

# Part-Time Faculty Association of Allan Hancock College

PARITY & FAIRNESS THROUGH ADVOCACY



## President's Letter

October 2015

By Mark James Miller, PFA President

### Is It Time For A Cell-Phone Free Classroom?

By now all teachers know how ubiquitous cellphones are in the classroom. 90% of college age adults have cellphones, according to research, and in my experience at Allan Hancock College I would have to say that number is closer to 100%. It seems every student has a cellphone, and many just can't seem to stop using them even in situations where they know and you know it is inappropriate (such as in the middle of a class discussion or lecture). For nearly half of American students, their cellphone is their only link to the internet. They use their cellphone to pay bills, look for jobs, do their schoolwork, communicate with their friends and of course do social networking via Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, etc. They are what is becoming known as "smartphone dependent."

A growing body of research indicates that students spend as much as ten hours per day on their cellphones. As inquiries into cellphone usage continue, more and more data is revealing that "cellphone addiction" is a real phenomenon, with 60% of students agreeing with the statement that they cannot live without their cellphone and showing other behaviors, such as anxiety, associated with addiction when their cellphone is not in sight. Other research is showing a direct correlation between excessive cellphone use and declining academic performance.

Because I recognize the positive factors that cellphones can contribute to the college classroom, such as being able to instantly look up information or take a picture of a page of text and use it to answer questions, I have, until now, adopted a lenient policy toward cellphones in my class, requesting in my syllabus that the students limit their cellphone use while in class to school an academic related matters.

Unfortunately, many students have a difficult time abiding by this policy. Habitual cellphone use appears to be so ingrained into our collective consciousness that for many students the temptation to use it is too great if it is within reach. More and more over the past couple of years I have noticed

Part-Time Faculty Association  
of Allan Hancock College  
Local 6185  
California Federation of Teachers  
American Federation of Teachers  
AFL-CIO

The PFA's goal is to achieve parity with the full-time faculty by improving pay, benefits, and working conditions of its bargaining unit members.

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students with cellphones in their laps, using them during class time for texting and going on social media. The problem has gotten so out of control that I have now adopted a new policy, announcing to my students that from now on, when class is in session, it is a cellphone-free zone. All cellphones must be put away and out of sight during class time. In the future I will keep you informed as to how this new policy works out.

### **Membership Meeting October 22**

Our fall membership meeting will take place on October 22, from 2—5 PM. Our special guest will be Mr. Joe Hooper, the California Federation of Teachers Member Benefits Specialist. Joe is the most knowledgeable person in our entire union when it comes to the benefits AFT/CFT members are eligible for. In addition to Joe, we offer light refreshments and a chance to spend time with your fellow part-time academic employees. Drop in anytime between 2 and 5 at our office at 426 E. Barcellus, Suite 103, in Santa Maria.

### **Special Election Update**

In a series of recent emails I have informed you that the PFA is holding a special election this month to fill two vacant seats on the Executive Board. It now appears now that no such election will be necessary, in that there are only two candidates for the two seats. In accordance with our Association Bylaws and standard parliamentary procedure, Jeff Stein and David Yundt will be declared the winners by acclamation. So welcome Jeff and David to the PFA Executive Board!

### **Correction**

In the September President's Letter it was stated that Dave Yundt, who has recently been appointed to our Executive Board to fill one of the vacant position, works in Computer Science. He actually works in the Math Sciences Department and as they say in the mainstream media, we regret the error.

### **PFA Office Still Closed On Fridays**

For now the PFA office will continue to be closed on Fridays. We will continue to check the emails and voicemails when we aren't here, and if you have an emergency you can call/text my cellphone, 805-235-7483. We will continue to be here Monday–Thursday 12 to 5.

### **Have Any News Or Announcements?**

Do you have any special news, life events, or announcements you would like to share with your fellow part-time academic employees? If so, please send it to [mark@pfaofahc.com](mailto:mark@pfaofahc.com), and we will consider including it in a future issue of the President's Letter.