

DEEP RIVER

A Newsletter of the Rio Hondo College Academic Senate & Faculty Association

News from the Academic Senate

As another semester ends, it's time to reflect on Academic Senate happenings. In Senate, we've discussed enrollment, specifically its recent decline and possible remedies. In fact, the College has hired a consulting firm to help us analyze our strengths and weaknesses in this area, with the objective of increasing enrollment in the future. The results of these investigations should be concluded by February.

The Chancellor has received the results of the Task Force on Accreditation and will present the findings to the Board of Governors this month. The Task Force recommended that the Board of Governors look for another accrediting body other than the ACCJC. Academic senates and college administrations from across the state have supported this endeavor. We appreciate their efforts and will keep you informed of the next steps in this process. It is important to remember that at this time, however, the ACCJC is still our accrediting agency.

Program planning and review are well underway, and I want to thank everyone who is participating in these important and meaningful processes: those submitting reviews and those volunteering to serve on the committees. These processes are an opportunity to take a studied and conscientious look at what and how we do what we do, and explain to the college constituencies our value and our needs. For program review, once every six years we have the focused ear of all the college constituencies to explain our successes, strengths, needs, and concerns for our programs. It is important that we take these opportunities seriously and provide accurate information, deliberate analyses, and thoughtful input. Through these processes, we plan our future.

- Robert Bethel, Senate President

Contract Negotiations

By Adam Wetsman, Ph.D., Professor of Anthropology, and Board Member of the Community College Association

The negotiations cycle is underway for the 2016-2019 contract between the Rio Hondo College Faculty Association (RHCFA) and the District. Faculty were given the opportunity to propose items for negotiations and then were surveyed about these items to set priorities for the negotiations team.

A "sunshine" (initial proposal) was delivered to the District in early November, and they are expected to respond in early January. The teams will then meet, with the goal to have things settled by May.

The District has received a lot of additional funds, ones that will allow for

COLA plus additional salary increases. Note that COLA is not a raise; it is merely an adjustment to take inflation into account. Rio Hondo will receive about \$3 million in increased base allocation funding. This money can be used to compensate faculty for more than a half-dozen years, starting around 2009, when there were no salary increases at all, not even COLA. Also, the money can be used to compensate us for the additional work that is now being done for SLOs, the planning process, and mandatory training on topics like the reporting of abuse.

The RHCFA is confident that the teams will work together to reach an agreement in as cooperative a manner as possible.



"If we cancel their eyeglass benefits, the union won't be able to read the fine print."

Righting Writing

by Juan Fernandez, English and WRC instructor

Ever have the feeling your students are writing and handing in the most amazing essays to the wrong prompt?

Is it the student? The professor? The prompt? Is it the weather? The proximity of the cemetery next door?

Whatever the issue, the WRC is for you! We incorporate appropriate strategies to help students decipher prompts assigned by professors of science, math, sociology, psychology, and more.

We hold one-on-one conferences with your students to help them create clear, coherent essays that address the prompt and meet your stated directions to follow APA, MLA, ASA, and even UFC guidelines.



Teachers Helping Students

The Faculty of Rio Hondo College has been supporting our students with two unique scholarships. One comes from our dues (the amount is set by law). This is a scholarship for students in need who are nominated directly by a faculty member. See the article on this page for details.

The second faculty scholarship, *Teachers Helping Students*, is from your direct donations and the Association's fundraising efforts. The RHC Foundation handles this fund, without charges or fees and all donations are tax deductible.

This year we are asking faculty members to donate money at the Holiday Luncheon. Tickets for the luncheon are \$10 and will go to this fund but please give a little more and help grow our fund. We have raised over \$5,000 and awarded \$2,000 in bookstore scholarships last spring. Help us replenish the fund so we can offer more to our students. Please come to the luncheon and/or write a check to the "RHC Foundation," and send it to the Faculty Association (Attn.: Sergio Guzman), or even better, fill out the foundation payroll deduction form and have your donation automatically deducted from your paycheck every month. Just be sure to indicate on the form your donation is for the *Teachers Helping Students Faculty Association Scholarship Fund*. It's fast, easy, and helps our students. It's also fully deductible, and you'll feel better for it too!

Thank you for your support.

The General Fund Scholarship

By Jill Pfeiffer, FA President Elect and Professor of Anthropology

Faculty, did you know that a portion of your dues are spent on a budget item called the "General Fund Scholarship" for our students? This is not to be confused with the new foundation fund "Teachers Helping Students." The General Fund Scholarship is a budget item we voted for and allotted \$2,200 to give to students with a minimum GPA of 3.0 and who are in need of financial support.

If you would like to nominate a student, ask for a copy of the application from Sergio Guzman or Jill Pfeiffer. This year we will give out 4 scholarships of \$550. Applications due dates will be announced at our next meeting.



Teachers Helping Students Fund Balance

| | |
|----------------------|----------|
| Fund as of 4/2015 | \$5,068. |
| Awarded 5/2015 | (2,000.) |
| Fund Balance 11/2015 | \$3,068. |

Please Donate Now!

By Kathy Pudelko, Faculty Association Grievance Officer and past RHCFA President

What is “Fair Share”?

Fair share fees help ensure that all employees equitably share the cost of negotiated benefits. A fair share fee payer is a worker who chooses not to join the union but is still fully covered by the union contract, with all its rights and benefits. The fair share principle ensures that these individuals do not get a “free ride” at the expense of the contribution of others.

No educator is forced to join CTA. Members can opt out of having their dues money used for political purpose. Fee payers can submit an objection to the fee and receive the portion of the fee that does not support bargaining representation.

Full membership in CTA, however, has powerful advantages, including the following: Having a voice in the association, adding strength to CTA’s collective voice in advocating for students, school, and school employees; accessing professional development opportunities; scholarships; financial saving; and accessing legal representation if you are treated unfairly or unjustly accused.

Are unions important? With unions in place we get a seat at the table to make sure the experts, we, the educators have a voice in legislation surrounding educational issues, such as appropriate testing and curriculum and laws protecting students and faculty.

The Economic Policy Institute published updated research in April of this year that showed union and nonunion workers in right-to-work states have lower wages and fewer benefits on average than comparable workers in other states.

Workers in right-to-work states make on average 28% less than non-right-to-work states.

If you would like to read more, this information was taken from the CTA website, *The Case for Fair Share Friedrichs v. CTA lawsuit jeopardizes our collective voice*, by Katharine Fong.

Know Your Rights

When an employee asks for representation, the employer must choose from among three options:

- Grant the request and delay questioning until the union representative arrives;
- Deny the request and end the interview immediately;
- Give the employee a choice of having the interview without representation or ending the interview.

Under the Supreme Court’s Weingarten decision, the following rules apply to investigatory interview. The employee can request union representation before or at any time during the interview.

If the employer denies the request for union representation and continues the meeting, the employee can refuse to answer questions.

The Weingarten Card

(If called to a meeting with management, read the following or present this card to management when the meeting begins.)

If this discussion could in any way lead to me being disciplined or terminated, or affect my personal working conditions, I respectfully request that my union representative, officer, or steward be present at this meeting.

So how do you know if you might need to have help or representation? Weingarten rights apply only during investigatory interviews. An investigatory interview occurs when (1) management *questions an employee* to obtain information; and (2) the employee *has a reasonable belief that discipline or other adverse consequences may result*. For example, an employee questioned about an accident would be justified in fearing that he/she might be blamed for it. An employee questioned about poor work would have a reasonable fear of disciplinary action if he/she should admit to making errors.

Not every discussion with management is an investigatory interview. For example, a supervisor may speak with an employee about a proper way to do a job. The supervisor may even ask questions. But because the likelihood of discipline is remote, the conversation is not an investigatory interview.

A conversation can change its character, however. If the supervisor’s attitude becomes hostile and the meeting turns into an investigatory interview the employee is entitled to representation.

News from the Faculty Association

As we come closer to the end of the semester The Rio Hondo Faculty Association (RHCFA) would like to acknowledge and thank you for the great work you do every day. The Rio Hondo Faculty Association (RHCFA) is here to help you navigate your career; we represent full-time and part-time faculty and in doing so we seek to find equity in pay, workload, and benefits for our entire faculty. This year the RHCFA is especially looking into supporting our part-timers. And, of course, we all need a long overdue raise.

Over the past few years, our Association has worked to reach out to the Board of Trustees to let them understand the dedication and hard work the Faculty at Rio Hondo does on behalf of the college. Our support for Trustee Vicky Santana has resulted in her successful re-election; we congratulate her and wish her well as she endeavors to help Rio Hondo College grow and succeed.

I am proud of the work we all do, and, as we all know, Rio Hondo College is a wonderful place to work and for students to learn.

We are a family, and we are united to educate our students. Your Faculty Association is here for you, our students, and the college.

As we move into the holiday season, I wish you all the best and thank you for your service.

-Sergio Guzman, RHCFA President



RH Faculty Association & the Presidents Office Holiday Luncheon

Thursday, December 3 • 12 noon

Swiss Park Restaurant

\$10 donation

*checks payable to the "RHC Foundation"
to support the "Teachers Helping Students"
scholarship fund*

RSVP

mcarreon@riohondo.edu



Faculty Association 2015-16 Officers

President - Sergio Guzman
VP/President Elect - Jill Pfeiffer
Secretary - Marie Eckstrom
Treasurer - Jeannie Liu
At-Large-Rep - Ada Pullini Brown
At-Large-Rep - Rudy Rios
Part-time Rep - Martha Carreón
Grievance Chair - Kathy Pudelko
PAC Chair - Colin Young
Lead Negotiator - Adam Wetsman

Academic Senate 2015-16 Officers

President - Robert Bethel
First Vice-President - Dr. Kevin Smith
Second Vice-President - Katie O'Brien
Secretary - Michelle Bean
Parliamentarian - Sheila Lynch
ASCCC Rep - John Frala
Past President - Dr. Adam Wetsman
RHCFA President - Dr. Sergio Guzman

Faculty Association Meetings
Join us for lunch and information
3rd Thursday of the month
12:45-2 pm in the Board Room