

A few weeks ago a colleague came to Eyes on the Board (EOB) distressed and concerned. She was concerned because during a recent address to the Board of Trustees (BOT), she noticed that those on the dais appeared disinterested. It distressed her that both the president of ACC and the chair of the BOT were chatting during her presentation. They clearly were not interested in what she had to say about the college or the students she served. She had taken much care to craft a very cogent speech to the BOT that was no more than three minutes in duration, yet its intended recipients were oblivious and took it with a “with a grain of salt.” Clearly this employee’s communication was being viewed as irrelevant. Unfortunately, the president and chair prejudged her address and decided to not pay any attention to one of its concerned employees.

“With a grain of salt” reminded EOB of previous conversations from the dais, particularly the BOT retreat on Saturday, August 15, 2009.^[1] In this meeting, the administration was responding to a board member’s query as to employee accusations that the administration has not involved faculty and staff in the shared governance process. The president candidly advised the BOT, “It does

require a grain of salt in hearing what is said at the podium. Just as you do with the citizen’s communications or anything else.”

EOB believes it is a grave mistake to not listen to employees’ communications or turn aside comments from taxpaying citizens of the community. Blindly following recommendations from the administration without verifying data is not good policy governance.

Case in point takes EOB to another BOT meeting on January 12, 2009, regarding agenda item 8541. In this instance, ACC administrators recommended that the BOT “approve a contract with Ford Audio-Video Systems for media upgrades in the ACC Board Room.” According to the administration “Board meetings are held at times convenient for the District’s many constituencies, and are recorded for posting on ACC’s website and for broadcast over local television. The audio, video, and computer equipment in the ACC Board Room is obsolete and increasingly difficult to use and maintain. Upgrading the media technology in the Board Room is necessary and desirable to maintain quality electronic communications with the ACC community, and to support college and community functions which are also held in this space.”

Eyes On the Board

And what was the budgetary consideration, you ask? The estimated cost was \$125,800 for “larger 42 inch flat panel displays” and three additional high definition cameras. After all, the BOT has to look good, right? And those old screens and cameras just weren’t up to par.

EOB recognizes that communications are important; however, this huge expense came just a few days prior to the administration’s announcement of a financial crisis at the college.^[2] The administration portrayed an economic picture so bleak that the college would have to freeze employee salaries. Clearly such an extravagant expense was inappropriate or the ominous predictions of a financial crisis were hyper inflated to achieve other goals the Board deemed of greater priority.

EOB has no intent of being overly critical of the BOT or administration, however good community college governance does require proper checks and balances to assure accountability. Blindly accepting all premises the administration submits without verifying facts and data and failing to communicate with the Employee Associations is neither wise nor profitable. Unfortunately as evidenced in the president’s latest evaluation by the BOT and subsequent discussions from the dais, it is a blind path the Board is willing to follow.^[3]

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Why Join ACC-AFT?

- **Our grievance committee** has successfully defended many union members, including reinstating fired employees who received all back pay (plus we get paychecks corrected, licenses back, fight racism and sexism, and MUCH more). Employees must join ACCAFT before their situation arises so they have access to the Legal defense Fund and our attorney. The employee associations do not provide this function.
- **We lobbied** the Legislature to pass a bill that allows Adjunct Faculty who teach 15 LEH per year to join the TRS pension plan. Prior to this, the most-used Adjuncts had no choice but to invest in the ACC Money Purchase Plan.
- **We were at the forefront** in pushing the College to fund Environmental Health & Safety. Many changes have been made that benefit employee and student health since the Union began pressing these issues.
 - We organize the fight for SS Fairness. Some employees cannot retire because they are invested in TRS & SS. AFT, TexasAFT, and

ACCAFT are trying to get the laws changed in Washington.

- **We successfully lobbied** the ACC Board to keep the “living wage” as Board policy, plus each year we support the set-aside that keeps 4% of the budget for employees raises.
- **We represent** all non-administrative employees: we represent Full-Time Faculty, Adjunct Faculty, Classified staff, Professional-Technical staff & Hourly paid employees.
- **We established** an emergency fund for ACC Union members. Also, Union members can purchase disability insurance and several other forms of insurance at www.aftplus.org.
- **We supported** the Bond election in 2003 that enabled ACC to be on par with other CCs in the State, plus we have supported each expansion of the district. Our members were on the ground walking door-to-door, pounding signs into the ground, and working the polls.
- **We interview & endorse**

candidates for the ACC Board of Trustees. The employee associations are not allowed to provide this function. We have influenced the direction of the Board to be more concerned with employee issues.

- **You will receive** “On Campus”, the AFT Higher Education magazine, plus the AFL-CIO newsletter and “American Educator” from AFT.
- **New AFT members receive** \$12,000 of Life Insurance free for a year.
- **All members receive** \$10,000 of AD&D Insurance.
- **All members receive** an \$8,000,000 Occupational Liability policy (higher than any other association).
- **Our dues** are lower than most Unions in the country.
- **New members receive** three months free membership!!!

NEWS & NOTES:

Board Meetings—The ACC Board meets on Mondays once a month at 6 p.m. in HBC 201 (next few: 11-2, 12-14, 1-11, 2-1). You can sign up to speak for three minutes at the beginning of the meeting. Make your voice heard! You must arrive before 6 p.m. to sign up. Comments have been made by the Administration and some Board members that the Association Presidents and ACC-AFT do not speak for everyone. Please let them know how you feel.

Robbery at EVC—On Sept. 30, a man robbed a female student sitting in her car in the parking lot adjacent to the Childcare Development Center. The man opened the student's unlocked car door, displayed a pistol, and demanded money. The man took \$10 and a cell phone and left in a nearby car with two other men. The female student physically was unharmed. Please be careful, especially in the evenings around all ACC campuses.

Health Insurance Costs Rise—Adjunct Faculty who pay for their own health insurance through

ACC (HealthSelect Family) saw an increase of \$23.86/month which is \$286.32/year. The 2% pay increase this year was generally offset by the increased premiums. ACCAFT opposes increases to health insurance premiums.

Project Build-a-Park—On Sat., Nov. 7. Join ACC students, faculty, staff, friends and family for the 8th annual Project: Build-a-Park from 8 a.m. –3 p.m. at Barton Creek Greenbelt East. Don't forget: Wear a long-sleeved shirt, long pants, and closed-toe shoes & bring sunscreen, bug repellent, and extra gloves if you have them. Call 223-9173 or find the event on the calendar at www.austinctc.edu.

ACCAFT lobbied the Texas Legislature—Adjunct Faculty who teach 7.5 LEH in both a fall & spring semester can join the TRS pension plan. Prior to this, the most-used Adjuncts had no choice but to invest in the ACC Money Purchase Plan. Also, you can take money from your ACCMPP to buy back TRS years. Details are here: <http://www.austinctc.edu/afa/benefits.php>

Some Adjunct Faculty can purchase health

insurance through ACC. —Having trouble finding health insurance? Do you have a pre-existing condition? You might qualify to purchase health insurance through the College. ACCAFT lobbied the Texas Legislature to get a law changed to make this possible. Details are here: <http://www.austinctc.edu/hr/benefits/gbp.php>

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[1] See Board of Trustees recordings Retreat Board Meeting Agenda August 14 & 15, 2009 http://irtflash.austinctc.edu/bflvplayer/index.html?noninstructional/board/0814_1509&id=BoT_Retreat_081509 for the actual recording 91:25 listening point.

[2] See <http://www.austinctc.edu/pres/communications/Economy1-30-09.pdf> for more detail.

[3] See Chair Nan McRaven's definition of the president's evaluation as a "Love Fest." ACC District Board of Trustees "Annual Evaluation of the College President" item 8595. Regular Board Meeting Agenda, June 1, 2009 video http://irt.austinctc.edu/board/FY_08_09/jun012009/index.html

ACC/AFT Local 6249 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Austin Community College AFT
Affiliated with the Texas AFT, A.F.T., AFL-CIO
3000 South I.H. 35, Suite 175, Austin, Texas, 78704, Phone 448-0130, Fax 448-0678

NAME	E-MAIL	ACC CAMPUS:
HOME ADDRESS	CITY	ZIP CODE
HOME PHONE	WORK PHONE	CELL PHONE

ACC Position (check one):

- Full-Time Faculty
 Adjunct Faculty
 Professional/Technical
 Classified
 Hourly

The ACC/AFT dues are based upon classes of membership defined in the national AFT constitution and by-laws. The dues levels are based upon your estimated current annual calendar year income. Please check your income category below and note the **monthly dues** amount associated with it.

- Less than \$10,000 annual income
 \$18.83 monthly
 Less than \$20,000 annual income
 \$23.71 monthly
 \$20,000 or more annual income
 \$34.75 monthly (\$29.88 if Classified or Prof-Tech)

Fill out the form below for dues payable through payroll deduction or send annual dues check payable to "ACC/AFT". Send this form to ACC/AFT, 3000 S. IH 35, Suite 175, Austin, TX 78704. Authorization for payroll deduction ACC/AFT dues

NAME: (LAST, FIRST)	SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER	
<input type="checkbox"/> \$18.83 (under \$10,000 at 12 months)	<input type="checkbox"/> \$23.71 (under \$20,000 at 12 months)	<input type="checkbox"/> \$34.75 (\$20,000 or more at 12 months)
<input type="checkbox"/> \$25.11 (under \$10,000 at 9 months)	<input type="checkbox"/> \$31.61 (under \$20,000 at 9 months)	<input type="checkbox"/> \$46.33 (\$20,000 or more at 9 months)
<input type="checkbox"/> Classified or Prof-Tech \$29.88 (\$20,000 or more at 12 months)		<input type="checkbox"/> Classified or Prof-Tech \$39.84 (\$20,000 or more at 9 months)

I voluntarily authorize and request that my monthly membership dues and fees be deducted from my payroll checks by Austin Community College and remitted to the organization indicated above. I further authorize my membership in the organization to be considered continuing for this and future years until written notification or dissolution of this agreement is given by me. I further authorize that any increase in these dues and fees be automatically applied to my monthly payroll deduction. I understand these increases will be communicated to the ACC payroll office in writing by the organization's authorized representative.

NEW MEMBER'S SIGNATURE DATE

Note: Dues and payroll deduction amounts reflect a \$1.00 per month contribution to the ACC/AFT Committee On Political Education (COPE).

You may decline to contribute to the ACC/AFT Committee on Political Education (COPE) by initialing here. _____

This material is not intended to solicit members of the National Education Association or any of its affiliates. Send form to "AFT" at RGC.