

Advocate

They're Talking on Campus...

... ABOUT THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION of Community Colleges' (AACC) plans to create the Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA), with help from the Association of Community College Trustees and the College Board. At the annual meeting of the AACC last month, it was decided that the VFA would act as the community college equivalent of the public four-year college and university's Voluntary System of Accountability.

The VFA will provide opportunities for community colleges to measure outcomes and processes such as college readiness, completion of degree or certificate programs, and other "overall success indicators." The accountability system is also looking for ways to measure all of the degrees or certificates awarded in professional fields, and ways to measure success in continuing and adult education.

...ABOUT THE 10-YEAR ANNIVERSARY of the "One Florida" initiative that ended the consideration of race in admissions in the state. Although Florida has seen an increase in minority enrollment over the past 10 years, the university system has not kept pace with the growing number of minorities graduating from high school.

In 1999, approximately 20 percent of the state's high school graduates were Black, as were 17.5 percent of university freshmen. Ten years later, Blacks accounted for 19.5 percent of high-school graduates, but only 14.9 percent of university freshmen. Likewise, a wider gap is seen today among Hispanic high-school graduates and their representation in the freshman class.

Future Scientists



The United States and the world need more scientists. It's up to teachers to produce them. How? By creating an environment where students can prosper in physics, chemistry, and other science classes. This

issue's *Thriving in Academe* stresses the importance of integrating science students into learning communities through Modeling Instruction, which promotes science industry experiences. **See page 5**

2

NEA LEADERS TO MEET IN NEW ORLEANS

The annual meeting and RA brings 9,000 delegates together.

8

REFORM MOVEMENT GAINING MOMENTUM

Promoting classroom collaboration, down-playing competition.

9

PROFESSORS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Most instructors have an account with at least one media site.

11

MAKE ATTENDANCE MANDATORY?

Are students self-directed and disciplined enough to skip class?

On the Road

WITH VALERIE WILK

This spring I made my first trip to Alabama A&M University in Huntsville, along with colleagues Agnes Smith, an education support professional (ESP) organizational specialist with NEA's Southeast Region, and Alabama Education Association (AEA) UniServ Director Natasha Jackson. Our AAMU local invited us to do a workshop about NEA's professional pay and living wage campaigns. (See www.nea.org/pay).

AAMU is AEA's largest university local (428 faculty and ESP members). The local is true to AEA's tradition of political activism. In our discussions with AAMU local president and telecommunications professor Regina Colston, we learned how the local has advocated for campus issues before the Board of Trustees as well as with county commissioners, state legislators, and the governor. Members have mobilized students and alumni through on-campus sororities and fraternities as well.

The local faces some daunting challenges: lagging salaries for both faculty and ESP members compared to those at peer institutions; an administration plan to privatize physical plant staff; and difficulties in obtaining full information about how university administrators spent the first round of federal stimulus dollars.

"The AAMU-EA chapter considers the visit by the NEA staff historic and enlightening. Already, members are planning local outreach based on their model," said Colston.

Alabama A&M hosted a recent White House conference on the new initiative for Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). NEA will be working with our HBCU locals to advocate for faculty and staff involvement in decisionmaking on their campuses regarding this initiative.

—Valerie Wilk coordinates NEA's higher education activities

ACTIONLINE NEA

White House Initiative on HBCUs

NEA participated in the White House funding conference for Historically Black Colleges and Universities at Alabama A&M University.

NEA leaders and delegates from state and local affiliates will gather June 26 through July 6 in

New Orleans, Louisiana, for the Association's 148th Annual Meeting and 89th Representative Assembly (RA). The RA is the Association's highest decision making body, and with more than 9,000 delegates, the world's largest democratic, deliberative body.

**NEA Representative Assembly
New Orleans, LA
July 1-6, 2010**



NEA President Dennis Van Roekel applauded Congress for passing legislation that includes

billions of dollars for student financial aid and community colleges. NEA played a key role in the higher education provisions, which will cut banks out of the student loan business, putting the federal government in charge of directly lending to students. The savings from that change will help fund a new \$36 billion allocation for Pell Grants. "Making a college education affordable is a critical step in restoring economic growth and stability to our nation," Van Roekel said. "Increasing both the amount and the availability of Pell Grants and student loans is a good beginning and long overdue."

Anita Thompson, who works in the Purchasing/Procurement Department at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, and is a member of the Classified Staff Union (CSU), has been named Massachusetts Teachers Association's

(MTA) ESP of the Year for 2010. Thompson was honored during MTA's annual education support professional (ESP) conference last April in Hyannis. More than 330 ESP members from across the state were in attendance. Higher education ESPs make up approximately 13 percent of NEA's total higher education membership (150,000 active members, and more than 30,000 agency fee members). Total

NEA ESP membership is 507,000. More coverage and videos of the conference may be found at <http://facebook.com/mtaespp>.

NEA participated in the White House funding conference for Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).

The event was held for the first time at Alabama A&M University in Huntsville. Alabama Education Association Associate Executive Director Dr. Joe Reed made a presentation on NEA's work with HBCUs. AAMU-EA local president Regina Colston also attended. The purpose of the conference was to provide Historically Black Colleges and Universities with information about obtaining federal grants and contracts. For more information on the Obama Administration's new HBCU initiative see: www.ed.gov/blog/2010/03/president-renews-white-house-initiative-on-historically-black-colleges-and-universities/.

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IN THE KNOW

Health Care Reform Now

After decades of failed attempts and a year of partisan fighting on Capitol Hill, President Obama signed legislation to overhaul the nation's health care system. But what will it mean?

In what will prove to be an historic victory for working families, President Obama signed the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act into law this past March. By making health care more accessible and affordable, the new law will relieve pressures on higher education institutions and local unions alike.

Health care costs have led many institutions to cut benefits to their workforce—scaling back existing plans and increasing the proportion of faculty and staff who do not receive benefits.

While the new law does not require employers to provide benefits to contingent faculty, the increased availability of affordable coverage should make it easier to include all faculty and staff in plans.

Allowing young adults to retain coverage under their parents' plans will improve student health care dramatically. Students can't learn unless they come to school healthy.

The new law will make health coverage more affordable to individuals and small businesses, hold insurance companies accountable, provide the security of coverage for the insured and uninsured, and bring down costs for everyone.

A brief list of the key benefits for active and retired NEA members and their families includes the following:

- Provides 32 million uninsured children and families with access to coverage.
- Maintains employer-sponsored coverage for most Americans who currently have it.
- Allows young adults to stay on a parent's plan until the age of 26.
- Immediately establishes a plan for the uninsured.
- Establishes a competitive health insurance market.
- Ends insurance company abuses.
- Assists employers providing retiree health benefits.
- Ends cost-sharing for preventive services.

Some critical benefits will take effect right away, but much of the impact will take longer to play out. NEA's Collective Bargaining and Member Advocacy department continues to analyze the law's provisions and will pass on information to members.

These reforms are vital to the nation's economic recovery and a crucial ingredient for great public education for all students. It will be important to see how Association locals can use the benefits of the new law to improve their contracts over the next few years.

From Capitol to Campus

AS PINK SLIPS ARE ISSUED TO EDUCATORS ACROSS THE NATION, NEA IS IN

high gear advocating for \$23 billion in emergency aid to states and localities specifically for education jobs. This federal funding proposal, called the Education Jobs Fund, started as a key component of a "Jobs for Main Street Act" that passed the House by a slim margin of 217–212 last December. Projections of layoffs are upwards of 300,000 by the fall of 2010, including both the K–12 and higher education sectors.

The American Association of School Administrators estimates that with these job losses come a collateral 82,000 job losses in those communities—jobs that are related to or dependent on, higher employment levels in education. With the Massachusetts Senate election in January taking away the Democrats' pivotal 60th vote, the prospects for passage in the Senate dimmed considerably. Since then, the Senate has been addressing jobs issues in a piecemeal fashion, passing smaller initiative and stopgap measures, but not yet taking up the Education Jobs Fund.

The funds would support jobs from early childhood through postsecondary education and would be distributed through the same funding mechanisms in states as were the State Fiscal Stabilization Funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, passed early in 2009. While some battles will ensue within states to secure appropriate funding for each of the education sectors, the key is first to get the funding approved in Congress. It's "all hands on deck" for this effort. For information on how you can help, please go to www.educationvotes.nea.org and www.nea.org/lac.

FLASH POINTS

The Excise Tax on High-Cost Health Plans

NEA and other groups fought vigorously against the provision, leading to important improvements in—if not the removal of—the tax. Below are key changes to the excise tax in the health care act:

- ◆ Tax will not take effect until 2018.
- ◆ Dollar thresholds were increased to \$10,200 for single coverage and \$27,500 for family coverage (\$11,850 and \$30,950 for retirees and employees in high risk professions).
- ◆ Dollar thresholds are indexed to inflation and will automatically increase in 2018 if the Congressional Budget Office errs in its forecast of the premium inflation rate between now and 2018.
- ◆ Stand-alone dental and vision plans are exempt.

Organizing

Higher education members attending the recent Texas Faculty Association

Leadership Conference focused on developing personal leadership styles and learning how to organize and increase Association membership, even in right-to-work states.

"There are inherent difficulties in organizing unions in a state without collective bargaining rights, like Texas," says Mary Aldridge Dean, TFA's executive director. Dean says one message from the conference was apparent: "Justice is hard to get for individuals, but can be obtained by groups with power." Local leaders from three University of Texas campuses and several community colleges from across the state attended the event.

"As higher education in Texas continues to face budget cuts, higher student enrollments, and a difficult political environment, it is essential to strengthen our collective voice," Dean says. "There is power in numbers, so we must be in a position to advocate for our students and colleagues. We can do this, even in right-to-work states, through organizing."

Campus Activities

During the last presidential campaign, the University of Illinois ethics office sent a letter to faculty and staff two months before the election banning certain forms of political speech, such as campaigning for a political candidate or displaying partisan political buttons or bumper stickers. Within days, university officials issued a retraction. The Illinois Legislature has since passed bills barring any public institution from prohibiting the political speech of faculty and staff, and also clarifying faculty's right to speak to legislators on public or private matters.

Oral arguments in the NYSUT lawsuits to prevent furloughs for thousands of NYSUT's higher education members are scheduled for May 26 in federal court in Albany. In mid-May the court issued a temporary injunction to stop Gov. David Paterson's arbitrarily imposed plan to furlough many state employees for one day a week until the state's multibillion dollar deficit is closed. For an update, see www.nysut.org.

Contracts

The 80-plus faculty at Klamath Falls Community College in Oregon recently formed the Klamath Community College Faculty Association (KCCFA) and joined the Oregon Education Association (OEA). The new local represents faculty members who teach at 0.2 time (nine credits) or more. At press time, the contract was still being written after several meetings with college administrators.

"We have established ground rules," says KCCFA President Jamie Jennings.

Oregon is among a minority of states that allow unions to form based on a "card-check," which acknowledges an official bargaining representative if a majority of employees authorize it by signing a card.

The bargaining unit was formed in response to the faculty not having hiring processes, salary schedules, cost of living adjustments, or seniority protocols.

Also, they had no collective contract with their employer, and as a result, part-time faculty members had not received a raise since 2004. Other than state mandated enrollment in PERS, part-time faculty had no benefits. As of 2009, KCC employed 61 part-time and 22 full-time faculty.

Youngstown State University Association of Classified Employees

(YSU-ACE) and Ohio Education Association won an arbitration decision resulting in retroactive (from August 15, 2008) wages to be paid to as many as 200 of the 390 members of the bargaining unit. The arbitrator found the union's case "credible and persuasive."

The university was found to have deliberately ignored the negotiated formula for recalculating employees' wages under a new classification system. The new system was intended to save YSU money and remove inequities and upgrade classifications, but no employee was to be financially harmed by the conversion.

The university is quoted in the Youngstown press as saying the decision will result in awards of anywhere from a few cents to more than \$1 per hour per affected employee.

Investigation of Furloughed California Instructors Dropped amid Protests



Phil Lopez, president of the Southwestern College Education Association, addresses one of several rallies held after he and three other faculty union leaders at the college in Chula Vista were issued two-week furloughs for their involvement in a student protest over cancelled courses. The four professors were charged with disrupting campus operations. With campus and community support, the investigation was dropped.

COURTESY OF BILL GUY, CTA

Thriving in Academe

The Physics of Change

Integrating Science Students into Learning Communities

LAIRD KRAMER, GEORGE O'BRIEN, ERIC BREWE—FLORIDA INT'L UNIVERSITY

Imagine hundreds of students clamoring to join your introductory physics class where they are likely to complete the course.

Student 1: When two cars collide, it's like the first one gives its force to the second one.

Student 2: Yeah, but the moving car didn't carry a force, since it was moving at constant speed. But the moving car did have kinetic energy it gave to the second car.

Student 3: I calculated the energy before and after the collision, and it's not the same. Either I made a mistake [laughs] or something else is going on. I heard the group next to us mention 'uumph'; I wonder if there is some other thing going on here.

Teacher: You have some great ideas there—force, energy, and that uumph stuff, all could be helpful in explaining collisions. Summarize your ideas on a whiteboard and

then the class will do a circle-meet.

This vignette illustrates how students are engaged in scientific collaboration as they learn physics at Florida International University (FIU) using Modeling Instruction. Introductory science courses are the gateway to developing scientists and offer critical leverage on their future learning and success. Our Modeling Instruction implementation has created a comprehensive learning environment that empowers our students through community building, scientific discourse, use of representational tools, and a focus on

epistemology. Scientific attitudes changed the physics department, and supported a 1300 percent increase in physics majors.



MEET LAIRD KRAMER, GEORGE O'BRIEN, AND ERIC BREWE

Laird Kramer, George O'Brien, and Eric Brewe lead the Florida International University Physics Education Research Group. The team has spearheaded institutional change in STEM education reform, for both future scientists and science teachers. Their work focuses on reform in teaching and curriculum, appears in multiple peer-reviewed publications and conference presentations, and results from generous support from the National Science Foundation and PhysTEC. The multidisciplinary team spans the Colleges of Education and Arts & Sciences. O'Brien is an associate professor of science education (obrieng@fiu.edu), Kramer is an associate professor of physics (Laird.Kramer@fiu.edu), and Brewe is an assistant professor of science education (Eric.Brewe@fiu.edu).

Tales from Real Life

CONFESSIONS OF A SWITCHER

HOW DID I GET TO WHERE I AM, I.E. PART OF A TEAM THAT IS REDEFINING

science education at an urban public research university? When I try to sort that out, I look back at the critical experiences along my path. These shaped my approach to education reform. But there was a neuroscience course about two years ago that was a nightmare. It fit my training, but some of the material was completely new to me. So I prepared intensely, learning and researching to fill in the gaps.

I went to college expecting to emerge as an accountant. Lucky for me, a physics professor saw some talent and suggested switching to physics, since "The world needs more scientists." I gravitated towards big science, working at several accelerators as an undergraduate and moving on to graduate school and post doc as an experimental nuclear physicist.

My switch to physics education research came after tenure, although the seed was sown just prior to tenure. Frustrated by the lack of student success, I read an education article or two, which led me to a small National Science Foundation grant and further opened my eyes to the possibility of moving towards deeper reform.

From those beginnings, I am now dedicated full time to creating learning environments that develop more and better-prepared scientists.

Doing science is also a theme, both in the way I've always worked (large science or in the classroom) and in how I research the impact of our innovations at FIU.

—Laird Kramer
Florida International University

From Learning Communities Sprout Scientists

Sow the seeds for future scientists by leveraging reform education knowledge, implementing what works for you, and creating a feedback loop based on outcomes.

Let's begin with results: Our Physics Education Research Group (PERG) at FIU has implemented innovative curricula and programs, centered in the Physics Department where students learn science as scientists; cooperatively build their knowledge through student discourse; and become integrated into a comprehensive research and learning community. Modeling Instruction has been deployed in several introductory physics sections at FIU as the central element of our community. Modeling Instruction is a guided inquiry reform curriculum where students engage in the process of building, validating, and deploying models. The modeling process helps draw students into the practice of science not just by building and using models, but also because they need to articulate models among themselves. Modeling replicates the central activity of practicing scientists, providing students with an authentic scientific experience throughout their introductory course.

Modeling Instruction has transformed our physics students' experience. First, modeling students develop deeper understanding of the content, as determined by the Force Concept Inventory (FCI). Further, they achieve significantly improved success, averaging a 6.73 percent greater odds of success (likelihood of receiving C- or better) in the modeling class compared to lecture. And perhaps most interesting is that we measure improved favorable attitudes toward science for students in modeling sections—a gateway to improving participation in physics. This result was the first reported increase in favorable attitudes; note that lectures reliably *decrease* students' favorable attitudes about science. Modeling classes, along with associated reforms, have led to a 1300 percent increase in the number of intended and declared physics majors at FIU, when comparing three-year averages to the early 1990s. Even more compelling is that FIU is a minority-serving urban public research institution in Miami, Florida, serving over 39,000 students, of which 64 percent are Hispanic, 13 percent are Black, and 56 percent are women. Our results reach across gender and ethnic boundaries, serving as models for improving participation by diverse student populations.



These innovations have forged ahead, actually increasing in scope, in these most challenging economic times. FIU is one of 11 state universities in Florida, a state that has seen revenues decline drastically over the past several years. FIU has faced double-digit cuts in the last several years. Thus change is possible, even when the deck seems stacked against it.

Start with knowledge of what works elsewhere and focus on your needs.

We are academics. Our research builds on the experiences of our colleagues and those who came before us. To save time and frustration, why not bring the same approach to our educational endeavors?

In our case, FIU's diverse student population propelled us toward methods inclusive of all of our students, thus focusing on collaborative learning modalities. Prior investigations found that underrepresented groups can be isolated from the majority students and not receive supportive mentoring from faculty; hence, our community participation framework. As academics, we thrive as a result of being integrated into our community. It is only natural that students would thrive being explicit members of a community. Research literature confirms this approach for students (e.g., references by Rogoff, Lave, or Wenger).

As our foundation, we selected Modeling Instruction, with its long history of success at the high school level as well as its collaborative constructivist approach. Rather than starting from scratch, we used an existing curriculum and focused on adapting it to suit our local environment. Multiple reform curricula and techniques are out there for the taking, so begin by selecting an established approach and adapt it to your needs.

When looking for what works, don't ignore neighbors. Our expertise, developed over the past eight years, is now being harvested by FIU's mathematics, chemistry, earth and environment, and biology departments, as they reform their undergraduate programs.

Modeling Instruction is a guided inquiry reform curriculum where students engage in the process of building, validating, and deploying models.

Our goal in teaching is to create an environment where students are motivated to learn. It is well established that learning takes place when students are actively engaged; thus, providing opportunities for active engagement is crucial to their success. The apex of learning is graduate school, where we develop into expert scientists. Learning at that stage is radically different than the undergraduate experience. Graduate students are expected to drive their own learning, work in a group, and engage in scientific discourse on a regular basis. Why should students wait for graduate school when the opportunity can be afforded in introductory courses?

If you create an environment where responsibility for learning is placed squarely upon the students, and this expectation is clearly established, then students will rise to the challenge. One of the unexpected outcomes in our efforts is how eager students are to learn, evidenced both inside and outside the classroom.

Modeling Instruction engenders this framework through inquiry activities that rely on student conjecture, argumentation, and consensus. For example, after developing models in groups, students report out their ideas via portable whiteboards and work towards consensus based on evidence, which drives their learning. The collaborative environment extends beyond the classroom, as students are often found engaged in scientific discourse as they study. This illustrates how placing the responsibility of learning on students can change how students approach their learning.

The collaborative environment extends beyond the classroom, as students are often found engaged in scientific discourse as they study.

Scientific evidence drives the reform feedback loop.

You must see the fruits of your reforms, given the effort it takes to implement them, therefore, evaluation must be integrated into your project. The evaluation must be substantial; a faculty member may think her students learned when no one asks a question at the end of the lecture, yet there is no evidence that learning actually occurred. Evaluation serves a dual function, both to formatively guide you in your intervention as well as to garner additional interest, resources, and accolades to expand and continue the intervention. Internally, our results have guided and inspired our team. Externally, we hope that our results have impressed you, and even motivated you to consider implementation. They have also brought attention to our group, both locally and nationally, resulting in additional extramural funding.

Start small, seize opportunities.

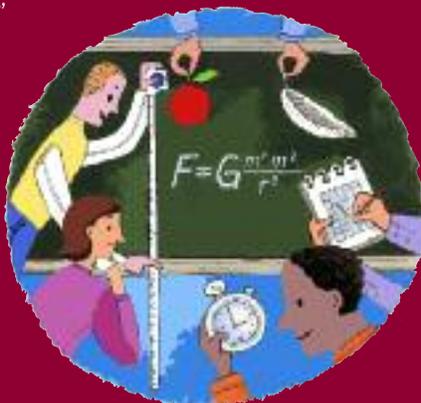
Our approach is comprehensive in nature and requires significant resources that originate in both local and federal funding. Initially, the barriers to mounting such an effort may appear insurmountable from your perspective. Our efforts started with one of us reading an article on interactive engagement, which led to a small National Science Foundation grant that we have leveraged for more than 10 years. In the end, what is vital is thinking critically about what your and your students' goals are, and how to plant the seeds that will grow into successful scientists.

BEST PRACTICES

Identify an Achievable Goal and Leverage the Outcomes

Launching a reform effort may appear challenging, but starting with an achievable goal, moving towards that goal, and then using the outcome to create a cycle of reform can get the ball rolling. We'll examine one of our efforts—reforming introductory physics labs where our lecture section students enroll.

First you need to begin with an opportunity assessment: what course/lab can be most easily reformed? For us, we would like to encourage faculty moving from traditional lecture to more active engagement. Yet, targeting their lectures almost assuredly would cause them to confront their beliefs about teaching and possibly create friction within the department.



However, the labs connected to the introductory lectures provided an ideal solution: implement a reformed curriculum in the lab, one developed elsewhere with a solid record of improving student learning (and based in collaboration and inquiry), and measure the impact on student learning in the lecture sections. Our idea was to use the data, the evidence, to encourage reform in faculty's lecture sections. And to make it even better, we staged the implementation over several semesters, so we could do direct comparisons of students in lecture taking both the reform and the traditional labs. Thus, we applied a scientific argument to scientists, trying to build on their beliefs and not directly confront them. Remember, start with small steps before moving on to longer strides.

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ISSUES TO CONSIDER

Move Reform Forward

Solutions for getting students and faculty on board with your reform environment.

What is a good response to colleagues who think I don't cover the standard content in my reformed course?

It's not what you cover in a course, it's what students uncover that matters. Remember your goal: student learning and empowerment. Introductory courses are about preparing students for their upper division classes and giving them a panoramic view of the discipline. All students are better served in an environment where they can learn how to be good learners while learning the critical components of the course. Depth is much more important than breadth, which means that content has to be prioritized with student learning goals in mind.

One response is asking which is more important: memorizing lots of facts for the test (and forgetting them within a few weeks) or developing skills that last a lifetime? You can also probe students about a couple of courses in their university career, comparing and contrasting large lectures versus engaging courses.

Better yet, if your reformed course deeply engages students in the beauty of your discipline, and moves nonmajors toward majors, your department won't be in much of a position to complain.

How do I move students from a competitive classroom environment to a collaborative one?

Competition, both explicit and implicit, can poison a classroom environment, undermining collaborative work. Studies have shown this can be especially detrimental to underrepresented students, who can

feel isolated in a competitive environment. Further, students often expect competition in the classroom, and may not know how to respond to collaboration. Thus we must take clear actions to promote collaborative learning and downplay competition.

Banish the grading curve! Grades are the front line of competition; they set the tone and policy of the course (and instructor). Curves send two clear messages to students: First, grades are random, since student grades include factors that are out of their control, including the performance of other students. Second, better grades come to those who

don't help their classmates learn, dissuading students from helping each other. Replace the curve with a fixed grade scale on the syllabus and encourage students to cooperate. Cooperation improves learning for both helper and helpee, which improves grades for all.

Group management is another critical tool in a collaborative classroom; you must set policy that encourages good group dynamics. Designating groups is often more effective than self-selection, as students learn from a variety of other students and don't only rely on their friends. Designations can take into account student ability and demographics to reduce domination and/or isolation of students.

Using group contracts and/or assigning specific roles to each group member are also effective means to explicitly encourage good group cooperation. Perhaps most important is selecting the appropriate activity. We often assign activities that are above the capacity of a single student, thus enforcing the need to work collaboratively.



THRIVING IN ACADEME

Thriving in Academe is a joint project of the National Education Association and the Professional and Organizational Development Network www.podnetwork.org in Higher Education. This section is intended to promote ever more effective teaching and learning in higher education through dialogue among colleagues. The opinions of this feature are solely the authors' and do not reflect the views of either organization. For more information contact the editor, Douglas Robertson, (drobert@fiu.edu) at Florida International University or John Rosales (JRosales@nea.org) at NEA.

World & Nation

Over 150 representatives of the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) convened last month to identify ways to improve Latino student achievement at the K-12 level. The Association hopes to expand the pipeline for Hispanic students entering higher education. According to the Pew Hispanic Center, by senior year of high school almost half of Hispanic students drop out.

HACU is encouraging collaboration between Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) and public school systems in order to increase the numbers of Hispanics advancing from preschool to graduate school. Furthermore, the organization recommends that Congress authorize monies for HSIs to expand their teacher preparation programs by increasing the number of teachers of color, and increasing Title V funds for undergraduate support at member institutions.

After three years of relatively flat growth, U.S. graduate schools have seen a 7 percent increase in the number of international student applications. The largest numbers of overseas applicants are from China, up 19 percent from last year. Applications from India and South Korea, the next largest sources of international applicants, have stabilized after sharp declines in 2008.

The 25 institutions that currently have the most international graduate enrollments saw applications rise 10 percent, while those outside the top 100 saw an average 4 percent increase.

While the report refers to the increasing figures as “an encouraging sign,” it cautions that there is no guarantee the growth in applications will result in a corresponding increase in enrollments.

The Obama Administration overturned a 2005 clarification that allowed Title IX colleges to use emailed or Web-based surveys alone to prove they are complying with equity in athletics while meeting the “interests and abilities” of female athletes. This step strengthens Title IX, while continuing to give institutions a great deal of flexibility and control over their athletic programs.

Faculty & Staff

Most faculty members use social media and nearly all use it to teach, according to a new study by Pearson. Of the 939 professors surveyed from both two- and four-year colleges, 80 percent have at least one account with a social media site. YouTube was the preferred tool for teaching, with more than a fifth of professors using material from the video-sharing site in class. About 10 percent of professors required students to create content within a social media community as part of an assignment.

The chart below shows the extent of the current recession compared to the previous recession, and estimates state budget shortfalls for FY2011 and FY2012. Balanced budget requirements will require states to make significant spending cuts and/or revenue enhancements over the next two years. Even after 2012, most states face structural deficits because their spending on current public services is growing faster than revenues generated by current tax systems. ↓

Professional News

The Journal of Collective Bargaining in the Academy is a new online peer-reviewed journal published by the National Center for the Study of Collective Bargaining in Higher Education and the Professions, housed at Hunter College/CUNY (www.hunter.cuny.edu/ncscbhep).

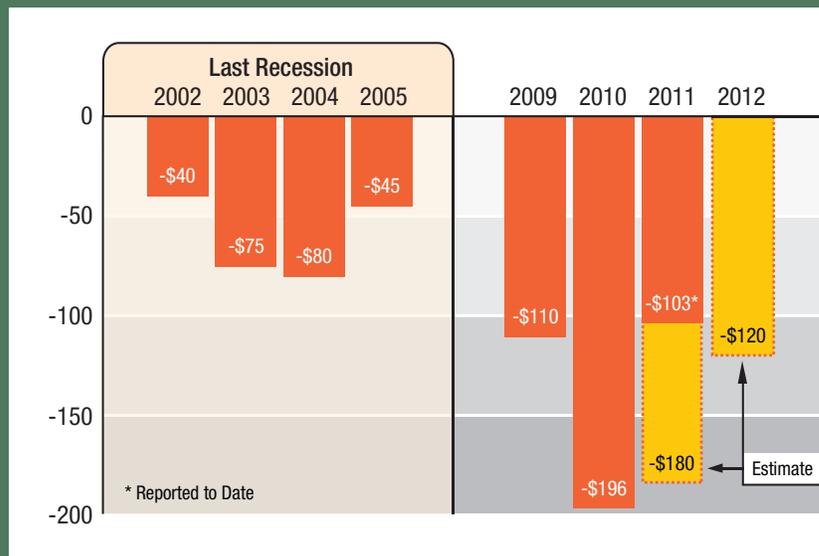
The Journal seeks to: (1) advance research and scholarly thought in academic collective bargaining, and (2) make relevant and pragmatic peer-reviewed research accessible to practitioners and scholars.

The Journal is supported in part by a generous contribution from TIAA-CREF, and is hosted by Booth Library, Eastern Illinois University. The inaugural issue of the *Journal of CBA* can be accessed via the National Center's Web site at: www.library.eiu.edu/NCSCBHEP/Journal/.

The Journal is accepting and publishing relevant manuscripts of scholarly inquiry, opinion and thoughtful reflection, and notes from the field. See the Journal Web page for instructions on how to submit a manuscript.

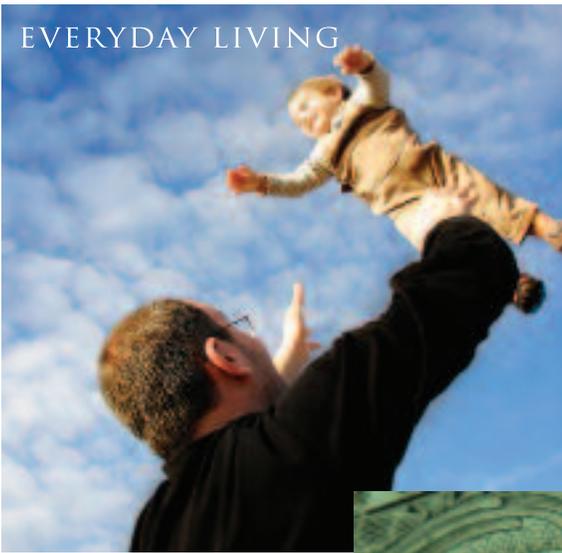
How Bad Will It Get?

TOTAL STATE FUNDING SHORTFALL IN EACH FISCAL YEAR, IN BILLIONS



Source: *Center on Budget and Policy Priorities*, “Recession Continues to Batter State Budgets; State Responses Could Slow Recovery,” Elizabeth McNichol and Nicholas Johnson. February 25, 2010 at www.cbpp.org/. For more information, see second column, second paragraph (above).

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Question:

Should professors use grading to enforce an attendance policy?

Yes,
many students engage in “magical thinking,”
assuming they can grasp the material by
coming to class infrequently.

MARTHA KINNEY



Philosophically, frankly, I am opposed to counting attendance as part of the final course grade. But practically, given my students, I must make attendance count. Let me explain. I teach at a suburban community college where students are often underprepared for college-level work. Many engage in “magical thinking,” assuming that somehow they can grasp the material just by coming to class infrequently. Without the “stick” of an attendance policy, a sizeable number of my students would fall woefully behind in the course, not realizing that the material and skill development that they miss in class is integral to their success in the course.

Previously, at a similar community college where I taught, attendance was not allowed to factor into students’ grades. The result was an attendance rate of about 50 percent and a failure rate of over 50 percent. At my current post, missing more than a week of class may result in failure. This policy does increase student attendance—and in doing so, I think, boosts student success in the courses they take. Since a large percentage of students in my classes do not intrinsically understand the value of regular attendance, making attendance a significant factor in their course grade takes the attendance decision away from the student and affords greater opportunity for success.

If I taught motivated students who were more prepared for college-level work, I would be reluctant to make attendance a part of their grade. My current students, however, are underprepared and unclear about how best to achieve their goals; an attendance policy, for better or worse, is vital to keeping them on track to meet those aims.

Martha Kinney, an assistant professor of history at Suffolk County Community College in New York, has taught for five years. She has an MA in European history from CSU-East Bay, and is studying modern German history at Penn State University.

No,
teachers recognize that we personally learn best
when we are self-directed and excited about our
project.

MARY BETH O’HALLORAN



Answer against this idea from the perspective of educational psychology. It is a matter of carrot versus stick: As a teacher, would I rather entice my students with a carrot or punish them with a stick?

Probably all teachers recognize that we personally learn best when we are self-directed and excited about our project. Being interested in the topic engages the curiosity and enthusiasm that drive the learning process. Learning becomes easy rather than drudgery—even when the topic is difficult.

Self-direction keeps us focused so we dig deeper and retain more. Who hasn’t spent late nights digging deeply into an online search that started simply and drew us into serious effort and great results? Students go through that same engaged process when they are self-directed.

When we draw students in with other techniques to intrigue and stimulate their own enthusiasm for learning, we offer them the opportunity to learn in the way we all naturally want to learn. But when we use a grading policy to punish them for not coming to class, we are likely to turn off their enthusiasm and self-direction.

They become other-directed and work either to please us or to thwart us. Their energy for learning is turned into energy for getting along with the teacher. The stick approach is negative and restricting; the carrot approach is positive and freeing.

It is possible to use grading in a positive carrot way. Rather than using a stick to reduce the grade for more than two or three absences, turn attendance into a carrot by awarding attendance points. Students will at least be self-directed to earn the points—a step in the right direction of becoming more self-directed learners.

Mary Beth O’Halloran, a philosophy teacher at Century College in Minnesota, has taught, counseled, and worked in TRIO programs at several colleges in the Midwest.

WHERE DO YOU STAND?

Send comments to
JRosales@nea.org

Opinion

I'd Like To Say!

THE DIALOGUE QUESTION REGARDING

interdisciplinary based clusters (April *Advocate*) is moot for most of us. Except, perhaps, in some large universities, "related" disciplines are frequently lumped together for the sake of practicality. A "History Department," for example, becomes the home of sociology, geography, and even psychology instructors. Thirty years ago, our History Department included math teachers.

My institution tried to lump together "related departments," including history, English, and psychology, under one administrator. This system allowed the college to ignore its standing policy of promotion to department head based on seniority while paying big bonuses to political hacks amiable to the new administration's other bizarre ideas. The resulting mess took years to clean up. Today, the college again has independent departments with department heads. It solved the promotion problem by abolishing seniority and appointing department heads based on local political connections.

Many educators, like the two you quote, do believe in change for the sake of the students. However, any positive ideas in education will only come when colleges adopt and carry out ethical standards for promotion, budget, administration, etc. that put the students and taxpayers first.

—Anonymous

SPEAKING OUT

Save on Software with OS

When I taught a computer networking course last year at Saint Paul College in Minnesota, I found that Open Source (OS) software was a way to significantly reduce software costs while maintaining high quality production values.

I learned this firsthand because computer networking is one of those courses where "hands on" exercises are very important. Unfortunately, it is prohibitively expensive to give each student two or three computers to do client-server exercises. A few of us used VirtualBox, an OS offering from Sun Microsystems. This allowed each student to have one physical computer running multiple independent virtual computers. The savings were substantial.

Strictly speaking, "OS" is a term used to describe a legal contract for the distribution of software. An OS software contract states, among other things, that the blueprints or "source code" must be part of the exchange and that the recipient must abide by these terms to redistribute the software. Though "Open Source" describes a legal contract, most people think of it as the huge collection of software offerings under this name.

Those familiar with OS may have heard about the Linux Operating System and the OpenOffice.org suite of office software. They are distributed under OS licenses. The soft-

ware is free to download and will run on most PCs. Linux and OpenOffice.org, with their easy to use graphical interfaces, provide an acceptable alternative to Windows and Microsoft Office. The popular OS Firefox Web browser is frequently used as a Microsoft Internet Explorer replacement.

At Boston University (BU), Linux runs on more than a thousand computers, including lab machines, servers, and desktops. The cost savings at education environments like BU is particularly important these days due to nationwide budget cuts.

Professor Steve Yuen (University of Southern Mississippi) has a 68-slide presentation about OS economics and other specifics, including a summary titled, "Why Teachers Like Open Source."

While many faculty members may have heard of OS, some are still discovering its benefits. Above all else, OS software is usually free. Please don't think "it can't be very good if it's free." Most OS software is of the highest quality. It's a solution worth considering.

Open Source software is a way to reduce software costs while maintaining high quality production values.



Joseph Hesse is a computer consultant (Linux training and software development) and former mathematics professor who teaches computer science at Saint Paul College in Minnesota. Contact him at joe_hesse@actcx.com.