

Going Adjunct

Yuba College
American Federation of Teachers

www.aftyuba.org

On Unions

It is one of the characteristics of a free and democratic nation that it have free and independent labor unions.

-Franklin D. Roosevelt



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MEETING BASIC SKILLS "WHERE THEY ARE"

When my Sacramento colleagues ask what it's like teaching in Woodland, implying that it's in the sticks, my answer usually is: it's very cosmopolitan. They think I'm joking. But then I tell them about my first semester at WCC, in which our small class of 23 students spoke 22 distinct languages (seven were trilingual), were born in 12 different countries, and included 2 recent brides in arranged marriages and a happily married mail-

order-bride. To find this cosmopolitan diversity in a small central valley town is fantastic, but with true diversity, comes some very real academic needs.

Another thing I say about WCC is how much it reminds me of teaching in Iowa. There is an earnestness about learning and doing well here I don't find at other regional colleges. It's one of the reasons I enjoy teaching here. However, earnestness on the part of the students comes at



Cherri Porter

a cost; as teachers we must return it with equally earnest, quality instruction that fosters skill-rich learning.

~Continued pp. 2

EMPLOYEE FREE CHOICE ACT INTRODUCED IN CONGRESS

AFT press release, AFL-CIO

Passage of the Employee Free Choice Act, which was introduced March 10 in both houses of Congress, would be an important step in protecting workers who want to form a union without interference from employers who often ruthlessly beat back

those efforts to unionize, says AFT president Randi Weingarten. "America's economic well-being is directly tied to that of its workforce," Weingarten says. "Strong unions, like investments in crucial programs and increased access to healthcare, are central to the future of

the country. Unions allow workers to share in the prosperity they help create, expanding the middle class and strengthening America."

Following the introduction of the act, the AFT is urging members,

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I've heard Dean Nather speak about the college's focus on teaching basic skills meeting the diverse needs of our diverse students. He sums up his take as "get them where they are." Since I teach English, and all students on campus take English as part of their degree program, where they are with their cornucopia of earnest efforts and very real needs, is my classroom. They are in your classrooms too. Although the diversity of needs is often more challenging than the needs themselves, I have developed a few strategies for working with underprepared students that work well for me. Although I teach English, these simple strategies are effective across the curriculum.

Explicitly define the lingo. One of the first challenges students face

is speaking the language of college, understanding the terms. like "syllabus," "weighted grades" and "MLA formatting" might as well be in a foreign language. Explaining the significance of terms that matter to success in your classroom is essential.

Unspoken and unwritten expectations. Struggling students are often unaware of what's expected of them, and making the terms of success transparent and specific can do much to improve student achievement. Making grading rubrics and assignment criteria available in print is important, and explicitly defining the

Don't Assume. The most important thing we can do as earnest educators is to not assume students know why and how to succeed, and to not write-them off when they don't.

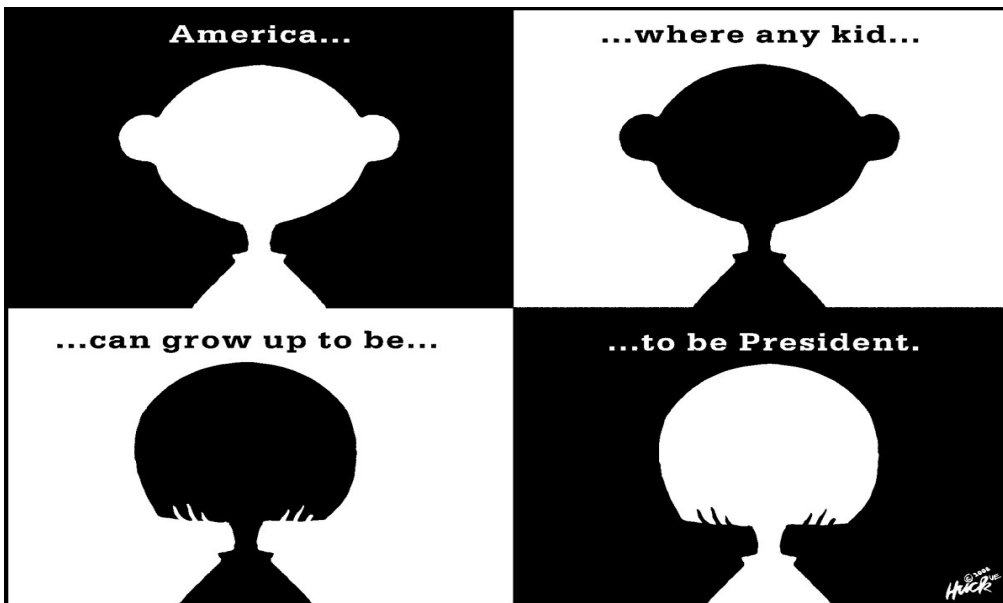
terms found on those documents is as well. How students are expected to complete and submit their work (typed, posted to Web CT) and how to do

those things is relevant. And, how much students are expected to do outside of class is often crucial information for students to both plan ahead and gauge where they are falling on the effort and time scales of success.

Repetition. I know that sometimes it feels like I'm saying the same things over and over again, but it's a way for underprepared students to understand what is important. Just last week one of my students

thanked me for being very clear and going step-by-step. I felt like I was on a constant loop, but the repetition helped a struggling student. Don't be afraid to say it again. And again.

Don't Assume. The most important thing we can do as earnest educators is to not assume students know why and how to succeed, and to not write-them off when they don't. Explicit communication. Full disclosure of the whys and hows of the classroom and the subject matter. This will take more time and more patience from us, of course, but our students will be more successful and better prepared to meet new academic challenges when we get them where they are next semester.



Huck, March 2009

CONTINUED from page 1—FREE CHOICE ACT

as part of the "Fight for America's Future: It's Dollars and Sense" campaign to call or write to their senators and representatives to support the legislation's swift passage. The AFT appreciates the leadership of Rep. George Miller (D-Calif.), Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) and Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) on EFCA, Weingarten notes.

She also warned about "the fierce and dis-

honest campaign to derail EFCA [that] has been spearheaded by business interests determined to keep the balance of power tilted in their favor. They have misled the public into thinking that EFCA would deny workers the option of a secret-ballot union election. The truth is that, under the legislation, workers could decide to have either a secret-ballot election or a 'card check,' in which a union is formed with a

majority of workers' signatures. EFCA will level the playing field by reaffirming the principle that every employee must have a free choice to join a union and bargain for better wages, healthcare and pension benefits, and for more of a say in the workplace."

The AFL-CIO also has put together a set of talking points about the introduction of EFCA in Congress. —March 9, 2009



Randi Weingarten, Pres. AFT

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YOUR UNION REPS' PAY

At an earlier board meeting this year, we realized that you might want to know what pay we receive. After all some of the money from our union dues pays us:

YC-AFT board

President:	\$2400
Vice president:	\$1920
Secretary/Treasurer:	\$2560
Campus representatives:	\$1440
Grievance officer:	\$1600
Negotiations officer:	\$1600
Membership coordinator:	\$1600

Contracted positions:

Book keeper:	\$2160
Newsletter editor:	\$1440



To learn about what we do for you, please attend one of our board meetings—lunch is on us! For info-contact Mary Benson at daymortgage@hotmail.com

YOUR NAME@YCCD.EDU

Yes! Please create a Yuba Community College District email account.

Not only is it professional etiquette, but you will receive important information from the college and from your union about your rights.

To create an email account:

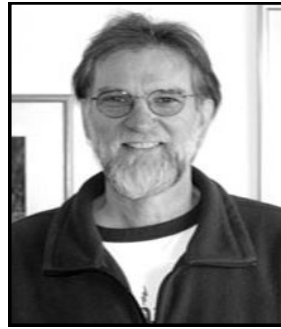
1. Go to the Faculty & Staff pages on the college website.
 2. Go to "Email set up instructions" and set up your account.
- To reroute yccd.edu e-mail to another account:** Go to <http://mail.yccd.edu/> pronto.
1. Login with your normal

- email credentials.
2. Choose the "settings" link on the top of the page.
3. From the settings dialog choose, "rules".
4. From rules menu choose the "redirect all mail to" tab.
5. Fill in the email address you wish to route

mail to (and if you want a copy, or do not want to redirect automated messages, or want to preserve to/cc fields, then enable the option and click, "save". If you have any problems contact Scott Snelgrove, ssnelgro@yccd.edu

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings, YC-AFT Local 4952. This is a short message wishing for the wellbeing of our members in continuing difficult times. The budget process looks like it will never be fully resolved as long as economic times remain in turmoil. Generally, community colleges have not taken the big hits other sectors face. While this is good news, that is a relative concept, to say the least. My understanding is that our meager COLA may be retracted at some point but this is unclear as I write. Cuts in course offerings have occurred, but not in massive numbers. It seems that the closer campuses have been to meeting FTEF targets in the past (staying within budget for courses offered per instructor) the fewer course cancellations are needed. So this may impact different campuses differently.



I am very happy to report that we continue to have increased member participation on the executive board of YCAFT. Julia Green and Elaine Robinson have stepped forward as representatives of Marysville. For the first time in my experience, each campus has its full complement of representation on the executive board. I neglected to mention last time that the additions of Bob Cassel and Jim Schulte from Woodland resulted from a contested election. This is also a first in my experience, and indicative of an invigorated membership.

There has been law change which eventually will expand the possibility of part-timers teaching from 60% to 67% of a full-time load. The legislation appears to phase that in at the expiration of current contracts, or July 2011.

We continue to enjoy and benefit from our newsletter, thanks to the efforts of its editor, Jodi Azulai. We hope to see similar improvements in our website soon. More to come on that subject.

In solidarity.

Douglas M. Harris, MSW

President, YCAFT Local No. 4952



WHAT ARE MY RETURN RIGHTS?

In each of our newsletters from here onward we will present a small excerpt or brief article highlighting a section of our contract with the Yuba College District. For this issue we present: 4.1.5 to 4.1.5.4.1 "Adjunct Faculty Member Return Rights" which basically stipulates that:

If I teach a general education course (as determined by the college) for three of the last six semesters, I can continue to teach a load equal to the highest load taught in the last six semesters up to a maximum of six units as long as I receive a satisfactory evaluation.

Counselors and librarians have the same return rights as instructors. Summer courses are not counted in determining my load. However, if I teach an intersession course, it is considered a part of spring semester load. If you are interested in learning more about our contract, go to http://www.yccd.edu/hr/view_contract.php?id=3.

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