



The Sentinel

Voice of the ECC Faculty Association
Local 3791/IFT www.eccfaculty.org
February 2008

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From the President



Happy 2008! Another semester is underway at ECC. It's difficult to believe that we are ending week five of our spring semester. Good news regarding enrollment! According to figures presented at the January Board meeting, enrollment is up 4.6 percent in heads and 5.9 percent in hours from 2007. Online course registrations exceed 2007 seats by 148 percent!

As usual, the ECCFA and its members have been busy in a variety of activities. Here's a brief update on some of our recent

actions as well as other general college announcements.

Foundation Brunch. The 2008 ECC Foundation Brunch, "Brunching with the Stars...Celebrating the Stars of ECC," was held Sunday, January 20. Many of our ECCFA members were present for this fund-raising event. Over \$45,000 was raised for student scholarships. Congratulations to Carole Robertson, who is serving as Acting Executive Director of Institutional Advancement, and the Foundation Board staff, on this successful activity.

Graduation Regalia. One of the recommendations that Dr. Sam has taken to the District 509 Board is to purchase rather than rent academic regalia for graduation, beginning with full-time faculty. Over a five-year period, the purchase cost will offset the rental fees. Faculty who leave the College prior to completing five years of service may either return the regalia or purchase it on a prorated basis. At this point, the College will continue renting regalia for adjunct faculty members attending graduation.

Elections! Currently, our ECCFA membership consists of 129 full-time faculty members, 180 UAF2s, and 125 UAF1s. Based on these numbers, we are in need of additional Senate representation for both UAF2s and UAF1s. Faculty Senate meets every other Wednesday at 3 p.m., in ICT 201. New Senators will be seated in May, with their two-year term beginning in August. If you are interested in running as a UAF Senator, contact Susan Ford or Dan Kocher. Instead of holding a special election for UAF vacancies, additional UAF Senators will be elected during our annual ECCFA election period, which has been designated as April 8, 9, and 10. Elections will include

the ECCFA President, as well as Senators and divisional committee representation for Academic Policy, Amendments, Assessment, Curriculum, Faculty Development, Grievance, and Honors. A list of vacancies for Senate positions and committees will be included in the March *Sentinel*. The call for nominations will begin March 17 and extend until April 4.

Committees. Both the *Tenure and Evaluation* and the *Faculty Development* Negotiating Subcommittees are in the process of finalizing their post-contract work. Faculty Senate hopes to be approving the recommendations of both committees some time during March. Special thanks to Sarah Dye, Sherry Hellmuth, and Karen Friedberg who have spent countless hours on tenure and evaluation; special thanks to Elizabeth Becker, Glenn Mayer, and Beth Santell for their time and expertise spent on faculty development.

Dr. Tony Spahr recently attended a Faculty Senate meeting to discuss work of the *Insurance Committee*. Language in our latest contract strengthened the charge of the Insurance Committee. Senators were pleased to learn that the committee is looking into several recommendations which will improve our insurance coverage. For example, one recommendation being considered is increasing our wellness benefit from \$100/year to \$500/year. Final recommendations from the committee are due no later than April 1 and will be shared with the faculty. Thanks to Maureen Lange, Melanie Dittus, and Sharon Walicek for their efforts on the Insurance Committee.

The *60th Anniversary History Committee*, co-chaired by Tim Malone and Paula Amenta, has been busy working on a coffee-table type book which will highlight ECC's accomplishments of the past 60 years. If you have college history which you want included in the document, be sure to contact Tim.

Academic Planning Retreat. Thanks also to those of you who were able to participate in the Academic Planning Retreat which was held on January 30 and sponsored by Dr. Glickman. Scott Epstein facilitated this work session, where

academic goals and objectives were discussed. A second academic and student services planning meeting is being scheduled in order to refine and dig deeper into the objectives.

Contract Clarification Meeting. An ECCFA contract clarification meeting will be held on February 21, from 4 to 6 p.m., in the ATC Auditorium. Please make every effort to attend this important meeting where contract changes will be discussed. A question-and-answer session will allow you to ask questions regarding our contractual rights and responsibilities.

Board Meetings. Remember that all ECCFA members are invited to attend District 509 Board meetings, which are held at 7 p.m., the second Tuesday of each month in the Seigle Auditorium. However, this month's meeting will be held Tuesday, February 19. Meetings are typically over by 8 p.m.

I wish you all a wonderful semester!
That's all for now.

In unity,

Linda

UAF Corner

Dan Kocher

In this issue I thought it would be timely to discuss the process by which teaching assignments are to be made at ECC. First and foremost, the principle agreed to by Board of Trustees and the administration is that ECCFA represented members are to be given faculty assignments before non-members. Broadly speaking, within our ranks, full time faculty get first choice, then Unit Adjunct Faculty 2 (UAF2), and then UAF1 members. I don't think this surprises anyone.

Traditionally, within each group, the assignments are made by seniority. If conflicts arise they are resolved by:

1. When you became a member

2. How many semesters you have taught
3. By lot

Only after all members are assigned all the credit classes they want and are entitled to teach can classes be assigned to non-bargaining unit adjuncts or administrators.

Furthermore, if for some reason your assigned classes are cancelled or reclassified as independent study, you are entitled to assignments to replace those you lost. Common sense dictates that your first choice should be to consider unassigned classes. These are usually listed as being taught by “staff” in the schedule or the accessECC listing. Your instructional coordinator or program director can tell you what is still available. Your second choice would be to assume a class that had tentatively been assigned to a non-unit adjunct. We believe your least desirable choice would be to assume the assignment of some other ECCFA member with less seniority than yourself.

A frequent question is, “How many hours (credit or contact) may I teach?” Situations vary, especially when laboratory classes are involved. In general, the full time faculty usually starts out with 15 contact hours per semester and has the option of choosing to teach an additional course as voluntary overload. Then, depending upon their availability, the UAF2s are to be assigned courses within a minimum range of six to nine credit hours (or 10 contact hours). Next come class assignments for the UAF1s who may be assigned a minimum of between three and six credit hours. Once these basic assignments have been made, full-time faculty may elect to teach additional classes as voluntary overload; after that, classes may be assigned to newly hired adjuncts. Provision is made for additional assignments to unit adjuncts with the written approval of both the Vice President and the Association.

The key to making all of this work smoothly is communication. Preparation of the course schedule consumes many months. The preliminary schedule for the Fall 2008 semester has already been submitted. At the start of every semester, make sure your

coordinator knows both your general availability and your course preferences for following semester. ECCFA recommends keeping a copy of what you send to your coordinator for your records to avoid any misunderstanding. If you have not already been told, ask what classes have been assigned to you for the fall of 2008. Continue to check with your coordinator just prior to the start of the semester and be prepared to look for alternatives in case the class you have been assigned to is cancelled or reclassified. Above all remember to remain flexible and student-focused. After all, they are the reason we are here.

To learn more about the ECCFA and our collective bargaining agreement, visit our website at: <http://www.eccfaculty.org>. The specific provisions concerning load assignment may be found in your contract in Sections 4.2, 6.5, 8.2 and 10.4.

In Unity,

Dan Kocher
ECCFA 3rd Vice President &
UAF1 Senator

Good Grievance! Positive Reinforcement

**Sue Ford, Co-chair,
ECCFA Grievance Committee**

Everyone knows that the academic side of the house—students and faculty—is the heart of ECC. Our Mission Statement, “To improve people’s lives through learning,” and our Shared Values and Institutional Goals* are focused on the teaching and learning that we all do every day, month in and month out, semester after semester. But we do not face the challenges of our Goals alone in our classrooms and offices.

ECC is really a collection of experts—dedicated folks who want to make ECC “the best community college in the country.”

We depend on **everyone** at ECC to truly “share” the commitment to our Shared Values to meet the challenges set forth in

our Goals. We couldn't do our part as faculty without the support of all of the ECC family. We need to be mindful of our Shared Values when we leave our classrooms and interact with the "other side" of the house. These Values **require** us to be honest, cooperative, fair-minded, respectful, caring, understanding, positive, and responsible co-workers as well as educators. We can't really expect our problems and concerns to be met with care and respect if we do not first display those qualities.

The sharing starts simply with a friendly smile and a sincere "Thanks!" Showing our appreciation for the efforts of all of our colleagues in "both sides" of our house will go a long way toward accomplishing our Mission and achieving that ultimate goal.

(*Full texts of our Values and Goals can be found on the College's website.)

ECC Anthology Draws \$3000 in Aid for Darfur

Rachael Tecza announces that the *Darfur Anthology*, produced by ECC's Writers Center, has generated over \$3000 in humanitarian aid for Darfur. Proceeds from the anthology are donated to the International Rescue Committee (www.theirc.org).

The anthology contains poetry and prose donated by 33 writers, most of whom have given readings at ECC through the Writers Center. One poem, "Letter to Laura" by Elizabeth Searle, has recently been nominated for a Pushcart Prize.

Copies of the book are available for \$20 from the ECC Bookstore or from Rachael Tecza (rtecza@elgin.edu). Too, student volunteers will soon be selling the book outside the ECC cafeteria.

In related Writers Center news, two more readings are scheduled for this spring.

On Thursday, 20 March, 2008, Chicago novelist and playwright Joe Meno will read from his works. On Tuesday, 8 April, poet Major Jackson will appear. Both readings will be held in 191D of the Visual and Performing Arts Center beginning at 7:30 p.m.

Intensive Spanish Institute Offered Summer 2008

Abraham Martinez-Cruz, Professor of Foreign Languages at ECC, would like to remind all ECC faculty that an intensive Spanish immersion program is being offered again this summer at the Universal Language Institute in Cuernavaca, Mexico.

This year, the program will run from Friday, June 27 to Saturday, July 26, 2008. The program offers participants instruction in Spanish as well as opportunities to explore Mexican culture. Language instruction is tailored to the individual student's level of comprehension and is therefore useful for both beginning and advanced students of Spanish. Language classes run five hours a day, Monday through Friday, for the duration of the program. Additionally, students will learn about Mexican culture through lectures, tours, and cultural events. Participants will live with a Mexican family in Cuernavaca.

The total cost of the program is approximately \$1500 plus around \$500 for air fare and \$400-\$700 for pocket money. Martinez-Cruz reminds ECC faculty that program participants may apply for faculty development money through individual or group proposals. Also, pre-approved credit for lane movement is available.

Application deadline is mid-April 2008; the exact date will be announced soon. There are two required orientation sessions on before the program begins. For more information, contact Martinez-Cruz at extension 7491. Ramiro Cuéllar, the director of the Universal Language Institute

Cuernavaca, will be at ECC later in the spring to meet with the faculty and students interested in participating. Interested faculty can also visit this website for more information: www.elgin.edu/studyabroad.

What I've Learned in SRC 375

Dennis Lynch

If you're like most workers, you probably spend more hours in your workplace than you do in any other room, except maybe your bedroom. Some of those workplaces might be glamorous or exciting, like the cockpit of a plane, the operating room of a hospital, or center stage in a theater. Some may be hopelessly boring, like a 1-hour photo booth or a casino cashier cage. This semester I spend 12 hours each week in SRC 375 at Elgin Community College. Though the room is a dull-looking one, it's exciting for me because of the students who fill it up and because of what we experience there together.

Whoever is responsible for decorating this room should be tortured by being forced to sit in it alone all day. The predominant wall color is a dingy off-white, except for a part of the front wall that inexplicably is painted the color of dried blood. The walls lack any paintings or photographs to enliven the room. Indeed, besides the blackboard, the only object on the walls is a clock that usually has a hopelessly incorrect time. The desks and chairs are functional enough but in dull shades of gray, black, and white. In one corner of a room sits a large dictionary. If you look up the word "drab" in it, you'll find a picture of SRC 375.

However, the room comes alive when it is filled with students, who are as unique as snowflakes -- and sometimes just as flaky. If the rest of the room lacks color, that is more than made up for by my student David's hair, which so far this term has been shades of red, orange, yellow, green, and blue. The semester's not over, so there's still time for indigo and violet. I'm not bothered by the drabness of the desks when

seated at them are people like Mandy, the 18-year-old reformed cocaine addict who wears peasant dresses and sings folk songs in her church; Fred, the 45-year-old undercover narcotics officer, who wears an immaculate suit and tie every day; Denise, the 35-year-old single mom and US Navy helicopter pilot who flew missions in the Gulf War; and Julio, who nearly lost his life entering the United States two years ago when he was 16, walking across the Texas desert for four days before reaching San Antonio.

Moreover, when I think of SRC 375, the first pictures that come to mind aren't the dirty laminate floor or the narrow, prison-like windows, but instead the many fond memories I have of the events that have happened there. I remember the day of my 50th birthday when I was in mid-lecture and my wife walked in with a birthday cake and balloons, followed by all her fellow students from her ESL class, singing "Happy Birthday" and covering the room with Silly String. I remember watching Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream Speech" each semester and getting goose bumps every time. I remember handing out the class evaluation forms one semester and how one student raised his hand and asked, "How do you spell 'incompetent'?" I remember hoping he was joking.

I get paid to teach in SRC 375, but I've learned plenty there. One lesson I've learned is that what is most important about a room or a workplace is not the color of the walls or the fanciness of its furnishings. Instead, much more important are the people who fill that room and the experiences shared in it. Nonetheless, if *Trading Spaces* ever comes to ECC and redecorates my classroom, I won't complain.

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Information for ECCFA Members

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Sue Ford, Second Vice-President
Dan Kocher, Third Vice-President
Linda McEwan, Treasurer
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Dan Kocher
Steve Lipinski
Michael Walschot

Senate Meeting Dates, 2007-2008

Spring 2008

- ⊕ 27 February
- ⊕ 12 March
- ⊕ 2 April
- ⊕ 16 April
- ⊕ 30 April
- ⊕ 14 May

All meetings are at 3:00 p.m. in ICT 201.

Sentinel Dates 2007-2008

Submissions Due Dates	Publication Due Dates
Wednesday, 12 March 2008	Friday, 14 March 2008
Friday, 11 April 2008	Tuesday, 15 April 2008
Friday, 9 May 2008	Monday, 12 May 2008 (Classes End 14 May)