Prez Sez

Bittersweet Election

By Paul Fong, AFT 6157 President

The Bitter

This was the most bittersweet election in my lifetime. The bitter part was the top of our candidate and ballot measures recommendation sheet that we passed out to the Union members, (and the top of the official ballot) recommending Hillary Clinton for president of the U.S. We lost the electoral votes to Donald Trump by not winning the swing states such as Wisconsin, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Florida.

Hillary Clinton was not able to build her fire wall that she needed to win the Electoral votes necessary to win the presidency. It didn’t help that the head of the FBI also sabotaged her campaign and the campaign to win the Senate by putting out misleading and dishonest information about her emails ... AGAIN ... 9 days before the election.

Clinton did win the popular vote mostly because California voted the way we wanted – overwhelmingly for Hillary. There are issues with the Electoral College system taking precedent over the popular vote. This constitutionally required method to elect the President has worked fairly or unfairly for hundreds of years. But it has worked.

And there have only been four times in the history of the U.S. when the Electoral College vote was different from the popular vote (winner with less popular vote in bold): Clinton vs. Trump, Gore vs. Bush, Sam Tilden vs. Rutherford Hayes and Andrew Jackson vs. John Quincy Adams. To change the method would call for a constitutional convention to amend our constitution to change the method for selection of our president and vice president. I do not think there is a national will to do this even though the Popular Vote movement would like to see this happen.

The Sweet

Local, state, and ballot measures had some sweet results. Local ballot Measure A for $950 million for affordable housing appears to be passing (and as of publishing has passed) by the narrowest of margin. Measure B will bring in billions of dollars to fix our roads and to bring BART to downtown San Jose.

San Jose City Measure E, the first kind to pass in this nation will give part-time employees additional work hours before hiring more part-time workers. This will have an impact in the City of San Jose mostly for lower-paid workers at employers such as McDonald’s, Target, Walmart etc. Bond Measure X that will bring in $748 million to complete...
Prez Sez
continued from page 1

This year by proposition 58. Proposition 58 just brought back Bilingual/Multilingual Education. It is a victory for our multilingual population, our schools and everyone who supports diversity.

It’s Only Just Begun

I am proud to be a Californian. Now we will need to protect what progress we have made with the most marginalized part of our society. Undocumented students and their families are being threatened every day. AB 540 and DACA students are very concerned that their families will break apart and that they will also be deported. We must assure them that we are here to help. Social justice is in our Mission Statement, so we are all in this together.

The racist, sexist, anti-LGBT, anti-Muslim xenophobic messages from the newly elected president will of course be challenged by all of us. We cannot tolerate these divisions. We must all fight to make sure that the progress we have made in this state will remain in the forefront of what makes California inclusive and great, and we must expand this to all states across the nation.

Renewable energy must remain a top priority in this state; we must continue to combat global warming. There is talk about the 7th largest economy in the world needing to recover from the Union of the U.S.A. It may be a wish of many Californians, however, it is not realistic. There is much for us to do. Stay tuned for the next Prez Sez article, I will be following the new president closely, and calling on faculty to stand up for each other and for those we work with and teach. This is just the beginning of our fight.

REGISTER 9/29/16 – 12/21/16 TO WIN: $500 gift card, 1 winner, $2,000 Grand Prize 1 in 5 winner

From the San Mateo AFT 1493 September Advocate

Studies Find Student Evaluations Unreliable and Biased Measures of Faculty Performance

By Eric Brenner, Advocate Editor

In the current contract negotiations with our Union, the District [San Mateo Community College District] has proposed significant changes to the faculty evaluation procedures, including student evaluations in every class every semester. Numerous recent studies of student evaluations of faculty, however, have raised serious questions about the accuracy, reliability and usefulness of student evaluations of faculty. Some examples of these studies are described below.

An article in the January 11, 2016 issue of Inside Higher Ed, reported that, “There’s mounting evidence suggesting that student evaluations of teaching are unreliable. But are these evaluations so bad that they’re actually better at gauging students’ gender bias and grade expectations than they are at measuring teaching effectiveness?”

A new paper argues that’s the case, and that evaluations are biased against female instructors in particular in so many ways that adjusting for them that bias is impossible.”

The paper titled “Student Evaluations of Teaching (Mostly) Do Not Measure Teaching Effectiveness,” was published in the January 7, 2016 issue of Science Review.

A research study titled “Evaluating students’ evaluations of professors” in the August 2014 Economics of Education Review, compared the student evaluations of a particular professor to how well those students performed in a subsequent course. The study found that professors whose students got higher grades in earlier courses were likely to get better grades in later classes (an objective measure of effective teaching based on student outcomes) received lower ratings from their students.

A January 2014 annotated bibliography from Auraria Library of the University of Colorado, Denver, listed eight different studies finding “Bias in Student Evaluations of Minority Faculty.” One of the studies described was “Are Student Teaching Evaluations Holding Back Women and Minorities?” The Perils of “Doing” Gender and Race in the Classroom (Chapter 12 of Presumed Incompetent: The Intersections of Race and Class in Women in Academia, from University Press of Colorado; Utah State University Press, 2011.)

Some of the conclusions of this study were: “Do evaluations less often but more deeply. Get students to think, not react intuitively. … Think of teaching as an ongoing process not an end product. … If decision-makers do not take the time or care to fully understand the candidate’s teaching file, including evaluations, and permit important personnel decisions to proceed on the basis of potentially misleading or biased data, then they ethically fail the professorate, students, and the institution.”

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article, I will be following

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Our Master's degree program for both San Jose City College and Evergreen Valley College passed by an overwhelming 66%. All our endowed Board of Trustee incumbents also won their seats again by over 60% to over 90% against their opponents: Congratulations to Mayra Cruz, Craig Mann and Rudy Nasol.

We hope to continue working with them to improve faculty rights, benefits and wages.

Senator Jim Beall and Assembly-

man-elect Ash Kalra, the two State Legislators serving our area and en-
dorsed by our Union won. State Pro-

position 55 sponsored by our Union reached with over 65% of the vote. This millionaires’ tax on the rich will be extended to 2030. Our district receives between $1.2-$1.5 million annually with proposition 55. The English only passed with over 65% of the vote. This sponsored by our Union

man-elect Ash Kalra

wages.

We hope to continue working with them,

Mayra

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Welcome Mark Branom
New Computer Applications & Social Media Faculty Referees Basketball, Plays Clarinet

By Linda Ferrell, AFT 6157 Fiscal Officer

Mark Branom is SJCC’s new Computer Applications and Social Media full-time faculty member. In addition to the Computer Applications and Social Media classes he teaches, Mark is also qualified to teach computer information system classes as well.

Mark earned his undergraduate and master’s degrees from Stanford University. As an undergraduate, he studied drama and communication (specializing in how humans and technology interact); as a graduate student, he studied Education (with a technology focus). Mark has been an instructor and an academic advisor at Stanford University for the past two decades, and comes to our college with a wide range of talents and experience. He even had a stint at Oxford University! Mark’s academic and research interests cover how humans utilize technology in communicating with one another. One of the things that fascinates him is how we treat different technologies differently — that we ascribe “human” attributes, and others we do not. Think about how you react to a computer, cell phone, or television reacting in a way you didn’t expect it to, and compare that with how you’d react to your toaster, microwave oven, or washing machine malfunctioning.

Regarding social media, everyone seems to think this is a brand new phenomenon, but Mark thinks it’s something we are more familiar with than we realize. How does it feel to a toaster, or television reacting in a way you wouldn’t expect of it (i.e., a toaster that is malfunctioning)?

Meet Laura Garcia
Former Classified Employee a New EVC Articulation Officer

By Minerva Duke, AFT 6157 Council of Division Reps; EVC Kinesiology Faculty

I met with my mentor for coffee and a scone. I love being a mentor because it gives me the opportunity to meet these young, intelligent, and bright women like Laura Garcia and Heather Ott.

Laura is my mentor this year. I almost always say “yes” to the Union when asked to be a mentor, because I know how important it is to ensure new faculty understand that the Union is not only there for you when there is a problem, but is part of the fabric of the colleges and District too. I am proud to convey that to new faculty.

Laura worked at San Jose City College for eight years as a classified employee and then applied and got her first faculty position as the articulation officer in the counseling department for Evergreen Valley College.

As many of you remember, your first semester of college is so hyped to work hard to get all your responsibilities done and get to know your colleagues. Part of Laura’s assignment is being on the curriculum committee, which is a hard-working committee because there are numerous responsibilities before, during, and after the meetings. She is enjoying getting to know the EVC curriculum process and the strong and dedicated faculty who make up this important committee.

Laura shared that she had her first meeting in the tenure process, and I let Laura know my experience in the process with several new faculty and assured her that the process is a supportive one from the faculty members and the dean. We want our new faculty to succeed, and this is the reason the faculty union started the mentoring program. We want our faculty to know that we are behind them 100%.

We had a little time to share about our families and the love we both have for our students. Unfortunately, time passed so fast and we both had to be in our offices. I love my time that I spend with my two mentees. Heather, my mentee from last year and I went and had lunch in October and we started talking right where we left off without losing a beat, easy conversation that we shared stories about our students and our travels.

What a treat! I am lucky to be a mentor for Laura. I am looking forward to seeing her both succeed and contribute to our colleges, faculty and students.

Happy Holidays!

Meet K. Kara Uy, Psy.D
Case Manager EVC

By Randy Pratt, AFT 6157 Vice President

Kara is Evergreen’s new Student Support and Case Manager, Department of Psychological Services located in Student Health Services. As her Union mentor it has been my pleasure to get to know her more, introduce her to the Union and answer any union and other questions that she might have. Kara has communicated with the Union how pleased she is to have a Union mentor and how helpful it has been.

Kara has a doctorate in Clinical Psychology with over a decade of training and experience in mental health counseling, crisis intervention, case management, and advocacy. In addition, she has worked in various academic, hospital, and community mental health settings, serving individuals of various socio-economic, cultural, ethnic, and education backgrounds.

Delightful, engaging and friendly, Kara also has some hidden talents, including designing traditional Cambodian wedding ensembles and singing. She recently began singing with a group of musicians and maybe we will get the opportunity to see her in her audience in the future.

Passionate in her drive to help others, she and her brother established the Cambodian Education Network, (CEN) a non-profit organization dedicated to serving the most vulnerable communities in Cambodia by providing desperately needed resources. For the past 14 years, CEN has built and staffed over 15 schools and libraries, built over 1,000 homes and clean water wells, and provided emergency relief to hundreds of families in Cambodia.

In her first couple of months, the college has already discovered how important her position is to our students and faculty. Her work often includes responding to student crisis, faculty consultation and support, case management, and establishing EVC’s Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT). The college is fortunate to have hired such a caring, kind and resourceful person providing great service to our students and faculty.

Please help welcome Kara to our campus community.
Confessions
Communication Studies Assignments Prepare Students for Life

By Shelly Giacalone, SJCC Communications Faculty

I have a confession to make. I have an extreme bias that has been brewing in my mind for the past year, the same amount of time I have been a member of the faculty here at SJCC. Verna Myers, Diversity Advocate extraordinaire, tells me in her TEDx talk to “walk boldly toward my biases” in order to create meaningful change in this world, and I am really listening to her. My bias is that our Communication Studies students at SJCC are some of the most amazing, dedicated, bright, and hard-working students on this campus.

Our SJCC Communication Club was officially chartered in August of this year, and we have a dynamic group of dedicated student leaders who inspire me to be a better teacher, mentor, and person. Over the past semester, some of our Communication Club members have created and facilitated a successful peer-led ASG Leadership Academy session on “Battling Speech Anxiety” for the entire SJCC community.

Additionally, we were able to secure ASG funding for a few Communication Club members to attend the prestigious Western States Communication Association (WSCA) Annual Convention in February 2017. For next semester, we are planning a Speaker’s Event titled “My Life Speak,” that will showcase diverse speakers, discussing social justice advocacy themes.

In addition to all of the accomplishments of the Communication Club, I would like to highlight the amazing work students in my Small Group Communication classes since 2007, and I have witnessed students’ personal growth as they volunteer in their communities.

The Service Learning Project is an eight-week project (I adopted a version from my former colleague at Gavilan College) that requires students to “learn into action.” For the first eight weeks of the course, students learn about how to be effective group members. For the second half of the course, students work in small groups to apply the theories of small group communication they have learned to benefit local nonprofit organizations.

Students are also each required to volunteer 8-10 hours of their time outside of class, to create a group mission statement, to create meeting agendas/minutes, to report on their progress throughout the semester, and they are evaluated by their other group members, as well as by their contact person working at the nonprofit organization.

This semester, I have groups working with City Team, Veggielution, the San Jose Animal Shelter, and Second Harvest Food Bank. Throughout the project process, students reflect on their own communication and the group dynamics. What usually begins as “another class assignment” usually turns into a “life-changing experience.”

I have another confession to make. This one relates to my bias about my Communication Studies colleagues. My colleagues are some of the most talented and collaborative people I have ever worked with, and I feel so grateful to be a part of our growing department. I am especially proud to work alongside Leslynn McCallum, who is always ready to listen and to guide me. I am also proud to work on a campus that has a strong Union that supports faculty, so that we may focus on our craft of teaching and nurturing our students to become lifelong learners.

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Running for Scholarships

By Minerva Duke, AFT 6157 Council of Divisions Reps, EVC Kinesiology Faculty

The 24th Annual Gloria Zufall Scholarship Fun Race was held on Wednesday, October 19, 2016. We ran two races, one in the morning and one in the afternoon with more than 100 participants in each race, and as always, we had great student, faculty, and community support. In fact, the support was so great that we raised $1,967.

The scholarship race was created by the Physical Education Department to honor Professor Gloria Zufall for her dedication to and love of teaching. Gloria is a retired professor who started teaching at City College and transferred to Evergreen College when it was founded in 1975. The proceeds of this fun event are awarded to students who major in kinesiology or education.

This year, more than 30 students applied for the scholarship, and we had six strong applicants who had all the qualifications for the scholarship. The winners this year were:

- Estrella Moran
- Tania Salcedo

Both student-athletes who play on the women’s soccer team at EVC and carry GPAs over 3.2. Both are committed to their studies as well as competitive players on the field.

This race gives students, staff, faculty, and the community at Evergreen an opportunity to gather, socialize, have fun while supporting a great cause, and exercise at the same time.

The Physical Education Department would like to send out a heartfelt thanks to everyone who helped make this another successful year. This year, we sold all of our beautiful T-shirts two weeks before the race. With next year being the 25th and my last as the coordinator, we want to invite you to join us in October 2017. The exact date will be announced in September 2017.

Scholarships for Union Members & Dependents

Raoul Teilhet Scholarship Program

The CFT offers $3000 and $1000 scholarships to high school seniors and continuing college students who are dependents of CFT members.

Application deadlines: January 10 and July 1. To learn more, go to cft.org/member-services/scholarships or phone (714) 754-6638.

Robert G. Porter Scholarship Program

The AFT awards four-year $8000 scholarships to four high school seniors who are dependents of AFT members, as well as 10 continuing education grants of $1000 to members. Application deadline: January 31. Email porterscholars@aft.org or go to aft.org/about/member-benefits/scholarships.

Union Plus Scholarship Program

Union Plus and AFT team up to offer scholarships ranging from $500 to $4000 to union members (and their spouses and dependent children) who have one year of continuous union membership. Scholarships are also available to graduate students. Application deadline: January 31. Go to unionplus.org/scholarships.
I Am They: Instructor Becomes Student Again

By Michelle Blair, SJCC English Faculty, Safe Zone Coordinator

Since I’ve had many Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students over the years in my classes and since I love languages and since it was time for a step advancement, I decided to take American Sign Language this semester, with SJCC professor Rufus Blair (no relation). I’ve always found signing to be beautiful and vibrant, fluid like a dance, and I was looking forward to it.

Yet, much to my surprise, I am having a really really really hard time with it. I say “surprise” not because I thought ASL was going to be easy, but because I’ve always been a good student. I’m attentive, I take notes, I do my work, and the stuff stays in my brain. Not so here.

First off, in case you didn’t know: I am very attached to words, particularly to finding the perfect one for any situation. In ASL class, when we’re introduced to a new word or expression, it is not spoken aloud (there is no interpreter); it is not written down on a board; and I am not able to write it down myself (because how do I write down an expression?). I never realized quite how vital these three strategies – seeing it, hearing it, writing it down – were to my learning process. A shape language is not the same as a verbal language, and I have none of my touchstones. I’m in uncharted brainscape. And my brain hurts.

The signs themselves are amorphous to me. There are subtle differences between them, which I can’t seem to register, let alone remember later. My mind moves weirdly slowly, which is disorienting and maddening, because it is so unlike me. Space is reconfigured. I can’t even see. Are they touching their thumb to their forefinger or to their pinky? When they sign, it is from a different perspective than when I sign, and often I can’t figure out which way my hand is supposed to go unless someone is literally standing beside me so I can parallel them.

And don’t get me started on fingerspelling. Oh, I can fingerspell – with intense thought and furrowed brow. But by the time I even figure out that someone else is fingerspelling, I’ve already missed the first letter, possibly the second, I’m having all sorts of unexpected panic, and my mind is running around like a blind mouse looking for an entrance. Once I do get the word or question, I must find an answer, and then get my hands – and face – and posture – to give that answer. At least once every class, I think I should drop – pay increase be darned!

But it’s all good. I feel the fresh grey cells a-poppin’ with every frustration, and I feel humbled to really and truly empathize with so many of my students who are overwhelmed by commas, by the difference between “affect” and “effect,” by the vagaries of paraphrasing. I am they.

Yesterday, Rufus came into my office to ask me a question (unrelated to ASL), and I thought, Oh, well, we’re just going to have to type it all out because I.CAN’T.DO.THE/n. He asked about a campus event I was planning – and I understood! And when he asked about my Thanksgiving, I explained about my nephew’s upcoming bar mitzvah, and my father’s Manhattan apartment on Central Park West, which overlooks the Macy’s parade, with the floats, literally, at eye-level – and I told it all to him… in sign! I can do this!