



# THE ADVOCATE

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Employee Federation of NHMCCD

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## *Education for Democracy— Democracy for Education*

### **Flourishing Upward While Nourishing Our Roots: The District Office Move**

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Many of us have our careers, our professional identities, centered in the success of NHMCCD. Few of us, surely, would fail to be impressed with the District's quick-handed, sure-footed acquisition of the HARC campus. For a great price we got 100 acres and two existing buildings in one of the most valuable, prized locations in southeast Texas. The chance to add programs, perhaps even "lab-based doctoral level programs" gladdens any academic's heart. As Dr. Pickelman said, the district was presented with "a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity." What an impressive change we have seen since that first rainy semester when the District began with evening classes at Aldine High School, using just twelve full time faculty. Indeed the District Office's leap from the concrete canyons of Greenspoint to the leafy, leafy suburbs of The Woodlands is strikingly dramatic. A lot of people have worked hard and intelligently to bring about this growth, and the surrounding communities are the better for all this effort.

As any gardener knows, however, the top-most branches are only as strong as the root system; thus, our foundation must continue to be nourished with care. Our District is built on the foundation of Aldine, Humble, and Spring which first voted to have a community college in this area. I trust that Dr. Pickelman, the senior administration, and the Board of Trustees will be mindful of our beginnings and maintain a vibrant presence in Aldine, for, most likely, one's opinion concerning the office move may be predicated on one's spot on the map. What one person may see at the corner of I45 and Woodlands Parkway may look very different to another standing on I45 and Little York.

When I brought my initial concern for proportionate visibility in Aldine to Dr. David Sam during a division meeting, he remarked that a second story will be built on Carver Center and Parkway Center will expand to the old District office. Is this effort really proportionate?

The largest issue, I believe, is how to provide quality education to everyone in a post-industrial service economy. So many of the traditional jobs our parents worked their whole lives are gone, and huge economic displacements have resulted. So many of the questions raised by our new economy can, I am convinced, be answered best in the hands-on, encouraging community college: outreach to potential first time college students who, like some of us, will be the first family member to go on to higher education; patient understanding for the sometimes gradual acculturation needed for the developing student; remediation as necessary to overcome previous lapses; work/study programs which function as part of our overall commitment to job training; counseling and support for financially strapped students who must combine work and study, support children, and try to do all of it well with sanity intact. Of course, we continue with transfer students who will automatically go on to a university, and we must push harder with technology, technology, technology, making sure all equipment is evenly distributed throughout our district. Many of these efforts are already in place throughout NHMCCD, and I am hopeful new outreach programs will be created in the future, nourishing the whole system: roots, trunk, and branches.

Pat Gray

## Summer Pay and Sacred Cows

From time to time, Dr. Pickelman has expressed concerns regarding the way NHMCCD does summer pay. Since its inception, the college district has offered summer salaries based on a complicated formula that translated into full salary for summer classes. A few, but not many, Texas community colleges offer full pay or close to it for summer teaching. Most colleges pay adjunct salaries for summer classes even to full-time faculty. Dr. Pickelman has expressed concern that a significant percentage of the budget goes to summer salaries. He is troubled that budgeting is difficult because he says we can't predict how many full-time faculty will teach in any given summer. While we may not be able to predict with complete accuracy, I suspect that if we look at summer teaching trends by full-time faculty since 1973, we can easily make a reasonably accurate prediction. The AFT's position has always been that summer pay is off limits. It is a significant boost to our nine-month salaries, and it has been used to entice many potential faculty to join the district.

Recently, however, Dr. Pickelman again broached this subject with the AFT with an additional rationale, and this time with an idea of a potential new method of compensation. He expressed concern about how our college appears in comparative salary studies such as those done by TCCTA. These studies typically report only nine-month salaries and do not reflect summer pay.

He points out that in such comparisons NHMCCD's reported salaries are not reflective of our faculty's total compensation and drive our ranking down. At this spring's conference day, Chancellor Pickelman announced specific plans to change the faculty salary structure, a move that will alter the way summer salaries are calculated. Summer pay has been a sacred cow among faculty for years. To alter it requires replacement with a system that is at least as good as or better than the one in place. I won't review the details of the proposal here. They were adequately handled in his presentation and in the handouts provided.

At first blush, his proposal looks good. Not teaching both summer sessions is an attractive idea to many faculty. On the other hand, the downside must also be carefully reviewed. One obvious negative is that such a change would discourage summer teaching by full-time faculty. We have a large population of summer transfer students, and the college's reputation is affected across the state and nation as much by our instruction of them as it is by the students in the regular terms. Disrupting the full-time to part-time balance for summer teaching may not be the right move. Secondly, while it would improve our ranking in nine-month salary comparisons, we would join the colleges to which we are currently inaccurately compared. In other words, we might look better for the nine-month, but those colleges which pay full salaries for summer might

actually have a higher total compensation. There may be other concerns as well.

We must consider any change to summer salaries carefully. We must also keep in mind not only the effect on current faculty but also the best interest of future faculty. The AFT welcomes input from faculty across the district. Please complete the questionnaire inserted in this issue on page 6 and return it to Bob Locander, AFT secretary, at NHC.

Alan Hall

## Contracting Out Food Services

In the last issue of *The Advocate*, the AFT expressed concern that the district has hired an outside consultant ostensibly to conduct a feasibility study on what to do with food services when, in fact, the administration and board of trustees appear to have made up their minds. The consultant, H. David Porter Associates, Inc., indicates that the district is "preparing to seek a vendor to perform the retail food service, catering and vending on the campuses and in the District office." We pointed out that two efforts at contracting out food services have failed in the past. We also expressed our concern for the employees who would be affected by such a move. The union continues to watch this situation and will have more information in our next newsletter. If you have opinions on the food service question, we urge you to let them be known to the administration and Board.

Staff

## An Elegy for the Humane

A number of years ago, I heard a senior partner at Arthur Anderson give a talk on ethics in business. As recent events have made clear, he was probably not a leading authority on the subject. Among other topics, he spoke with some pride about how they would hire on bright young accountants, push them to work 70 and 80 hour weeks for about ten years, keep the survivors and “counsel out” those who couldn’t stay productive at that pace. Many words can be used to describe an organization like that; “humane” would not be one of them.

One of the reasons I am glad to be in education, and working at a community college in particular, is that ours is a business that is profoundly humane. We provide a place that is safe and supportive for all sorts of people who come to us for a helping hand as they seek a better life. We accept; we mentor; we support; we offer second chances. The dividends we return are of a type that no economic downturn can erase.

When that “humaneness” is truly part of the corporate culture of an educational institution and not just an advertising slogan, it carries over to how we view and treat our colleagues whether faculty, staff or administration. Certainly, ours is an institution that reaches that ideal in many ways, great and small, every day.

Therefore, what a profound disappointment it was to me to observe the most inhumane corporate act I have personally encountered right here at NHMCCD on the morning of February 21, 2002. It was that morning, at district conference day, after “softening up” the audience with a promise

of a generous pay raise, that the chancellor of this district reserved the final nine minutes of his opening remarks to announce the mass firing of the district’s entire middle management team of associate deans.

If someone would ask me for an example, outside Arthur Anderson, of a body of corporate employees worked to the point of exhaustion, I would point to the associate deans of this district. Heavily burdened with a mountain of clerical details and a mind numbing schedule of meetings, many of these folks can be found on campus late at night and on weekends just trying to catch up. Clearly, something needed to be done to make these positions sane.

As this school year got started we all heard that district administration had become aware of the difficulties faced by associate deans and would expend some effort to make their lives better. The goal was for associate deans to be freed up from bureaucratic details so that they could provide more leadership and mentoring to faculty. Input was solicited. Suggestions were made. The final answer? The way we’ll make life easier for the associate deans is to dismiss them from their positions. Of course they will need to continue to do the work as they always have until replacements are found. We’ll change the positions around a bit, add a business manager, add teaching duties, increase the size of the divisions, think up a new title and tell the associate deans they can compete for their old jobs back.

Whether the changes in the newly christened positions of dean are helpful is a debate for another discussion. The question of the moment is, why did we not improve the positions and let the current personnel have a go at it? Is it because

some of them aren’t doing a good job? If so, where was the mentoring for those who were doing badly? Where is the second chance, once the position is fixed? More importantly, where are the support and the affirmation for those who have done their best and are trying to provide the leadership the district wants? Is it humane to throw out the good, the bad, the strong and the weak with no distinctions? What will be next? If district feels there is some “dead wood” in the faculty, will they fire all of us, change our titles and make us all fight for our jobs back?

Perhaps the goal is simply to downsize administration by consolidating divisions. If associate deans were having trouble managing the divisions they had, what will be the benefit of making them larger? Is money an issue? Perhaps not everyone is aware that, when the dean position is created, vice presidents and presidents will get an increase in pay category as well.

The rush to implement the plan adds insult to injury. Dean positions were being advertised on the District web page before anyone had decided what the candidates would be deans of. Are things really so bad we can’t take the time to plan the next step before we start firing people? Will associate deans even have the dignity of finishing out their contracts? Why is there no time for meaningful dialog and consensus building? Is the goal to rush some changes through before serious opposition can get a chance to organize?

Whatever the rationale, let us consider the outcome. Rather than being helped and supported, our associate deans have been insulted and demoralized even as they have had their livelihoods jeopardized. I wonder how many of the best ones will

## An Elegy for the Humane (cont'd)

decide they have had enough of this treatment and will choose to leave us? Besides the associate deans, with divisions being consolidated, we have support staff whose positions may go away as well. They don't even have the dignity of knowing for certain. What about assistant deans in those colleges that have them? What about coordinators of small departments that are going to be consolidated? All of us face a season of uncertainty and turmoil as we

realign divisions. All of this is so unnecessary. A little thought to what would be humane could have made this an exciting and expectant time rather than a disheartening and worrisome time.

At the end of the talk I heard several years ago by the Arthur Anderson senior partner, I spoke with a Rice professor who had attended the presentation as well. We talked about how that company used people up and threw them

away. He told me that he would do his best to warn his brightest and most promising students not to work for them. I agreed that I would do the same. Do we need to provide the same warning for bright, promising faculty members who want to provide leadership at NHMCCD?

Dr. John Burghduff  
Mathematics Professor  
Kingwood College

## O'Banion Revisited

In the January/February 2002 *Advocate*, I wrote an article entitled "The Learning College," in which I reflected upon Dr. Terry O'Banion's speaking at NHC's Spring in-service. One of O'Banion's major thrusts on change focuses on colleges becoming "learning centered," a prime element of a "learning college." Dr. David Sam has made a commitment that NHC will become a "learning college," and Cy-Fair College is using this concept as a guiding principle in the development of its programs, courses, and buildings.

O'Banion proved to be a strong advocate of change although many of his proposals were not particularly new. I was interested in pursuing his thoughts on change as it relates to the classroom and faculty. Dr. O'Banion seems to see faculty as relatively resistant to change and, in particular, suggests teacher unions are decidedly resistant to change.

In his *A Learning College for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Dr. O'Banion writes; [ . . . ] the faculty as a whole can be highly resistant to change. Their allegiance to discipline

guilds and their unification under the protective mantle of academic freedom are twin pillars of conservatism fortified against change. Faculty, first "schooled" as students then inducted into a system in which they become the gatekeepers of educational tradition, do not embrace alternative ideas with enthusiasm, despite their own deep cynicism about the current system. (29)

Let's take a look at these remarks in relation to our faculty. I have been with this district 27 years and have witnessed enormous changes, including many involving faculty. At NHC, I have seen English faculty develop conference evaluations and participate in a pilot project designed to create a "learning centered" environment to increase student success. The math faculty have experimented with a pilot project with the same goal. I know faculty across the district have exhaustively tried similar innovative approaches to instruction. These same faculty have developed distance learning

courses, incorporated computer usage in their classes, and experimented with collaborative learning and testing. They have engaged in team teaching (Art/History, Philosophy/Psychology, Biology/Ethics, among others), and interactive TV, which requires 40 hours of training. They have attended conferences and sought professional development, and they brought back useful, practical "student centered" and "learning centered" techniques. Introduction of new and innovative courses into the curriculum typically are initiated by faculty. All of these efforts occurred long before Dr. O'Banion or the administrators who seem to be his converts came along.

On the topic of teacher unions, Dr. O'Banion is less than complimentary. After citing a college union's insistence that their administration honor a part of their agreed upon contract, he writes, "Teacher unions can certainly mobilize organized resistance to any changes in education, including those designed to place learning first. [ . . . ]

*cont'd on page 7*

## Social Security, Retirement, and You

The AFT has conducted a series of presentations around the college district on the impact that participation in ORP and TRS will have on individuals who are eligible to receive Social Security benefits. These employees may be expecting to receive full Social Security benefits, but, as the law currently stands, their benefits will be reduced, perhaps eliminated, due to the “windfall elimination provision” and the “governmental pension offset.” The good news is that legislation is now before Congress that will eliminate these significant reductions in benefits. To learn more about this issue and to take meaningful action to rectify this injustice,

visit the website of our state organization, the Texas Federation of Teachers: [www.tft.org](http://www.tft.org). On the upper right side of the home page, you will find a section titled “What’s New.” You may need to scroll to the right to see it. Beneath that section, click on “Social Security Benefit Cuts Target Texas School Employees.” That link will take you to a page with detailed information on the potential reduction in benefits. Also provided are the toll free telephone numbers and email addresses of congressional members as well as suggestions on appropriate means of addressing them and a sample letter. Initially, we were going to start a petition drive on this issue, but indi-

vidual letters to members of Congress will have a far more powerful effect. Here is an opportunity to make your voice heard on this issue. The AFT urges you to use it.

Staff



## AFT – American Federation of Teachers

The union is a professional organization regularly engaged in many activities. Membership dues support a host of activities and events, and membership is a bargain. If you believe faculty should have a voice in educational issues, you should join. If you believe employees should have a voice in the political process, you should join. If you believe in the value of employees helping out each other, you should join. If you believe employees should be treated with dignity, fairness, and respect, you should join. Your dues help support these values. Membership should not be thought of as only for “protection”, but, if you need help in a conflict, we will be there for you. Don’t join because you think you might get into trouble. Join because you embrace the values we embrace.



## O'Banion Revisited (cont'd)

The unions provide a visible structure for the communication of resistance to change, but the more invidious resistance is often hidden in the values and perceptions of individual faculty members”(30).

“Organized resistance” to change and “invidious” do not describe the behavior of the union with which I am familiar. Our national affiliate, the American Federation of Teachers, has been a voice of change for years. The late Al Shanker, president of the national union for many years, was recognized as one of the prime forces in educational reform of his time. His successor, Sandra Feldman, is developing the same reputation. The AFT’s national

higher education newsletter, On Campus, regularly advocates changes in distance learning and curriculum development, arguing that they should be faculty developed and driven. In the March 2002 issue, Feldman reports on the findings of an AFT taskforce’s report “Building a Profession,” which calls for changes, including higher professional standards, “high-quality mentoring programs which are helpful to new teachers and enhance the profession in other ways,” and revamped education departments with rigorous requirements to strengthen teacher preparation (5). The national union has also advocated increased pay and better working conditions for adjuncts.

Here at NHMCCD, our union has been a singularly influential agent for change. A review of our newsletter over the last twenty two years will reveal our engagement in the changes listed for our national organization and local changes far too numerous to list. Frankly, I am appalled that Dr. O’Banion, an ostensibly well-educated man, would make such sweeping generalizations. Perhaps he might consider change in this arena.

Alan Hall

## Teacher Unions Linked to Strong SAT, ACT

Although teacher unions are frequently accused of being obstacles to education reform, a new study finds a “significant and positive relationship” between the presence of teacher unions and strong state performance among students on SAT and ACT tests.

The study, “Do Teacher Unions Hinder Educational Performance? Lessons Learned from State SAT and ACT Scores,” is covered in the Winter 2001 edition of the *Harvard Educational Review* (Vol. 70, No. 4). The authors, Lala Carr Steelman of the University of South Carolina-Columbia, Brian Powell of Indiana University at Bloomington and Robert M. Carini, also of Indiana University, conclude that states with a greater percentage of teachers represented by unions tend to report higher test performance of their stu-

dents. “This pattern is surprisingly robust; it holds for both SAT and ACT scores and persists across different model specifications,” they write.

The authors note that when they began the study, they expected to find no relationship between teacher unions and measures of educational productivity, such as test scores. “That we found such a strongly consistent positive relationship across so many permutations of analysis should give pause to those who characterize teacher unions as adversaries to educational success and accountability,” say the authors.

The study confirms findings of an earlier study conducted by the Institute for Wisconsin’s Future in 1996. The focus of that study is the relationship between high, medium and low levels of teacher unioniza-

tion and student test scores on the SAT College Entrance exams and the NAEP fourth-grade reading tests in a state-by-state comparison. Findings of the 1996 study are posted online at the AFT Web site at [www.aft.org/research](http://www.aft.org/research). Click on “Collective Bargaining” to find “Impact of Teacher Unions on Student Performance.”

Copies of the Winter 2000 edition of the *Harvard Educational Review* are available for \$15 each plus postage and handling and can be ordered by calling 800/513-0736.

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## Grade Inflation

In a satirical article titled "Summa Cum Avaritia" (Harper's, February 2002), Nick Bromwell, a college English professor, cites some alarming information about grade inflation in a climate where "Students who are really customers deserve teachers who are really businessmen" (76). Bemoaning this new attitude toward students promoted by many administrators, Bromwell notes, "Today, young Amherst faculty coming up for tenure grade more charitably, knowing that the administration will ask every student they ever taught for his or her opinion. Consequently, Amherst students are much better than in my day: more than three quarters of them now graduate with honors" (76). He goes on to write, "Today, we mete out mainly As and

Bs, telling students either that they're brilliant or that they're very good. This is quite a step forward. In 1969, 7 percent of students nationwide received grades of A- or higher. By 1993, this proportion had risen to 26 percent. Grades of C or below moved from 25 percent in 1969 to 9 percent in 1993" (76).

Bromwell points out that grade inflation is not limited to Amherst. Even Ivy League schools have fallen prey to the trend:

At Princeton, the median grade point average for the class of 1973 was 3.078. The median GPA for the class of 1997 was 3.422. At Dartmouth, the average GPA rose from 3.06 to 3.25 between 1977 and 1994, with 47 percent of current

grades now registering as A or A-. [ . . . ] At Harvard, 49 percent of the undergraduate grades given during the 2000+01 year were A and A-, more than double the figure for 1966. The percentage of C+ grades and below has fallen from 28 percent in 1966-67 to 6 percent in 2000-01. Harvard now graduated fully 91 percent of its seniors with honors. (76)

Taking a wild guess that the students/customers at these institutions haven't gotten appreciably smarter over the last few years, we feel that faculty should be alarmed and careful not to fall victim to such practices.

Staff

## The Gang That Couldn't Shoot Straight

Shortly after my arrival at NHC in the fall of 1990, at a business function for my wife's employer, I met two former students of John Eudy. They asked me if I knew him, and when I professed that I did not, they proceeded to quite literally gush about how great an instructor he was, that they really enjoyed his class, and only mentioned as an afterthought that he was a tough grader. "But," the one student added, "it was one of the best classes we ever took."

Having sat in on his class from time to time, I can confirm that Mr. Eudy was an excellent instructor and public speaker. He was almost as entertaining and interesting covering his course material as I am. And, having served on the faculty excellence committee from time to time, and having observed more than a

few instructors in their classrooms, it's safe to say few people could surpass him.

But teaching talent is not a valued commodity at NHMCCD, and I hadn't been here very long before it became quite apparent, someone upstairs had a real grudge against this guy. The problem they had was that he was a lot smarter than they were.

For instance, at the "retreat" where the new faculty workload policy was shoved into place, advocates of the new policy publicly cited Mr. Eudy as an example of someone who "just teaches and does nothing else." Under the new workload policy, people like Mr. Eudy who "just teach" could be required to teach additional classes without additional pay if they did not meet the 70/20/10 criteria.

Ultimately, not only could they not force Mr. Eudy to teach additional courses for no pay, but just the opposite happened. He was paid tens of thousands of dollars NOT to teach at all.

Another example. No less than two different administrators, at various times over the years, publicly stated they were going to get rid of Mr. Eudy. As it turns out, they were both long gone before he was.

Then there were numerous investigations by the college's civil rights officer into Mr. Eudy's conduct, the result of which has been an investigation of the college's Civil Rights officer by the faculty senate.

And then there was the grand finale. When Mr. Eudy's grade distributions were put on display, in what was apparently an attempt to facilitate faculty support for



## The Gang That Couldn't Shoot Straight (cont'd)

Mr. Eudy's dismissal, it backfired badly. Within 48 hours, not only was the NHC faculty publicly up in arms over the posting of those grades, describing the act as "despicable" at best, but at the end of the meeting, Mr. Eudy arose and delivered what can only be described as a Churchillian farewell address that caused many of the assembled faculty to take to their feet with a standing ovation.

Talk about the gang that couldn't shoot straight. Not only was the administration unable to move Mr. Eudy's cheese, it was he who shoved it down their throats, cut off their tails and made them like it.

Why did the administration want this guy so badly? For one, he "knew the power of the Dark Side." He was once an administrator himself. He knew how petty, shallow

and vindictive the leadership culture is at NHMCCD.

Mr. Eudy's inside knowledge of how leadership decisions are made, and some of the secrets of those who make them, made enough people uncomfortable that they did everything they could to discredit and then dismiss him. His refusal to "kneel before Zod" was, however, in their eyes, his original sin. If NHMCCD had a license plate logo it would be "Suck up or Die!" Quiet mediocrity is embraced routinely by this district's leadership while insolent excellence makes you a target.

And yet despite being a target for so long, in the end, Mr. Eudy walked away not only with his head held high and a six figure golden parachute, but also with a new and heightened sense of respect from faculty, staff and students alike, all

courtesy of the very people who are left now to go back to doing what they do best: scurry around and look for some more cheese to move.

You don't have to like John Eudy to hate what was done. Mr. Eudy may not have been the perfect citizen, and he was certainly no friend of the AFT, but his fight is our fight. We cannot allow administration to use grade distributions as a measure of teaching talent or student success. The SACs visiting team's final report to NHC specifically states that course grades are an inappropriate performance indicator. Raising grades for the sake of raising grades lowers standards. It's as simple as that. Or at least, it should be.

Tim Howard

## Reflections No. 2

I was born and raised in the small coastal town of Lianga, Suri-gao del Sur, Philippines. It was a very rural town bereft of modern city amenities. There were neither phones nor televisions. A town crier would walk around town to announce community events. Travel to another town was limited. Dirt roads were barely paved from town to town. As a young boy, I would spend my afternoons after school walking on the white sandy beach just watching the sun as it gradually disappeared on the horizon. I would watch the alternating crests of the gargantuan waves of the Pacific Ocean and feel the easterly wind gently on my face, reminding me that it was time to go home. With one last glance, I dreamed about crossing the ocean and going wherever my imagination would take me. That was thirty-five years ago.

Living in America is like living my childhood dream. In spite of its pitfalls and imperfections, this is still the best nation in the world to live out one's dream. Growing up under a military regime was like living in prison. I started high school when martial law was declared in the Philippines on September 21, 1970. My first taste of the regime was when I was on a bus bound for home. Our bus was stopped at an army checkpoint and all male passengers were lined up for interrogation. I will never forget that day. We were so helpless. We had no rights. *Habeas Corpus* was suspended. Not a word from any of us. One wrong move would mean immediate arrest, torture, or God-knows-what. Silence and submission was the common response to every intrusion of our privacy. To speak out and defend our rights was a sure way to deten-

tion, torture, and unexplained disappearance. To assemble, to meet, or to attend a social gathering was a highly sensitive activity that could be shortchanged by mere suspicions. To believe in basic human rights and freedom was to prepare for the unforeseen consequences of our beliefs, including the supreme sacrifice of life. I had many friends and colleagues who were confronted with such situations. Some decided to join the armed struggle and headed for the mountains. Some took the moderate stance by going through the political process of addressing grievances through available means provided by the regime. Although this approach had helped address issues, it adversely affected the peoples' perceptions of the regime. This became a moral blessing to an oppressive regime. Nevertheless, people from the Northern and South-

## Reflections No. 2 (cont'd)

ern Philippines had enough. When the stones started crying out and the boiling cauldrons reached their maximum temperature, the nation decided it was time to unite and change Philippine history. In 1986 the "People Power" bloodless revolution shocked the world. Filled with exhilaration and a feeling of freedom, I left the Philippines and went to Papua New Guinea to do missionary work among the Papuans of the coastal and the highland provinces of such a naturally endowed and politically young country. That was fifteen years ago.

North Harris College has been my mission arena for several years. I have seen students come and go. They have come with different mindsets. Some come as neophytes in the arena of academic pursuits. Some come with clear plans about what to do, where to go, and why. I

have been very fortunate to be able to participate in our students' quests for academic success and lifelong learning. Often I have said to a student in my office, "*Schola non scholae sed vitae.*" It is an old phrase, but it is truly relevant to our times since our NHMCCD value statements communicate a similar insight of "allowing citizens to develop to the full extent of their ability, to succeed in a competitive work environment, and to be *effective lifelong learners.*"

The Admissions Office provides the doorway to student success. Whatever we do can make or break a new student's dream. I feel that we have the privilege and the responsibility of welcoming our students and instilling in their minds that there are worlds of opportunities waiting to be tapped and developed to their fullest realization. We set the tone

for a positive learning environment before students meet the faculty who will light that fire from within and keep it burning on their way to success. We support our faculty and academic counselors as we guide our students towards an experience of lifelong learning. We, the support and professional staff, create the *conditio sine qua non* that prepares students for the academic quest for success.

With the new changes occurring in our college district, I applaud the current move to reward our dedicated faculty their long awaited increase for competitive, fair and just compensation. I am also hopeful that the support staff and professional staff will benefit from these changes. I have to remind myself that I am living the American Dream.

Severo M. Balason, Jr

### CALL FOR ARTICLES

We invite you to send us your opinions, your news, your questions and so forth. The Advocate is a forum for information and free interchange of ideas. Send your articles to Dawn Baxley, Editor, MC, or e-mail: dawnb@nhmccd.edu, or submit to any of the following officers:

Alan Hall, President	North Harris College	ACAD 217-G
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Rich Almstedt	Kingwood College	FTC 100-G
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