

VANGUARD

Official Newsletter of the Adjunct Faculty Association at Nassau Community College
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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

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About Our Students,
Our Members,
Our College!*

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From the President's Desk



Stefan Krompier

Over the past week, I have been procrastinating writing this *Vanguard* column because I could not decide on a suitable topic. I considered writing about the relationships we have developed with stakeholders on and off campus or the excellent work that we do to protect the rights of our membership, or the hardworking leadership team that I get to work with each day. Each is a worthy topic but none of them seemed quite right for this issue, this column.

The morning of my writing this column, I read the most current email detailing NCC's declining enrollment statistics. The obvious took center stage in my mind: This five plus year trend must be reversed. Why? Because it shouts that Nassau Community College is failing to meet the educational and personal needs of those who might have, and should have, been pursuing their education here at Nassau Community College due to the connection between what we offer and their educational needs, wants, and desires is not being made.

Nassau Community College is "Where Success Starts and Continues" and where those who study here "Stay Close and Go Far". Nassau Community College is where students "Discover the Power to Change their Lives". These are notions/positioning statements that resonate with those who are seeking an education. These are notions/positioning statements that are not reaching nearly enough prospective students.

Those at NCC tasked with recruiting students are working hard and as effectively as they can to deliver our message to those who need to see it and hear it. Our Acting Director of Marketing is doing the best job she can particularly because her responsibility to market NCC is heaped on top of tasks she must perform in her current position.

We need a Director of Marketing now. High school seniors and their parents are considering the possibilities as to where they and/or their sons and daughters will attend college in the spring and fall of 2020. They are in the process of making their decisions now. Those who are looking to attend college on a full time and part time basis are making their choices now. They need to

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know what Nassau Community College has to offer now:

- Over 70 degree and certificate programs that prepare students for a quality transfer to a four-year college or to secure meaningful well-paying positions upon graduation.
- An award-winning caring faculty who takes great pride in teaching and working with the students who come through their doors each day.
- Flexible scheduling opportunities and online/hybrid course offerings that enable students to mesh college with their personal and work responsibilities.
- Financial aid, grants and scholarships that enable students to pay for their education.
- Tens of thousands of alumni working in well-paying careers that bring personal and professional satisfaction.

ALL AT A REMARKABLY LOW COST THAT WON'T BREAK THE BANK.

This past summer, a search for a Director of Marketing was started and completed. As a member of the committee, I am of the opinion that excellent candidates were recommended for the position. There was no official announcement as to why the position was not filled and, for all intents and purposes, failed. If we are to attract all those prospective students who need what Nassau Community College has to offer them, a Director of Marketing must be hired as soon as soon as possible.

Stefan Krompfer
President
Adjunct Faculty Association

Message from the Vice-President



Scott Stark

When I sat down to write this column, I had yet to turn the page of my calendar to October. Yet, I have already accompanied 3 members to the Office of Equity, Inclusion, and Affirmative Action this semester. It seems to me that some students, and, unfortunately, some faculty believe that any action that affects them negatively is grounds for a charge of harassment or bullying. Dr. Wright is mandated to investigate any charge that comes across his desk. Failure to do so could result in the college being fined \$150,000 each time

they don't investigate. The good news is that all of the meetings I have attended this semester, and in the past, have resulted in these charges going unsubstantiated.

When the member is contacted, they are not told what the charge is. They don't know until we go to the meeting and read the charge. Most of the time, though, the adjunct knows who the complainant is. It is not because they know that they did something wrong; it is because each student complaint that I have dealt with has come from a student that had made it known early in the semester, through their words and actions, that they were going to be difficult.

Because these complaints are becoming a regular occurrence (one per week this semester so far), I recommend that you prepare now to protect yourself from these false claims. How do you do that? Start by knowing the student code of conduct and the college classroom management policy.

The Student Code of Conduct can be found here:

https://collegecatalog.ncc.edu/current/policiesandprocedures/additional_information/student_conduct.html

The Classroom Management Policy here:

https://collegecatalog.ncc.edu/current/policiesandprocedures/academic_info/class_mgmt.html

If a student breaks the Student Code of Conduct or Classroom Management Policy, document the breach with a narrative that includes the date and time of the breach as well as the names of those involved and those who might have witnessed the occurrence. Also, include what you did to alleviate said situation – if anything. As long as we are doing our jobs, we have protection. I suggest that you at least

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attempt to speak with the student in a timely manner and let them know that the action they participated in is a violation of said code or policy. Document this as well as any incident or occurrence that might be relevant to the breach. After that, at your discretion, you should go through the prescribed channels and make the appropriate report. Another thing I would do is to **document everything**.

As a teaching professional and Vice President of the AFA, I find it disheartening that we have students that respond to a grade that was lower than they had wanted with a claim of bullying, but in this day and age I am not surprised. We live in a ‘victim culture’ where too many students seem to feel entitled to everything without doing anything. I could espouse for pages and pages about how too many of today’s youths received trophies for everything, regardless of their effort and achievement – and now they come to Nassau Community College with similar expectations.

For those of you that are members of the AFA, I pledge to make sure that you receive due process and the assumption of innocence when charges are brought upon you. I also pledge that the AFA is looking closely at Section I.F of the student code of conduct which states that “If it is determined that a person who has accused another of a violation has maliciously or recklessly made a false accusation, the accuser will be considered in violation of the Student Code of Conduct.”

As I wrote in the *Vanguard* a few months ago, having us by your side, especially in the face of increasing complaints of harassment, is one of the most, if not the most, important benefit of membership in the AFA. My words of last semester seem even more prescient today.

I hope I don’t ever have to represent you in one of these hearings. If you are called upon for one, contact us immediately. We will guide you through the process.

As always, it is a pleasure to serve as your Vice-President. If I can ever be of service, please email me at scottstark27@gmail.com, or call me at 516-859-0250.

Scott Stark
Vice-President
Adjunct Faculty Association

The Inside Scoop

Our membership is most diverse in that our ranks include pure adjuncts and full-timers working as adjuncts as well as classroom and non-classroom faculty members. Because of this, it was extremely important to us to have a negotiating team that reflected the various constituencies among our membership. In much the same manner that Stef assembled a leadership group reflective of all constituencies, he did the same with the negotiating team. The team was comprised of pure adjuncts, full-timers who work adjunct and classroom and non-classroom members. Each individual was well versed to the intricacies related to the group in which they belonged.

Well in advance of our first negotiations session, Dr. Robert Femminella chaired our Negotiations committee. The committee was charged with getting member feedback through our Department Representatives. He received a substantial amount of feedback. The feedback was categorized and reviewed by the negotiations team. We focused on the items that were requested by most members. The actual negotiations with the college were amicable, but not necessarily easy. In the end, we came to an agreement which we distributed to all

AFA members and our membership approved the package by slightly over 94%. The benefits that were reflected in the MoA are benefits that are listed because they will change the wording in our contract. Other benefits came in the form of requested givebacks that we staved off. These are not listed in the MoA because the contract language will not be changed.

We fought hard for all our constituents. We and the College signed off on this agreement many months ago. The agreement was sent to the County Executive (CE) for her approval. For a variety of reasons, it took the CE months to sign the agreement. She signed the agreement after the Board of Trustees' final meeting for the academic year. Our BoT unanimously approved our MoA at their September meeting. The final step before the MoA becomes part of our new contract is for the County Legislature



Richard D. Erben

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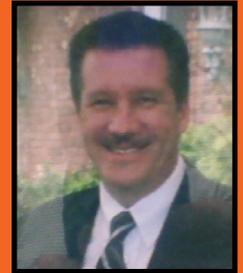


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The Inside Scoop

to approve it. We are working to get this final approval as quickly as possible.

When this final approval takes place, our new contract will feature a 2.5% wage increase for the 2018/19 academic year and an additional 2.5% increase as of 9/1/19. There will also be 2.5% increases on 9/1/20 and a 2.35% raise on 9/1/21. The increases will be retroactive to 9/1/18. Other monetary increases include adjustments to the Excellence in Education stipend and increases to the TA sub rate. Additionally, there will be an increased leave accrual threshold and additional annual leave days.



Richard D. Erben

Richard D. Erben
Chief Information Officer
Adjunct Faculty Association

Around the Region

WARTEL: Virginia's Poor Environment for Workers can only be Remedied with Unions

The Path to Fighting Inequality Runs Through Rebuilding the Labor Movement



By Jake Wartel | 09/30/2019

The path forward for working-class residents of Virginia and the United States is through rebuilding the labor movement.

Virginia proudly boasts the claim of number one in the country for business. When talking to my former state representative, Democrat Dave Marsden,

during the June primary election I brought up my concern about right-to-work-for-less laws, or anti-union laws in Virginia. He reassured me that he wanted to help workers but also make sure Virginia was good for businesses. In reality though, “good for business”

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Around the Region

means good for bosses, and in Virginia it means workers suffer. An Oxfam report found Virginia to be the worst state in the country for workers. This is appalling and also highlights the desperate need for the revival of labor unions in Virginia and the country.

Unions are organizations that collect the membership of employees into a single body. The goal of doing so is that workers have a more credible threat to walk off the job or strike when it is every worker threatening it versus just a few. Negotiating pay is more powerful when it is 100 people rather than 1 person, this is known as collective bargaining. But unions also serve as a way to make demands beyond just pay. Working conditions, healthcare, hours, retirement benefits and more are all codified in contracts when workers collectively force bosses to negotiate. This is why corporations like Amazon furiously resist unionizing efforts, and even ostensibly liberal organizations like NextGen America engage in union-busting. It's as simple as a conflict between workers and bosses, if workers get more pay or more benefits then the boss gets less profit to bathe in.

Those aligned with corporate interests have often implemented "right-to-work" laws as a way of discouraging union membership. To dispel the myth of "right-to-work" laws it's important to understand that these laws only exist to hurt working-class people and make capitalists richer. But "right-to-work" also doesn't mean that labor unions are outlawed. Rather it means that workers can essentially opt out of the union in their workplace, no longer paying dues to the union and forgoing collective bargaining for state employees. When workers can't strike, or act as a

unified group, the boss is able to weaken their stake in the profit of the company. In Virginia, this means employees make lower wages, are less protected and have fewer benefits. Nationally, 27 states have right-to-work-for-less laws which have translated into stagnated wages and soaring inequality.

Two current labor struggles illustrate the importance of unions around the country. First is the United Auto Workers strike against General Motors. 49,000 workers went out on strike against increases in healthcare costs and paltry raises. Since 2007, GM has increasingly pushed for two-tiered contracts, which exclude many employees from benefits. GM is a massively profitable company now, making 11 billion dollars in profit last year. Its workers, however, are stuck with higher healthcare costs forced on them by GM and nowhere near high enough raises. Right before our eyes, we are seeing the power of the working class to halt production and demand better conditions for themselves and their communities. Strikes like the UAW one also incorporate demands to restart production in idle factories, giving a life line to communities destroyed by deindustrialization.

The second important struggle happening right now is with Coalition of Kaiser Permanente Unions, which threatened to bring 80,000 workers out on strike, the largest labor action in over 20 years. Just the threat of a strike reportedly led to an agreement of higher wages and better conditions for the workers. The lesson of these two examples is simple — when

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there are unions, the power of workers to demand better conditions for themselves and their community is much stronger than without a union.

In Virginia, the unfortunate lack of unions hurts us all. Charlottesville specifically has the highest level of income inequality in the Commonwealth and the University plays a key role in local inequality as the largest employer in the city. The large disparity of how much academic employees are paid and how much low-wage employees are paid sets a center-of-gravity for the problems of income inequality in the area. This is the same sort of tiered system UAW workers are trying to fight against with their strike.

The increase of wages to 15 dollars an hour only counts for direct employees, not contracted employees. In the academic section of University employees, the difference in compensation of adjuncts and professors creates precarious employment for more faculty. While there was once a staff union that could deal with these issues, now individuals are left to fend for themselves. The issues of wages and em-

ployment are never settled without a collective organization to negotiate a contract. Inflation and cost of living can go up with no guarantee that wages will.

The path forward for working-class residents of Virginia and the United States is through rebuilding the labor movement, a challenging but possible task. Presidential candidate Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) has proved himself the most committed to this task, rallying with UAW workers on the picket line and with Chicago Teachers Union members ahead of a potential strike. Additionally his plan includes provisions to double union membership, institute sectoral bargaining, repeal right-to-work laws and give all workers the right to strike. This sort of transformational national vision for labor unions is just what the country needs and just what Virginia needs.

Volunteer Opportunity!

Free! On-Campus!

Just a half hour a week! No experience necessary!

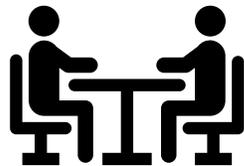
Here is the link to sign up!

<https://forms.gle/tXquCnygXQotipEV7>

LINCC

(Language Immersion at Nassau Community College)

Conversation Partners



- Enrich your world by conversing with an ESL college student 30-60 minutes a week.
- Learn about another language and culture while helping a fellow NCC student improve communication skills.
- Set your own schedule and get valuable volunteering experience.
- No previous experience required. Just bring your English!

To get an application, contact the LINCC program at 516-573-0165 or lincc@ncc.edu or visit us in the LINCC office, Life Sciences, Room 141 or <https://forms.gle/tXquCnygXQotipEV7>