

March 2025



ECCFA NEWS

The Sentinel: Elgin Community College Faculty Association Newsletter

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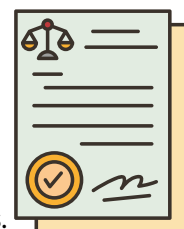


If there is something you would like to see in our next Sentinel Newsletter, please feel free to contact the Sentinel Editor [Deyana Matt](#)

ECCFA President's Message

At ECC, we're fairly insulated from outside pressures. Periodically, state legislation or budgetary problems can impact us, but we're on solid financial footing, we have a strong faculty union with a good administrative relationship, and we're known around the state and country as a quality institution of higher learning.

But now, recent actions at the federal level have the potential to significantly impact our work. VP Schopen and President Heinrich have relayed what they know about the impact of the recent executive orders, but we're largely in uncharted waters.



I haven't shared much of these conversations with anyone outside of the ECCFA officers, primarily because there is just so much we don't know. We do know that [a letter](#) was sent to all education institutions that receive federal funding, which includes ECC. Not only do we have millions of dollars in grant-funded programs, [nearly 3,000 ECC students](#) receive Pell Grants. But the letter is intentionally vague, likely hoping that institutions will self-censor in an act of anticipatory obedience, a strategy that [the AAUP strongly advises against](#).

What does this mean for us as faculty? Right now, we don't know. Our senators and representatives have shared that this is indeed serious, and there are programs that we all value that are at risk of changing or being removed entirely - not because our college administration has decided to obey in anticipation of whatever nebulous rules the Department of Education decides it wants to apply, but in recognition of the stark reality that the removal of all federal funding would cause significant harm, and so ECC may have no choice.

What can we do? Maintain our solidarity. We know the vital mission we serve here at the college, and we know we must serve ALL students. Continue the good work. Keep advocating for what you believe in, and encouraging others to resist external pressures whenever feasible. And keep an eye out for plans to mobilize. We hope to periodically show the public (and ourselves) that we still have a voice, and we still believe in what is right for students. The faculty at ECC have served students for 75 years, and we will continue to serve them long after the current administration has passed.

In Unity, Dan Kernler - Prof. of Mathematics - President, ECCFA, IFT Local #3791

New Member Feature: Suzanne Onbargi



What's an educational project or professional development item you're working on?

I am proud to say that I am working on my doctorate. It has been my long-term goal, and I am slowly nearing the end.

What do you/did you love the most about your career?

During the day, I am a paraprofessional at an elementary school, where I help care for children with special needs. In the evening, I teach at ECC. Both are rewarding as I feel I am impacting their lives. With the children, I am helping them with their basic needs of learning how to read and write, and with the adults, I feel I am helping them get more confident to communicate in English for their everyday needs.

English as a Second Language

What excites you the most right now?

What excites me most now is to see my son embark on fulfilling his dream of becoming a medical doctor. He is a first-year medical student at UIC in Chicago. I am extremely proud of him.



Where are you from?

I was born in Chicago. My father was Lebanese, and my mother was British. When I was three years old, my father returned to Lebanon where I grew up until the civil war in 1975 forced us to return to the States. After getting my Masters degree at SUNY, I went to the United Arab Emirates where I taught French and English. I lived there for over 30 years. When Covid hit, I returned to the States and am currently teaching at ECC.

Favorite place you've traveled to?

I have been blessed to have lived in and traveled to several countries. My most recent trip was to Cambodia where my son and I visited the Angkor Wat Temple complex. We also went to Thailand and Japan on the same trip.



Sick Bank Committee Updates

The Sick Bank Committee has been hard at work this academic year!



Since August 23rd, we have approved 71.5 days to be given to eligible applicants. Currently, we hold 230 in our bank account of days.

We are grateful to all of our members who have contributed to the sick bank this academic year and would like to strongly encourage folks to donate next fall when the time comes. As you can see, we have used almost a quarter of our total available days already and we've still got 3 months left in the academic year during peak sick season to go. Keeping our reserves well maintained is critical for this committee to provide the security of which it is intended.

Big thank you to our committee members: Amanda Hirsch, Deyana Matt, Roda Ryan, Catherine Moushon, Ranae Ziwicki, Susan



Robinson, and a very special thank you to our most recent Chair, now Chair Emeritus, Joe Rosenfeld for years (not sure how many!) of service!

Additionally, we could not complete our duties at all without our HR representative, Lesia Gemelli.

[Kathleen DeMars](#), The New Chair of the Sick Bank Committee.

ECCFA Has Endorsed Melissa Barbosa-Guzman and James Allen for ECC Board of Trustees!



This spring, two seats on the ECC Board of Trustees are up for election. ECCFA Senate has endorsed **Melissa Barbosa-Guzman and James Allen** for these seats. Find info on these candidates here: barbosaallenforecc.com

Early voting is from March 17 to March 31. Election Day is April 1, 2025. Please note that Election Day occurs DURING ECC'S SPRING BREAK. If you will be out of town, please vote early. ECC will host the Early Voting Mobile Unit on campus for Kane County residents from 9-4 on Tuesday, March 18 and Wednesday, March 19 2025.

If you live outside Kane Co, check with your county election officials for early voting times and locations.

If you would like to help support these candidates, email the COPE Chair at eccfacope@gmail.com.

