



The Sentinel

Voice of the ECC Faculty Association
Local 3791/IFT www.eccfaculty.org
September 2005

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From the President

And so we begin another school year at ECC. How lucky we are to be able to begin our school year. As we all know, many teachers in the Gulf Coast area were not so lucky. Almost 15,000 teachers and support staff personnel represented by the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) were affected by the devastation of Katrina. Some of our colleagues lost their jobs, some lost their homes and all of their personal possessions, and some of them lost their lives in this terrible tragedy.

ECC Faculty, staff, administrators, and students have already shown their generosity in reaching out to the victims of Katrina. In addition, the AFT has been very active in a number of ways helping with hurricane relief. Working in conjunction with the United Teachers of New Orleans (UTNO), the AFT has set up a member-to-member locator site, where UTNO members can provide their most current contact information or locate colleagues and friends working in the

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New Orleans Public Schools system. Here are some other joint AFT projects in which we might help out.

Contribute to the AFL-CIO's Union Community Fund. A special hurricane relief fund has been set up within the AFL-CIO's Union Community Fund, labor's charity for working families and communities in distress. The Union Community Fund is working with the labor federations in the affected states and with relief organizations to target help to our working brothers and sisters who need it most. UCF is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) public charity. Donations to UCF are tax-deductible to the extent permissible by law.

Contribute to the AFT Disaster Relief Fund. AFT affiliates can help by making contributions to the AFT Disaster Relief Fund, which provides small grants to AFT members who are victims of natural disasters. Contributions should be made payable to the AFT with "disaster relief" written in the memo portion of the check and sent to:

AFT Disaster Relief Fund
Attn: Connie Cordovilla
555 New Jersey Ave. N.W.
Washington, DC 20001

Volunteer Through the AFL-CIO Office of Community Services. The AFL-CIO Office of Community Services has teamed up with the Red Cross to solicit 1,000 volunteers for three-week assignments to work in shelters. The Red Cross is describing this as a "hardship assignment"; there is no housing available and volunteers will sleep where they work. Red Cross will

provide meals. Union volunteers can send an e-mail to hurricanevolunteers@aflcio.org

Offer Housing. Through www.hurricanehousing.org, a project of MoveOn.org, you can offer free housing to hurricane victims. If you want to offer housing specifically to a teacher, school support staff member or college faculty member, you can make that notation in the description portion of the form, but please follow the guidelines outlined by MoveOn.org.

Yes, how lucky we are to be returning to the classroom for another "pretty normal" school year. May each of us contribute to the men, women, children, and animals affected by Katrina in whatever way we are able.

In unity,

Linda

And a bit more news. . . .

Teachers in Farmington Go On Strike

The Farmington Federation of Teachers, Local 3764, began a strike at 6 a.m. on Monday, September 12, following a rejection of the school board's latest contract proposal. Local 3764 is a wall-to-wall unit comprised of 100 employees -- over half of whom have been employed by the district 17 years or more. This strike represents the first in the local's history.

The Farmington K-12 District is located in Peoria County, approximately 25 miles west of Peoria, and serves

almost 1,500 students. Cards of support may be sent to strike headquarters at 322 E. Fort Street in Farmington; or calls of support may be directed to (309) 338-4302.

Special Thanks to the Adjunct Negotiation Team

Long hours were spent this summer and into the fall working on the three-hour adjunct negotiations by our head table team members Rick Green, Rick Bailey, and Sue Ford, as well as our supporting negotiation team members Mary Peterhans, Lynn Ducar, Cathy Tomasik, Linda Perez, and Illinois Federation of Teachers representative Jennifer Marsh.

These members deserve sincere thanks and appreciation for their dedication to the ECCFA and for their tireless efforts for work they perform to keep the ECCFA strong and united. Please take some time to show them how much we appreciate all they do by e-mailing them a BIG HUG today!

Union Leadership Institute (ULI)

The IFT provides Union Leadership Institute training each year to help our members grow and develop professionally. This year, the ECCFA is sending Tim Anderson, Dan Kernler, and Sue Ford to ULI training. Tim will attend Grievance Administration, while Dan will go through Collective Bargaining classes. Sue will attend Positive Negotiations class.

Thanks to Tim, Dan, and Sue for their willingness to participate in this

training and to take on a leadership role in the ECCFA.

Writing Instruction at ECC

Assessment Team Identifies Common Student Errors

As a part of the Spring 2005 writing assessment activities, students in several classes were given an essay test, similar in format to ECC's placement exam. These essays were evaluated holistically by ECC faculty. On both the essays and on the mechanically scored CAAP tests, ECC students performed slightly below average.

During the summer of 2005, a team of English faculty—Sara Baker, Becky Cooper, Bill Demaree, Jason Kane, Rachael Tecza, and Jeff Weisman—revisited these essays, reading them analytically to determine the most common mechanical mistakes made by ECC students.

The team identified four areas in which ECC students were most likely to make mistakes:

1. Agreement between nouns and pronouns and between subjects and verbs
2. Sentence fragments, comma splices, and run-on sentences
3. Commas with introductory phrases and clauses
4. Commas with coordinating conjunctions.

The assessment team hopes that ECC faculty across the curriculum will encourage writing improvement by pointing out these mistakes to their students and by factoring these errors into the grading of written work.

On Opening Day 2005, a document explaining these errors and giving more information about the writing assessment activities at ECC was made available to faculty. Copies of this document are available from Rachael Tecza, rtecza@elgin.edu, ext. 7578.



Jason Kane, Sara Baker, Jeff Weisman, Becky Cooper, and Rachael Tecza reviewing assessment exams from Spring 2005

The Write Place Opens Its Doors for the 2005-2006 School Year

ECC's writing lab, The Write Place, began its second year of operation on 1 September 2005.

During the 2004-2005 school year, TWP staff held 1872 tutorial sessions and helped 853 individual students. While roughly 70% of these students came for help with English courses, students also sought help with writing assignments in psychology,

business, humanities, speech, and many other disciplines.

Most of these tutorial sessions lasted about 30 minutes; in all, TWP staff provided students with 1300 hours of extra help during the school year.

According to its mission statement, The Write Place "promotes the college's mission of lifelong learning by providing an environment for nurturing writing, for emphasizing process as well as product, and for valuing progress, not only perfection. It helps writers improve by providing instructional expertise as well as the latest technology."

Staffed entirely by English teachers, The Write Place is located in SRC 371. Its Fall 2005 hours are:

Mon.-Thurs: 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.
4:30 p.m.-6:30 p.m.
Friday: 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

Faculty are encouraged to refer students to The Write Place for help with grammar, punctuation, development, organization, documentation, or any other writing issue.

A Guide to Writing at ECC Now Available Michele Noel

While on sabbatical for the Spring 2005 semester, I wrote a brief manual entitled *A Guide to Writing at ECC*. It was printed in house and is currently on sale in the bookstore for \$2.10. It is also accessible on the library's main page (www.library.elgin.edu) under "Assignment Help." The main purpose

of this guide is to provide a resource for students who are writing across the curriculum. While many English faculty are using it in their classes, the guide's main purpose is to *support* the writing that is assigned outside the English department. The current situation at ECC is such that students may not have taken any English courses despite being enrolled in some writing-intensive ones. In other words, there is often a gap for many of them, and my goal was to use this guide to fill that gap.

Though no less important, the second purpose is to reinforce the *importance* of writing across the curriculum and to provide a way to hold students accountable for quality writing, regardless of the particular courses in which they are enrolled. For example, some of the subjects covered include: the writing process, evaluation, how to avoid procrastination, academic integrity, the research paper, taking essay exams, and the support available for writing, including the library, the Write Place, and web resources.

I hope you find this resource a valuable supplement to your classroom instruction. If you have not used it this semester but would like to next semester, just list it on your book order form.

Any questions? Please email me at mnoel@elgin.edu. Thanks.