



On Campus

THE NATIONAL PUBLICATION OF AFT HIGHER EDUCATION FACULTY AND PROFESSIONAL STAFF

Grad rates exposed	2
Facebook's redeeming value?	3
Fix healthcare NOW!	5
Postdocs post gains	7
Flu season and you	11



Can we talk?

Pressing for a place at the accreditation table PAGE 8

From left to right, Cuesta faculty Allison Merzon, Kevin Bontenbal, Peter Dill and Steve Leone are defending their college against accreditation sanctions.

Just Ask!

Posing questions to make colleges squirm

PAGE 4

Billions for higher ed

This is the year of the community college

PAGE 6

FACE triumph

Oregon passes law on faculty excellence

PAGE 7

Member Benefits

Check out your AFT + Member Benefits

INSIDE

The **time** is now!



The time to reform healthcare is now!

Contact your members of
Congress today: Call **866/327-8670**
or visit **www.aft.org/fight4america**.



With us, not to us

RANDI WEINGARTEN, AFT President

HIGHER EDUCATION FACULTY and staff too often are on the receiving end of administrators' edicts on instructional and assessment policies, class size, course loads, staffing or various other decisions affecting their work. And, too often, professors and other personnel find that these directives lack the insight and common sense that come from involving the real authorities—the people who actually do the work.

I've heard a common plea from many AFT members, whether they work in higher education, elementary or secondary education, or other professions: When it comes to decisions affecting our work, we want management to do these things *with us, not to us*. That's the theme of this issue's cover story on accreditation.

At the national level, the Obama administration has shown tremendous respect for the value of employees and their unions. In the opening days of his administration, President Obama signed several pieces of legislation strengthening collective bargaining and protecting workers' rights.

The administration also has welcomed the AFT's input on pressing issues in higher education. And the president and his secretary of education have said that decisions and policies affecting the delivery of education should be made with education personnel, not imposed on us.

I know that some of the toughest challenges and barriers to engagement are found not at the national level, but in our members' workplaces, where programs are implemented and contracts are enforced. We must insist

that higher education personnel have a seat at the table and the opportunity to engage. And then, when we do, we must seize that opportunity.

Through our unions as well as any shared governance institutions on campus, we must be ready to raise our voices, to advise and advocate, and to accept an appropriate share of responsibility. We must be the engine of

“Whether the issue is academic staffing or academic freedom, decisions affecting our professions and our workplaces are best made **with us, not imposed on us.**”

real change, providing the ideas, the guidance and the people who can get the job done. That's what a strong, forward-looking union does. We bring the collective wisdom, experience, voice and abilities of our members to the table.

AFT Higher Education affiliates have shown that engagement on some of the most important issues affecting academia can result in our administration partners making changes with our input and agreement, leading to more collaborative and more effective approaches. The examples below show how several of our higher education affiliates have engaged with management to help shape decisions affecting their work.

When the Los Angeles Community College District decided to expand its distance education program by, among other things, doubling the maximum class size, the faculty union raised concerns. The local worked with management to allow such an increase on a trial basis for a limited number of courses. In exchange, management agreed that faculty would be given an appropriate amount of

time and compensation to meet the increased load. Both sides agreed to participate in a labor-management task force to assess the educational value of the distance education initiative, which, to date, is operating smoothly.

At Henry Ford Community College in Michigan, the faculty and management reached agreement on how to handle perfor-

mance issues. Should concerns about a faculty member arise, the administration first must inform the union, which then informs the appropriate departmental peer mentor committee, which in turn reviews the concerns with the faculty member. An intervention program may be implemented, or, if the committee finds no validity in the concerns, the matter is concluded.

At Rutgers University in New Jersey, the faculty union and the administration agreed to work together to provide greater stability in the balance of full- and part-time faculty available to students. In lieu of faculty raises, for example, the latest contract provides a substantial investment in a faculty development fund that is intended to create 100 new tenure-track positions by 2011.

Whether the issue is academic staffing or academic freedom, decisions affecting our professions and our workplaces are best made with us, not imposed on us. That's what AFT Higher Education is working toward, and we will support you in your efforts to achieve that goal in your workplace.



A Union of Professionals

AFT ON CAMPUS (ISSN 1064-1971) is published bimonthly except for summer, by the American Federation of Teachers, 555 New Jersey Ave. N.W., Washington, DC 20001-2079. Phone: 202/879-4400. E-mail: bmckenna@aft.org
www.aft.org

Periodicals postage paid at Washington, D.C., and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to AFT ON CAMPUS, 555 New Jersey Ave. N.W., Washington, DC 20001-2079

MEMBERS: To change your address or subscription, notify your local union treasurer.

AFT ON CAMPUS is mailed to all AFT Higher Education members as a benefit of membership. Subscriptions represent \$2.50 of annual dues. Nonmember subscription price is \$12/year.

Although advertisements are screened as carefully as possible, acceptance of an advertisement does not imply AFT endorsement of the product or service.

© 2009 AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS, AFL-CIO

RANDI WEINGARTEN
President
ANTONIA CORTESE
Secretary-Treasurer
LORRETTA JOHNSON
Executive Vice President

KRIS KEMMERER
Communications Director

ROGER S. GLASS
Editor-in-Chief

BARBARA MCKENNA
Managing Editor

JANE FELLER
Copy Editor

LAURA BAKER
MARY BOYD
ADRIENNE COLES
DANIEL GURSKY
ANNETTE LICITRA
MIKE ROSE
KATHY WALSH
Contributing Editors

KAIRA STELLY
Editorial Intern

CHARLES GLENDINNING
Art Director

JENNIFER CHANG
PAMELA WOLFE
Graphic Designers

SHARON WRIGHT
Production Manager

SHARON FRANCOUR
Production Coordinator

SHAWNITRA HAWKINS
ALICIA NICK
Production Support

Cover Photo:
CHRIS LESCHINSKY

Latest report on college graduation rates tells only half the story

Outcomes are as varied as the institutions themselves

A RECENT REPORT from the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) purports to show dramatic variations in graduation rates among a range of “competitive” to “noncompetitive” U.S. colleges and universities.

Released this summer, “Diplomas and Dropouts: Which Colleges Actually Graduate Their Students (and Which Don’t)” uses official U.S. Department of Education graduation rates and selectivity rankings from Barron’s *Profiles of American Colleges* to analyze institutions with similar admissions criteria and students. It finds, on average, that four-year colleges graduate less than 60 percent of their freshmen within six years: Noncompetitive institutions graduate 35 percent of their students, while the most competitive schools graduate 88 percent.

In the past, the AFT has been critical of the federal government data source AEI used for its report. In a 2004 study, the union documented the dangers of relying on federal graduation rate data alone to interpret student persistence and completion patterns. The AFT study, “More Than Counting Caps and Gowns,” showed that federal graduation data:

- only count people who start and finish at the same college;

- don’t count the 40 percent of students who attend college part time;

- don’t count those who take more than six years to complete their degrees.

The AFT report concluded that relying on the limited data “presents a factually incorrect and misleading picture of what is going on.”

“We wrote this in the spirit of transparency and advocacy for higher education,” said AEI resident scholar and director of education policy studies Frederick Hess about the AEI report when it was released.

“Student success in college is a complicated topic,” says AFT vice president Sandra Schroeder, president of AFT Washington and co-chair of the AFT Higher Education program and policy council.

“President Obama has rightly made college graduation a national priority for his administration. The education community must do our part to shape policies and inform the public based on a full picture of the challenges we face.”



Transforming teacher education

NCATE’s first new standards in 10 years focus on the clinical

SHRINKING THE GAP between theory and practice—between coursework and working in the classroom—is the goal of a major redesign of accreditation requirements for teacher education programs. The new strategy announced this summer by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) introduces two alternative pathways for institutions seeking accreditation.

The revised accreditation plan offers teacher-training institutions a choice between the “continuous improvement” track, which requires an institution to move beyond an “acceptable level” to demonstrate “excellence,” and the “transformation initiative” track, which requires an institution to make major changes in its program. The changes required under the “transformation” track

must address schools’ critical needs, such as teacher recruitment and retention. They also must strengthen the program’s clinical focus, demonstrate the program’s and its graduates’ impact on learning, and build on research-based approaches to preK-12 student learning and teacher preparation.

“In the past, accreditation wrapped clinical experience around coursework. This approach reverses the priority, encouraging institutions to place teacher candidates in yearlong training programs and wrap coursework around clinical practice,” says NCATE president James G. Cibulka.

Several statewide programs, including Tennessee’s and Connecticut’s, are using the redesigned accreditation system to transform teacher preparation and preK-12 student learning. However, while the plan provides opportunities for institutions, it also will present challenges, since coursework will have to be re-created to match the new NCATE standards.

Beginning this year, NCATE will introduce the new approach to nearly 700 teacher education programs that prepare a majority of the nation’s teachers. According to NCATE, it marks the first major revision of teacher education requirements in 10 years.

NCATE’s clinical focus parallels the thrust of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act’s stimulus programs. The ARRA provides \$100 million for the Teacher Quality Partnership, which focuses on improving teacher quality in high-need schools and early childhood education. —KAIRA STELLY



Do problems associated with social networking outweigh the benefits?


YES

Social networks are time bandits

BY NORAH WEI TANG

FOR TODAY'S COLLEGE STUDENTS, popular social networking sites like Facebook, MySpace and Twitter are part of everyday life. On the surface, these sites appear to be harmless tools friends use to connect with each other and exchange thoughts.

A deeper look, however, raises troubling questions: Does the virtual connection justify the huge amount of time and energy it takes away from college life? After all, students can always meet in person, talk over the phone or write e-mails to build more meaningful relationships.

The convenience of social networking sites creates the illusion of a huge network of acquaintances. In reality, many of these "friends" are strangers the social networker normally wouldn't care about. Moreover, the possibility of immediate interaction that these sites offer poses a huge distraction. As long as users have access to the Internet, they can be plugged in 24/7—literally: whether they are in class, writing up assignments in the lab or studying late at night. This can cause serious time management issues.

Social networking also feeds students' unrealistic expectations of instant gratification. In this era of text messaging, file downloading and Googling, patience is a casualty. Users install

Facebook and Twitter applications on their cell phones, and update or post, comment or reply, whenever and wherever they want. Gradually, they can be lured into believing that their input is so important, even a single day's absence from the network may lead to irreparable anxiety or depression. The shallowness of the constantly plugged-in life may eventually lessen people's appreciation of the real beauty and meaning of social and academic interactions.

Finally, there is the permanent nature of posting. We know that employers browse potential employees' Facebook profile pages. Have students not learned the lesson of Olympic champion Michael Phelps, whose career went into a tailspin when an unauthorized photo of him appeared on a Facebook page? With the increasing size of a loose network, it is difficult for one to control and monitor who the audience is and what others may post.

Overall, social networking creates more problems than advantages for college students.

Norah Wei Tang is studying communications at the University of Illinois at Chicago and is a member of the Graduate Employees Organization/AFT.


NO

Social networking enhances the free exchange of ideas

BY ELIZABETH ANNE WOOD

HIGHER EDUCATION DEPENDS on the free exchange of ideas. Social networking technology restructures and expands the space within which we exercise that freedom, increasing the number and variety of people with whom we can exchange ideas and leveling hierarchies that inhibit interaction.

As with all tools, effective use must be learned. These tools allow us to build an information "commons," making all kinds of information (including authoritative sources) accessible to many people outside of academic institutions. When experts keep blogs and are active on Twitter or Facebook, students and nonstudents can ask them questions about their work. I met and continue to talk with Kate

Bornstein, an intellectual role model of mine, because we follow each other on Twitter. Social networking lets many more people—who otherwise might never meet—learn from one another.

Social networking tools also facilitate intellectual engagement. Authoritative blogs are especially engaging because they combine the communication of complex ideas with archivable discussion of those ideas. *Racism Review*, a multi-author blog produced by Jessie Daniels (Hunter College) and Joe Feagin (Texas A&M University) explores issues of racism in politics and culture

from a sociological perspective, with active, intelligent conversation in the comments on each post. The American Sociological Association publishes blogs alongside its *Contexts* magazine. Scienceblogs.com hosts more than 70 well-researched and documented blogs with numerous contributors and commenters. These are just a few places where students, faculty and other interested readers interact and explore new ideas they can then bring into the classroom.

Social networking tools have obvious applications for online courses, and faculty also use them well in classroom-based courses to support study groups and collaborative projects, and to extend discussions of course material outside the classroom. As we incorporate these tools in our teaching, we learn from our students about the technologies shaping their lives, while teaching effective use of those technologies and important information-literacy skills, and we expand access to intellectual discourse at the same time.

Elizabeth Anne Wood is assistant professor of sociology at Nassau Community College and a representative to the executive board of the Nassau Community College Federation of Teachers/AFT.



DAN SHERBO



Just Ask!

AFT launches campaign to reach public on staffing crisis

WHEN PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS and their parents come to campus, they're usually armed with questions: How selective is the admissions process? What does tuition cover? Are students allowed to have cars? How much financial aid is available?

This fall, the AFT wants students and the public to ask a few more—and consider the implications of the answers:

How likely am I to be taught by full-time faculty in my first year?

What percentage of courses are taught by grad students? By part-time faculty?

How much do they get paid per course?

Do they have offices and hold office hours?

These questions more directly get at the heart of matter: the quality of students' educational experience.

The fact is, colleges and universities are

investing less and less in the educators who are crucial to a student's success. Many parents don't know that, and the institutions aren't going to volunteer the information. Yet faculty who are undercompensated and under-resourced aren't exactly what parents and students have in mind when they start dipping into their life savings—or incurring considerable debt—for college.

This is the thrust of the AFT's new "Just Ask" campaign being kicked off this fall. Its goal is to reach parents, counselors and students to start putting some "consumer pressure" on colleges and universities to end the harmful trend toward using more underpaid and overworked part-time faculty.

Just Ask is an outgrowth of the three-year-old Faculty and College Excellence (FACE) campaign—the nationwide initiative of the

AFT and other organizations to address the growing staffing crisis that is threatening the quality of higher education.

FACE's dual goals are pay equity for contingent faculty and the rebuilding of the tenured faculty workforce. Just Ask aims to bring more external awareness to this issue and the AFT's role in addressing it, as well as to educate more of the AFT's membership about FACE.

In September, the first Just Ask ad appears in the *U.S. News & World Report* "Best Colleges" issue and online. Keep an eye out for other references to the Just Ask campaign, including op-eds and videos. And if family or friends seek out your advice on college, remind them to find out the value their first-choice colleges place on their core teaching staff by *just asking*.

The call for collaboration and innovation

Education conference draws 2,500 to Washington, D.C.

Right, U.S. Labor Secretary Hilda Solis pledged to help make the economy work for everyone. Below, AFT president Randi Weingarten and U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan shared the stage to lead a frank town-hall-style exchange with the audience.



AFT PRESIDENT Randi Weingarten called on elected and school officials to do school reform "with us, not to us," and urged educators and their unions to "be the engines of real change in education, providing the ideas and the people that can get the job done."

Speaking on July 13 at the biennial AFT QuEST (Quality Educational Standards in Teaching) conference almost exactly one year after her election as AFT president, Weingarten emphasized the need for collaboration.

Many in the audience of more than 2,500 educators wore buttons bearing the message "With us, not to us," a variation on the campaign pledge President Obama made to enact education reforms "with teachers, not to teachers."

Also addressing the QuEST conference were U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and U.S. Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis.

Duncan participated with Weingarten in a town-hall-style Q-and-A that featured frank but friendly discussion. The education secretary made clear from the outset that he was there to build bridges, not burn them. "I think we have the chance to do something special together" on key education issues, Duncan told the crowd.

Solis, who grew up in a strong union household, said her teachers were key to helping her succeed in life. She pledged to work with the AFT on vital issues such as education, healthcare and workers' rights.

"We can make strategic changes to the economy to make it work for everybody—not just the folks who work on Wall Street, but people who live on Main Street and work in our communities," she said.

On the Employee Free Choice Act—a top priority for the labor movement—Solis said she and President Obama are strongly behind the legislation, which would help expand collective bargaining rights to more workers.

In introducing Solis, AFT executive vice president Lorretta Johnson told the audience that a longtime AFT member—Democrat Judy Chu—had won a special election on July 14 to fill Solis' vacant seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. Chu, who teaches psychology at East Los Angeles Community College, is a member of the Los Angeles College Faculty Guild.

In addition to hearing from national movers and shakers, QuEST participants attended workshops on the latest teaching and research innovations.



PHOTOS BY MICHAEL CAMPBELL

If ever there was a
time to fix healthcare...

the time is **NOW!**

AS HEALTH INSURANCE premiums continue to rise at three times the rate of wages, and more and more businesses are being forced to choose between covering their employees and staying afloat, the urgency to reform health insurance continues to grow.

President Obama and Congress remain firmly committed to a reform package that controls costs, guarantees coverage and provides more choices for every American—principles shared by the AFT.

Most AFT members have solid, union-negotiated healthcare benefits. Yet, many feel the crunch of rising premiums, higher deductibles and increased out-of-pocket costs. A growing number of AFT Higher Education members are contingent workers. Their healthcare “benefits” are a hodgepodge of offerings, ranging from full coverage to prorated coverage, from the option to buy into a group plan to no coverage. Healthcare reform can’t come soon enough for those who get no benefits with their employment.

The union recently asked members how healthcare costs were affecting them—and their families. The responses show a mixture of deep concern, frustration and despair over the nation’s ailing healthcare system. “Co-payments and deductibles are rising while salaries are staying the same,” writes Max Boettger, a member of the Onaway Federation of Teachers in Michigan.

“I live paycheck to paycheck and can’t afford to contribute to a pension,” writes Louisa McCabe, a designer and City University of New York instructor. “If we lose any work, we won’t be able to afford health insurance.”

Susan Stuart from California has been a freeway flyer for 15 years. During that time she has never had health insurance for herself or her two now-grown children. “This is so wrong and we all know it,” she says. “But the failure is really the system itself. Health insurance is not a commodity. It’s a basic human need.”

Stories like these are becoming commonplace, raising the stakes and hope for *real* reform. “Groups that battled healthcare reform in the past are seemingly working together to find a cure for our healthcare system. Hopefully, a breakthrough is possible,” AFT president Randi Weingarten says.

Reform that lowers costs and protects the benefits of people who are satisfied with their current coverage won’t happen without an all-out push from healthcare reform advocates—including unions and their members. That push includes making sure lawmakers are fully aware of how the crisis is hurting families as well as the nation’s economy.

In early August, Weingarten sent a letter to each U.S. senator outlining the key provisions that are necessary for a comprehensive reform bill. “The Senate bill must protect working families from high premiums and excessive out-of-pocket costs,” she wrote.

Weingarten also expressed opposition to taxing benefits. “Whether the health insurance tax is on the worker, the employer or the

health plan itself, the effect will be increased costs, not just for ‘gold plated, Cadillac’ plans but for millions of working families that have employer-provided coverage.”

AFT-represented nurses and health professionals, who work on the frontlines every day, see reform as a way to improve the quality of care their patients receive. “I’ve seen too many patients coming into the hospital who have waited too long for care because they don’t have insurance or are underinsured,” says Charlotte Crowe, a medical surgical nurse from Jersey City, N.J., and a member of the AFT-affiliated Health Professionals and Allied Employees. Crowe was among the 180 AFT members who met with more than 75 lawmakers and staff during the joint conference of AFT Healthcare and AFT Public Employees in June. AFT members are often the union’s most effective messengers in making the case for healthcare reform, Weingarten says.

Nearly 10,000 people rallied in Washington, D.C., in June to demand reform now. Healthcare reform is “a fight that has been fought for decades against powerful interests.” Sen. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) told the crowd. Pointing to the U.S. Capitol, he added: “We need all of you to hold everybody in that building’s feet to the fire.”

Nearly 10,000 people rallied in June to demand healthcare reform, left. AFT activists, below, take to the stage to pump up QuEST conference participants before they headed off to the offices of their congressional representatives.



MICHAEL CAMPBELL



MICHAEL CAMPBELL



President builds his higher education agenda

Obama says community colleges are 'an undervalued asset'

PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA is making sure this is the year—make that *decade*—of the community college. In January, he set out a goal for the United States to lead the world, by 2020, in the proportion of college-degree holders in the population. This summer, he started putting in place the elements to make that happen. Community colleges figure prominently in his plans.

The president announced the American Graduation Initiative, so named for the 5 million additional Americans who may earn degrees as a result of the program. The \$12 billion program includes:

\$9 billion for “challenge grants” to fund job training programs and business partnerships, workforce development projects, expanded course offerings and dual high school-college enrollment programs, and remedial and adult education. It also would pay for a research center focused on increasing the number of students who complete their degrees.

\$2.5 billion to back loans to colleges for facilities improvement and expansion.

\$500 million for a new online skills laboratory to provide free online courses that could be offered by any community college, soft-

ware, and evaluations of what does and doesn't work online.

The day after Obama's proposal, U.S. Rep. George Miller (D-Calif.), chairman of the House Committee on Education and Labor, introduced the Student Aid and Fiscal Re-

“The most effective way to develop and implement **reforms** and other improvements on campuses is to ensure that **faculty and staff** are **engaged** in shaping those initiatives and programs.”

— RANDI WEINGARTEN, AFT president

sponsibility Act. This legislation, which quickly passed out of committee, would provide the vehicle to execute Obama's broad plan and then some.

It would pump money into student aid, send resources to community colleges and historically black colleges and universities, and support front-end investments in early childhood programs, which pay off with high school and college completion rates down the road. The bill also includes \$10 billion in savings to reduce the deficit (the act's “fiscal responsibility” part).

“For many students, community college offers an important pathway to attain higher education, to launch careers or to retool for new work opportunities,” says AFT president Randi Weingarten. The union, she adds, will be making sure our members are part of the reform process: “The most effective way to develop and implement reforms and other improvements on campuses is to ensure that faculty and staff are engaged in shaping those initiatives and programs.”

Obama presented his initiative at Macomb Community College in Michigan, a place very hard hit by job losses. The audience cheered when the president said,

“Community colleges are under increasing pressure to cap enrollments and scrap courses and cut costs, as states and municipalities face budget shortfalls. And this is in addition to the challenges you face in the best of times, as these schools receive far less funding per student than typical four-year colleges and universities. So community colleges are an undervalued asset in our country. Not only is that not right, it's not smart.”

Among those cheering was John McDonald, president of the Henry Ford Community College Federation of Teachers, also in Michigan, which represents full- and part-time faculty at the college. Before the speech, on behalf of the AFT, McDonald met Obama and thanked him for his support of community colleges.

“The funding is overdue and very much needed,” said McDonald afterward. “We have had a 30 percent increase in enrollment at HFCC in the last two years. Much of it is people displaced coming back to retool.

“On two counts, we appreciate what the president is proposing. First, we need to expand facilities ... so capital improvement money is very much needed.” Expanding student support services, such as counseling and advising, is a second concern: “Every two-year student coming in requires extensive advising,” said McDonald. “So we are hoping some of this money will allow us to expand those services.”

Michael Rosen, president of Local 212 at Milwaukee (Wis.) Area Technical College, worries about the focus on graduation rates. “Most of our students are part-time. That means many have no intention of graduating. They come to get the skills upgrade they need or to get the training they need.”

Another point, McDonald emphasizes, is the need for full-time faculty to develop curriculum and programs and to deliver them in much larger numbers.

“It sends a terrible message to students coming to our institutions, when we convey how important education is to finding secure careers and [then] 50 percent of those teaching their classes are adjunct faculty. Those faculty would love to have a secure career, too.”



LARRY DOWNING/REUTERS/CORBIS

The Macomb Community College audience gave the president an enthusiastic welcome even before they learned of his \$12 billion plans.



State certifies union for Rutgers postdocs

They join only two other postdoctoral groups in the U.S. to form unions

THE NEW JERSEY Public Employment Relations Commission has certified the vote of nearly 350 postdoctoral associates and fellows to be represented by Rutgers Council of AAUP Chapters/AFT, the union that represents more than 5,000 faculty and graduate employees at Rutgers University. This is only the third group of postdocs in the country to vote for union representation.

Postdoctoral associates and fellows are grant-based, nontenure-track research faculty who work under the direction of a principal investigator, usually a university professor. Generally, their salaries are low, job security is nonexistent, work rules are arbitrary, and visa and housing support for this largely foreign-national workforce is negligible.

"Postdocs are an absolutely essential part of Rutgers' research effort, and we should be treated with the same level of respect as other



RICHELLE FIORE



Rutgers postdoctoral associates like Alan Wan say a union will help the professionals focus on their work.

professionals working at the university," says Alan Wan, a postdoctoral associate in the chemistry department. "Having a union contract will help us set working conditions that are fair and allow us to better focus on our work."

The next step for the union is to negotiate a contract with Rutgers University.

"The improved pay and benefits that come with a contract will help Rutgers continue to attract top-notch Ph.D. researchers and remain a center of research excellence," says Lisa Klein, immediate past president of Rutgers AAUP/AFT and a principal investigator herself.

The two other groups of unionized postdoctoral associates and fellows are the University Health Professionals at the University of Connecticut, which affiliated with the AFT in 2004, and the Postdoctoral Researchers Organize/UAW in the University of California system.

Legislation passes on academic staffing crisis

Oregon is first state in the nation to have a law addressing faculty excellence

BOTH HOUSES OF THE OREGON Legislature have voted to put the principles of the AFT's Faculty and College Excellence (FACE) campaign into state statute. The state Senate's 30-0 vote on June 27 followed a nearly unanimous 54-1 vote in the state House of Representatives on HB 2557, the Oregon Faculty and College Excellence Act. The bill is now scheduled to be signed by Oregon Gov. Ted Kulongoski.

"This is a great step for contingent faculty and for Oregon's higher education system," says David Rives, AFT-Oregon president-elect and part-time community college instructor. "I'm thrilled that we're finally getting public awareness about the faculty staffing crisis."

The FACE campaign presses for more full-time faculty and pro-rata pay and benefits for contingent or adjunct faculty. AFT affiliates around the country have successfully drawn attention to the staffing crisis in higher education by having FACE legislation introduced

and by testifying at hearings associated with the bills. This has generated discussion and has led to progress on such solutions as increasing pay-equity money for part-time faculty and dedicating money to convert part-time positions into full-time positions. In Oregon, dozens of AFT-Oregon members attended hearings and wrote their legislators in support of the bill.

Oregon's bill, as amended, allows part-time faculty at community colleges and universities access to high-quality health insurance benefits through the Oregon Educators Benefit Board (OEBB) healthcare plan. It also holds colleges accountable by requiring annual reporting and tracking of faculty staffing and salary ratios for review by the Legislature and governor.

State Rep. Michael Dembrow carried the bill through the Oregon House, giving a passionate presentation on behalf of part-time faculty throughout the state.

"All of these faculty members are equally

credentialed with their full-time colleagues, and most of them are excellent teachers. However, they are paid much less, with few benefits, and they have little job security," Dembrow said. "Many of them are, in fact, teaching full time—and more than full time—but their work is spread out over multiple institutions."

AFT VOICES



Do you feel your college is preparing students for 21st-century jobs? Why or why not?

IT'S YOUR VOICE We want to hear from you on issues throughout the year! Visit www.aft.org/voices today where you can respond to this and other questions.

BY BARBARA MCKENNA

ACCREDITATION, such a lightning rod for conservative education reformers during the second half of the Bush administration, remains a live wire under the new president.

When Bush appointed Margaret Spellings as U.S. Secretary of Education in 2005, one of her first acts was to create the Commission on the Future of Higher Education. Its purpose was to do for postsecondary education what No Child Left Behind tried to do for K-12: bring accountability to the work of colleges and universities, and get students prepared for a 21st-century workforce.

The commission rapidly homed in on accreditation as a vehicle for executing widespread academic reforms. It looked for a way to use the Department of Education's oversight function to set standards based on performance outcomes, such as measures of student learning, completion rates and other assessments.

Because there was an ideological fervor to the commission's work, higher education was

on guard to preserve the peer-review and self-regulatory characteristics of accreditation, which many in the world view as our system's greatest strength. A change in the makeup of Congress after midterm elections resulted in the passage of legislation that reined in the power of the education secretary.

The language added to the reauthorized Higher Education Act prohibits the secretary of education from "establishing any criteria that specifies, defines, or prescribes the standards that accrediting agencies or associations shall use to assess any institution's success with respect to student achievement."

But while the disaster of national accountability standards has been corralled, another horse clearly has left the barn. The act specifically allows accrediting agencies to establish institutional standards with respect to student achievement. This reflects a call from legislators and the public for greater transparency in higher education, with more attention focused on student success.

It is a call that President Barack Obama

echoed when he announced a series of multibillion-dollar higher education programs and aid expansions in the first months of his presidency. His goal is greater access and attainment—more students in the door of college and more out with degrees.

Seeking a role for faculty and staff

Accreditation is evolving, and most say that is a good thing. But as assessment instruments proliferate and finances shrink, it is more appropriate than ever, say AFT leaders, for faculty and their unions to ensure that they participate in conversations about standards and accreditation.

When faculty/staff organizations try to get the ear of accrediting agencies, they are usually turned away or told to work through their college administration. Accrediting commissions say they welcome the involvement of faculty on visiting teams, but in practice, faculty participation tends to be minimal. It is hard for faculty and staff to get away from classes for a week. Also, accrediting agencies seek names of faculty through the college presidents—who might decide not to submit the names of those who are outspoken.

Yet faculty must persist, says AFT Higher Education director Larry Gold, who has met with regional accreditors on this and other issues. AFT leaders are seeking traction in two areas central to the union: academic staffing practices, and the implications of student learning outcome (SLO) standards on academic freedom and subjects of collective bargaining.

Five years ago, delegates to the 2004 AFT convention passed a resolution on "Reviewing Institutional Accreditation and Standards Regarding Contingent-Academic Faculty." It notes the lax monitoring and enforcement practices of accreditation as they relate to working conditions and exploitation of contingent faculty—even in states that have laws (rarely enforced) about full-time/part-time ratios and equity. The resolution calls on the AFT to propose to accrediting bodies best practices on faculty staffing that will lead to quality assurance and improvement.

"How can accrediting agencies demand evidence of quality in outcomes, without also seeking evidence of a quality investment in the workforce that produces the outcomes?" asks Phillip Smith, president of the United University Professions/AFT/NEA at the State University of New York and an AFT vice president.

Can we talk?

Pressing for a place at the accreditation table



Cuesta College faculty have spent countless hours this summer preparing a response to an accreditation sanction.

CHRIS LESCHINSKY



Taming the SLO agenda

One effect of the accountability movement is that student learning outcomes (SLO) have become a common standard in institutional accreditation. The Western Association of Schools and Colleges, which accredits all preK-12 and higher education in California, Hawaii and the Pacific territories, was an early leader on this front.

In the mid-1990s, WASC looked at redesigning accreditation by applying a “total quality management” approach borrowed from the corporate world. In education, this translated to a focus on continuous improvement and what WASC calls “a culture of evidence.”

Now, student learning outcomes and the feeding of that “culture of evidence” has so permeated all the standards for accreditation that some in community colleges think the process is unmanageable. They point in particular to WASC’s two-year college arm, the American Council of Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC), and the experiences of colleges in California since the council adopted new standards in 2002.

At first, the community college academic senates resisted the new standards, but they eventually decided they needed to get in front of the issue. They were concerned that peer review not be replaced with government regulation.

In a report adopted in fall 2004, “The 2002 Accreditation Standards: Implementation,” the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges noted, “Local faculty must safeguard academic freedom, preserve local senate authority with regards to academic and professional matters, and develop SLOs that do not undermine local senate authority, curriculum design or academic freedom.”

Designing SLOs is labor intensive. Also, because of a mandate to address quality deficiencies within the timeframe of a student’s typical tenure at an institution, two-year colleges are in speed-up mode. They are always in a state of preparing for accreditation reviews or responding to reports.

“Meeting the standards is like NCLB on

steroids in California,” says Allison Merzon, president of the Cuesta College Federation of Teachers.

Cuesta’s current experience is a case in point. On Feb. 5, 2009, Cuesta College received a letter from Barbara Beno, ACCJC president, informing the college that it was being put on warning status. The letter summarized nine recommendations, identifying broad areas where the college was out of compliance with the council’s four standards. Further, the recommendations included 48 citations, by standard section and paragraph, of where the deficiencies occurred.

The college was given a deadline of Oct. 15 to resolve the recommendations.

The number of recommendations was “over the top,” says Kevin Bontenbal, a librarian who was co-chair of last year’s self-study committee. Now, each recommendation has

a committee assigned to work on that part of the response. That’s nine committees with two co-chairs each, a faculty member and an administrator. Since February and through the summer, the committees have met countless hours, gathering information and writing response drafts. In fact, on a July morning at 7 o’clock, Merzon, Bontenbal and two other members of the Cuesta Accreditation Steering Committee were on campus to work on the third draft of the report. Joined by Steve Leone, faculty senate chair and co-chair of the steering committee, and Peter Dill, former senate chair, they spoke with *AFT On Campus* about the experience.

Merzon is co-chair of the college’s Recommendation 2

Response Program Planning and Student Learning Outcomes committee. Complying with the new standards ACCJC introduced in 2002 has added a significant dimension to everyone’s workload, she says. “On some campuses, the amount of work faculty are expected to do as part of student learning outcomes is tremendous. It’s almost as though, before the SLOs, faculty weren’t evaluating our students. But we’ve been doing this a long time.”

The extra time “does not translate into improving teaching or students’ success,” she adds. “Faculty are feeling like, ‘Why am I do-

“How can accrediting agencies demand evidence of quality in outcomes, without also seeking evidence of a quality investment in the workforce that produces the outcomes?”

— PHILLIP SMITH
President, United University
Professions/AFT/NEA at the State
University of New York

Do you think faculty and staff should be more involved in accreditation at your institution?

“While there have been attempts in the past at our community college to involve faculty and staff, most of the time the body of work falls to a few folk. It seems to many to be an empty chore. ...

The Northwest accreditation body is trying a new procedure that puts things on a seven-year cycle with ongoing visits and yearly reports. The smaller, yearly bites might make a difference in people’s perceptions.”

MICHAEL HARVES

Yakima Valley (Wash.) College Federation of Teachers

“Right now, most institutions are terribly understaffed. Full-time, tenure-track professors are aging and are overburdened, although administrative positions reproduce like rabbits. While it would be nice to be able to participate more fully in accreditation, it would only add insult to injury. Surely administrators should handle this aspect of the institution.”

SUSAN KELLEY

AFT- West Virginia

“Yes, the whole purpose of the process is to get those who actually do the work and have the information to the table to improve education. Administrators do not have the information they need, and the accreditation process is one vehicle to bring the groups together.

Further, faculty governance needs to be an important part of this process as well or accreditation will lack any power.”

FRED FLOSS

United University Professions (N.Y.)

“Faculty and staff should have more input with the accreditation team. Often the team visits the campus and talks to administrators but never talks to faculty and staff.

Also, there should be a limit on the percentage of adjunct faculty—40 percent in any department; otherwise, colleges can exploit part-time labor and not fill vacancies with full-time, tenure-track faculty.”

DAVID COOPER

Kentucky Faculty and Staff Alliance

Continued on page 15

Labor board says firing union prez was discriminatory

Part-time instructor's only job protection was the union

THE WASHINGTON STATE Public Employment Relations Commission (PERC) has found that Edmonds Community College discriminated against adjunct instructor Margaret West in the spring of 2008 when it chose not to reappoint her to teach the next session. The commission said the college violated West's right to engage in union activities that are protected under state statute.

West has been a part-time English instructor at ECC for more than 21 years. She's also been a union activist, holding a variety of positions on the executive board of her local, the ECC Federation of Teachers, and on the statewide AFT Washington board. After serving on or leading the faculty team that negotiated six contracts, she knew her contract and was comfortable asking questions of the college when she felt the contract was not being followed.

Turns out, a new dean found those que-

ries "divisive."

West says she was stunned when, two days after she announced she was running for president of the union local, the dean informed her she wouldn't be offered a teaching position for summer 2008.

"I asked, 'Why?'" West recalls. "The dean said, 'I don't have to give you a reason.'"

West was elected president of the union, which represents approximately 100 full-time and 250 part-time faculty. The union filed an unfair labor practice with the state PERC. In testimony, it became clear that what the dean found to be divisive was West bringing "the union voice" into departmental meetings.

On July 10, the commission handed down its decision and ordered the college to offer West immediate and full reinstatement to her former position or an equivalent position, and to compensate her for back pay and ben-

efits lost due to the improper actions of the college.

The college also has to report in a public meeting of the board of trustees, and must post notices on campus that the administration "unlawfully discriminated against Margaret West."

"It was my active union work that saved me," says West. While the union has not been able to improve job security in the contract, it's a goal it will be pursuing with renewed urgency in the next contract.

State passes expansive collective bargaining bill

Rights could extend to 20,000 academic workers

AFTER 40 LONG YEARS of advocacy and dashed hopes, academic employees in the University of Wisconsin system finally have the right to decide whether they will be represented by a union. On June 29, Wisconsin Gov. Jim Doyle signed the 2009-2011 biennial budget, which includes a provision extending collective bargaining rights to more than 20,000 UW faculty, academic staff and research assistants.

The new right extends to 6,600 full-time, tenured and tenure-track faculty and 13,100 academic staff—defined to include part-time and full-time lecturers, adjuncts, advisers, IT technicians and others.

Another provision gives 3,200 research assistants the right to choose union representation through the state's first card-check process. That option would allow research assistants at UW-Madison and UW-Milwaukee to be represented by the UW Teaching Assistants' Association (TAA) or the Milwaukee Graduate Assistants Association (MGAA) when 50 percent plus one of the research assistants in the unit have signed cards.

The UW academics are the only non-management class of public employees who

have lacked bargaining rights in the state. It has been a sore point on every campus, says state Rep. Cory Mason, who was co-sponsor of a motion supporting collective bargaining rights for UW faculty and staff that passed in the Legislature's Joint Finance Committee. "This is all about fairness," he says.

AFT-Wisconsin and its higher education affiliates have been building their political muscle over the years to achieve this outcome, says Bryan Kennedy, president of AFT-Wisconsin and a member of the Association of University of Wisconsin Professionals, one of the AFT's oldest nonbargaining locals representing faculty and academic staff at 13 UW campuses. The United Faculty and Academic Staff, the nonbargaining local at UW-Madison and the UW-Extension's Madison campus, also has been active.

Peter Rickman, co-president of the TAA, credits the political organizing legwork of his union's and MGAA's members. "This is just tremendous. It doubles the potential size of AFT-Wisconsin. And it gives us the chance to make a quantum leap forward in terms of the strategic roles we play in organizing workers and in affecting things in the state."

AFT lauds confirmation of first Hispanic Supreme Court justice

THE VOTE OF the United States Senate to confirm the appointment of Sonia Sotomayor to the U.S. Supreme Court marks a historic moment for our country, the AFT said in a statement marking her Aug. 6 confirmation.

"Barriers to the highest elected and judicial positions in our land are swiftly falling away, open now to people of merit from all backgrounds and walks of life," the statement says. "The message this sends—to our young people and to the world—is that America is realizing the fullness of our founding values.

"We commend this vote, and we welcome the newest associate justice to her important role as a member of the United States Supreme Court."

Sotomayor's degrees come from Princeton and Yale School of Law. She served as an adjunct professor at New York University School of Law from 1998 to 2007, and she has been a lecturer at Columbia Law School since 1999, according to *Inside Higher Ed*.

Sotomayor's rise to become the first Hispanic appointed to the Supreme Court undoubtedly will generate high interest in this year's observance of National Hispanic Heritage Month, which kicks off Sept. 15 and runs through Oct. 15.



SOTOMAYOR

Got shots?

Colleges and universities prepare for a return H1N1 visit

H1N1, THE VIRUS also known as swine flu, was first detected in the United States in April, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. On June 11, the World Health Organization declared that a global pandemic of H1N1 was under way. As of July 25, the CDC had counted nearly 44,000 cases in the United States and its territories. States are girding for plenty more cases this fall and winter.

At many campuses, unions have been asking, "Are we ready?"

"Yes, Upstate Medical University has a Flu Pandemic Plan in place—based on previous experiences with the 'regular' flu," says Carol Braund, United University Professions/AFT chapter president at the State University of New York medical campus in Syracuse. In fact, all of the four medical schools in the SUNY system have pandemic plans.

Braund was chair of the Red Dot Flu Vaccine Campaign last year. Its goal was to vaccinate as many as possible of the 7,000 doctors, nurses and other medical personnel who staff the hospital. Once vaccinated, they'd get a red dot put on their IDs. The vaccination was free, and 58 percent of workers got their shots. Students also could get the vaccinations on request.

This year will present special challenges, Braund notes, because the pharmacological development of the H1N1 flu vaccine has been slow and its delivery method is uncertain.

Since March, the Professional Staff Congress/AFT has been working with other unions in New York City to gather and disseminate information about H1N1 as quickly as possible. PSC also has pushed the City University of New York administration to develop a policy for the rapid conveyance of the latest accurate information. The university's response has been "slow," says Joan Greenbaum, PSC health and safety coordinator, adding that the union is trying to keep a step ahead:

"Since our members are concerned with many issues—from overcrowded classrooms to lack of cleanliness in the bathrooms," she says, "our union is putting together a set of forums and workshops for the fall as well as news on our Web site and in the [PSC newsletter] *Clarion*, in order to engage members in outreach on public health issues. We have many talented faculty and staff in nursing and the medical professions who will be a vital asset to the entire CUNY community."

Symptoms for H1N1 flu may include fever,



headache, upper respiratory tract symptoms (cough, sore throat, runny nose), muscle fatigue, vomiting and diarrhea. The CDC recommends that those suffering from the flu remain at home for at least seven days. See "What You Can Do To Stay Healthy" for more tips from the CDC.

The CDC recommends that those who work at medical centers be vaccinated. But there won't be enough vaccine to inoculate all students.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO STAY HEALTHY

STAY INFORMED. Check your college Web site or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Web site (www.cdc.gov) for updated information.

Influenza is thought to spread mainly person to person through coughing or sneezing. Take these steps to stay healthy:

Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.

Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way.

Stay home if you get sick. The CDC recommends that you stay home from work or school for approximately seven days and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.

Follow public health advice regarding school closures, avoiding crowds and other social-distancing measures.

Find healthy ways to deal with stress, get plenty of sleep and eat right, so your immune system isn't compromised.

For more information, go to www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/college-alert.htm.

SOURCE: CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL

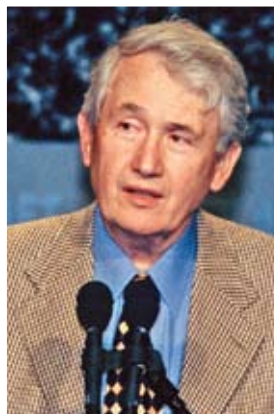
Remembering author and AFT member Frank McCourt

THE WORLD LOST ONE of its most inspirational writers and teachers when former AFT member Frank McCourt died July 19. He was 78 years old. McCourt, the author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning memoir *Angela's Ashes*, spent 27 years as a New York City social studies and English teacher before retiring to write that book.

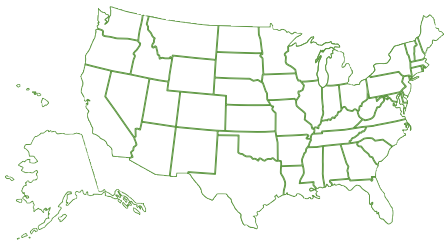
"Frank McCourt saw teaching, storytelling and writing not only as a way out of his unimaginable, poverty-stricken childhood and adolescence, but also as a way to share his life's lessons," says AFT president Randi Weingarten. "Thousands of students benefited from his remarkable ability to help them realize the richness of their own lives, no matter how difficult."

Addressing the AFT's 1997 educational issues conference, McCourt claimed he knew nothing about teaching when he became a teacher, except what he had picked up from his teachers in Ireland, all "trained by the Marquis de Sade." He added, "I didn't know I was learning on the job that first year [at McKee Vocational School on Staten Island], and later found out I had been learning on the job for 27 years."

McCourt's 2005 book, *Teacher Man*, chronicles his teaching career in New York City.



MICHAEL CAMPBELL



MI Instructors and adjuncts at Western Michigan University cast an overwhelming vote for union representation by the Professional Instructors Organization (PIO), which is affiliated with AFT Michigan. The vote, counted by the Michigan Employment Relations Commission on June 29, was 207 to 29 for a unit of 430.

"We are delighted that our colleagues have strongly supported the PIO union, and we will work hard to improve wages and working conditions for all instructors at WMU," says Janet Heller, a part-time instructor in the Gender and Women's Studies program.

Heller was among a core group of 15 colleagues who began organizing in 2007, when all segments of the community except the instructors got wage increases. "We had not even gotten a cost-of-living raise for 12 or 15 years," says Heller. WMU pays the adjuncts \$700 per credit hour, and offers no benefits or adequate office space.

Achieving more job security is another priority, as is seeing part-time jobs converted to full time. "Many of us feel when full-time vacancies come open, we part-timers are not considered seriously," says Heller. "That is one of the things we want to address."

The WMU PIO joins other AFT Michigan lecturer affiliates at Wayne State University and the University of Michigan.

NY The United Federation of Teachers and Green Dot Public Schools has announced a three-year contract agreement for teachers at Green Dot New York Charter School in the Bronx, an agreement AFT president Randi Weingarten says proves that unionized charter schools can be collaborative, innovative, and good for students and teachers.

"This contract can serve as a blueprint for giving charter school educators a voice, for bringing innovations to the classroom,

and for looking at new ways to improve labor-management relations in our schools," says Weingarten, who at the time also was president of the UFT.

The UFT-Green Dot contract is rooted in the belief, held by both groups, that establishing a collaborative and respectful labor-management environment in schools is essential to supporting the quality of teaching and learning.

The AFT represents teachers and staff in more than 70 charter schools nationwide. "Across the country, we are hearing from more and more educators who want the fairness and professionalism that comes with union membership and a collective bargaining agreement," Weingarten says.

PA What does it take to get more people through college?

The U.S. Department of Education embarked on a listening tour this summer, sponsoring forums in Denver; Little Rock, Ark.; and Philadelphia, to gather examples of best practices that bring students to college and ensure they persist through to a degree. The department is looking for ways to leverage federal postsecondary programs to produce a more educated and skilled adult population.

At the hearing in Philadelphia, held at the Community College of Philadelphia, AFT Higher Education director Larry Gold signed up as a panelist, and CCP Federation of Teachers member Jenny Smith attended as a vocal observer.

Gold noted that in community colleges, the gross majority of courses are taught by part-time or contingent faculty who are not given the opportunity to build relationships with at-risk students. Research shows a

correlation between the percentage of courses taught by tenured or tenure-track faculty and student success, he said.

Later, Smith, a Philadelphia area part-time English instructor and AFT member, pointed out the intrinsic value of supporting faculty whose engagement with students conveys excitement about learning.

"In high school," she said, "we give students a stable corps of teachers. One year later, we throw that out and give them essentially long-term subs."

VT A unit of 305 technical professionals at Fletcher Allen Health Care in Burlington, Vt., has voted for union representation by the Vermont Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals/AFT.

"We organized to let Fletcher Allen know that we care about our community, the reputation of the hospital and patient safety," says Chele Webber, a certified surgical technologist at the facility. "We want the hospital to be a place where people want to come to work, and a safe place for people in the community."

The technical professionals want to address a number of issues, including the quality of patient care. The techs also want more professional development opportunities. "I felt that the union could [help me] work with management to ensure better coverage for education," says Sara Root, a professional coder at Fletcher Allen who is required to renew her certification each year.

Marley Skiff, a nurse who is part of the new local at Fletcher Allen Health Care in Vermont, shows her feelings about the vote tally.



ANDY DUBACK

Recession loses speed as stimulus kicks in

BY ED MUIR AND MIKE ROSE

FEDERAL STIMULUS is helping break the grip of a record-shattering recession and could be sowing the seeds of recovery, several leading economists said following the July 31 release of gross domestic product (GDP) figures.

GDP, a widely watched gauge of broad economic activity, contracted at a 1 percent annual rate in the second quarter, the U.S. Commerce Department reported. The decline was less than expected—following a 6.4 percent contraction in the prior quarter—and the newest round of numbers boosts odds that modest economic growth could return as early as fall.

Economists are digging into the latest round of numbers and finding a major contribution from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), the \$787 billion federal stimulus law that President Obama and Congress enacted in the first days of the new administration.

The consensus view is that “ARRA contrib-

uted roughly 3 percent” to second-quarter growth, says Josh Bivens, an economist at the Economic Policy Institute. EPI estimates that federal stimulus saved 720,000 jobs in that period. “The recovery act turned this quarter’s economic performance from disastrous to merely bad. This is no small achievement, but with even more public relief and investments, the U.S. economy could do much better.”

Economist Christian Weller of the Center for American Progress stresses that better-than-expected GDP numbers came despite a 1.2 percent decline in consumer spending for the second quarter. He also points to new numbers from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis showing that the recession was worse than previously thought. From the end of 2007 through the first quarter of 2009, the pace of contraction was 50 percent greater than earlier estimates (a 2.8 percent average annual decline, versus earlier estimates of 1.8 percent).

“Congress and the administration relied on data that turned out to be too optimistic when they enacted the stimulus that is now

beginning to show signs of supporting economic growth,” Weller notes. “Public policy interventions, especially the economic stimulus, have helped slow the slide in the economy as government spending increased. The hope now is that expanded government activity will eventually translate into more jobs.”

While news that the ARRA is starting to have its intended effect is certainly welcome, it will be some time before the change in the overall economy is felt by most AFT members. Following the end of the last recession in November 2001, it took another year for private sector employment to begin to improve, and it took three years before state and local governments saw their finances begin to recover.

The 2010-11 fiscal year is still likely to be the hardest for funding of public services. But these are the first hopeful signs that the economy is pointing in the right direction and starting to move forward.

Ed Muir is deputy director of the research and information services department, and Mike Rose is a senior writer with the AFT.

Share a movie. Share your savings!

(Share the popcorn?)



TRAVEL | ENTERTAINMENT

- **MOVIES:** Savings of up to 40 percent on movie tickets.
- **THEME PARKS:** Savings of up to \$15 at theme parks.
- **ATTRACTIONS:** Savings at theaters, Broadway shows, museums, aquariums, zoos and sporting events in selected cities.

For more information about these and other savings, go to:

www.aftplus.org
The Community Advantage



A Union of Professionals

AFT +
Member Benefits

AFT + is your advocate. For information on all **AFT +** programs, call 800/238-1133, ext. 8643, or e-mail aftplus@aft.org. The AFT has an expense reimbursement and/or endorsement arrangement for marketing this program. For more information, please contact AFT Financial Services at 800/238-1133, ext. 4493; send an e-mail to disclosureinfo@aft.org; or visit www.aftplus.org/disclosure.

Depends on how you look at it

BY DON KUEHN

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times ... it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair. ...

— CHARLES DICKENS, *A Tale of Two Cities*

IT DEPENDS on how you look at it, but today's economy is either very good (like if you are trying to buy a new home) or very bad (if you are trying to sell one). This recession is just another swing of the economic pendulum. The concept is "reversion to the mean."

Home prices—as bad as they may seem—are still a bit *high* when measured against comparable rental costs. Between 1983 and 1999, most houses were priced at 13 to 15 years' rent. In 2006, that index had zoomed to 25 years. The index is now about 20 and falling.

The pendulum has swung in employment, too. The historic rate of unemployment in the United States is about 5.6 percent. Not since

For an expanded version of this article, go to: www.aft.org/publications/your_money.

1982-83 have we seen the likes of today's 9.5 percent. When previous periods of high unemployment ended (1983 and 1992), the stock markets forged six-year runs of positive returns.

We have seen this bubble/bust phenomenon in other areas, too. Remember when gasoline was well over \$4 a gallon last year? I filled my tank today for \$2.46 a gallon—still high by many measures, but closer to an inflation-adjusted mean.

For more than a century, the S&P 500 Index traded at a price about 15 times earnings (the price/earnings ratio or P/E). P/Es have been as low as six (1921 and 1932) and as high as 44 (2000). During the past year, the market fell from a P/E of 26 to a level a little below its historic mean: about 12 times earnings. The lower the P/E, the "cheaper" stocks are—a good buying opportunity for those ready to get back into the markets.

When the tech bubble burst in 2001, stocks tumbled, then rebounded. Today, commodities have fallen, gold and silver

prices are down, and personal consumption is low. In short, the pendulum swings both ways. What goes up comes down. What has been down rebounds. Keep an eye on the mean, or average. Figures that stray far from their averages (either way) tend to come back to reality sooner or later—sometimes with a soft landing, other times with a thud.

When you hear that "it's different this time," take it with a grain of salt. It probably isn't. We've been there before. So when things are bleak, don't get too distraught.

Your *personal* economy may be in the tank right now, but remember the notion of reversion to the mean. Time and patience will help you return to normal. In the meantime, take advantage of the opportunities that the depressed markets present. It's *your money*; make the best of it.

Don Kuehn is a retired AFT senior national representative. For specific advice relative to your personal situation, consult competent legal, tax or financial counsel. Comments and questions can be sent to dkuehn60@yahoo.com.

MAILBOX



Part-timers not to blame

I was pleased to see your article on the spiraling use and exploitation of part-time faculty in particular in higher education (July/August cover story: "The Shifting Workforce"), but I was very puzzled by the comment of Marilyn Besich: "... grade inflation that comes from adjuncts being afraid to offend students."

There is no research evidence showing that grade inflation is characteristic of part-time faculty, and it is an unfair argument to use to

advocate for the hiring of more full-time faculty members. I would say that the quality of education does suffer from the current system of a heavy dependency on part-time labor, mostly because part-time instructors must run (or fly) from one campus to another to cobble together a few classes to eke out a livelihood and therefore do not have the EXTRA TIME to give to students outside of class, NOT because of

grade inflation. They are no more liberal with grades than are full-time faculty members. The majority of my part-time colleagues are quite rigorous; most of us have students who plan to transfer to the University of California.

I've heard full-time, tenured faculty members glibly make the same statement. So far as I can tell, it is an unfair speculation. But we do need to move forward together for job security and improved working conditions, the key to excellence in any workplace.

CYNTHIA MAHABIR
Oakland, Calif.

Improving healthcare

Regarding Randi Weingarten's July/August column ("Healthcare reform: A moral and economic imperative"): There are many aspects to the need for change in healthcare. First, the insurance companies should be eliminated from healthcare. Remember, they are in it to make money, not to care for people's health. Getting them out would return at least 20 percent of the amount spent, which could go to reducing the cost

of covering the uninsured.

Then, I have always felt that surgeons are grossly overpaid. An equally qualified and competent internist will only get about one-tenth of what a surgeon does for taking care of patients. Bringing down surgical fees and paying less for procedures, while paying more for routine patient care, would not only reduce costs considerably but also improve the population's general health.

Next, the price of drugs should be brought down to the levels that are charged in Canada and European countries. If the drug companies cry that this will stifle new developments, one can point to the number of new agents that have been discovered overseas (by the same companies!).

Finally, hospitals. If you stayed in a hotel where you paid \$2,000 a night, you would expect the most fantastic service. One does not get this in the average hospital, but they charge these amounts up front, if you have no insurance. Where does all that money go?

JOSEPH MARCUS, M.D.
Great Neck, N.Y.





E-MAILING CONTROVERSIAL IDEAS

A committee of the academic senate at the University of California at Santa Barbara has cleared sociology professor William Robinson of charges that he acted improperly when he sent a mass e-mail containing some controversial views on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to students enrolled in his course. The controversy attracted the attention of several national [organizations](#), but the resolution ultimately demonstrates the robust internal procedures colleges and universities have in place to protect the free exchange of ideas.

CULTURE WAR IN RETREAT

The 2009 legislative cycle has come and gone in state legislatures, and [all signs point](#) to a waning interest by politicians in entertaining culture-war legislation like the so-called

Academic Bill of Rights (ABOR) or intellectual diversity bills.

Only three of these bills were introduced in state legislatures this session, and none of them made it out of committee. Additionally, so-called academic freedom bills, which would have injected politics into decisions about the curriculum in college science courses, were soundly rejected in two states.

SETTING THE RECORD

STRAIGHT The [Free Exchange on Campus coalition](#) released two reports this spring further documenting the insidious anti-academic-freedom movement spearheaded by David Horowitz and the American Council of Trustees

and Alumni. The first, "[Facts Still Count](#)," details the mendacity of Horowitz's latest smear, *One-Party Classroom*, showcasing the hackneyed research, selective misquoting and blatant disregard for the facts that are his hallmark.

"[Manufacturing Controversy](#)," meanwhile, connects the dots between the various right-wing players who have been at the forefront of the attacks on higher education, and documents the tactics they've used over the last several years.

The report already has [generated a response](#) from Horowitz, ABOR's numero uno honcho, who bizarrely (yet somewhat predictably) compares the defense of the university to defending child abusers.

COURT REOPENS DOOR TO

SCHOLARS The 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals has [overturned](#)

a lower court ruling that affirmed the Kafkaesque Bush administration visa policies that prevented foreign scholars from entering the United States. The court ruled specifically on the case of professor Tariq Ramadan, a critic of U.S. policies, who had been offered a teaching position at Notre Dame University but was denied a visa for reasons never communicated to professor Ramadan or anyone else. As [Inside Higher Ed reports](#), the case illustrates how the government can use unfair assumptions and pretexts to keep scholars out of the country—and block the free exchange of ideas.

ON THE WEB Visit the hyperlinked version of this column (with Internet links to the words printed in blue) at www.aft.org/higher_ed/aff/.



Can we talk?

Continued from page 9

ing this piece? It takes away from what I do to improve instruction."

Bontenbal notes there were problems with the recommendations that the committee hasn't been able to clarify: "Some of the standards they cite don't exist."

Worse, from the union's perspective, is that some of the standards actually violate collective bargaining law and education regulations.

"The problem is a lack of willingness on ACCJC's part to get players in the room and discuss what we mean by accreditation," Merzon adds. "I'm astounded by the top-down approach in a state where shared governance is mandated by law."

New standards bring more sanctions

Since ACCJC enacted the new standards, the number of community colleges in the state that have been sanctioned is off the charts.

A recent study compares accreditation sanctions of community colleges across the six regional commissions that provide insti-

tutional accreditation. The period under study is 2003-2008, a time when all the regional accrediting commissions tightened standards under increased scrutiny from the federal government.

The ACCJC has sanctioned 41 of the 110 California community colleges during this period. By contrast, the other five commissions have issued sanctions to just 15 of a total of 756 colleges within their collective jurisdiction.

"Something is not right here," says Merzon. "As an analogy, if 60 percent of your students are failing, you go back and look at the materials you're using, try to figure out what you're doing wrong."

"What's not right is that it's being done to us," says Leone. "We don't have a voice."

Last fall, California Federation of Teachers president Marty Hittelman wrote to ACCJC, pointing out that the state's Educational Employment Relations Act explicitly enumerates the right of faculty to academic freedom and to negotiate evaluation procedures, criteria and standards.

"In recent years, considerable controversy has existed within the community colleges over the issue of Student Learning Outcomes

or SLOs," he wrote. "It is an understatement to say that many within the college community, faculty and administrators alike, feel the ACCJC has gone too far in its demands regarding SLOs, because they intrude on negotiable evaluation criteria and violate principles of academic freedom."

A month later, Hittelman heard back from ACCJC's Beno. The accrediting agency is a private organization, she said, and its standards apply to institutions beyond California. It is therefore not bound by California law.

"There is no accountability on the part of the accrediting agency," says Dill. "The agency doesn't have to respond to anything, tell you anything, or justify anything...."

"That's the irony: The whole thing is about accountability, but the agency is not accountable for what it's doing."

As frustrations mount, faculty and staff hope that they can join with administrators and open up a two-way dialogue.

Meanwhile, the AFT continues to press members of Congress and national and regional accreditation officials to involve faculty. The goal: accountability that makes sense and fair staffing practices that benefit students. Plenty to talk about there.

ISUCCESS STORY Shortly after arriving at Stanford University last fall, freshmen Kayvon Beykpour and Aaron Wasserman created a campus iPhone application with access to campus maps, the course catalog, and professors and students via e-mail. Soon, the university arranged for them to connect to the secure computer network, and iStanford was launched. It lets students see grades, add and drop courses, and perform other administrative tasks. Before long, the two students had a startup company, Terriblyclever, and were creating mobile computing systems for other colleges.

This summer, Blackboard bought the company for \$4 million—and hired Beykpour, Wasserman and friends. Wonder what their sophomore year holds ...

ONLINE LEARNING SURGES Ten years ago, when distance or online learning was still new, student outcomes from face-to-face instruction ruled the day. That has changed, according to a new report released by the U.S. Department of Education's Center for Technology and Learning. Researchers did a systematic search of research literature from 1996 through July 2008, broke down the data in 1,000 studies and then conducted a meta-analysis. The results: Students do best with "blended" instruction, which combines elements of online and face-to-face instruction. Wholly online instruction came in next for learning effectiveness.

CYBER U IN CALIFORNIA? Dean Christopher Edley Jr., of the University of California, Berkeley School of Law, is calling for "an 11th University of California campus"—a cybercampus. "The budget cuts caused by the state economic crisis are real and huge, leaving two choices," he writes in an opinion piece in the *Los Angeles Times*. "Educators can do less with less, or we can explore new ways of providing value to California and the nation by doing more—albeit differently—with less."

California is 49th among the states in the number of high school graduates who go on to degree-granting colleges. This year, with the state's complete budget meltdown, hundreds of thousands of students are being turned away from the state's universities and community colleges. A cyberuniversity could reach many of those students, he says.



JAMES YANG

Swimming in a sea of texts

Attribution in the age of the Internet

BY SUSAN D. BLUM

YOUNG PEOPLE in the "digital generation" are connected, attached to others at almost all times. They sleep beside cell phones that can summon them from precious sleep, and are available to their friends whenever they are near a computer—for those with smart phones, at all times—through Facebook chat (this year), Twitter or other means. Written words flow in and out of their consciousness at a dizzying rate.

This is a wordy generation. In many ways our students love language: They love song and poetry and clever combination of others' words.

Students relate to texts in ways that are somewhat different from the instinctive methods of older generations, and it behooves us to understand some of the changes that are occurring around us. That does not mean we accept that anything goes. But if, as teachers, we wish to communicate with our students, it is helpful to understand them at least a little—and not rely on punishment as the means of teaching them about respect for others' words.

For many distracted students focused on completing a list of tasks, paper writing involves trolling sources for useful material, copying an idea from Wikipedia, importing a paragraph to be considered from class readings (perhaps read online from electronic reserves), and collecting some technical terms or quotations. All the while, student writers are interrupted constantly by more texts flowing through their consciousness. Songs are playing, and maybe a movie too, and people are speaking to them live and virtually. Web sites are beckoning; videos are linked. The world is at their fingertips.

But students are also apprenticing in our world. We professors must teach students to

slow down, to put quotation marks around each little piece of text, to remember where each one comes from. Our reasons are moral (authors are individuals with a right to credit for their own original productions), practical (readers must track writers' thought processes), professional (each academic field in each culture has conventions for what material should be cited, and how much), and even economic (writers earn a living through perceived invention). Though students may provide attribution primarily because we tell them to, they may find that academic reasons for citation reinforce what they may know intuitively.

So if we want to teach students to comply with academic norms of attribution, it may be helpful to contrast their ordinary textual practices—rich, varied, intersecting, constant, ephemeral, speedy—with the slower and more careful practices required in the academy.

Who knows? Showing the enduring quality of texts (electronic or physical) may give them food for thought. And it would certainly show that we are not merely dismissing their practices but would like to add another possibility to their almost limitless set of relationships to texts. It would show that there are intellectual aspects to the rules we demand they follow. And it would allow the possibility of communicating effectively with our students. That is one of the fundamental preconditions of education, isn't it? By the time we punish students, we have failed. So let's talk. These text-savvy students may surprise us with their sophistication.

Susan D. Blum is professor of anthropology at the University of Notre Dame and the author of My Word! Plagiarism and College Culture (Cornell University Press, 2009).



Your student wants
to join the Military.
She has the answers
to "why."

Are you prepared to
help with the "what,"
"where," and "when"?

IT'S A BIG DECISION. TALK ABOUT IT.

TODAYSMILITARY.COM

ARMY
MARINE CORPS
NAVY
AIR FORCE
COAST GUARD

•ACTIVE •GUARD •RESERVE

AFT *A Union of Professionals*
Subscription Services
Serving AFT members for over 30 years!

AFT+
Member Benefits

Box 258, Greenvale, NY 11548
www.buymags.com/aft

1-800-774-9161

No Gimmicks... Just the Lowest Prices!

Economist
A global perspective. Today's news for the well informed. **Unbeatable! Just \$77.00**

Reader's Digest
large print edition
Redbook
Road & Track
Rolling Stone
Runner's World

Happiness
Special! Double Issue
The Economist
Happiness
How to measure it!

Publication Name _____
 Years _____
 Price _____

Please bill me
 Check enclosed payable to: AFTSS
 Charge my Visa MC Disc Amex

Total _____
 Exp. _____

Gift: Attach recipient's name, address and a message

E-mail _____

AFT SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES Box 258, Greenvale, NY 11548

	Usual Price	Your Price
Allure	20.00	11.97*
American Photo	21.00	10.50
Architectural Digest	42.00	29.95*
Arthritis Today	30.00	9.95
The Atlantic	29.95	24.95
Baseball Digest	44.95	23.94
Better Homes & Gardens	1 yr 22.00	14.97
	2 yrs 44.00	22.00
Bird Talk	27.97	13.99
Black Enterprise	22.00	17.95
Bon Appetit	28.00	24.00*
Car & Driver	22.00	10.97
Cat Fancy	27.97	14.99
Coastal Living	36.00	16.00
Columbia Journalism Review	20.00	14.00
Conde Nast Traveler	19.97	12.00*
Consumer Reports	29.00	29.00
Cooking Light	1 yr 19.64	18.00
	2 yrs 36.00	30.00
Cosmopolitan	29.97	18.00*
Country Living	24.00	12.00
Cruise Travel	44.95	11.97
Discover	29.95	24.95
Dog Fancy	27.97	12.00
Ebony	1 yr 20.00	14.97
	2 yrs 40.00	24.97
Economist	127.00	77.00*
Elle	28.00	14.00
Elle Decor	29.00	14.50
Entertainment Weekly [57 iss]	39.24	34.95*



Forbes	59.95	24.95
Foreign Affairs	44.00	32.00
Fortune [25 issues]	59.95	29.98*
Girls Life	19.95	14.95
Glamour	20.00	11.97*
Golf	19.95	15.00
Golf Digest	27.94	16.77

Discounted rates for AFT members. www.buymags.com/aft

Good	1 yr 23.97	12.00
Housekeeping	2 yrs 39.94	24.00
Gourmet	1 yr 20.00	15.00
	2 yrs 32.00	30.00
GQ	20.00	15.00*
Harper's Bazaar	18.00	15.00
Harper's Magazine	21.00	11.97
Horticulture	19.95	19.95
House Beautiful	19.97	12.00
Humpty Dumpty (ages 4-6)	22.95	17.29
Instructor (K-8)	19.95	8.00
InStyle [12 issues]	22.15	18.00*
Jet	38.00	26.00
The Kiplinger Letter	79.00	48.00
Kiplinger's Personal Finance	23.95	12.00
Kiplinger's Retirement Report	59.95	29.95
Ladies' Home Journal	16.97	9.99
Latina	17.97	9.97
Lucky	20.00	12.00
Marie Claire	19.97	12.00
Martha Stewart Living	28.00	24.00
Men's Fitness	21.97	14.97
Men's Journal	19.97	9.97
Metropolitan Home	29.00	13.97
Modern Bride	17.97	11.97
Money [12 issues]	39.89	19.95*
More Magazine	18.00	14.97
Mother Earth News	18.00	13.97
Mother Jones	24.00	15.00

Reader's Digest	24.98	13.96
large print edition	29.96	21.95
Redbook	17.97	12.00
Road & Track	22.00	10.97
Rolling Stone	25.94	14.95
Runner's World	24.00	20.00*
Saveur	29.95	19.95
Scientific American	34.97	24.97
Self	17.97	14.97*
Seventeen	19.95	12.00
Shape	21.97	14.97
Smart Money	24.00	15.00
Smithsonian	34.00	12.00
Southern Living	36.00	28.00
Sporting News [1 year]	59.90	20.00
Sports Illustrated	89.04	39.95*
Sports Illustrated For Kids (ages 8-14)	31.95	31.95
The Weekly Standard	79.96	47.96
Stereophile	19.97	12.97

New Yorker
The latest in ideas, events & issues. A great rate!
1 Year \$29.95
 47 issues

Sunset	24.00	19.95
Teen Trend	16.00	12.95
Teen Vogue	15.00	10.00
Tennis	18.00	12.00
This Old House	20.00	20.00
This Old House 2 yrs	40.00	30.00
Time [56 issues]	59.95	29.95*
Time Out - New York	39.94	19.97
Town & Country	28.00	15.00
Travel & Leisure	45.00	19.00
TV Guide	58.14	39.96
US Magazine	65.00	52.00
Vanity Fair	1 yr 24.00	15.00*
	2 yrs 48.00	25.00
Veranda	24.00	18.00
Vogue	29.95	21.00
W Magazine	29.90	14.95
Weight Watchers	17.70	14.95
Wine Enthusiast	35.00	26.95
Wired	24.00	12.00
Woman's Day	18.00	9.99
Women's Health	17.97	14.97*
Yoga Journal	1 yr 21.95	15.95
	2 yrs 43.90	26.95

Call to place an Order: Mon.-Thur. 9am-7pm & Fri. til 5 pm ET. 1-800-774-9161

Vanities
 One year \$15.00
 Two years at \$25.00!

Ebony
 One year \$14.97
 Two years only \$24.97

New Yorker
 One year \$19.97
 Two years just \$37.97!

ESPN	26.00	13.00
Esquire	15.94	8.97
Essence	22.00	18.96
Every Day with Rachael Ray	34.00	24.00
Family Circle	19.98	15.00
Family Fun	16.95	9.95
Family Handyman	24.00	15.00
Field & Stream	19.97	10.00
Fitness	19.98	14.97
Food & Wine	32.00	19.00

Motor Trend	18.00	10.00
The Nation	52.00	26.00
Natural Health	31.00	17.97
Natural History	30.00	15.00
New York	1 yr 24.97	19.97
	2 yrs 55.02	37.97
New Yorker	52.00	29.95*
Newsweek	41.08	40.00*
Old House Journal	27.00	13.97
Outdoor Photographer	19.94	10.98
Parenting	1 yr 17.97	9.97
Early Years	2 yrs 35.94	14.97
Parenting	1 yr 17.97	9.97
School Years	2 yrs 35.94	14.97
Parents	15.98	9.97
PC World	29.90	19.97
Popular Photography	24.00	11.97
Popular Science	19.95	15.94
Prevention	21.97	16.94*
Psychology	1 yr 21.00	15.97
Today	2 yrs 42.00	20.97
Real Simple [12 issues]	28.95	24.00*

SAVE MORE ON TWO YEARS!
 ORDER MULTIPLE YEARS TO GET AN ADDITIONAL DISCOUNT... AND TO LOCK IN OUR CURRENT LOW RATES!

Call us for Other Titles! 1-800-774-9161
 *Rate for members and college students

CALL FOR HUNDREDS OF OTHER TITLES

A2907