

VANGUARD

Official Newsletter of the Adjunct Faculty Association at Nassau Community College
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Correction: In the February issue, page 12, the inset quote was incorrect and not from the article about René P. Fiechter. This error was fixed on the version of the Vanguard that can be downloaded from our website at <http://www.myafaonline>

From the President's Desk



Stefan Krompfer

Presidential Search The "End Game"

Because I sat on the Presidential Search Committee and signed a confidentiality agreement, I am restricted as to what I can write on this matter. Without violating confidentiality, I report the following in an effort to answer the myriad of questions that we have received regarding the process that resulted in the selection of NCC's new permanent president.

The third Presidential Search continued when Dr. Kenneth Saunders withdrew his name from consideration for the position. Understanding the severity of the Middle States Commission report, and the implications for the college, the Presidential Search Committee Co-Chairpersons Arnold Drucker and Wanda Jackson expedited the process by direction of the search firm, Academic Search, to canvas, narrow down, and provide a list of highly qualified candidates who met the following specific criteria¹:

1. **Possession of a terminal degree.**
2. **A demonstrated record of success in college leadership.**
3. **Significant (7+ years) experience as a sitting president.**
4. **A proven track record resolving compliance issues with Middle States or another post-secondary accrediting body.**
5. **Evidence of experience with labor unions and collective bargaining issues.**
6. **A demonstrated understanding of shared governance and evidence of successful work with faculty.**
7. **The successful navigation of college finances and budgetary issues.**
8. **Experience working with Boards and/or governing bodies.**
9. **Successful engagement with local communities and underrepresented populations.**
10. **A recognized understanding of what it means to be a comprehensive community college and the balance between workforce development and a liberal arts education.**
11. **Evidence of successful fundraising.**

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There were no restrictions on who could apply however, only those meeting the necessary qualifications would be extended an invitation for an interview.

Two individuals were selected for an interview with the search committee. The committee interviewed the two candidates. The Board of Trustees then interviewed both candidates and recommended to the SUNY Chancellor and the SUNY Board of Trustees that Dr. W. Hubert Keen be named our new President. Both the SUNY Chancellor and Board of Trustees approved NCC recommendation.

My Opinion

The criteria listed above is imbedded in Dr. Keen's resume and experience. Additionally, Dr. Keen's knowledge of Long Island's changing demographics, the inner structure and workings of SUNY, our problems with retention and the political realities/relationships that affect who we are and what we accomplish, and the relationships he has built over the years with those who can help us repair and grow, coupled with his experience leading the conversion of Farmingdale College from a two year college to a four year institution of higher learning, will stand us in good stead as we move forward.

As Ben Franklin said: "We must all hang together, or assuredly we shall all hang separately." All of us, the Board of Trustees, the Administration, the Academic Senate, the NCCFT, CSEA, we the AFA, etc. must adjust our thinking as to how we do business in the long and short term if we are to succeed and reach new heights. Listening to one another, seeking win-win solutions, working out principled compromises, collegiality, timelines, and deadlines are in order and necessary as we rebuild.

Stefan Krompfer
President
Adjunct Faculty Association

¹Drucker, Arnold, Jackson, Wanda. "Re: Presidential Search Update" Message to NCC College Community, 10 May 2016. Email

Message from the Vice-President



Scott Stark

As you read this issue of the Vanguard, we are in the midst of the Fall 2016 availability submission period. *You must submit your electronic availability by Tuesday, June 7, 2016 at 4:00pm.* ***I cannot stress enough that if you fail to submit the form, the chance of receiving an assignment is slim to none.*** When you submit your availability, you will get a confirming email at the email address that the college has on file. Stated simply: if you do not have a confirmation email, you did not submit your availability. There is nothing the AFA can do to get you an assignment if you do not have the confirming email that proves you submitted

the availability form.

I receive a report called the “Process Cancelled Report” every day in the last two weeks of the submission period. The report is a list of any adjuncts that began filling out the form, but didn’t finalize their submission. On each of those days I send emails to the adjuncts that appear in this report and alert them that they need to complete the submission before the deadline. I use your NCC email to accomplish this, so please check that email to see if there were any complications with your submission. If you are on that report you will receive an email from me stating that fact.

The Process Cancelled reports provide me with the names of the adjuncts that began, but did not complete, the submission. Those people will receive an email from me. Those who do not begin the process will not be contacted. I do receive copies of the availability forms, as do each of our Department Representatives, but only *after* the submission period is over. For this reason, there is no way for us to check who has, and has not, submitted their availability, therefore I am not able to contact individuals who have not begun the process. Once the Tuesday, June 7, 2016, 4:00pm deadline passes, the submission period is over and ***there is nothing that can be done to assist you if you haven’t completed the task.*** Whether we like it, or not, that is the policy.

If you submit the availability form, get a confirmation, and then need to change something, I ask that you contact your Department Representative, or me. If you encounter any difficulties with the process, please reach out for assistance. Your Department Representatives are eager to assist, as am I. If needed, I will meet with you in the AFA office, C2073, and walk you through the process.

Please don’t miss out on an assignment because you didn’t follow the established policy. If there is any way the AFA can assist you, we will. Don’t hesitate to contact us. You can email me at scott.stark@ncc.edu. If you need immediate attention, my phone number is 516-859-0250.

As always, it is a profound honor to represent you. Thanks for the privilege.

Scott Stark
Vice-President

The Inside Scoop

On May 7th, the AFA held its annual Scholarship Luncheon. At a time when our institution is facing major challenges, this event put a spotlight on the exceptional education that our students receive from our faculty. The recipients, all of whom are part time students, performed in exemplary fashion in their respective disciplines. Having gone through college as a part time student taking night and weekend classes, I am keenly aware of the sacrifices and difficulties associated with being a part time student. Often, one must juggle family, work and school responsibilities. You find yourself eating meals in your car while in transit from one place to another. At times, the journey to graduation seems so far off that you begin to think that it is merely an elusive dream. Along the way, you confront many hurdles. Some will view these hurdles as obstacles while others will view them as challenges. It is within this determination that often your outcome will be born. I left the scholarship winners with the following advice: When you face a great difficulty in any aspect of your life, recall the great success you had at NCC. Remember, that there is no mountain too high to scale and no dream too elusive to be realized.

The event also featured the first annual Presidential Awards for Excellence. Laurie Pezzullo and I received this award. It was a profound honor to receive this recognition. I feel that I am a single piece in a large puzzle that has come together to reshape the AFA. Our officers, Executive Board, Representative Assembly, committee Chairs and members-at-large have all made great and significant contributions over the past 17 months. The vision that Stef Krompiewski had of tapping the immense resources of our membership has come to fruition and has produced amazing results. I am in contact with Stef almost seven days a week working on initiatives and opportunities to further enhance our adjunct's working conditions. Every time one of those initiatives are enacted or clears a hurdle and becomes that much closer to being realized, I feel that that is my reward. We look at this as a labor of love to advance our adjuncts on every level. When I say our adjuncts, I do mean all as a single group, pure adjuncts, full timer adjuncts, classroom and non-classroom alike. For when we differentiate from among our own ranks, we begin to break down solidarity and that is the moment that our strength diminishes. Our commitment to a unified membership is witnessed by the composition of our officers, Executive Board and R.A. These bodies are comprised of pure adjuncts, full time adjuncts, classroom and non-classroom alike. In fact, at our continual planning and strategy meetings between Stef, Scott and I, AFA VP Scott Stark is a classroom pure adjunct and I am a non-classroom full time adjunct. This means that all voices and perspectives are brought to the table. As I hang this award in my office, you have my promise that I will never lose sight of the contributions that so many of you have made. In my heart, I have accepted this award on behalf of countless adjuncts who have worked tirelessly on behalf of the AFA. I look forward to continuing to work on behalf of all adjuncts in an untiring manner.



Richard D. Erben

Richard D. Erben
Chief Information Officer
Adjunct Faculty Association

AFA SCHOLARSHIP LUNCHEON

Each year the AFA awards scholarships that specifically target only part-time, matriculated students who are currently enrolled at Nassau Community College. The scholarships, and the luncheon where they are presented, are run by the AFA Scholarship Committee. The scholarships range from \$500 to as much as \$5,000.

This year's luncheon was on May 7th, 2016. Currently, you can watch a video of this event on the front page of our website: <http://www.myafaonline.org>



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AFA SCHOLARSHIP LUNCHEON



An Adjunct and the New York State Teachers' Retirement System (NYSTRS) Part 2

By Paul Guadagnino

I returned home from my day job on Monday, not having had the *time* to contact NYSTRS. After parking my car, I planned on quickly swapping teaching bags and clothes before *traveling* to my evening adjunct class at Nassau Community College. A lack of *time* and *traveling* are often shared experiences for adjuncts, experiences which I believe leave adjuncts with little time for planning their retirement.

Upon entering my house, I was greeted unexpectedly by my mother-in-law, who my wife must have asked over to babysit. "I was told you don't have your wife or children listed as your beneficiaries," she stated. "I should have it fixed before the end of the week," I told her, heading to the bedroom. "I'll try not to die before then!" I joked, closing the bedroom door. After changing clothes, I emerged into the hallway where my mother-in-law was waiting for me and she did not seem amused by my attempt at humor. "I think you can make those changes online, on the website," she told me. "Great, I'll check it out, but I have to get going to class!" I responded, and out the front door I went. As I walked to my car, I remembered that my mother-in-law had taught an online course

A lack of *time* and *traveling* are often shared experiences for adjuncts, experiences which I believe leave adjuncts with little time for planning their retirement.

for SUNY, and that she was soon planning on retiring herself. I wondered if she applied for membership with the NYSTRS and whether her adjunct teaching had counted with the system.

Traffic was unusually light that Monday afternoon, and so I arrived at NCC even earlier than I normally do for my class. I went to check my mailbox in the Department Office, where I ran into some adjunct colleagues who also teach as instructors. After exchanging pleasantries, I decided to ask them about the

NYSTRS. "Are you registered with the Teachers' Retirement system for the pension?" I asked. "No," they responded looking perplexed. "I don't have a pension," the other responded. I explained that I was looking into whether our time teaching at NCC counted in

the NYSTRS. They asked me to let them know what I found out. As I left to go to my class, it worried me that neither my colleagues nor myself were signed up with the NYSTRS and that perhaps teaching at NCC may not count with the system.

It was late by the time I got home that Monday night. My children were in bed, my mother-in-law had left, and even my wife was down for the count. So I logged onto my computer, knowing it was far

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too late to call NYSTRS directly for information. I guessed that someone at NCC must handle retirement information for adjuncts on the college's end, so I decided to see if I could email that person and ask them for more information. I went to NCC's website and tried to search using keywords like 'retirement' and 'NYSTRS'. I came upon NCC's Human Resources department and decided to email the Director of Human Resources for Administration & Benefits, Nardos Hamilton. Ms. Hamilton responded quickly and professionally in directing me to the Human Resources representative who appeared to handle adjuncts, Barbara Cestaro, to whom she had already forwarded my question. Ms. Cestaro was just as fast and just as professional in responding back to me in email, before I had finished my 'thank you' email to Ms. Hamilton. Ms. Cestaro let me know in her correspondence that she had already checked the NYSTRS records on my behalf and that I have been an active member of the NYSTRS since 1999. Ms. Cestaro further explained that she could handle placing my information into the college system so that any of my earnings from then on would be reported to the NYSTRS. At the end of the email, Ms. Cestaro attached a form labeled PRS-3, called a Prior Service Verification form, which she explained I could fill out. This would allow her to begin the process of examining the college's records in order to calculate how much time I had taught in previous semesters for submission to the NYSTRS. I replied to back to Ms. Cestaro and thanked her for her time and help.

The above exchange answered the question for me as to whether or not adjunct teaching at NCC could be accrued for the NYSTRS, and it also clari-

fied that previous teaching also counted and could be calculated and sent to the NYSTRS. I made a mental-note to remember to tell both my wife and my colleagues about what I had learned, and went to bed.

The next day was Tuesday and, as it happened that semester, my Tuesdays went much the same as my Mondays, schedule-wise. This was the second day in a row in which I hadn't had time to call NYSTRS, nor to check the NYSTRS website. As I was once again beginning my commute to NCC, I received a call on my hands-free cell phone. I answered the call and my father began right away with: "I heard that you still have your mother and me as your death beneficiaries. You have to get that fixed." "Hi Dad, I'm working on it," I replied, wondering how many more

“..my father began right away with: “I heard that you still have your mother and me as your death beneficiaries. You have to get that fixed.”

times I was going to have this conversation. My father is a retired teacher with Western-Suffolk BOCES and was already receiving his NYSTRS pension. "It may not be as simple as you think," my father continued unabated. "I think you need to get the form notarized

and there are rules about primary and secondary beneficiaries you need to read up on." "I can't make the change over the phone or on the website?" I asked. "I don't think so," replied my father. "Ok, thanks, talk to you later!" I ended the conversation.

That Tuesday night, after my NCC class, I once again found myself arriving late at night to a house full of sleeping family. It was once again past the time when I could call the NYSTRS, so I sat down at my computer with the intent of discovering exactly how to update who my beneficiaries were online. My father's phone call and my mother-in-law's advice from the previous day echoed in my head, as I found the NYSTRS website located at <https://www.nystrs.org>. After a brief look, I gleaned a lot of infor-

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mation that I did not know: The NYSTRS has been operating since 1921, it is the second largest public retirement system in the state, it was in the top ten largest pension funds in the country and, amazingly, the pension system has an estimated funded ratio of 92%!

I finally found some information on beneficiaries by clicking on a button labeled “Benefits”, and then a link labeled “Death Benefits” (located here: <https://www.nystrs.org/Benefits/Death-Benefits>). On this page there was an expanding column labeled “In-Service Death Benefit”, and at the very bottom of this column it read: “You may change your beneficiary designation(s) prior to retirement by filing a Designation of Beneficiary (NET-11.4) form.” I found the form, and clicked on the hyperlink labeled Designation of Beneficiary, which started a download of the NET-11.4 form. It appeared that my mother-in-law was wrong about being able to make the changes to beneficiaries on the website directly, but the website did have the required form for those changes. After looking at the form, my father appeared to have been correct about needing to have the form notarized by a Notary Public.

However, my heart quickly sank as I began reading all the information surrounding the designation of beneficiaries. The website has information about leaving the money to a “primary” beneficiary upon my death and what happens if I name “contingent” beneficiaries. It also discussed designating your “estate” rather than a person, and what happens if your primary beneficiary dies before you, and what happens if all of your beneficiaries die before you. I thought about the fact that I have a will, and if in my will I left everything to my ‘estate’ and I made my spouse the executor of my estate, would that be better, worse, or the same if I made my wife the primary beneficiary or if I made my estate the primary ben-

eficiary for the NYSTRS? Now, something which I thought was going to be quite simple (I was just going to make my wife my primary beneficiary and make my children my contingent beneficiaries) wasn’t quite as clear-cut. Perhaps I was going to have to consult the lawyer who did my will. Or seek out someone who has experience with these specific retirement-type questions. I began to feel as though I was in over my head, and I am not alone when it comes to dealing with complex issues surrounding the NYSTRS, or retirement issues in general.

This is about where the story ended for me. I was able to tell my wife, my mother-in-law, my father, and my adjunct colleagues that our instructional time at NCC does count with the NYSTRS. I was also, ultimately, able to change my beneficiaries, which pleased my wife, the person who matters most to me in this whole saga.

“I am not, by any standard, someone to ask about the NYSTRS or retirement.”

Under no circumstances are the events detailed above a suggested course of action, nor is it comprehensive in its extremely limited scope. I am not, by any standard, someone to ask about the NYSTRS or retirement. By far, I made many errors and did things the hard way. Instead, my actual suggestion for any AFA member seeking information about the NYSTRS, or retirement, would be to immediately contact the AFA Retirement Committee Chairperson Margaret Renner at 516-541-0594 or by email at profrenner@aol.com. I recently got to meet Professor Renner in person and I was struck by her warmth and grace, but also by her steely resolve and wisdom in the arena of retirement issues. She made it very clear to me that when the time comes, retirement is a highly individualistic ritual that has to encompass a litany of fiscal, emotional and personal goals.

By Paul Guadagnino

AFA/NYSTRS Affiliation

A Bit of History

I have been involved with the AFA since 2001, and eventually became the Chairperson for Retirement Issues.

In 2004, I was instrumental in changing legislation that provided adjuncts with more service credit. The event occurred because I was both a full-time and part-time SUNY employee. Working with both contracts, I realized that adjuncts were short-changed in terms of service credit. (A retiring NYSTRS lawyer, at my request, gathered data to change the legislation necessary to correct this inequity).

I gained the respect of the New York State Teachers' Retirement System (NYSTRS) because rarely had this kind of change occurred. When teaching 18 credits we now receive *18/30 full-time credit hours or 60% of the full-time yearly experience which is nine months. This change has contributed to higher retirement payments for adjuncts. The equity allowed me to establish a professional relationship with NYSTRS. Also, I saw the need to include the full-time faculty because many of the full-time faculty were adjuncts as well. Thus, the NYSTRS seminar became a co-sponsored event.

“In 2004, I was instrumental in changing legislation that provided adjuncts with more service credit.”

I have been actively involved in transfers from other retirement systems, tier changes and reporting situations because each SUNY college had to change their reporting to accurately reflect the *new* service credit system.

Truth be told, my questions launched a new career. I wrote to Elliot Spitzer regarding “how to” facilitate the transfers between the city and the state, and he assigned Betsy Gotbaum as a NYC advocate to aid me in answering retirement transfer questions. I am not an expert in the field, but I understand the concept of the “how-to method” between the city and the state.

The AFA gave me the opportunity to provide an on-site seminar for our AFA members and other NYSTRS members. I do receive calls from districts as to whether I can make suggestions or contact their members. I contact their members but I suggest they attend a NYSTRS seminar so that they can establish a professional relationship with the system. Since NCC is a public institution, I invite them to attend our seminar. Over the past twelve years, we have extended our hospitality to many Nassau County agencies.

Also, I have maintained a professional

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rapport with Human Resources. *In my opinion, we have an excellent Human Resources Department.* They work diligently to provide the best possible information for our NCC faculties.

My personal goal for our membership is that they have the best available information for their problem-solving activities. The AFA was able to request and deliver documents for our recent retirees. If a member has concerns, please encourage him/her to contact me: (516)-541-0594 or email Profrenner@aol.com. I have heard the horror stories from my colleagues regarding errors that they have made in the past because of a lack of knowledge and/or information. **Let's not let history repeat itself.**

Afterthought: AFA Securing Additional Benefits

The AFA encouraged me to pursue an-

other avenue that would provide for the needs of our membership.

During my tenure at CUNY as both a full-time and adjunct professor, I was entitled to medical benefits. It occurred to me that the adjuncts at NCC were not entitled to medical benefits at that time, and I knew that some members needed medical coverage.

In an effort to provide for the additional needs of our membership, Stephen Leonard and I completed a survey which resulted in the AFA making medical insurance available to its membership at reasonable rates. Please contact Human Resources to discuss your needs.

Submitted by:
Margaret A. Renner, Ph.D.
AFA/ NYSTRS Representative
Nassau Community College

Announcements

The AFA wants you! Please consider joining with hundreds of your colleagues in becoming an AFA member by visiting our website at: <http://www.myafaonline.org/#!/membershipform/c1nbb>

Adjunct Availability: FALL 2016 Adjunct Availability opens Tuesday, May 3rd, 2016 and closes Tuesday, June 7, 2016 at 4:00PM.

NYSTRS Seminar: An Attentive Audience

There is no denying that an attentive audience gathered in the CCB on May 12th, 2016 to listen and react to an excellent presentation provided by Winnie Nelson, a NYSTRS communication representative.

Although Winnie has visited Nassau Community College for many years, she always brings the enthusiasm of a neophyte to her presentations. Perhaps it is because she believes in the NYSTRS' mission of providing its members with the most current information available to make their retirement decisions.

As a colleague so aptly remarked shortly after Winnie's presentation, "I am sure she has presented numerous sessions, but she sounds like she is speaking to each of us for the first time." I have personally organized and participated in her seminars for years, and I have learned something new or reflected differently after each session.

Over the years, I have reflected about these three components of retirement: **the letting go factor, the grasping for knowledge, and the assurances needed from a professional.** No matter how prepared you are for retirement, a "doubt" always exists. Is this *the right time* and *place* for this decision?

Although a systematic review of one's benefits and profile offers the **knowledge and assurances needed, the letting go factor** is a personal decision that requires a comfort zone. A comfort zone can be created through a step-by-step process as one contemplates their present and future needs and expectations.

Winnie can provide the systematic information and anecdotal stories which can nurture the comfort zone but your decision is a personal choice. To further establish the comfort zone, a NYSTRS member may call 1-800-348-7298 and speak with a representative whenever the need exists. First, you will be assured of your benefits; and then you will be advised of the process so that you can establish a comfort zone.

Submitted by:
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Email Updates

Shortly after Stefan Krompfer and Scott Stark were elected in January 2015, I created a member database and verified a number of components of that data such as addresses, email addresses, and member statuses for accuracy. Simultaneously, I offered adjuncts the option of using a personal email address in lieu of their NCC email address. Approximately, 4% of the 3,200 individuals that were listed in the database opted in and sent me their personal email address. These personal email addresses were from free services (Yahoo, AOL, Gmail) and also from cable providers (Optimum, Time Warner, etc). In the beginning the process went very smoothly. Those who chose to use a personal email address received AFA news at that address. However, as time passed, more and more of these personal email addresses were bouncing. My assumption is that the individuals might have abandoned free email accounts and/or changed cable providers but forgot to notify the AFA of their new address. Since communication with our members is of the utmost importance, when I receive a bounced email, I revert that individual back to their NCC email address. As most of you know, our main communications method is done electronically. We are committed to keeping every adjunct apprised of work-related and union-related information and news. Thus, if you are an individual who is wondering why you are receiving AFA emails at your NCC email address when you provided me with a personal email address, this is the reason.

Richard D. Erben
Chief Information Officer
Adjunct Faculty Association

Below are the Classroom Adjunct Pay Dates for Summer 2016:

Summer I Paycheck Date = 7/1/16*

Summer II Paycheck Date = 8/1/16*

Summer III Paycheck Date = 8/29/16*

Summer On-Line/Hybrid Paycheck Dates = 7/1/16 & 8/1/16*

Summer Weekend College Paycheck Date = 7/1/16 & 8/15/16*

Summer Specials (including May Special) Paycheck Dates = The next regular payroll date following the last day of class*

*These dates are based on timely submission and processing of completed adjunct contracts