drive. This way, when the network goes down, he will only loose items which require network information (e.g. EMail) and any network printing. If the HP mainframe goes down, he will still have network capabilities and well as PC capabilities.

DAVID HEYDE
INFO TECH
DO

I am very troubled by the article written in the last Advocate about the District's computer problems and Hewlett Packard. Obviously the person who wrote the article has no knowledge of how the District data communications system works. I would like to speak for Kingwood College, concerning the Hewlett Packard equipment. First, in the two + years we have made the commitment to HP, we have only called service out three times on desktop PC's; once for a hard disk, once for a network card, and once for a monitor. They have worked beautifully on the network and with the standards of software set by the District Technology Committee. Initially we did have problems on a few machines with a video "bug", but, that was factory generated and was taken care of when we installed the machines. Second, we have never had a problem with HP network products: repeaters, concentrators, network cards, DTC's, etc. The equipment is easily installed, configured and managed. Third, our file server has "gone down" only once in the period we have had it, and that was due to heat expansion on the memory chips on the network adapter. The problem was solved within the service period, 4 hr. turn around, and has never been a problem since. Last, we have always had HP printers in the District, and in the five years I have worked in the District, I have only had one service call on an HP printer. I am very pleased with all the products that HP offers and am very happy with the representation, service, and commitment we get. I will, with no reservation, continue to follow the common course and District initiative on making HP "our" common platform.

By the way, Kingwood tried, several years ago to get an agreement with Compaq and IBM, and they both declined. One last point, someone should inform this person that we had a McDonnell Douglas mainframe along with an enormous cost per year maintenance fee (I don't believe Compaq has EVER manufactured a mainframe.) Sounds like most of the stated problems/complaints could be local, although I cannot speak for anyone but Kingwood, maybe this person needs to speak with Jim Berry before writing articles concerning the District as a whole. A "technological revolution" like this needs district-wide cooperation and positive input/feedback, in transition, to be successful, not negativity and criticism. . . .

ROBERT B. ARMSTRONG
COORDINATOR OF TECHNICAL SERVICES
KC

I would reiterate almost all Robert's comments.

The HP equipment has been well within acceptable limits. For us, that means we've lost a monitor or two, a CPU, and a couple of hard drives on the desktops (not bad for almost two hundred machines in over a year) and a drive on an LM server--we didn't noticed the LM drive failure until we were doing some of our own maintenance (no one was negatively impacted). All of this has been repaired quickly by HP. We have also experienced some of the mysterious video bugs Robert refers to, but we've just about got them all nailed down as well.

In fact, I would say we've had almost no significant hardware-related down-time with any of our equipment--HP, Compaq, Gateway, Clones,etc.

Also, our HP connectivity equipment has functioned flawlessly (and at prices that beat others all over the place)!

As for the "mainframes," except for a nasty drive crash a while back, I don't really recall that we've had much go wrong with them either.

We have also tried to purchase Compaq equipment, but at the time we most recently bought computers, they didn't manufacture a PCI-based Pentium machine that was anywhere near price-competitive with other equipment on the market.

**AL VICKERS
DEAN OF EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
TC**

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) or any other member (Tony Foster, Bob Locander, Velma Trammell, Mel McFadden, 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.