

The Sentinel

Standing up for ECC Custodians

Vicki Bethke, SSECCA President here to speak out against the request for proposal for custodial services advertised by ECC on March 26 during closure for spring break.

SSECCA acknowledges that no decision has been made, but this type of “cost-saving” action has an impact not only undermining the morale of employees but, it also creates fear! As support staff, we have great pride and dedication to the safety and health of the college and all of its constituents.

The stated purpose of the RFP was an exploration of potential savings. SSECCA maintains it isn't feasible to conduct a fair comparison as current staffing has not been maximized (excess of 20 part-time vacancies) and malmanagement of scheduling has lent itself to excessive overtime. i.e. we had a FT member working 18 and 20 days consecutively without a break. ECC has contracted with Sikich to audit other areas of the college. Why wasn't an internal audit of existing practices conducted first to determine necessity of exploring subcontracting?

There are 92 custodial employees. 16 are full time. 76 are part time. 40 members work 3rd shift, and that is if employees are in the right seats for reporting purposes. Approximately 88% are district 509 tax paying employees. 77 have Elgin/S.Elgin addresses. RFP requires contractors to compensate no less than prevailing rates of wages. According to Kane County's April 1 data, Janitors first year compensation rate is \$13.30 per hour. How can the college justify this request given internal hire rates of \$9.25 per hour which doesn't even equate to a living wage?

The action of targeting a majority minority population is in direct conflict with Goal 6 of ECC's Strategic Plan, Goal 6: Enhance Elgin Community College as an Employer of Choice.

Further, SSECCA believes moving forward with this action violates contract language stating, “All work which is normally performed by Bargaining Unit employees must remain as Bargaining Unit employee work.”

Counseling Threats Continue

A letter of agreement was signed as the final item in the bargaining of the 2014-2016 ECCFA contract. It confirmed that the college and the ECCFA had to and would bargain the changes as a result of the restructuring of the Counseling department. (Dec. 19, 2013)

Beginning in late January and after 28+ hours of meetings, there is no resolution for 2 FT and 4 adjunct counselors.

A wellness professional position was agreed to orally and in a draft, including work hours, pay and benefits. However, there is nothing firmly committed to writing. There is no official agreement document. There would be only 2 full time positions.

Subsequently, the Board team was forced to renege on a possible severance package that they had introduced. Two weeks later, they were forced to renege on a possible transfer to teaching package.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As I usually start my letters, I hope you are enjoying the wonderful spring weather over the last few days. Unfortunately, for some of our brothers and sisters at ECC, the enjoyment of the weather is impossible due to uncertainty of their future as ECC employees. Our brothers and sisters in the counseling department and custodian services are going through very difficult times because of the actions taken by the Board of Trustees and the President of the college.

As you all know, the Board and the President decided, in their own right, to restructure the counseling department. Early in this semester, the counselors received a letter informing them that, as of mid May 2014, their job at ECC will no longer exist. Many hours of negotiation with the administration team followed, with the frustration of no reasonable outcome. Both teams have worked diligently; we have reached consensus in several possible options for our counselors. At one of the negotiation meetings, we even agreed to a proposal from the administration team. It was a futile effort. Our excitement of a possible resolution was short-lived. The bosses of the administration team did not like the proposal presented by their own team and sent them back to us to say, "sorry, but our proposal was not to the liking of the board and president."

Let me be clear. The administration team has worked very hard to get a solution to the counselor's situation. I believe their hearts are in the right place, but the board doesn't empower them. I feel sad for the members of the administration team sometimes. They are good people, with the best intentions to solve this nightmare created for our counselors. If they are not being empowered to negotiate, what else can we call it?

Now, the Board and the President, as they have said, in following their duties to the taxpayers of District 509 to save them money, are looking into finding a cheaper replacement for our brothers and sisters of the custodian staff. They believe that it would be right to find a cheaper contractor that can do an as good or better job than our custodians. That will be the responsible thing to do for our taxpayers, even if they end up making the life of our custodians miserable, as is happening with our counselors who have been living in this nightmare for far too long.

In conversations with members of the ECC family, not only faculty, but staff, administrators and students, there are so many questions unanswered regarding the board's

actions and how they align with their duties with the tax payers. Does the board look for all possible alternatives to find ways of saving taxpayers money and being fiscally responsible? Is that across the board? Have they been applying the same mechanism to find how to save taxpayer money in all the confines of the college? Did they apply the same mechanism when discussing the new contract for the college president? Did they look for a potential president who could do as good or a better job as they believe the president is doing when exploring options for Dr. Sam's new contract?

Isn't what is good for the goose, good for the gander? Where do you draw the line for fairness? Don't you think the counselors and the custodians deserve to have the same peace of mind that others at ECC—teaching faculty, you, me, Dr. Sam—have every night when we go to bed, knowing that we have our contract taken care of and not living under this constant stress caused by the actions of the board? Who is responsible for the damaging effect this situation has on the health of these individuals?

We are all very proud of the counselors and the custodians at ECC. The last board meeting should open the board's members' eyes. They should see what the ECC family thinks of their recent actions geared towards finding a possible replacement to custodians and dragging their feet in coming to an agreement to make our counselors whole.

I deeply believe one of the purposes of a community college is to build community, not to destroy community. That is exactly what will happen if counselors and custodians are let go. And that is why I said at the board's meeting on Tuesday that we should change the name of Elgin Community College to Elgin College and throw the word community into the garbage can.

We will continue to fight for our brothers and sisters. We are all in this together. I truly hope the board will listen and act with fairness for EVERYBODY, and not just for a few. By the way, members of the board, we all would like some of those nice perks in our contracts. I believe we all would like a little bonus, just for coming back to teach every year.

Nobody surrenders; the fight continues until justice for all and not only for few is achieved.

**IN ABSOLUTE, DETERMINED
UNITY WITH ALL OUR BROTHERS AND
SISTERS.**

Luis Martinez, MD
President of the ECCFA

Union Membership is a Family

Tradition

The following is a new edition to The Sentinel. It will highlight ECCFA members and the role unions played on them and their families. The goal is to emphasize the importance of unions.



By Antonio Ramirez

I have only lived in anti-union times. A few months after I was born, President Reagan fired over 11,000 striking members of the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization, essentially killing the union. Many point to PATCO's defeat as a major blow to the 20th century labor movement.

As you know, subsequent decades were anything but rosy for organized labor. By 2011, union membership hit a 70-year low. That same year Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker and his conservative supporters delivered the deathblow to my old union, the 6,000-strong Milwaukee Teachers' Education Association, along with most of the state's other public sector unions.

And among my generation it's common for many folks—occasionally even union members themselves—to harbor a bitter distaste for unions.

Yes, I've grown up in anti-union times. But my family is a union family.

My wife, Kate, and I were among the college students recruited in the 1990s and 2000s by union leaders that hoped to inject younger energy into the labor movement and renew its

focus on organizing. Kate and I had one of our first dates at a gathering of anti-sweatshop student activists. Soon after, she recruited me to join a student labor group. We spent our college years supporting local and international workers' struggles and developing friendships with active unionists.

Later, we applied lessons learned as student activists to the workplace. I got involved in the teachers' union and supported progressive candidates for union leadership. As a young social worker, Kate was threatened with termination when she began to organize her co-workers against unjust working conditions. Our wedding album includes a solidarity photo, complete with white dress and tuxedo, with workers struggling to unionize at Palermo's Pizza in Milwaukee. And today, I'm proud to be one of the newest ECCFA members. I plan on doing what I can to help fight for a fair workplace.

Over the years, Kate and I have tried to help build a strong labor movement. Sadly, though, it seems that in our lifetimes the movement for fair, dignified work has only gotten weaker.

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A Personal Perspective on Counseling

BY MANUEL SALGADO

I am sending this out as a perspective of one of the counselors affected by the “restructuring of counseling.” This is an individually motivated response and I don’t speak on behalf of the entire counseling department or ECCFA. As many of you may know, I have been on a leave of absence since August 2013 and “scheduled to return on May 19.” This means that my family and I made the decision to forego my income for the entire year. This has been a sacrifice for us, to say the least, but we made this decision because of our drive and dedication to education; in 2012 I was accepted to the PhD Counseling Psychology program at Loyola University Chicago, a selective program that accepts only four students every year. In addition, our decision was based on the climate and knowledge of 2012; which is a drastic shift from what we know today.

I was the last full time counselor to be hired at ECC, along with my colleague that enjoyed a very short tenure, Dr. Derrick Johnson, in 2003.

At this time seven full time counselors worked at ECC. When I was hired, the college and/or our division appeared to be invested in diversity; after all, hiring two males of color, both bilingual in Spanish, was probably unheard of in college counseling. In fact at this time, we were the most diverse faculty division in the college, four out of the seven counselors were people of color. The promise of the counseling job that both Dr. Johnson and I understood was that counselors offered comprehensive services to all students, including educational planning, seminars/workshops (career planning, stress management, anxiety, procrastination, etc), consultation services to faculty and staff, personal and career counseling, course work delivery (General Student Development, GSD) and academic advising. Through the years the number of full time counselors have decreased to 4 and the counseling role has steadily dwindled to “academic advising,” while at the same time the enrollment of students have substantially increased. On a relevant note, the increase in facilities and space has substantially increased too.

Administration is attempting to make the case, for many years now, that the value and quality of counseling services are not satisfactory. I can’t completely disagree with this point, but perhaps this is not a result of the quality and value of the faculty, who they are attempting to replace/eliminate. Perhaps, the “mission” and/or “investment” in offering comprehensive services to a diverse student population have diminished? Perhaps, administrators responsible for sustaining the economic and functional integrity of a division have failed? Perhaps, buildings and numbers overshadowed the importance and priority of people- our students and faculty? And just maybe, the commitment to student development transformed to crowd management (or customer management); in other words managing the quantity of people and not the quality of the services? These may appear as scathing questions, but the intention is not to insult or criticize rather to expand the dialogue and elevate a voice that has been marginalized.

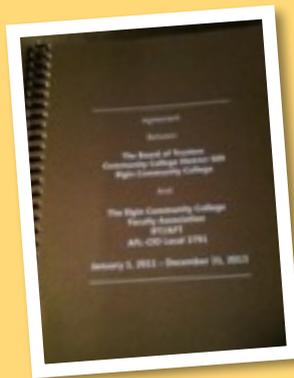
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GOOD GRIEVANCE!

By Susan Ford

Know your Rights and Responsibilities

Any day now, our new contract will be distributed to all members of our bargaining unit—the ECCFA. The new contract in its new booklet gives us all a chance to start anew to learn and honor the rights and responsibilities it holds for us. Being very familiar with the contents of “the book,” is our best defense when we are concerned that a contract violation has been committed by anyone.



The best way to avoid a possible grievance or resolve a problem quickly is to know your rights. You have no way of knowing that a violation has occurred or whether you are entitled to some recompense if you don't know your rights in the first place. They are presented primarily in the body of the contract—Articles IV through X.

The best way to avoid being called to a meeting with your dean, the VP, or HR that could result in discipline is to be aware of your responsibilities as a faculty member and fulfill them. These are primarily delineated in the Job Descriptions—Appendix B. (Tasks or projects not included in your job description that you are asked to do for any compensation—not already negotiated and listed on our Extra-contractual Chart—must be officially negotiated with the ECCFA—the President, Chief Negotiator...)

In addition, you should be aware of your Weingarten Rights. You are entitled to union representation anytime you will be attending a meeting that could include any disciplinary action.

Becoming as familiar as possible with our entire contract will help you to be a better and happier ECC faculty member. Believe it or not—the book is a very interesting read!

English Faculty to be Published

Congratulations to English adjunct faculty member John Kersey on the publication of his short story “Uncle Dog” in the March 30 Chicago Tribune. In addition to his teaching, John is also the advisor for Writers’ Block (the creative writing club) and an active participant in the Writers Center programming. This appearance in the Tribune marks John’s fourth publication. Please join us in congratulating him on this wonderful accomplishment.

Grant Schubert will also have a fictional short story published in the African American Review in the next 18-24 months. The African American Review is sponsored by Johns Hopkins and published through St. Louis University.

He says the story is about a boy named Oshian and his fulfillment of a vocation; a violent, focused vocation.

First Aid Training, CPR and AED Training

by Jessica Carpenter

☒ You are watching the TV Show *Crisis* when suddenly a lead character's finger is chopped off. Someone takes the finger and tosses it in a bag of ice. Is that how to appropriately handle the situation?

☒ A coworker appears confused, dizzy and has a headache. They ask for your help as someone certified in first aid. You ask them to smile, raise both arms, and repeat a phrase for you. What are you checking for?

☒ A student is stung by a bee on your prairie walk excursion. They ask for your help and hand you an epipen. Could you correctly administer the medication?

As an instructor who has had several students experience seizure in her classes, I finally found the time to register for and take the (free!) Heartsaver First Aid Training offered by ECC. The training was interesting and took three hours. Our instructor added some engaging real life examples and I found out that I am terrible at holding on to gauze (he said some of us would drop it and.. it was me.. several times).

If that isn't enough to convince you that this training is worth your time, consider the case of ECC sophomore Zac Cooper, who had a life threatening emergency during a basketball game in February and

was saved by the quick action of Alicia Mikulski and an automatic external defibrillator (AED). Am I signed up for ECC's (also free!) CPR and AED training? Yes I am, and I hope to see some of you there on April 25 at 9AM sharp (there is also a session this semester at 1:30 to 4:30 on May 6th). You can register via ACCESS ECC. Professional Development registration regularly sends email updates about when these courses are available and certification is good for two years. The first aid training also came with useful printed materials and a small first aid kit.

I got mine, go get yours!



(Answer Key: *Situation 1*-NO- the digit should be rinsed in water, wrapped in gauze and put in a water tight bag. The bag containing the digit should be placed in another bag with ice and water. *Situation 2*- You are checking for stroke)

Faculty Artwork to be Displayed

Pat Brutchin has been accepted in the St. Charles Park District 2014 Exhibition in Mt. St. Mary Park. "Ballerina" will be on display from April 20-Oct 6, 2014.

Profile—Jerry Mackay, Library Associate Dean

By Ellie Swanson

Jerry Mackay joined the ECC library as the new associate dean in January. Jerry shared some background information and some information about his goals and philosophy as a way of introducing him to the faculty.

Jerry grew up in Lockport, Illinois. He holds an associate's degree from Joliet Junior College and a B.A. in history from Lewis University. He earned an M.A. in political science from Governors State University and a Masters in Library Science from Dominican University.

Before completing his degree at JJC, Jerry spent four years in the U.S. Marine Corps. He served as a military police officer and then as an embassy guard. He was stationed at the embassy in Czechoslovakia before the fall of the Berlin Wall and in South Africa during apartheid.



After returning to civilian life and completing his education Jerry began working as a library administrator. His first administrative job was at Ella Johnson Memorial Public Library in Hampshire, Illinois. He moved into academic libraries with a position as Dean of the Library and

Instructional Services at Prairie State Community College. He also taught political science at Moraine Valley Community College. At Prairie State Jerry was responsible for the library and for distance learning. There was where he gained the community college library experience that brought him to ECC in January.

Here at ECC Jerry is responsible for all library operations. He sees that role as providing librarians and library support staff with the tools and scope required to do the job of serving our students and other users. He tries to make it as easy as possible for librarians to teach classes, select materials, and provide the other services that support student learning in the library. Jerry feels responsible for making the atmosphere in the library a positive one and for supporting the faculty and staff who directly support our students.

Jerry believes that today's students need to learn to be independent learners. With the rapid changes in society, and particularly in technology, they will need to reinvent themselves constantly throughout their working lives. Jerry believes the library is a key part of this lifelong learning. We are an information-based society now and the library is where students can learn to sift the valuable information from the misinformation that is all around us. He would like to see the library as a venue for students to experience and learn to use changing technology tools. He sees the library as an ideal place for students to experience Windows 8 or Chromebooks or other new technologies and to help them bridge the digital divide.

...Perspective Continued

In spite of the current conditions, I am extremely grateful and blessed to work at ECC. It continues to be the best job of my professional career. For those who have come to know me (students, faculty, staff and administrators) can affirm that I am a devoted student services servant. I've attempted to stay true to a quote by Ghandi "the best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others." ECC has provided numerous opportunities to provide services to others and I've embraced these opportunities to the fullest. In addition to counseling services that I provide in a culturally competent manner, I also had the opportunity to actively participate in efforts and initiatives outside the scope of "academic advising." For example, empowering students who are undocumented by organizing and participating in their campaign toward justice, heading the student advising committee for achieving the dream, developing programming opportunities for Black and Latino males, participating in the negotiating team (2010-2011), developing curriculum and providing leadership for COL 101 initiative.

I am also a devoted father and husband, my wife, Lidia, and I have been married for eleven years and we have two beautiful daughters, Ysela (7 yo) and Maya (5 yo). Providing the lifestyle that my wife and I have been able to provide to our daughters is of utmost priority. When we decided to forgo my income for this year we created a plan that would last us through May of this year, assuming I would return in May and begin earning income as I did the previous year. The current state of affairs at ECC has threatened the likelihood of this plan and caused considerable concern and stress for my family. I am saddened, but not defeated! I trust and have faith in ECCFA and its great and devoted leaders. I will be attending tonight's board meeting in support of a fair and just resolution for counselors and custodians alike. I hope you can join my family and me tonight.



...Union Family Continued

So, I've often wondered: what does it mean to be a union family in anti-union times?

Does it mean spreading our message? Because as union members, we have important ideas to share. No, austerity and scarcity are not natural, we explain to friends and family. Working conditions don't have to deteriorate year after year. No, rising salaries for the richest and plummeting wages for the poorest are not the only possible reality, we say. A fairer economy is possible.

Does being pro-union in anti-union times mean writing op-eds? Lobbying in Springfield? Influencing elections? Standing in solidarity with other workers, even those we don't know? Does it mean building our locals to be a strong and pro-active force at our workplaces and in society?

Honestly, I'm not sure how to best support a just workplace for everyone in such an intensely anti-union atmosphere. I'm not sure how to respond to a relative who, despite being a union member himself, voted for Scott Walker. I'm not always sure what to say to friends who are struggling to survive on low wages while I enjoy the solid pay and contract protections a union provides.

I am sure, though, that we can't stop fighting. And we can't stop helping our students learn and critically engage the world around them. We need to help them to be informed and active around global issues, particularly labor issues.

Fortunately, in recent years the labor movement has been innovatively engaging young people and workers not traditionally represented by unions. It has started to organize low-wage workers, from *carwashers* to cashiers. It has built important bridges with labor struggles in other parts of the globe. It has pushed President Obama to take action on the minimum wage and to correct pay disparities between women and men.

Also, Chicago fast food workers have emerged as a major force in sparking a national conversation around economic inequality. It's important to mention that the lead organizer on that campaign is an ECC alum. I'm sure he learned a lot from ECC teachers and from being active in the campus community.

So, what can I do as a new ECCFA member, part of a union family, living in anti-union times?

I'm not sure yet. But I am looking forward to helping ECC students to better understand our world and to help improve it. And I'm excited to learn from other ECCFA members and help build better workplaces for everyone.

COUNSELING CONTINUED...

There has been one consistent position directed by Dr. Sam and the board; there is no movement or attempt at reaching a reasonable compromise. (The Board team has worked diligently and collaboratively with us to reach plausible solutions, but their efforts are rejected by their bosses.)

Their offer as of 3/14 p.m. is “quit or teach”—no training, no “making them whole”—no part of the possible agreement we had discussed orally agreed to is included (the last deal that they were required to

withdraw.) The teams have not met since.

They wanted us to make that offer to the current counselors.

We did not accept that offer. We will not seriously discuss options with them to which we have not agreed nor have anything in writing nor that do not make our members whole.

March 21 and 23 (?) --They posted 2 new job descriptions on the College web site—full time and part time Academic Advisors-- before bargaining the work out of our contract.

(The new job descriptions are essentially the same as those existing in our contract.)

We have requested mediation and will be meeting with the mediator within the next few weeks.

The posting also allegedly violate SSECCA’s contract. The JDs were presented to SSECCA leadership. They asked if the negotiation with the ECCFA was complete and stated they would use the 10 days afforded by their contract to review and respond. The jobs were posted as “administrative” positions the next day. SSECCA is likely to file a grievance.



Faculty, staff and students rallied behind ECC’s custodian’s during the April 8 Board of Trustees meeting. Approximately 150 people, clad in blue, filled Siegel Auditorium. Twenty-four people addressed the board, including students, faculty staff, as well as community members.



2012-2013 ECCFA Senators

LVPA

Joel Peck
Howard Russo

BUS

Linda Hefferin

HP

Michele Brynelsen
Kim Tarver

MSE

Mary O’Sullivan
Miroslav Rezac

CABS

Lori Clark
Cindy Hutman
Pat O’Brien
Glenn Turner

LRC/CON

Armando Trejo

SSCT

Gary Norden
David Reich

UAF Senators

Rick Bonnom
Dan Kocher
David Lawrence
Marcia Luptak
Loretta McCallister
Chad Pearion
Joyce Ross
Julie Roth
Cathy Tomasik
Baudelaire Ulysse
Cassandra Watson



Sentinel Calendar

May 6

-Deadline May 2

2013 Senate Meetings

- April 17
- May 1
- May 15

All Senate meetings are on Wednesdays, from 3:00-5:00, in C120. All faculty are welcome to attend.