

FACULTY MATTERS



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AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS
LOCAL 6157

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The Lack of Merit in the Merit Pay Debate

by David Yancey, FA, AFT 6157 President

A famous quote from history warns us to “beware those who come to you with simple solutions to complex problems.” The argument that merit pay will make better teachers and improve education provides us with the latest example of this quotation.

Those advocating merit pay as a way to solve the “problems” in public education are the same types that advocated “three strikes and you’re out” as a solution to crime in our

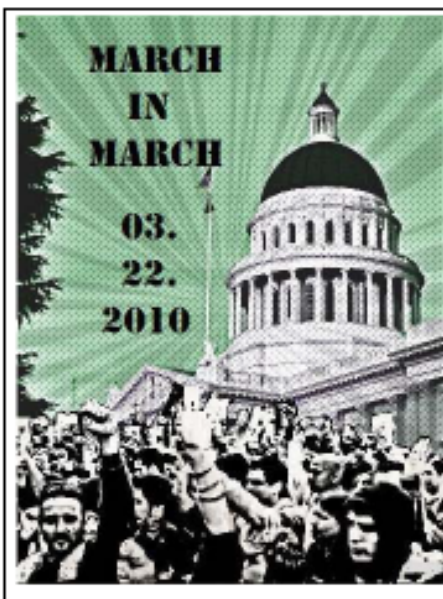
society and we can all see how that worked out; there are more people in jail for longer periods at increasingly greater costs and no reduction in crime or violence on our streets.

Not only is the concept of merit pay a simplistic approach to the problem of developing good teachers, it is also an attack on unions. It is a tool used by politicians and business leaders, and it creates in the public’s mind a false

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Join In: March In March March 22, 2010

For more information contact Phil Renteria (SJCC) or Victor Garza (EVC)



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FA, AFT 6157 Supports United Auto Workers of NUMMI

By Frank Espinoza, FA, AFT 6157 Vice President

On a Saturday afternoon, January 30, 2010, our **AFT Local 6157 President, David Yancey** and **Vice-President, Frank Espinoza** and other labor leaders joined the picket line in front of Stevens Creek Toyota, in support of United Auto Workers (UAW) from the NUMMI plant located in Fremont, CA. Strong messages of, “Save my Mommy’s Job” and, “We need California Jobs” were but a few messages shared that afternoon.

A nationwide campaign has been in effect in an attempt to prevent the NUMMI auto plant in Fremont, CA from shutting down. Rallies and picket lines are taking place throughout the United States to avert the potential closure of the NUMMI plant that directly affects approximately 5,000 autoworkers from the Fremont plant.

It is estimated that the closure of the plant will not only have a devastating effect on thousands of UAW workers but also on other related businesses throughout the Bay Area that provide service and products to the NUMMI plant. While autoworkers understand that keeping the plant open is highly improbable, efforts must continue in order to convince Toyota executives not to shut down



Frank Espinoza, FA AFT 6157 Vice President & David Yancey, FA AFT 6157 President

the only Unionized Toyota manufacturing plant in the United States.

The AFT Local 6157 leadership gives its full support to the United Auto Workers, fellow affiliates of the AFL-CIO, in their effort to keep the Fremont NUMMI plant from shutting down. While keeping the plant open is a slight possibility, faculty union AFT Local 6157 is committed to supporting the struggle of both the autoworkers and their families.



The Lack of Merit in the Merit Pay Debate

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choice on how to solve the real issues in public education.

Instead of doing the hard work of teacher training and development, including positive and constructive evaluation of a teacher's performance to promote professional teachers, it is easier to point to the so called "outstanding teacher" and give these teachers more money. It creates a false sense of solving both issues. It looks like they care about teachers/students, and it also undermines the work of unions to guarantee that people are treated fairly and equitably. Make no mistake the motives of these advocates are not pure nor are they well intentioned.

The work and the results of educating our students cannot be placed solely on the shoulders of teachers.

Teaching is hard work and the vast majority of teachers strive to be outstanding. But hard work by the teacher is not the whole answer. It is not that simple. Furthermore, the effort of the classroom teacher is not the only critical part of the educational experience of our students. There are many other important factors involved in this process. One of the most critical is the preparation of the student themselves. How much help/support has the student had in previous educational settings. How much family support is available and what is the environment within the home toward that student's education. What learning differences have been identified or even considered and dealt with to ensure the student has all the learning accommodations they need to be successful.



The concept that it "takes a village" to educate our children is fitting.

The idea that a teacher alone makes a difference in the educational process has been and continues to be narrow and uninformed. Bright students and those with learning differences require very different kinds of support to be successful and no one component or member of the "educational village" can do it alone. We need a concerted effort to ensure that the whole system, from teachers to parents to proper funding of schools is operating together to give our students the educational experience they deserve.

The other aspect of this idea of merit pay is aimed at undermining the strength of teacher's unions. Without unions, then administrators in schools and business owners in the community would not be concerned with equity, fairness and equal treatment of their employees. What little rights workers have today didn't come out of the great sense of conscience of the employer. It came from the hard work of those who fought to win collective bargaining rights relative to wages and working conditions. Reasonable wages and benefits didn't come the employers sense of compassion and fairness; they came from the collective voice of unions.

Even those not in unions benefit from the fight for fairness and adequate wages led by unions.

Without a union, there would be administrators who would be unrestrained in their abuse and mistreatment of people based on their particular sense of what is right or wrong; and believe me salaries would be much lower.

Don't be fooled by the straw man argument of merit pay! It is simply not the answer.

We need a much broader approach to support our students and their education. We need adequate school materials and technology, student evaluation for those suspected of struggling with learning differences, more parental participation in their children's education and lastly, community support for families that are struggling to survive in a difficult economy. Add those things to the many good teachers we already have and that will improve our students education.

The problems we face in education today are complex and require real commitment to find a solution. We need to forge stronger relationships with our educational colleagues to allow us to have a decisive voice in this debate. We need teachers that are given the professional support they require and the respect they deserve and we can make education work again in this country for all of us.

Merit pay sounds good initially but "Beware."

FA, AFT Mentorship Program - Introduction

by Laura Sanchez, FA, AFT 6157 Union Mentorship Coordinator

It's been a year since the FA mentorship's inception. The first semester mentor's like **Sharon Youngblood** and newcomer **Amber McCall** paired up for a semester to kick start this idea that the FA, AFT 6157 could mentor new faculty and teach them about our union and the many resources available. We wanted to ensure new faculty learned about the Union before they needed our help.

As the FA Union Membership Coordinator, my job was to pair up tenured faculty mentors with new faculty mentees and support the relationship between the two. That was easy, until I noticed that a new faculty member needed support, so I volunteered.

I first met **Rufus Blair**, our new sign language teacher, at the district new faculty orientation with his guide dog. His interpreter was there while he asked great questions regarding benefits and such. I didn't think much of it, but later came to appreciate the fact that despite Rufus's previous adjunct position with us and a semester as a full-timer under his belt, it became apparent that a Union mentor would be

a great benefit to him. What happened next became a great benefit to me.

It is easy to coordinate and lead but all instructors know that nothing replaces experience. Rufus and I meet once a month. With the FA mentorship brochure in hand and with a list I helped create, I set forth to meet with Rufus to "go over the list." Naturally, we did nothing of the sort. He had questions about reading his payroll check, salary, how to create an advisory board for his department where he is the only full-time faculty member.

We talked about his tenure committee and who he should report to since our Language Arts dean retired. Interesting enough he had questions that surprisingly, were not on the list! The relationship unfolded naturally and what came to fruition for me was that I just needed to show up and be helpful. That's it! It's not hard or time consuming or complicated. Just be present, listen and be as helpful as I can.

I took for granted that Rufus already worked as an Adjunct Faculty member and had a semester under his belt before we partnered. He had many



Laura Sanchez, Mentorship Coordinator

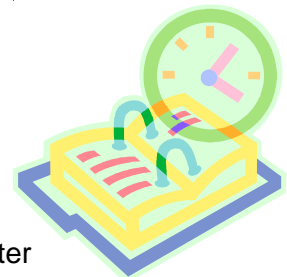
questions and needed answers. What appeared to be simple to me today as a senior faculty member was extremely helpful to him. I appreciate his willingness to ask questions and it taught me that no one ever experiences a loss from receiving more support. No one!

As the FA Membership Coordinator and mentor, I appreciate the value of our relationship, the union, and Rufus for letting me be part of his process as he acclimates to his full-time responsibilities. One day he will pass this valuable experience to the next new faculty member and that is how community is built.

If you would like to become a mentor, please call me at ext. 3254. It's an easy experience you will never forget.

Executive Board Meetings and Other Important Meetings - Spring Semester 2010

Date	Campus	Time	Location
Friday April 9 th	EVC	9:30am-12:30pm	Appi Mishra
Friday April 23 rd	SJCC	9:30-12:30pm	SC 204
Friday, May 7 th	EVC	9:30-12:30pm	<u>Gullo II</u>
Friday May 21 st	SJCC	9:30-12:30pm	SC 204
Adjunct Meetings			
Thursday March 11 th	SJCC	4:00-5:15pm	Adjunct Center
Wednesday, March 24 th	EVC	4:00-5:15pm	Appi Mishra



FA, AFT Mentorship Program - Testimonials

My First Year at EVC

by Mirella Burton, EVC Enlace Counselor



Mirella Burton, EVC Enlace Counselor

As a first year faculty at EVC, I found participating in the Faculty Union Mentoring Program was truly a rewarding experience. I was fortunate enough to be the mentee of seasoned English faculty, **Richard Regua**. Starting employment at a new institution of higher education could be daunting; however, it could be even more daunting to work in a new system of higher education. Prior to starting my employment at EVC, I had minimal knowledge of community college faculty rights. With the assistance of my mentor, I now have an understanding of the tenure review process, the faculty bargaining agreement, and most importantly I have someone that day to day I could ask questions.

Richard not only allowed me the opportunity to ask questions and to discuss any concerns that I may have had, but he also went above and beyond by providing me a “grand tour”

of San José. Not only was I new to EVC, but I was new to the area. I felt that in order to have a stronger connection to the students we serve, I needed to know where they came from. So now when students mention the high school where they graduated from or the neighborhood they grew up in, I can relate to an actual school or area—rather than just names.

My Experience Being Mentored

by Amber McCall, SJCC Dance Instructor



Amber McCall, SJCC Faculty

The Union mentorship program was valuable for me as a first year full time faculty member because it helped make my transition into the district an easier one. It is reassuring to know that the Union is not only working for what is in the best interest of the group as a whole but also giving support on an individual level. My mentor, **Sharon Youngblood**, met with me on several occasions with a list of ideas about what I might need to know about the

campus facilities and procedures. It was great to receive mentorship from a faculty member with years of experience and insight into the inner workings of the campus and Union.

Being a Mentor

by Richard Regua, EVC English Instructor



Richard Regua, EVC Faculty

I have been honored to serve as a faculty mentor for two EVC faculty members: **Mirella Burton**, Enlace Counselor; and **Keenan Norris**, English/AFFIRM Professor. My intent was to assist their transition to EVC. Topics we discussed included the EVC student and staff culture, the support provided by the Faculty Union, and the diverse EVC service area.

I recommend faculty volunteer to serve as mentors. Participating in the Union sponsored mentoring activity provides faculty an opportunity to contribute to the growth and development of others in a flexible, individual-driven process.

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FA, AFT 6157 Mentorship Program - Testimonials

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Being Mentored By My Union

by Khalid White, SJCC Ethnic Studies Faculty



Khalid White, SJCC Faculty

My experience as a mentee was a great experience, overall. I am fortunate to have a mentor, **Ron Levesque**, who has been helpful in adding to the impact of the courses I teach. Since he is the Service Learning coordinator and I teach African-American Studies, our disciplines are connected, ironically. Community service, giving back and creating a lasting, positive impact in your community is a key facet of Ethnic Studies curriculum. In essence, what better person and program to have as a guide?

In regards to the Union, I did learn more about what the Union does in terms of negotiations. The Union is a much more powerful force and entity across campus than I knew about. They advocate for the protection and rights of faculty members. Mentorship is a privilege but it is a “right” and necessity that the Union feels new faculty should be granted. Thus, they instituted the mentorship program on campus.

On a personal level, Ron and I have been able to build a friendship that extends outside of the classroom and our campus. We’ve had the opportunity to take off our teacher’s hats and get to know what types of things make each other “tick”.

I believe that Ron agreed to be a mentor because he wanted to help new faculty ascend to their highest level. I agreed to be a mentee because I want to ascend to the highest level and bring my students along with me. It was a perfect match. I am a better instructor now, my classes have a higher enrollment and my students’ work casts a broader net into the community, thanks to my relationship with my mentor.

Mentorship Program

by Sharon Youngblood, SJCC Business Education Faculty



Sharon Youngblood, SJCC Faculty

I thoroughly enjoyed taking part in the Union Mentorship program. It was a great opportunity to assist Amber McCall into a smoother transition into the ins and outs of the Union and College so that her teaching career at SJCC can be more successful. I enjoyed our conversations and the

opportunity to share information and retrieve information from such an enthusiastic, innovative faculty member. Amber is definitely on the right path to make some positive changes on our campus. I attended one of her dance concerts—it was GREAT, and I was able to share a couple of comments that might make the concerts even better in the future.

The FA, AFT 6157 Union Mentorship Program also provided insight for me on what our union is really about and all of the time and energy that is expended to make sure that our faculty rights are protected and our needs are met to the best of their ability. Overall, it was a rewarding program, and I am happy that I had the opportunity to take part.

Reflecting on My Mentoring Experience

by Ron Levesque, SJCC Service Learning Coordinator and ESL Faculty



Ron Levesque, SJCC Faculty

When the FA, AFT 6157 announced its new mentoring program, I immediately signed up. It is important to me that our union care about the “entire” instructor beyond the key issues of salary and working conditions. I was asked to mentor **Khalid White**, and since we

FA, AFT 6157 Mentorship Program - Testimonials

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had already interacted, we got off to a good start. We both made the effort to actually find the time to socialize off the campus to gain some perspective over a few beers, which always seems to help!

I enjoyed the experience of sharing some of Khalid's settling in to the campus after years as an adjunct instructor, which took me back to my own early years in the 90's. I learned about and supported his passion to rejuvenate Umoja (Our African

American Student organization) and he picked my brain about weaving service learning into his curriculum. It made me feel good that I could still be passionate about my work here after 20 years and that a new generation was bringing in its own "fire." It is all about students and our community, on which Khalid and I agree totally. It was also an opportunity to share information about the Union that created this program.

We continue to develop a very open and mutually supportive working

partnership that was strengthened by our participation in the mentoring program.

In a surprising way, mentoring a young instructor led me to reflect on my remaining five or so years here and on what imprint I may hope to leave. Our time here does fly by, so we need to focus on doing excellent work and on collaborating with our peers to do so. Union mentoring is a significant part of this journey. I urge each of you to become a union mentor.

Statewide Day of Action - In Support of Public Higher Education

On March 4, 2010 a group of EVC and SJCC faculty joined in the Statewide Day of Action in Support of Public Higher Education. Other groups included community members, Cal State University, University of California, Community College Faculty, staff and students.



Personal Notes

Carol Bristow was hired in June 1974 at EVC as a librarian. Carol passed away the week of February 22nd. Carol retired last spring, 2009 after 35 years of service to EVC College. Prior to her retirement Carol shared with President David Coon, that she was proud to have been the first employee hired at the college in June 1974. Carol assisted many students in the library over her long career. She was a beloved colleague and will be missed.

Carol was also active in our Faculty Union and was the first Council of Division Reps member from our EVC library. We appreciate her concern and input into the Union. Carol received her BA from UC, Santa Barbara and her M.L.S from UCLA.

What Has the Union Done for You Lately?

Thanks for all You Do

by Kevin McCandless EVC Faculty

During the Fall 2009 semester the Payroll Department informed me that I would not be receiving a pay increase this year. To the contrary, due to an error made by Human Resources in 2006, I would be expected to give money to the San Jose / Evergreen Valley Community College District. As a new homeowner, the timing of this proposed “pay cut” was extremely unfortunate.

Just before I began pulling my hair out (and playing the lottery), **Barbara Hanfling** of the Faculty Association, AFT 6157 contacted me, and she insisted that we meet and discuss the situation. During our meetings, Barbara was very supportive and she helped me understand the relevant sections of the faculty bargaining agreement and the legalities involved. We discussed my work history and possible alternatives and pathways to help alleviate the financial pressure I was soon to experience.

Negotiations between the FA Union and the District ensued, and the Union took a firm stance on my behalf to protect my rights and defend my position. The

Union reached an effective agreement, and it produced results far beyond my hopes and expectations. This experience has helped me realize the value of our Union, and I am greatly appreciative for all those involved who supported me through such a volatile situation.

Support When You Really Need It

by Deborah Kennedy-SJCC Adjunct Art Instructor

During my Master’s in Fine Arts program, I worked as a teaching assistant, a job I fell into without much thought. At the beginning, it was nerve-racking—lecturing in front of a room of curious eyes, uncertain of what I had to offer. Over the years I developed my courses and gradually realized I did have meaningful ideas to offer my students. I strive to make my classes relevant to my students, pointing out ways learning art history or drawing can help them understand themselves and the world more deeply and have fuller lives. Sometimes it seems to work.

Last year while handing me his final exam, a student said with a slightly annoyed tone, “Who would have thought Art History could be interesting!” Happily, it seems, I had

reached him in spite of his expectations—a very satisfying moment. However, I recently realized, my satisfaction is much more than a few scattered moments. I actually enjoy teaching more every year. How many people can say that about their jobs?

Unfortunately, last semester these reveries were disrupted by the news that I was not going to be offered my two regular classes in the Spring semester. Under pressure from budget cuts, dire decisions were being handed down with little discussion. I contacted Barbara Hanfling, the Director of the Faculty Association, AFT 6157, and I found a strong supporter. She discussed my load and seniority issues with the department. Emails ricocheted back and forth and I was offered another course. I am deeply grateful to be teaching two classes this semester, doing what I love.

Personally, I appreciate the union’s support, and I am relieved not to have lost a substantial part of my income, but when I remember President Carter’s observation that, “Every advance in this half-century: Social Security, civil rights, Medicare, aid to education... one after another came with the support and leadership of American Labor,” I then realize how and why being a union member has been the right choice for me.



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