

NEA Higher Education Advocate

VOL. 33, NO. 3 APRIL/MAY 2015



Teaching with iOERS

NEA Members Insurance
Trust and Plan Summary
Annual Report [pages 12-13](#)



College is too expensive — but is free a good deal?

The Special Salary Issue: Find out how your salary stacks up.

The one thing about college ratings. They don't work.

It's not just about access. Bill Lyne explains on pg 16.

THE COST OF FREE COLLEGE	3
College is too expensive. But is free a good deal?	
THRIVING IN ACADEME	6
How you can win your students' undivided attention.	
WHY I AM A MEMBER	10
Why staff at RISD formed a new union.	
BY THE NUMBERS	11
Are you fairly paid?	
THE STATE OF HIGHER ED	13
CASE STUDIES	15
The complicated terrain of academic freedom.	
OP-ED	16
The problem isn't just access — it's access to what? Bill Lyne reveals the questions that matter.	

Advocate (ISSN: 1522-3183) is published four times a year, in September, November, January/February, April/May by the National Education Association, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, D.C., and additional mailing offices. The *Advocate* is mailed to NEA Higher Education members as a benefit of membership. Postmaster: Send change of address to Advocate, 1201 16th St., N.W., Suite 710, Washington, D.C. 20036. Copyright © 2015 by the National Education Association

National Education Association	NEA Center for Communications
Lily Eskelsen García NEA PRESIDENT	Ramona Oliver SENIOR DIRECTOR
Rebecca Pringle VICE PRESIDENT	Steven Grant ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR
Princess Moss SECRETARY-TREASURER	Mary Ellen Flannery EDITOR
John C. Stocks EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	Alice Trued PRODUCTION
	Groff Creative GRAPHIC DESIGN
	Prepared with the assistance of NEA staff:
	Nilka Julio
	Nancy O'Brien
	Mark F. Smith
	Heather Valentine
	Valerie Wilk
	Phadra Williams



Headline News

College ratings aren't so simple. One size does not fit all.



A COLLEGE RATINGS SYSTEM proposed by President Obama in late 2013, and further detailed by the Department of Education framework late last year, “fails to recognize the complexity of the American higher education system,” concluded Donna Harris-Aikens, director of NEA’s Education Policy and Practices department, in a February letter to U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. Put simply, the ratings system — which eventually could be tied to the annual distribution of \$150 billion in federal aid to institutions—does not have NEA’s support. “One size does not fit all, and the strength of our system of higher education is its diversity of institutions and institutional missions,” wrote Harris-Aikens. With that in mind, ratings should account for the level of preparation that students may have received prior to college, and not penalize colleges with more non-traditional or first-generation students. Indeed colleges should be rewarded for serving more students who need more support. But the ratings, as proposed, rely on a typical mix of graduation rates and student loan repayment rates, and do not reflect the complexity of public higher education. Harris-Aikens also warned Duncan that any attempts to tie these ratings systems to student aid will face NEA’s strenuous objection.

DOE takes steps to protect student borrowers, after NEA pressure

FIVE COMPANIES THAT COLLECT DEFAULTED student loans were told in March that the U.S. Department of Education would end their contracts, because the companies had made “materially inaccurate representations” to borrowers. The decision follows pressure by NEA and other groups, who in a 2014 letter to DOE, wrote: “For [many] borrowers, economic hardship is just one of many hurdles... The other hurdles are... the inept, subpar and potentially illegal conduct on behalf of the loan servicing and debt collection contractors selected and supervised by your department.”



Where is your journal?

IN AN EFFORT TO GO GREEN, NEA’s peer-reviewed journal, *Thought & Action*, is available in new ways this year. You may request a free paper copy at www.subscribenea.com (with the special discount code NEAHIGHERED) or you may download a PDF at www.nea.org/thoughtandaction.

MISSED SOMETHING?

READ PREVIOUS ARTICLES ON OUR WEBSITE

BUDGET CUTS TAKE THE PUBLIC OUT OF PUBLIC HIGHER ED

With their radical budget proposals, governors in IL, WI, LA and elsewhere are accelerating the privatization of public higher ed.

<http://neatoday.org/2015/02/19/>

WALKER WANTS TO CUT \$300 MILLION FROM HIGHER ED

But the WI governor also wants to spend \$220 million for a new NBA stadium. “He doesn’t see value in the higher ed system,” said NEA Director Britt Hall.

<http://educationvotes.nea.org/2015/02/10/>

ALEC ATTACKS PAY RAISES FOR OUR MOST VULNERABLE

The wealthy corporate donors who make up the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) are attacking the “little guy” again.

<http://educationvotes.nea.org/2015/03/06/>

TAKING ACTION AGAINST FOR-PROFIT ABUSES

New federal regulations proposed in late 2014 are a “welcome first step,” said NEA President Lily Eskelsen García.

<http://neatoday.org/2014/12/17/>

THE Cost of **FREE** COLLEGE

President Obama’s proposal to make two years of community college free for responsible students takes aim at a serious problem in the U.S.: that college remains out of reach for too many Americans, said NEA President Lily Eskelsen García. But high-quality is as important as affordable, noted García, and NEA Higher Ed faculty and staff have made it clear that they’ll need more resources to deliver the education that students deserve. “Success and quality of education must matter, not just cost,” said Donnie McGee, vice president of the Massachusetts Community College Council (MCCC), and a professor of English at Bristol Community College.

“C

ommunity colleges are your first chance, your last chance, and often your only chance,” said Lisa Ossian, a Des Moines Area Community College history professor and former NEA Board member. In her classrooms, Ossian sees students directly out of high school, students who have failed at other institutions or jobs, and students who can’t afford any other options: veterans, immigrants, students with disabilities, and people of poverty.

When she asks them why they’re in her classroom, she usually hears that it’s “cheap!” And while community college shouldn’t be expensive, said Ossian, it also needs not to be a cut-rate or shoddy education.

Under President Obama’s “America’s College Promise” plan, as many as 9 million students could attend college for free for two years, saving each an average \$3,800 in tuition a year. This is not a trifling sum. Although public two-year colleges are a real deal compared to private two-year colleges (the latter cost an average \$31,231 per year, according to College Board), the price is still too high for too many. And yet, studies show that a college education is a necessary part of the American Dream. Get a degree, and get a good job. The problem is if you can’t afford the degree, you’re stuck.

“At a time when post-secondary education has become even more important, students and their families are scrambling to pay,” said NEA President García. “The President is right to continue pushing to make the dream of a college education more attainable.”

Student debt now exceeds more than \$1.2 trillion in the U.S.—or 150 percent more than it was just 10 years

ago. Each year more than 10 million students borrow from the federal government (not to mention private lenders), and they graduate, on average, owing more than \$30,000 each.

It’s a far cry from a few decades ago, when higher-ed students in California paid just \$11 per credit, recalled Long Beach City College counselor and National Council for Higher Education director-at-large DeWayne Sheaffer. (And it used to be even less. Thanks to the 1960 “Master Plan for Higher Education,” public higher education in California was tuition-free until 1978.)

The question is: What would today’s students get for nothing?

The Problem of Funding

It’s no wonder some NEA Higher Ed members and leaders are skeptical. State support to higher education has declined 20 percent in real per-student terms since 2008, according to William Zumeta’s 2015 *NEA Al-*

manac of Higher Education article. (Read more at nea.org/almanac.)

Because of those cuts, institutions have raised tuition to unaffordable levels, while also trimming costs to the bone. The first programs to get cut? Often it’s vital student supports, such as academic advisors or developmental reading, writing and math faculty. At the same time, institutions also have escalated the trend to hiring low-paid contingent faculty.

“Free’ would be fine if we had full-time educators and support services in place to ensure that those who walk through our open admission doors would be met with an experienced community of educators to teach the classes and provide the support services that our most academically at-risk students need—academic advising, tutoring, career counseling, and college orientation,” said MCCC’s McGee.

In Massachusetts, contingent faculty teach more than two-thirds of community college courses—a proportion that undermines student success, according to a 2013 Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA) study. Meanwhile, just 17 percent of community college students enrolled in an academic or certificate program complete that program within three years of enrollment, the same MTA study found.

Those two numbers—the high percentage of adjunct or contingent faculty and the low percentage of graduates—have everything to do

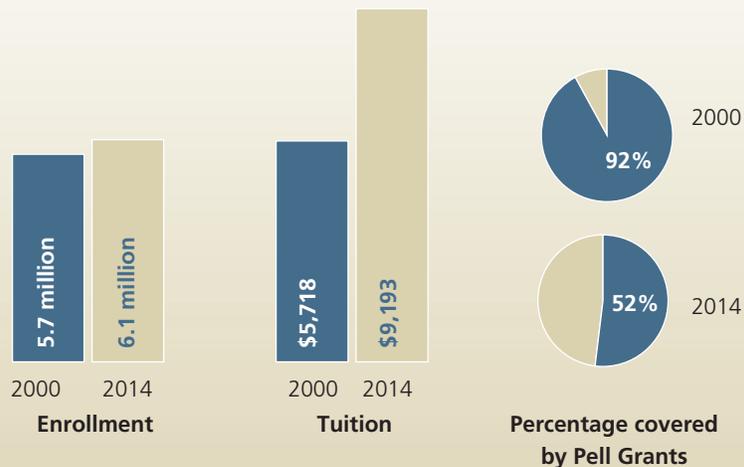
with each other. And the problem isn't that contingent faculty aren't high-quality instructors or deeply qualified in their fields. They are. It's that adjuncts typically are paid to do one thing: Teach that course. The other stuff—the office hours to provide extra tutoring, the academic advising and mentoring, the supervising of students' interest-based clubs, etc., which underlie student success—isn't part of their work.

In a recent *NEA Thought & Action* article, "Faculty Matter: So Why Doesn't Everybody Think So?" Adrianna Kezar and Daniel Maxey of the University of Southern California's Pullias Center of Higher Education show clearly how faculty influence student learning.

"A substantial body of research, con-

The Community College Squeeze

While community college enrollment has increased over the past decades, state funding has dropped — forcing schools to raise tuition or cut programs. Students are left struggling to pay, as the cost of college has outpaced the value of Pell Grants and other federal aid.



“‘Free’ would be fine if we had full-time educators and support services in place to ensure that those who walk through our open admission doors would be met with an experienced community of educators.” — Donnie McGee, MCCC vice president.

ducted over more than 50 years, makes clear that faculty-student interaction is a key factor in promoting student success, particularly among those students who most need support, such as first-generation college students and students of color,” wrote Kezar and Maxey. “Major consideration should be given to the impact of current working conditions on faculty-student interactions and how improving those conditions could enhance learning.” Will “free” community college include that necessary faculty support?

Support services also are critical. About 20 percent of first-year college students in 2008 enrolled in non-credit developmental reading and/or math courses, according to the U.S. Department of Education’s National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES). Within “open admission” four-year public institutions, the average rate was 25.6 percent; at community colleges, it was 24 percent.

Federal statistics also show it’s more

likely for non-traditional college students, low-income students, and students of color—the students who look most like the U.S. today—to need extra support. And yet, states are cutting those classes. In Florida, a new law has made them optional. In Connecticut, students are limited to a single semester. Will “free” community college include that necessary academic support?

Moreover today’s college students seem less able to navigate the system than ever “I ask my students, ‘Why are you here? What do you want to accomplish?’ And I have kids who don’t know the answers,” noted Sheaffer. Will “free” community college include necessary counseling and student services?

The Performance Trap

On top of funding cuts, many states, including Massachusetts and Florida, are embracing performance-based funding plans that force public colleges to com-

pete for limited dollars and reward them for “success” in specific metrics, like degree-completion rates.

In that competition for necessary funds, there is little incentive to throw open the doors to the most disadvantaged students, especially when institutions can’t provide them with the support they need to complete their programs.

Free tuition isn’t all that students need, unfortunately. A recent *Washington Post* analysis found that just one in eight low-income community college students actually earn an associate’s degree within three years. Their progress can be derailed by any “small disruption,” including a broken-down car, a failure in childcare, a new job with new hours, etc.

“Without first investing in the education and support services that these students need.. our open admissions door will become a revolving door,” said MCCC’s McGee. **BY MARY ELLEN FLANNERY**
Editor, *NEA Advocate*, mflannery@nea.org

Thriving in Academe

REFLECTIONS ON HELPING STUDENTS LEARN

Thriving in Academe is a joint project of NEA and the Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education (www.podnetwork.org). For more information, contact the editor, Douglas Robertson (drobert@fiu.edu) at Florida International University or Mary Ellen Flannery (mflannery@nea.org) at NEA.

■ The Distracted Classroom!

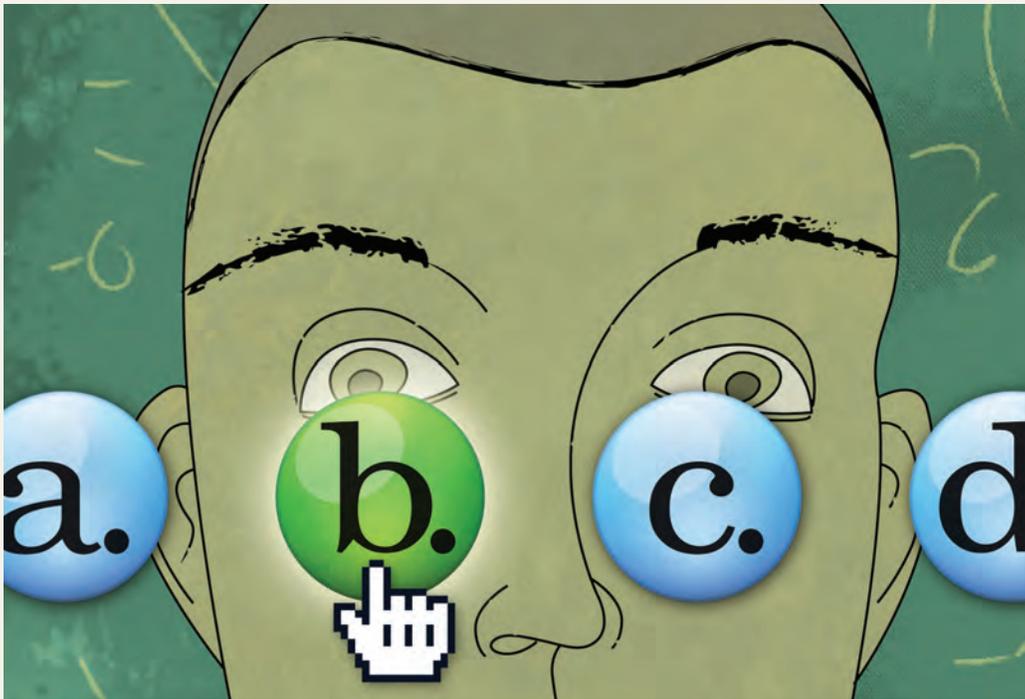
If you think your students are more distracted than ever, iOERS can help you do something about it.

BY JOHN D. SHANK
*Penn State University
Berks.*

We have all known students who sit in our classes, physically present but mentally a million miles away. While this tendency is nothing new (I'm certain Plato and Socrates could completely relate), modern technology seems to make it even more pervasive. We live in an age of information abundance — but it does not intrinsically lead to greater individual knowledge or even more collective wisdom. As Clay Shirky proclaims, “Abundance breaks more things than scarcity does.” (NFAIS, 2010)

Too often I have been in classrooms, both face-to-face and online, where students are dividing their attention between their smartphones, tablets, or laptop computers, and their professor. These students may believe they are being efficient and effective, but the reality is that they are missing important course content and interaction. Too often students are not full participants in their own learning.

Is it possible to do a “techno flip” and leverage technology to reverse this trend? Absolutely. If we intentionally use newer formats of educational resources (i.e. interactive open educational resources or iOERS), we can capture our students’ attention and refocus them on content and knowledge. The very tools that are contributing to the problem can be used to solve it.



Meet John D. Shank



John D. Shank is the head of the Boscov-Lakin Information Commons & Thun Library at Penn State Berks, and the founding director of its Center for Learning & Teaching. One of the first instructional design librarians in the U.S., he was promoted to full librarian in 2013. In 2002, he developed the Berks Educational Technology Grant Curriculum Program, which has awarded 90 grant projects to 60 faculty, initially impacting more than 3,500 students. John has presented at hundreds of conferences, webinars, and workshops, and authored and coauthored books, book chapters, and research articles that focus on library integration into learning management systems. In 2005, *Library Journal* named him a “Mover and Shaker.” John can be reached at jds30@psu.edu.

Reducing Student Learning Distractions

There are more opportunities than ever for students to become distracted in both face-to-face and online classrooms (Sherry Turkle, 2009; Matt Richtel, 2010; Nicholas Carr, 2011; PEW Research Internet Project, 2012). As director of a Center for Teaching and Learning, I have worked with many faculty members who are frustrated with how technology impacts their classrooms, and shared a number of techniques to reduce distractions.

The most obvious and a great starting point is to have all students turn off cell phones, laptops, and computer screens during lectures or class discussions. While this method might help your students focus by reducing digital distractions, it does not necessarily increase student engagement; after all, students have been daydreaming for centuries. And, in an online environment, this “turn it off” agreement is nearly impossible to ensure.

A better approach is to shift from a passive, lecture model to a more activity based learning model (i.e. the Classroom Flip/

Inverted Classroom, Bishop, J. L., & Verleger, M. A., 2013). This model seeks to expose students to class content before they come to the classroom or participate in a synchronous, live online class session. In so doing, classroom time is freed up to integrate activities such as group discussions and role play, problem-based learning, or student response systems (e.g. polling, clickers).

TALES FROM REAL LIFE > A DECADE OF DISCOVERY

More than a decade ago, I was hired into a faculty position, “instructional design librarian,” that had never before existed at Penn State. This was inspiring and intimidating: inspiring because it opened up a million possibilities, and intimidating because

I needed to prioritize among those possibilities. I realized my position mirrored one of the most profound challenges of the digital revolution — that of ‘over abundance’. Soon I realized, as many others have, that far too often technology (a tool) was *driving* the purpose of its use

on campus, instead of the other way around. I was determined to find a way for the purpose — enhanced student learning — to drive the process. Our solution was to create competitive grants that provide incentives and support to faculty who want to integrate digital resources into

their web-enhanced, blended, and online courses. Through these grants, I have seen first-hand how interactive tutorials, games, and simulations can have a measurable and meaningful impact on student learning. Many students who struggle with a topic, skill, or prerequisite

knowledge have found these resources helpful, and faculty have found these students to be more engaged with the material and more prepared for meaningful conversations and interactions. Because of this experience, I have become a passionate advocate for the use of iOERs in all courses.

This model has an obvious weakness: It relies on students to read, watch, or listen to the course material we have assigned them. Far too often, our students come to our classes ill-prepared to learn, simply because they failed to do the readings, watch a video, or listen to a mini lecture recording/podcast. A recent study by U.S. Public Interest Research Group (U.S. PIRG Education Fund, 2014) found that the majority of students had at some point not purchased their course textbooks because they were too expensive. We certainly can't expect our students to read textbooks they don't own.

Benefits of Interactive Open Educational Resources

Technology helped create this problem of 'techno distraction.' Can it also help us find solutions? Is it possible to integrate freely available online, engaging educational resources, such as tutorials, games, and simulations that students have a natural inclination towards using because of their interactivity? What if these same digital resources could provide valuable feedback to us, telling us if, when, and how long our students used the material? And what if we could also gain valuable insight into how well students understand that material?

Sounds too good to be true! But thanks to higher education, governmental, and not-

for-profit institutions supporting the development of these resources, instructional designers, technologists, and multimedia developers are increasingly able to create these interactive open educational resources (iOERs — i.e. tutorials, games, and simulations).

“INTERACTIVE OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES... HELP US FOSTER ‘PEAK LEARNING EXPERIENCES’ FOR ALL OUR STUDENTS IN ANY TYPE OF CLASSROOM.”

What sets iOERs apart from traditional, more passive forms of course resources (i.e. articles, books, videos) is their ability to help us foster 'peak learning experiences' for all our students in any type of classroom. The best iOERs are able to accomplish this by integrating high quality content with:

- hypermedia
- decision making activities
- learner assessment
- learner feedback & reflection

To be clear, a 'peak learning experience' occurs when a student's complete atten-

tion is focused on what we want them to learn. The above mentioned components of iOERs force students to focus on the material — or fail to successfully complete or master it. Entertainment video games often create just such a dynamic, requiring the player to focus on achieving a set of tasks to reach a particular goal (usually winning or completing the game).

The best interactive open educational resources embed hypermedia, incorporating images and/or videos, sound, and text to allow students to receive information in multiple ways. This approach engages students' bodies (i.e. eyes and ears) as well as their minds by playing to the cognitive strengths of auditory and visual learners.

We all are familiar with the phrase 'we learn best by doing.' Educational games and simulations are excellent tools for allowing our students to virtually experience a process, environment, or system with little cost (e.g. travel, time, or money) or danger. Also, if done in an exciting way, the decision-making activities embedded in the resource can be enjoyable and motivational for students. A game or simulation that requires students to mix chemicals and predict what type of reaction might occur will, by its very nature, contain practical decision making activities.

Another integral component embedded in the best iOERs is an assessment feature. To be most useful to faculty and students

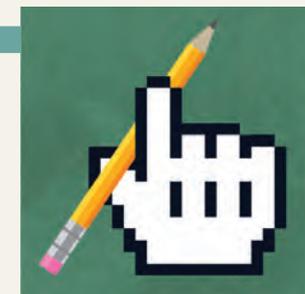
■ BEST PRACTICES > MAKING IT REAL

Faculty often express a desire to help students see how the topics and concepts they are learning are relevant and applicable to 'real world' skills or jobs. Interactive open educational resources can do just that. When a Penn State Berks faculty member who taught introductory accounting wanted to help her students better understand basic concepts that they could apply

as business operators someday, we created an interactive tutorial with practice exercises that replicated the accounting principles that students would need in operating a business. We also added a gaming element that challenged students to keep their business healthy by correctly answering questions.

Another big challenge for instructors is that too many of their students have forgot-

ten or not learned prerequisite knowledge or skills that are fundamental to their success. Compounding the problem is the reality that instructors cannot always take the time to review material that the majority of other students have mastered. Interactive open educational resources offer a solution to this dilemma. I have worked with faculty to identify foundation topics, skills, or knowledge that



students often need help to remember or learn. We would then identify high quality pre-existing online resources to assign or make available to students. Also, when we developed our own interactive tutorials, we would often include related-knowledge vignettes.

alike, iOERs need to have some type of testing feature. This allows both the learner and the instructor to measure and gain insight into the knowledge that students are acquiring as a result of using the resource. Also, this allows both parties to know students' areas of strengths and weaknesses, and enables the instructor to address the areas that most students are misunderstanding. It also allows students to focus on the content that they are struggling with, and to get additional practice at their own pace.

Lastly, as we all know, students need feedback to learn — it is good practice as noted by Arthur Chickering and Zelda Gamson in their highly cited work *Seven Principles For Good Practice in Undergraduate Education*. iOERs that have built-in feedback components guide learners so that they can gain a better understanding of what they are doing correctly as well as why they may be making mistakes. Through this feedback and reflection, students can build upon their prior knowledge and correct misunderstandings as well as misperceptions.

While entertainment video games and simulations have been around for decades (anybody remember pong?), online educational tutorials, games, and simulations have only more recently entered the higher education scene. This means the quality of the resources varies widely and the ability to locate them can be challenging. Now that you have had a glimpse of the educational value and potential to enhance the student learning environment, I encourage you to take the next step in creating a new type of student learning experience, one that encourages students to be fully engaged with the critical course material they need to learn.

We need to capture our students' attention and shift their focus to the course content and related discourse they need to have to learn. In an increasingly digital world, we must find the right balance between traditional, reflective resources (i.e. books, articles, and videos) and the emerging interactive education resources (i.e. tutorials, games, and simulations). Start small; focus on finding an iOER that can help your students learn a challenging topic or skill. As you progress, if you want more guidance with integrating iOER, you

ISSUES TO CONSIDER

THE ADOPTION PROCESS

1. Learning Needs Assessment. To select an iOER, you must first determine the most important concepts/skills/knowledge that students consistently struggle to learn. Although intuition may tell you the answer, a quantitative analysis of students' test scores can be helpful, as well as a survey of your students' perceptions.

2. Learning Activity Desired. Next decide on a type of activity. A good rule of thumb is to use:

- Simulations when students need to practice using a tool, system, or complex process, or if you want them to create/build something;
- Games when they need motivation or you want to foster competition to help them remember (i.e. memorize), better understand, or apply their knowledge about a concept;
- Tutorials when you

want to introduce concepts or skills, demonstrate appropriate use, and test how students analyze or evaluate those concepts.

3. Locating iOERs. Start at a big multidisciplinary repository such as MERLOT (www.merlot.org/) or OER Commons (www.oercommons.org/), then check out discipline repositories, such as the National Science Digital Library (<http://nsdl.org/>), and institutions'. Focus on well-funded schools with strong programs, such as research universities. Also, government agencies (i.e. NASA), non-profit educational institutions, and museums (i.e. Smithsonian) have excellent interactive learning content. To discover more, visit: www.scoop.it/t/oer-digital-learning-materials.

4. Evaluating iOERs.

- Validate the quality of the content (no junk allowed);
- Match the learning activity to your students' learning needs;

- Determine the level of engagement required by students—the higher the better;
- Ascertain the level of feedback the resource provides to students—the more detailed the better;
- Confirm that students can use the technology (i.e. does it play in their web browser?)
- Establish that the material has a good user interface design (i.e. your students can use the simulation, game, or tutorial with little or no training)

5. Assessing the iOERs Impact. Are students performing better on the tests? If not, discard the iOER. You can also ask students via a survey or more informally if they like it and believe it helps them learn.

may find more information in my book, *Interactive Open Educational Resources: A guide to finding, choosing, and using what's out there to transform college teaching*.

REFERENCES & RESOURCES

Bishop, J. L., & Verleger, M. A. (2013, June). The flipped classroom: A survey of the research. *In ASEE National Conference Proceedings*, Atlanta, GA.

Carr, N. (2011). *The shallows: What the Internet is doing to our brains*. WW Norton & Company.

Chickering, A. W., & Gamson, Z. F. (1987). *Seven principles for good practice in undergraduate education*. AAHE bulletin, 3, 7.

Khan, S. (2013). *Teaching for a wired generation*. ASEE Prism, 23(1), 51.

Means, B., Toyama, Y., Murphy, R., Bakia, M., & Jones, K. (2009). *Evaluation of Evidence-Based Practices in Online Learning: A Meta-Analysis and Review of Online Learning Studies*. U.S. Department of Education.

Purcell, K., Rainie, L., Heaps, A., Buchanan, J., Friedrich, L., Jacklin, A., ... & Zickuhr, K. (2012). *How Teens Do Research in the Digital World*. Pew Internet & American Life Project.

Richtel, M. (2010). *Growing up digital, wired for distraction: Business/Financial desk*. New York Times.

Shank, J. (2014). *Interactive Open Educational Resources: A Guide to Finding, Choosing, and Using What's Out There to Transform College Teaching*. Jossey-Bass/ACRL.

Turkle, S. (2011). *The Tethered Self: Technology Reinvents Intimacy and Solitude*. *Continuing Higher Education Review*, 75, 28-31.

Weksler, M. E., & Weksler, B. B. (2012). *The epidemic of distraction*. *Gerontology*, 58(5), 385-390.

WHY I'M A MEMBER



Steph Darling

RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL OF DESIGN (RISD)

“What really pushed people over the edge,” says Steph Darling, a member of NEA Higher Ed’s newest professional staff union, “were the changes in health care contributions” that the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) demanded from its academic staff, one of the only non-unionized group of employees on campus. Those RISD staff people who earn less than \$100,000 a year are now paying *more* for health care, while those who earn between \$100,000 and \$150,000 are paying *less*. “That pushed people right over the edge!” recalls Darling. But, at that time, Darling and her colleagues had nowhere to go with their complaints. That sudden, unilateral, you-don’t-have-a-choice change in health care contributions amounted to a \$885 pay cut per year for Darling — but who cared? “We had no say, really,” says Darling. And that’s why the RISD academic staff voted overwhelmingly in late 2014 to join NEA-Rhode Island. “It got like all this stuff was coming at us, but we had nowhere to go and we didn’t feel protected in voicing our concerns. That’s why we unionized. We figured we needed some say in our working conditions and job benefits.” The disproportionate health care contribution isn’t the only example of academic staff getting less than what’s fair. For all their efforts to register students, put together the course table, and coordinate part-time faculty, RISD also contributes a smaller percentage to their retirement accounts and asks them to pay more to take RISD classes. “People might have swallowed the health care contribution if it had been fairly done, across the board,” says Darling. “But instead it was like, did that just really happen? The college just took \$885 out of my paycheck. What’s next?” Well, thanks to their efforts, what’s next is a collectively bargained contract!

■ NEGOTIATING A WIN

Faculty Collaboration Key to Contract Wins

When the University of West Florida chapter of United Faculty of Florida convened in August 2013 to negotiate its 2014-2017 contract, the executive committee identified several goals: to improve the working and financial situations of faculty; to strengthen our collective voice; and to incorporate our many talented faculty in the process. We began by polling faculty: Not surprisingly, a lack of salary increases and new promotion opportunities for both full professors and lecturers were identified as issues, as was the lack of a benefits system that recognizes same-sex partners. But simply articulating these priorities doesn’t lead to success. To document these concerns, UWF-UFF reached out to business faculty, who put together a formal analysis and presentation of the financial losses suffered by faculty, which was shared with college councils and the faculty senate. That cross-campus collaboration made clear we were united. In the end, we ratified a contract with a 1.9 percent increase to base salaries, a 1.9 percent bonus, and a commitment to providing same-sex partner benefits. Additionally, this collaborative process strengthened the voice of faculty on campus and better positioned the bargaining team for obtaining future gains.



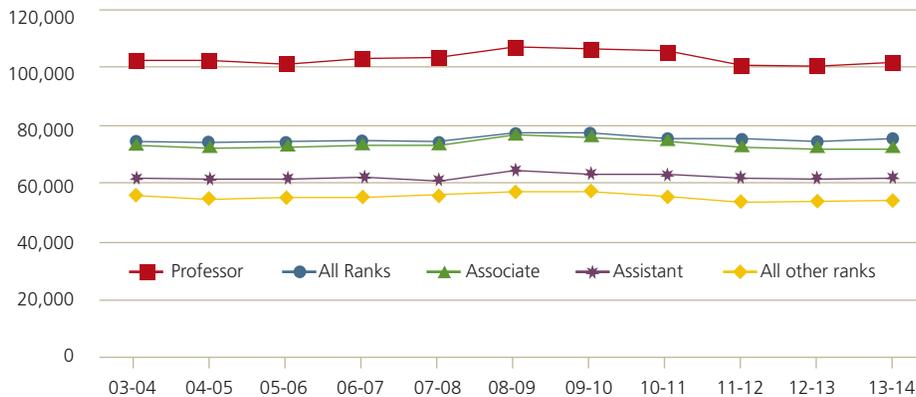
BY JONATHAN FINK
Chief negotiator for faculty, UWF Chapter of the United Faculty of Florida

Are You Fairly Paid?

THE NUMBER OF COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN THE U.S. IS UP. The tuition and fees charged to those students also is up — way up. But, even as enrollment and tuition rise, faculty salaries are mostly stagnant. The *Special Salary Issue of the NEA Advocate* provides information about faculty salary trends, including average faculty salaries at every public college and university in the U.S. This year, that special issue is available online-only at nea.org/advocate. Check it out and find out how salaries at your institution compare to others.

The Flat Line of Faculty Salaries

Despite large increases in student tuition and fees, faculty salaries across all ranks saw only a slight increase in FY2014. Moreover, over the past ten years, in constant 2014 dollars, there has been an overall decrease in salaries.



Where the Grass is Greener...

The institutional listing of average salaries paid to faculty, by rank, includes a wealth of information. To see the entire list, visit nea.org/advocate. In the meantime, here are just a few tidbits: average salaries across ranks in a handful of Alabama and California institutions, plus the percentage changes over last year:

University of Alabama at Birmingham	\$93,300	+5.3%
Alabama A&M University	\$63,700	+6.0%
Gadsden State (AL) Community College	\$53,500	-0.7%
University of California—Los Angeles	\$136,300	+2.7%
California State University—Los Angeles	\$78,900	-1.5%
Long Beach City College	\$73,400	-14.9%

Pay Equity? Not so much.

Female faculty members continue to earn less than men in almost every sector — with the greatest disparity found at public doctoral universities, where women’s salaries are just 80 percent of men’s. (Women are also less likely to be tenured — see nea.org/advocate for more on that...)

	2-Year		Liberal Arts		Comprehensive		Doctoral		Average	
	Public	Pvt.	Public	Pvt.	Public	Pvt.	Public	Pvt.	Public	Pvt.
Womens Salaries	61,725	50,552	60,819	68,504	63,810	64,733	72,822	82,620	67,704	763,153
Mens Salaries	64,078	48,176	68,330	74,723	70,307	70,487	90,882	105,277	81,427	94,013
Women/Men	96%	105%	89%	92%	91%	92%	80%	78%	83%	81%

NEA Members Insurance Trust® and Plan
2013 SUMMARY ANNUAL REPORT
(Plan Year Beginning September 1, 2013)

The following is the summary annual report for the NEA Members Insurance Trust® and Plan (collectively Trust), Employer Identification Number 53-0115260, providing information on the insurance programs sponsored by the National Education Association (NEA) including the NEA Life Insurance® Program, NEA Accidental Death & Dismemberment Insurance Program, and NEA Complimentary LifeSM Program for the period beginning September 1, 2013, and ending August 31, 2014. The annual report has been filed with the Employee Benefits Security Administration, as required under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA).

BASIC NEA MEMBERS INSURANCE TRUST FINANCIAL INFORMATION

The value of Trust assets, after subtracting liabilities of the Trust, was **\$138,313,816** as of August 31, 2014, compared to **\$122,053,257** as of September 1, 2013. During the Trust year, the Trust experienced an increase in its net assets of **\$16,260,559**. During the Trust year, the Trust had total income of **\$126,637,032** including participant contributions of **\$103,773,443**, a net appreciation in the market value of investments of **\$18,546,493**, and earnings from investments of **\$4,317,096**. Trust expenses were **\$106,772,248**. These expenses included benefits paid to participants and beneficiaries, administrative and other expenses.

INFORMATION FOR NEA LIFE INSURANCE PROGRAM

The Trust has a contract with Minnesota Life Insurance Company to pay all NEA Preferred Term Life Insurance claims and The Prudential Insurance Company of America to pay all other NEA Life Insurance claims incurred under the terms of this program. Because it is a so called "experienced rated" contract, the premium costs are affected by, among other things, the number and size of claims. The total premiums for the Trust plan year beginning September 1, 2013, and ending August 31, 2014, made under such "experienced-rated" contract were **\$62,106,216** and the total of all benefit claims paid under the contract during the Trust year was **\$52,851,846**. The total number of participants was **509,177**.

INFORMATION FOR NEA ACCIDENTAL DEATH & DISMEMBERMENT (AD&D) PROGRAMS

The Trust has a contract with The Prudential Insurance Company of America to pay all NEA AD&D and NEA AD&D Plus claims incurred under the terms of the Trust. Because it is a so called "experienced rated" contract, the premium costs are affected by, among other things, the number and size of claims. The total premiums for the Trust plan year beginning September 1, 2013, and ending August 31, 2014, made under such "experienced-rated" contract were **\$4,355,666** and the total of all benefit claims paid under the contract during the Trust year was **\$3,497,209**. The Trust has a contract with The Prudential Insurance Company of America which allocates funds toward group insurance certificates for the NEA AD&D Advantage Program. The total premiums for the Trust plan year beginning September 1, 2013, and ending August 31, 2014, was **\$14,401**. The total number of participants was **181,077** in all AD&D Programs.

INFORMATION FOR NEA COMPLIMENTARY LIFE INSURANCE PROGRAM

The Trust has a contract with The Prudential Insurance Company of America to pay all NEA Complimentary Life Insurance claims incurred under the terms of the Trust. The NEA Complimentary Life Insurance Program is self-supporting and paid by premiums from the NEA Members Insurance Trust funds rather than from Member contributions. Because it is a so called "experienced rated" contract, the premium costs are affected by, among other things, the number and size of claims. The total premiums for the Trust plan year beginning September 1, 2013, and ending August 31, 2014, were **\$1,902,766** and the total of all benefit claims paid under the contract during the Trust year was **\$1,593,792**. The total number of participants was **3,151,218**.

YOUR RIGHTS TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

As a participant, you have the legally protected right to receive a copy of the full annual report, or any part thereof for a reasonable charge or you may inspect the Annual Report without charge at the office of NEA Members Insurance Trust, Attn: NEA Member Benefits, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036 or at the U.S. Department of Labor in Washington, D.C. upon payment of copying costs. Requests to the Department should be addressed to: Public Disclosure Room, Room N-1513, Employee Benefits Security Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20210. You also have the right to receive from the Trust Administrator, on request and at no charge, a statement of the assets and liabilities of the Trust and accompanying notes, or a statement of income and expenses of the Trust and accompanying notes, or both. If you request a copy of the full annual report from the plan administrator, these two statements and accompanying notes will be included as part of that report. The charge to cover copying costs given above does not include a charge for the copying of these portions of the report because these portions are furnished without charge.

■ THE STATE OF HIGHER ED

CA's Race to the Bottom

The California Faculty Association issued its first "Race to the Bottom" white paper in March, titled, "The CSU's 10-Year Failure to Fund its Core Mission," which shows that no other segment of education in California or other comparable public university in the nation has allowed its educators to fall so far behind in salaries. CFA East Bay Chapter President Jen Eagan, who spoke at the release of the paper, said, "Public university faculty have been—and we should be—a solid sector of the middle class in California. And yet, this report shows that instead we typify the concerns about the loss of that very middle class."

A contract is a contract.

Although former Gov. Deval Patrick and current Gov. Charlie Baker both say the University of Massachusetts (UMass) system has enough money to cover the pay raises in its faculty and staff contracts, the UMass system still hasn't paid up. Those contracts were ratified last year and sent to Patrick's office, where it was determined that no ad-

ditional appropriations were necessary. The Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA) maintains the contracts must take effect immediately. "It's an outrageous situation. People's livelihoods are being toyed with," said MTA President Barbara Madeloni. With that in mind, MTA is preparing to file charges of unfair labor practices (ULPs) for violations of the National Labor Relations Act at every UMass campus.

Adjunct faculty hand out roses, but want bread too

During the National Adjunct Action Week in February, adjunct faculty in the Professional Staff Congress (PSC) of the City Universities of New York (CUNY) organized events ranging from teach-ins to speak-outs, and some also handed out roses, a reference to the 100-year-old Lawrence, Mass., textile mill strike, known as the Bread and Roses strike. Their actions were part of a movement to build power, and to negotiate for pay parity and more job security in the next PSC/CUNY contract.

Student debt refinancing, key part of UUP plan

The State University of New York (SUNY) union, United University Professionals (UUP), has proposed NY legislators approve a SUNY Student Loan Refinancing plan that would enable recent SUNY graduates to refinance federal and state student loans. It also has proposed an Adjuncts Loan Forgiveness Program that would give eligible SUNY adjuncts the opportunity to waive a maximum of \$29,400 in student loans. At the recent Campaign for the Future of Higher Education (CFHE) meeting in January in California, CFHE leaders called on at least 10 states to approve mirror plans. Meanwhile, in New York, the governor's state budget includes very little that would actually help students struggling to pay for college — or faculty and staff struggling to maintain a high-quality university system. "This can be tolerated no longer," said UUP President Frederick Kowal. "The state must provide SUNY with its fair share to fulfill its mission to provide educational services of the highest quality, with the broadest possible access."

NEA Members Insurance Trust

Conforming to the Department of Labor Reg. §2520.104b-3, the following material modifications have been made to the **NEA Complimentary Life Insurance Plan** in the 2013-2014 fiscal year, ending August 31, 2014.

ELIGIBLE CLASSES OF NEA MEMBERSHIP

All **Active** members who are active members in good standing of their **State Associations** are eligible for the **Program**. All **Life Active**, **Staff**, and **Reserve** members who are **Actively Employed in the Field of Education** and are members in good standing with their **State Associations** are eligible for the **Program**. **Life Active** members must be **Actively Employed in the Field of Education** at the time of death to qualify for benefits under the **Program**. **Life Active** members will be deemed to have paid the same dues as **Active** members for determining their benefits under the **Program**. **NEA Retired** members, only while acting on **Association Business** in the capacity of an **Association Leader** (including **NEA Retired** activities), are eligible only for the \$50,000 **NEA Complimentary Life Insurance** (DUES-TAB) Accidental Death Insurance Benefit or the \$50,000 **NEA Complimentary Life Insurance** (DUES-TAB) Accidental Dismemberment Insurance Benefit.

Conforming to the Department of Labor Reg. §2520.104b-3, the following material modifications have been made to the **NEA Introductory Term Life Insurance Plan** in the 2013-2014 fiscal year, ending August 31, 2014.

ELIGIBLE CLASS OF NEA MEMBERSHIP

All **Active** members who are in their first year of membership with the **NEA**, are members in good standing with their **State Associations**, and whose first year of membership in the **NEA** is not due solely to a merger of their **State Association** are eligible for the **Program**. All **Staff** and **Reserve** members who are **Actively Employed in the Field of Education**, are in the first year of membership with the **NEA**, and are members in good standing with their **State Associations** are eligible for the **Program**. Members who had previously had an interruption of their membership of less than five years and have been since reinstated, will not be eligible.

COAT

Advancing Excellence in e-Learning
MarylandOnline.org

The COAT Course Covers:

- Pedagogical approaches to teaching online
- Orienting students to online learning
- Establishing a social presence
- Facilitating online discussions
- Managing assessment
- Legal issues
- Relevant policies, procedures and support services
- And more...



www.marylandonline.org/coat

COAT on Twitter

COAT on Facebook

COAT on LinkedIn

Offering Professional Development for Online Educators

Teaching Online Requires New Skills COAT offers opportunities to master those skills!

[Register Now!](#)

[Learn More](#)

[Subscribe to Our Mailing List](#)

The Certificate for Online Adjunct Teaching (COAT) course is a 9-week, fully online course designed for college instructors. Based upon research, the course includes weekly learning activities and assignments, frequent interaction, and collaboration through group activities. COAT is offered by MarylandOnline, a non-profit consortium of colleges in Maryland. Join educators from 33 states and 9 countries who have already completed the course!

“While the value of the content was indisputable, the process of actually participating in a model online class has provided more than I could have ever learned from books, articles, discussions and other formats.”

*- Carole Williamson
Carol Community College*



The Certificate for Online Adjunct Teaching (COAT) is a program of MarylandOnline. MarylandOnline is a non-profit, inter-segmental consortium in Maryland dedicated to championing distance education and enhancing the quality and availability of e-learning in Maryland and worldwide.



Jason Walta is an attorney in the NEA Office of General Counsel and an adjunct faculty member at American University's Washington College of Law.

Academic Freedom

The Messy Reality of the Internet Age

BY JASON WALTA

THE CLASSIC FORMULATION OF ACADEMIC FREEDOM holds that faculty are “entitled to full freedom in research...” as well as “full freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject.” Moreover, “when they speak or write as citizens, they should be free from institutional censorship or discipline.” [Source: the American Association of University Professors’ *Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure*.] As an abstract principle, it seems impossible not to embrace wholeheartedly. But reality can be messy—sometimes *very* messy. And, a particularly messy dispute unfolding at Marquette University may just test the limits of what qualifies for protection under aegis of academic freedom.

That dispute concerns John McAdams, a tenured professor of political science and an outspoken conservative who writes a blog called “Marquette Warrior.” Last fall, McAdams wrote a post that criticized a graduate student instructor’s handling of the issue of same-sex marriage. In a nutshell, an undergraduate in that instructor’s philosophy course was disappointed that same-sex marriage opponents were not given time to air their views when another student raised the issue. That student confronted the instructor with his concerns after class and surreptitiously recorded their conversation, during which the instructor said the undergrad’s views on the subject might be offensive to other students in the class.

In his blog post, McAdams, who received a copy of the recorded conversation, identified the instructor by name and criticized her for stifling disagreement in the name of “political correctness.” McAdams also criticized the way the chair of the philosophy department handled the complaint, claiming she “pretty much blew the issue off.” McAdams also reported that the dispute had led the undergrad to drop the course.

If that was all that had happened, this would appear to be a clear-cut exercise of academic freedom. McAdams’ actions wouldn’t have been terribly collegial, to be sure, and his colleagues likely would have appreciated him taking his concerns directly to the instructor and depart-

ment chair. But, if academic freedom means anything, it surely encompasses the right to speak on issues of public concern like same-sex marriage and whether university classrooms are inhospitable to conservative viewpoints.

Even so, the Marquette administration moved quickly to punish McAdams, first by suspending him (without a hearing) and then by serving him with notice of its intent to fire him. According to the administration, two features of the blog post carried it beyond the bounds of protected academic freedom. First, the administration asserts the post contained false or incomplete characterizations of the facts. In particular, they pointed out that, far from “blowing the issue off,” the department chair took extensive steps to address and mediate the complaint. Also, the administration noted the undergrad decided to drop the class—not because of the dispute—but because he was in danger of failing the course.

Second, and far more importantly, the administration detailed how McAdams’s post had unleashed a torrent of misogynistic online abuse toward the instructor, including veiled threats of violence. Indeed, concern for the instructor’s safety was so serious that the university posted a guard outside her classes. What’s more, the administration claims McAdams had been admonished at least two times before for disclosing the names of students in a way that exposed them to possible harassment.

Recent experience tells us there is no lack of anonymous internet dwellers willing to harass and intimidate people—especially women, who often endure threats and abuse as a kind of tax for participation in public debate. Yet, to what extent should McAdams be held responsible for actions of these abusive hordes? Is it enough that he could’ve, or at least should’ve, foreseen the consequences of his identifying the instructor? Or does the breathing room necessary for academic freedom require something more—perhaps that he actually intended for his readers to contact or harass the instructor. McAdams’s may be one of the first, though certainly not the last, that attempts to resolve that question.

eADVOCATE



Stay in touch with current legislation, developing trends in higher education, and more through the NEA eAdvocate, a monthly newsletter.

To subscribe, visit www.nea.org/he

NEA's Office of Higher Education is now on Facebook. To keep up with current news and discuss events with your colleagues find us at www.facebook.com/neaighered.



Real Degrees Without Debt

IN EARLY MARCH, in a visit to Western Washington University to stump for his budget proposals, Washington Governor Jay Inslee emphasized his budget included a tuition freeze at our state's six public universities. He thought this would be very popular with students, so it caught him a bit by surprise when several pointedly asked him why his budget didn't include increased state funding for the universities to cover the lost tuition revenue in a state where total funding per student ranks 49th in the nation.

These students were concerned not only with the affordability of their college education, but also with the quality and value of the degrees they receive. This concern is something we should pay attention to as higher education becomes more and more of a political football.

On the surface, Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker's draconian proposal to dramatically cut his state's higher ed funding and President Obama's proposal to make community college free seem like they couldn't be farther apart. But when we look a little closer, especially when we consider the Obama proposal in the context of his administration's dumb ideas about ranking colleges, the two proposals start to look like two sides of the same coin. Governor Walker wants to pay professors less and have them teach more, President Obama wants to subsidize students' access to the inferior education that would surely follow.

None of the politicians who have seized on college affordability as a political opportunity are talking about the other issue that threatens public higher education. Neither Inslee nor Walker nor Obama has shown much concern for the billions of dollars that have been cut from state universities. None of them have made proposals to address ballooning class size or shrinking curricula. No politician looking to make political hay out of higher ed ever talks about the threat to academic quality and academic freedom posed by a professoriate that becomes more contingent, itinerant, and precarious each day. None of them ever mentions the way that reliance on corporate funding threatens the integrity of basic university research.

From the time the Morrill Land Grant Act took hold until the 1970s, large-scale state and federal investment in public universities created the tremendous economic growth and middle class expansion that made the 20th century the American century. For nominal tuition and fees, regular people could go to school in Austin or Berkeley or Columbus or Seattle and get the same world class education that rich kids got at Harvard, Princeton, or Yale. Thirty years of state and federal disinvestment put this engine of equality in peril.

And now the only thing that politicians and policy makers want to talk about is making degraded education cheaper. But unless we join the students who questioned Governor Inslee and make it clear that voters will demand that public college degrees again match the quality of private higher education, we will condemn the students of the future to schools separate and unequal.



BY BILL LYNE
President of the United Faculty of Washington State (UFWS) and professor of English at Western Washington University