



# The Sentinel

Voice of the ECC Faculty Association  
Local 3791/IFT [www.eccfaculty.org](http://www.eccfaculty.org)  
December 2005

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## From the President

### *Time to Step Up for Committee Leadership!*

As we say goodbye to 2005, we begin our list of tasks that must be accomplished during 2006. First and foremost, we must prepare for contract negotiations. We are currently sending Dan Kernler, Tim Anderson, and Sue Ford to the year-long IFT Union Leadership Training. In the spring, I'll attend the AFT/NEA Higher Education Summit, *Sharing Our Successes, Challenges, and Strategies*, which includes over 40 workshops, many of which share state-of-the-art bargaining tactics used by locals across the country.

Along with other standing committees, our ECCFA Constitution calls for election of both a Negotiations Committee as well as an Amendments Committee in September of every year, although this is something that hasn't been done in recent years. On Opening

Day in January, each division will be asked to elect their negotiating representatives who will serve on the Bargaining Team which will negotiate with the Board next fall. The term for the members serving on the Negotiating Team will be two years (January 06 – January 08). This team will then assist the ECCFA Vice Presidents during this term on contract clarification issues since they are the members who worked on the contract changes.

Here are the numbers of faculty who will be elected from each area:

*Business & Career Technologies: 2*  
*Communications & Behavioral Sciences: 2*  
*Liberal, Visual, & Performing Arts: 1*  
*Learning Resources/Counseling: 1*  
*Math, Science, Engineering & Health Professions: 2*  
*Unit Adjuncts: 4*

In the spring, this team will survey our membership and ask you to prioritize bargaining issues. By fall, we'll begin negotiating with the Board, and it is our sincere hope that we will complete the process before the contract expires on December 31, 2006.

In addition, each division needs to elect Amendments Committee representatives on Opening Day so that our Constitution can be updated. As soon as the contract for the three-hour adjuncts can be ratified, numerous changes must be made to update our constitution language. The same number of faculty representatives from each divisional area will be elected for the Amendments Committee as shown above.

Finally, any faculty replacements for Curriculum, Assessment, or Faculty Development Committees will need to be elected at your division meetings on Opening Day in January.

As the holiday approaches, I am especially thankful to be a member of the ECCFA. December 10 was celebrated as International Human Rights Day, when union members across the world mobilized to demand that working people be guaranteed the right to join and participate in a union. International Human Rights Day celebrated the anniversary of the 1948 United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Thirteen years before this document was signed, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the National Labor Relations Act, enabling Americans the right to join unions. Yet many of the freedoms that we take for granted as a result of our contract are not guaranteed to people working in other countries or to people in our own country for that matter. It is both our right and our responsibility to protect those privileges.

In closing, I wish you all Merry Christmas, Meilleurs Vœux, Felices Fiestas, Feliz Navidad--whatever way you say it, have a happy holiday!

In unity,

Linda

## **ECC Operations Suffer from Low Morale**

**Rick Bailey**

It is disheartening that, in the last year the morale of our college community has fallen so low that you couldn't even trip over it. If it is the focus of the board of trustees and this administration to fractionalize the institution, then it won't too long before that goal is reached.

It is the perception of many ECCFA members that we (as a union) are often viewed as a hindrance to the operation of instruction within the college. For the last twenty-one years we have worked to improve the lives of our students through learning while we have also worked to improve the college.

I see the role of union leadership as a resource for the college as a whole. The current climate has caused the leadership to become a defender of the collective bargaining agreement, further affecting the morale of the institution. If there are questions concerning interpretation of the agreement, it would benefit all parties if the authors were consulted before decisions were made. No one is denying the authority of the administration; I am just asking that it be used constructively and without violating the contract. Collective bargaining is a part of this college and the State of Illinois. If individuals can't respect that, then they need to move on.

When I started teaching here full-time in 1985, we had 99 or 100 full-time faculty; in twenty-one years, we've added only twenty-eight to that number while our student enrollment increased dramatically. During the same period, we have increased, then decreased [by IBHE mandate during Paul Heath's tenure as president], and are now increasing the number of administrators again, based on the current number of administrative searches. We are close to having one administrator for

each full-time faculty member. This is based on the administrative compensation chart which includes confidential administrative assistants, operations and maintenance, as well as instruction administrative personnel. Since the primary focus of this institution is to educate students, this seems unreasonable and even wasteful.

I'm aware that change is inevitable as we continue to grow as a college. If we want to continue to be one of the premier community colleges in the nation, then the changes we adopt need to foster growth rather than destroy the morale of the college community. Some changes are occurring at such a fast pace, without concern for the "ripple effects," and with unclear direction based on the inconsistencies in policy applications that many among us are confused and concerned. The faculty must be, as we have been in the past, fully included in the dialog that leads to changes in policy and practice. The same is true for all constituent groups within the college. Our collective input is necessary so that we make the right decisions at the right times for the right reasons. Change for the sake of change because the board or any administrator(s) can order it is foolish.

Perhaps, if it is needed to preserve our past and ensure the future of ECCFA, then changes must be made in the board and upper administration.

Please take time to think about where we are and the

important jobs all of us have to do to meet the needs of our students. If we **are not** communicating **but are** embroiled in grievances or arbitrations, we aren't serving the community, and we certainly are not respecting each other.

I, as others, have worked very hard for this college over the past 21 years. This college has also supported me when I needed it, and I can't ever pay back all the caring and support I've experienced within the "ECC Family." Right now, I don't see that family attitude. It is not to say that small groups are not still working as a family, but these groups can't do it all. We ALL have to strive to bring the whole family back into the fold.

I hope to see many of you at the End-O-Semester gathering at Blue Raz.

In Unity,

Rick Bailey (Ricky for Dan ☺)

## **Know Your College**

**Dan Kernler**

Do you ever wonder what is going on in all of the committees we have right now on campus? What new courses have been approved in the Curriculum Committee? Who is on the Faculty Development Committee? What new policies are being considered at the Academic Policy Committee meetings? What is the faculty Senate discussing right now? Are there important union or

academic issues that I should be a part of?

Any English faculty member will tell you that a paragraph full of questions is no paragraph at all, and you most likely got the point after the first two, but I couldn't resist. Sometimes we *are* overcome with questions. At other times, it doesn't even occur to us to ask a question. Regardless of your situation, there should be answers out there for all our questions – even the ones we haven't thought of yet.

Some of those answers do exist. Many are available online, either on [eNet](#) or the [ECC home page](#). At the moment, only two faculty committees have space on eNet: [Faculty Development](#) and [Curriculum](#). Pat Parks, the chair of the Academic Policy Committee, is in the process of finding a home for information from that committee. The charge given each committee can be found on the ECC web page, under Academics, on the [Instruction and Student Services](#) page about committees. Faculty Senate information, of course, can be found on the ECCFA home page: [eccfaculty.org](#). This site includes minutes from Senate meetings and previous editions of *The Sentinel*.

If you've visited these places, you know that there are still gaps. The Curriculum Committee has minutes available from the fall semester, but the most recent minutes from Faculty Development are from spring. The Academic Policy Committee is still looking for a home. Senate minutes, while

currently up-to-date, aren't always posted in a timely manner.

So what recourse do we have if the information we seek is not readily available? The answer is to know your college. Who is your representative on the faculty Senate? If you're wondering about the current situation with the group of adjunct faculty and their place in our union – ask! (If you don't know who your representative is, ask the faculty president, Linda Hefferin.) Ask for updates about recent topics. Come to a meeting!

Did you know that most committees have open meetings? We've all received email announcements from Pat Parks about the Academic Policy Committee meetings. If you have concerns about how the implementation of the new College 101 course will affect your program, come to a meeting and express your thoughts.

Every committee has an obligation to solicit information from its constituents and to keep those constituents informed. On the other hand, every constituent has a responsibility to make his or her voice heard and to stay informed about decisions that are made. I know many of us are overworked already, but there are important issues out there, and you should feel invited to express your opinion on them.

So be informed. Ask your senator about ECCFA issues. Read the minutes of the committees you're

interested in. Put some pressure on them to keep you informed. And most importantly, stay involved.

## **CETL Sponsors Learner-Centered Teaching Workshop** **Lynn Ducar**

On December 1, 2005, over 30 faculty and staff, most from ECC, but also including representatives from U. of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, Judson, Oakton, Triton, and Wright College, attended the CETL sponsored event, "LEARNER-CENTERED TEACHING," a day-long workshop led by Dr. Maryellen Weimer, Penn State Professor of Communications and author of the book by the same title.

With lighthearted humor, Dr. Weimer graciously and practically presented the basics of her book, which focuses on student-centered learning. She challenged faculty to teach in "ways that are different than you've ever taught before;" to examine the *Instruction = Learning* equation and begin from the "learning side," because, in the end, it is the student who decides what it is he will learn.

Dr. Weimer said her favorite teacher metaphor is Teacher as Midwife. The teacher is present at the "birth of learning," but does not actually give birth.

She challenged teachers to be "ethically responsible" with the

power and authority they have in their classroom

In the context of learner-centered principles, she acknowledged that it is much easier to talk about changing the teacher's role than it is to actually do it!

In a learner-centered environment, teachers stop "covering" content and start "using" it. In Dr. Weimer's words, this means, "marrying content with process; otherwise techniques are just gimmicks."

Dr. Weimer is a strong proponent of group work and told attendees that the theme song for all group work should be, "Why did we do that and what did we learn?" In fact much of the afternoon session focused on the importance group work in learner-centered teaching and of the absolute necessity of crafting good group tasks which establish developmentally and environmentally appropriate expectations for student success.

Participants laughed and learned and went away with the kind of energy that wants to be activated and shared.

And, thanks to Suzanna Lakin of CETL, everyone who missed the event but who would like to know more can take a look at the handout/bibliography and photos of the day at this link:  
<http://instruction.elgin.edu/cetl/weimerpictures.htm>

Additionally, the library will be gathering and purchasing all the books and articles from Dr. Weimer's bibliography. They will be available at the Circulation Desk beginning next week.

P.S. Many who attended Thursday's workshop want to continue supporting one another in our learner-centered teacher efforts. Next semester, watch for opportunities to join the discussion.

## **Flash Drives Fast Replacing Older Disk Technology**

**Lynn Ducar**

Especially at the end of the semester, librarians and our computer lab people encounter many desperate students who find they cannot retrieve their documents from their 3 1/2" disks. Karen Stacey and Brian Baer both confirm that more and more disks are failing. They're not sure why there are so many failures, but common reasons are scratches, dust, and magnetic snafus (my technospeak). Karen reports that some in her department maintain that "quality control" on the manufacturing end of disks has ceased to exist. The 3 1/2" disk technology has become obsolete.

Might we all remind our students of this reality? Flash drives or USB (universal serial bus) jump drives are highly recommended. Jump drives are very fast and far more dependable because they have no moving parts. (Brian's actually went through the washer in his pants

pocket and came out OK!) Even the smallest drive, purchased for under \$20 will hold 100 times more data than the unreliable disk.

We all know these things, but many of our students do not. So, for now and next semester, could we spread the word?



**CHECK OUT WHAT'S NEW  
IN THE LIBRARY**  
Ellie Swanson  
ECC librarian

Barrow, John D. *The Infinite Book: A Short Guide to the Boundless, Timeless, and Endless*. New York: Pantheon Books, 2005.  
111.6 B278i

Laird, Bob. *The Case for Affirmative Action in University Admissions*. Berkeley, CA: Bay Tree Publishing, 2005.  
379.26 L188c

Nathan, Rebekah. *My Freshman Year*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2005.  
378.198 N274m

Pridmore, Jay and Larson, George A. *Chicago Architecture and Design*. New York:

Harry N. Abrams, 2005.  
720.977311 P947c

Royte, Elizabeth. *Garbage Land: On the Secret Trail of Trash*. New York: Little, Brown, 2005.  
363.7285 R892g

Sarasin, Lynne Celli. *Learning Style Perspectives: Impact in the Classroom*. Madison, WI: Atwood Publishing, 1999.  
370.1523 S243L

*Shattering the Stereotypes: Muslim Women Speak Out*. Northampton, Mass.: Olive Branch Press, 2005.  
305.48697 S533

If you're interested in more information about any of these books, check out each title in the library's [catalog](#) .