

# VANGUARD

Official Newsletter of the Adjunct Faculty Association at Nassau Community College  
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*WE CARE*  
*About Our Students,*  
*Our Members,*  
*Our College!*

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 Bey, Philip Pecorino  
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# From the President's Desk



Stefan Krompfer

## CONTRACT UPDATE

Hoping that I would be able to report that our new contract was ratified or that the process to ratify was moving forward as it should, two weeks ago, I asked Chief Information Officer Richard Erben and *Vanguard* Editor Paul Guadagnino to hold off publication of the March 2019 edition of the *Vanguard*. Here we are on March 31st, 2019, and such an announcement cannot be made.

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I am saddened and disheartened as to the status of our contract negotiations. At this point in time we should have had a new contract that was signed, sealed, and delivered. We do not. **In the interest of securing a ratified contract relatively quickly, we will continue to try to move the “power that is” off of his/her current stance in a non-confrontational, positive manner rather than one that will require us to take an adversarial position.**

If the affirmation process restarts in a timely manner, we will inform you via an email or a special edition of the *Vanguard*. If it does not, we will explain what is causing the stall in the process, and who is responsible for the holdup and the issues that are currently causing the impasse. **Be assured that one way or another we will take the necessary steps to bring a fair and equitable contract that recognizes who we are and what we contribute on a daily basis to make Nassau Community College the high quality learning institution that it is.**

Stefan Krompfer  
President  
Adjunct Faculty Association

## AFA Welcomes NCC's new President

The AFA welcomes Dr. Jermaine Williams to NCC. Dr. Williams is currently Vice-President of Student Affairs at North Shore Community College in Massachusetts. The AFA looks forward to working with Dr. Williams on college initiatives.



## SUNY Chancellor's Award Recipients

One of our initial objectives upon taking office was to put a spotlight on our adjunct faculty to show the collective talent that they bring to our college. We accomplished this in a number of ways including: serving on various Middle States' accreditation committees, professional video presentations, outreach through social media outlets and our website. Understanding that our adjuncts are master teachers at the highest levels, it was clear that the SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Adjunct Teaching needed to be made available to those NCC adjuncts who qualify to apply for this award. In the Spring of 2018, Stefan Krompfer successfully partnered with the leaders of the Academic Senate to make this happen. The culmination of this effort came in awarding adjuncts for the first time at NCC with the SUNY Chancellor's Award for Adjunct Teaching. If and when SUNY offers a Chancellor's Award for non-classroom adjuncts, we will participate in that as well.

With great pride, the AFA congratulates the first ever cohort of its members who are recipients of the SUNY Chancellor's Award for Adjunct Teaching:

Timothy Driscoll – Legal Studies  
 Jamie Graber – Mathematics, Computer Science and Information Technology  
 Dr. Albert Grazia – Allied Health Sciences  
 Dr. Alan Hecht – Allied Health Sciences  
 Dr. Mark S. Malaszczyk – Geography, History and Political Science  
 Michael McGinty - Mathematics, Computer Science and Information Technology  
 Dr. Anthony Perrotto – Allied Health Sciences  
 Dr. Norman A. Rubin - Biology



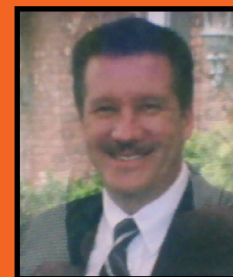
# The Inside Scoop

Merriam-Webster defines a labor union as an organization of workers formed for the purpose of advancing its members' interests in respect to wages, benefits, and working conditions. Indeed, throughout its long and storied history, the AFA has exemplified the definition and has successfully achieved the outcomes of that definition. Today, our contract remains a shining beacon of light over what is increasingly becoming very stormy seas for adjuncts, unions, and education in general. Our contract continues to provide us with competitive wages, a powerful grievance procedure, an array of employment benefits and the most unique feature: Our seniority system that protects our members from being "at-will" employees.

How has the AFA been able to obtain, continue, and enhance these benefits through its decades of existence? I contend we must look at the word Union for the answer. The most important letter in the word Union is "U". For it is you, each and every member, who has made what we have today possible. While some members might be very active and have a high profile, others might contribute in less of a manner; but your mere membership adds the power that is needed to continue to maintain and

enhance what we have. When our negotiating team sits at the table, there are five to six people present. However, one might envision bleachers behind those five or six individuals filled with our members. If those bleachers are sparsely filled, it lends little to no help to your team that is negotiating our contract. Conversely, if those bleachers are full, a powerful message of unity exists that cannot be ignored by those who we must negotiate with.

I am proud to say that our bleachers are full. New members are joining every week. We have witnessed an increase in membership of more than 120% over the past four years. This explosive increase in membership has positioned the AFA well as we move forward. The Janus decision that was meant to deal a lethal blow to labor unions throughout the USA has actually had the opposite effect on the AFA, as we have added more than 260 new members since that decision was handed down.



Richard D. Erben

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How has the AFA obtained, maintained, and enhanced what we have in our contract? The answer is as simple as looking in the mirror. You as a member of the AFA have played a very important part in our success. This is whether you sat at the table and negotiated, or were one of the people in the bleachers showing our strength through unity. You, along with our 1,721 members are the reason that the AFA is what it is today.

**Richard D. Erben**  
Chief Information Officer  
Adjunct Faculty Association

## Adjunct Spotlight

### Rose Ott

<http://roseottdesign.com>



By Ruth Silverman

Nassau Community College students are lucky to have Rose Ott as their adjunct instructor of Interior Design. She has her own design company, Rose Ott Design, a firm specializing in interior design projects throughout metropolitan New York City, Long Island, the Hamptons, and Fire Island. A strong background

in fine arts and fashion has earned her the reputation as one of the industry's premier professionals. She is highly qualified to provide our students with a hands-on introduction to the field.

Rose always knew that she wanted to be an interior designer. As a child she would constantly rearrange the furniture in her parents' home. They would never know what to expect. Fortunately for her, they recognized her talent and interest and encouraged her in her chosen path. She attended three years of college at Oneonta and one year at the Fashion Institute of Technology in Manhattan. She earned both a fine arts degree and a degree in fashion. Upon graduation, she was on her way towards her destined career. After college, she went to work for Louis Feraud where she learned about fashion and fabric.

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## Adjunct Spotlight



## Rose Ott

<http://roseottdesign.com>

After her children were grown, she went back to her fine arts background. She enrolled in the Metropolitan Institute for Interior Design and received a certificate. She then struck out on her own. Early in her career, she worked with a late-in-life couple in their 70s to redesign their living room. She had an architectural fireplace built, which so pleased the couple that they had her do the whole house. These days most of her projects involve an entire house. She has also been involved with charitable organizations, having redesigned the corporate offices of the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation on a pro-bono basis.

At Metropolitan Institute she had Professor Beganskas as an instructor. Professor Beganskas asked her to do a presentation to one of her classes on billing and invoicing at Nassau Community College. She made a great connection with the students and found that she loved teaching. This same professor invited her to teach adjunct courses on Professional Practice for Interior Designers and Resources and Materials and Color for Home Furnishings and Design. She has

been teaching at Nassau for 3 years.

Her favorite part of teaching is watching the students grow and evolve as the semester advances. She encourages them to go beyond their comfort levels and to work at their highest levels. It is an incredible experience for her to watch them mature and to see their work get better and better. By the end of the semester, they are able to carry out tasks with ease that were so difficult at the beginning. She celebrates their successes as if they were her kids.

She also tries to bring in industry leaders into her classes such as Nancy Fire from HGTV and Nancy Ganzekaufer, Interior Design Coach, to talk about career goals. Through her work and connections, Rose Ott has brought to Nassau Community College a wonderful professional opportunity for one of our students. Last fall the Property Brothers, Drew and Jonathan Scott, launched Casaza, a digital platform for the home that mirrors the blueprint-vision board experience they give people on their HGTV show. The two are looking to provide a talented design student at

Nassau Community College with an internship. This is a wonderful professional experience for one of her students and it is an example of the kind of professional experience and teaching that adjuncts bring to Nassau Community College.

*She made a great connection with the students and found that she loved teaching.*

## Around the Region

The adjunct professors of Mercy College have formally announced their decision to unionize following a gathering on Jan. 31 in front of Verrazano Hall in hope to receive what they consider “*better working conditions.*”

Over 20 faculty members came to show solidarity toward this movement in the brutal and freezing coldness of winter, including staff from Fordham University, who in the fall of 2017, overwhelmingly voted to support the unionization of part-time faculty.

In a letter featuring the signature of 91 different Mercy adjunct faculty members, the group, known as “*Mercy-FacultyForward,*” formally announced that they would look to work collectively in forming a union.

MercyFacultyForward is affiliated with the Service Employees International Union. The SEIU represents nearly two million workers throughout North America.

Unlike a full-time worker, an adjunct professor is paid on a per course basis and does not have medical benefits. An adjunct is also not fully employed with any one specific institution.

In order to work as an adjunct at Mercy, one needs to have a Master’s Degree (unless they are given special permission in other circumstances.)

The average adjunct makes \$2,200 per course. Many numbers have been offered for an hourly rate. Considering a course meets for three hours weekly for 15

weeks, time spent on course preparation and marking assignments varies.

This rate can be increased if one works at the college or holds a certain degree.

With anywhere from 100 to 150 assigned adjunct professors, they contribute to the near 75 percent of part-time faculty for the college. It emphasizes these points on the letter that was eventually given to President Tim Hall.

*“We believe that bargaining collectively to determine our working conditions will allow us to have a voice to win inclusion in the academic community and to enhance our commitment to quality education,”* stated in the letter.

Citing the successes of colleges like Fordham University, Ithaca College, George Washington University, and others, the group hopes to gain benefits such as increased pay, better job

security, and an overall greater platform to express their views to the college.

The day began with songs, signs, and speeches and high morale. A delegate was eventually able to meet with Hall to announce that the process to unionize was beginning. Despite this, he remained hesitant toward the news when English adjunct, Caroline Cur-



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van, came out to address the group.

*"We had a very productive conversation with President Hall, we gave him our letter, we told him why we were doing this and he seemed to feel that a union may not be the best way for us to get our point across. He felt that where he's from in the South, he would speak to the state directly rather than with the union. He finds that in the north that what we tend to have here is that he's only able to speak with a few representatives, so that seems to be the thrust of his main concern."*

According to Curvan, Hall has claimed that adjuncts have seen a raise every year but one since he's taken over as President of Mercy College in May 2014. That year was not specified.

Despite this, Mercy College adjuncts reportedly make some of the lowest rates of any part-time professors within the New York City Metropolitan area, with numbers ranging to only \$2,100 per course, according to the Service Employees International Union.

According to Mercy College's official website, adjuncts are offered minimal benefits. *"Adjunct faculty are eligible for tuition remission towards matriculated graduate programs at 50 percent of the cost per semester. Approved tuition remission will be taxable as income to the recipient. All application policies and procedures apply."* They may also audit courses at no cost to them with the approval of the respective

school dean.

Additionally, adjuncts are eligible for coverage under the New York State Short Term Disability immediately upon hire. Adjuncts are allowed to take advantage of Theater Tickets (Plum Benefits), Westchester Broadway Theater – (914) 592-2268, Fitness Memberships to Globalfit gyms, Bronx Zoo – (718) 741-1432, Verizon Phones ([www.vzw.com/getdiscount](http://www.vzw.com/getdiscount)), Dell Computers, Hewlett Packard Computers, and Travel/Shopping. They can also enroll in the college's retirement

(403B) program. Payroll deductions may be remitted to either of the carriers.

The fight for better working conditions hasn't only been cited as beneficial to the workers, but also to the students, according to Kevin Donahue, an adjunct Math professor.

He stated that due to the con-

stant hiring (and subsequent firing) of adjuncts, students were being given the short stick when it comes to a quality education.

*"This is terrible for the students because this means that 75 percent of their classes are being taught by somebody who isn't a good teacher, and those of us who care about teaching and want to help our stu-*

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dents need a living wage to actually do that.”

In a letter from Thomas J. Abinanti, the Assemblyman for New York’s 92nd District, which includes Central Westchester, he declared his support for the ongoing fight.

*“It appears that contingent faculty are the clear majority of Mercy’s total teaching faculty. And now the number of contingent positions at Mercy has increased over the years. I understand that while tuition for students has risen, the pay for contingent faculty at Mercy has remained more or less stagnant.”*

Citing that these professors offer the most in terms of day-to-day in the molding of Mercy students, Abinanti praised and offered support to the ongoing process.

Catherine Johnson, an English adjunct who has been at Mercy for about 10 years, complained about the pay, claiming for it to be insufficient to live. She also mentioned a story of an adjunct who hasn’t received a pay raise in their 20 years at the college. But more importantly, the need for a voice was crucial

for her. *“I would like some more say on my professional life.”*

For adjuncts like Terri Lucas, a union means more than one may initially imagine. Using the recent Federal Shutdown as an example, Lucas emphasized that a “gig economy” has done nothing but hurt the labor force, which only makes unionizing that much more important. *“If I was not married to someone very kind and had a more stable position, I would be homeless, again. I have had housing insecurity, food insecurity, and no health insurance in all of the time I’ve been an adjunct teaching because I cannot earn enough money. I love teaching, (and) I think my students will tell you that I’m a good teacher. I love to teach and I wish I could make a living out of it.”*

With the next meeting set for Feb. 12, a lot of progress needs to be made in order for the college and adjuncts to come to an agreement.

## NYSTRS News Update

Dear Colleagues:

You are cordially invited to attend the NYSTRS Seminar on Monday, May 20, 2019. On the next page is a flyer which provides specific information regarding the seminar.

Warm regards,  
Margaret (Peg) Renner, Ph.D.  
Nassau Community College  
Garden City, N.Y. 11530  
AFA/ NYSTRS Representative  
516-541-0594 (voicemail)  
Profrenner@aol.com



# NYSTRS NEWS

## New York State Teachers' Retirement System Seminar

The AFA and NCCFT retirement committees are sponsoring a New York State Teachers' Retirement seminar. A representative from NYSTRS will discuss issues such as: membership rights and responsibilities, how to initiate the retirement process, transferring credit, your profile and service credit. The presentation will include an explanation of Tier V and VI. There will be time for questions. (No personal consultations will be provided.)

Date: May 20, 2019 (Monday)

Time: 5:00-7:00 pm

Place: CCB Room 251

Light refreshments will be available.

Please complete this form and return it to:

Margaret Renner, Ph.D.

AFA/NYSTRS Representative

Nassau Community College

Email: Profrenner@aol.com

margaret.renner@ncc.edu

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I plan to attend: Name \_\_\_\_\_

Department \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Number \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_