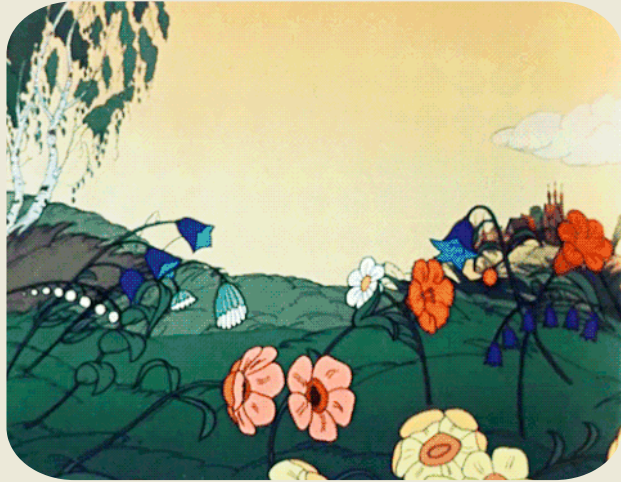


[View this email in your browser](#)



Spring has Sprung

FA NEWS



FOOTHILL-DE ANZA FACULTY ASSOCIATION  
23 April 2024  
Volume 48 Number 7

- President's Report: The Chill is On
- FA Leadership Positions Open
- Negotiations Update: It's Time to Do the Right Thing
- New FA Appointments
- Important Deadlines
- Particularly for Part-Timers
- FA Thanks Our New Members
- Classroom Hacks: Grading
- What Do you Think?



IN THIS ISSUE:



## President's Report: The Chill is On

**FA President  
Tim Shively**

Even a cursory glance at the headlines in major newspapers these days reveals that there is a great deal of civic unrest in our country, especially concerning the conflict in Gaza. On the day I began working on this article, I was confronted by more about the congressional grilling of Columbia University administrators regarding their institution's alleged antisemitism, the seemingly correlative arrest of more than 100 pro-Palestinian student protestors encamped on Columbia's campus (since duplicated on

Yale's), *national* protests blocking major transportation arteries and airport access, the US being the *sole* UN Security Council member to vote against a resolution for Palestinian statehood—and even Google got in on the action by firing 28 employees who protested its contract with Israel.

It seems we are quickly reaching a critical mass of social upheaval and its attempted suppression at a level perhaps not seen since the Vietnam war. This has bifurcated our society, and created not only extreme responses, but extreme efforts to silence open public discourse on the conflict, particularly in our institutions of higher learning. Columbia is the second chapter after previous Republican House committee hearings involving/leading to the removal of the Presidents of Harvard and the University of Pennsylvania (MIT President Sally Kornbluth slipped the guillotine). Here in California, university administrators in the UC, CSU and private institutions have been pressured by external groups to sequester speech, speakers and activities that they claimed made students or employees uncomfortable (e.g. USC cancelling the graduation speech of its valedictorian, Ana Tabassum, a first generation South Asian American Muslim). And even in our own District, outside community groups have inserted themselves into what are normally faculty, staff and student activities to protest against and stifle speech which they oppose. The ensuing silence is deafening.

Most recently, the Foothill Academic Senate was taken to task for its efforts to entertain a Gaza ceasefire resolution. Over the course of 4 meetings, it was bogged down in procedural matters, including one meeting in which so many community members demanded to make public comment on the proposed language (which must be allowed per the Brown Act) that there was no time for the Senators themselves to discuss it. Senate officers (as well as the Chancellor and Board of Trustees) were also subjected to a barrage of emails from the public (something on the order of 200 communications), including threats of legal action should the Senate pursue passage of the proposed resolution. In the final meeting, one of the senators challenged the Senate President's assertion that the Senate did have purview to entertain such resolutions, and the Senate itself voted not to further consider the resolution *despite not having even discussed its content!*

On the heels of the Faculty Association's unanimous passage of its own Gaza Ceasefire Statement, I found the unfolding of these Senate events disquieting to say the least. While some of the community comments read as much to suggest that *any* ceasefire resolution would be inherently antisemitic, such efforts to sequester and silence discourse which does not align with one's own strikes me as inherently anti-democratic. Let's be clear: there has been antisemitism within the Palestinian protest movement, just as there has been islamophobia directed against it. But it is wrong and dangerous to conflate opposition to Israel's actions in Gaza or the West Bank with antisemitism, or to magnify the hateful speech or actions of a few to discredit all protest. We need to move away from such insular, binary thinking. These matters must be talked about, and a humanitarian ceasefire is the most feasible way this conversation can begin. I have heard double earfuls from a few faculty who feel *strongly* that FA has no business making statements about a geopolitical conflict unfolding half a world away on which I am certainly no scholar nor have any direct experience with. While I respect my colleagues and their views, I politely (and sometimes less than politely) disagree with them. In point of fact, many Jewish people, in Israel as well as America, support a ceasefire. It is not about choosing sides or ignoring the wrongs on all sides, but about halting the violence and destruction, about saving human lives. "Then why don't you address other geopolitical conflicts like Ukraine?" opined one community antagonist. It seems that certain Jewish organizations are having an "all lives matter" moment in regards to our country's complicity in the destruction of Palestine and Palestinians. At least in the US, it's becoming clear that the conflict is less one of religious belief and more one between those who can empathize with the suffering of even those in opposing camps and those who are intolerant of anything which questions their own values and orientations.

Personally, I don't care what your politics, affiliations or allegiances, there is no justification for the harming of innocent civilian populations in the pursuit of political, ideological or any other goals. Regardless of the history of injustices between Israel, Palestine and other middle eastern entities, there was no excuse for the brutality of Hamas's attack on October 7th. Nor do Hamas's actions constitute a carte blanche for Israel to continue to pursue its unrealizable goal of "eradicating" Hamas from the Gaza peninsula regardless of the impact on its residents. If anything, Israeli actions are creating the next generation of revolutionaries who are witnessing the willful destruction of their culture, the leveling of their neighborhoods, the killing of their families and the systemic elimination of their basic social infrastructure. Back in February, [Amnesty International noted](#) that "acute malnutrition was surging in Gaza and threatening children's lives...The speed and severity of the decline in the population's nutritional status within just three months was 'unprecedented' globally." The situation has grown steadily worse, with [the onset of widespread famine now imminent](#). But when [aid workers are shot by Israeli Defense Forces](#) and private bands of [Israeli citizens block the delivery of aid](#), it's going to take more than US airdrops of food and floating piers and even the \$9 billion of US humanitarian aid which just passed the House (along with another \$17 billion in military aid for Israel) to turn this situation around. A humanitarian ceasefire must be enacted now. And these matters must be talked about. As employees of an academic institution it is our right to discuss these events with our colleagues and have open discourse with our students. We need to make our colleges spaces where students and employees can safely hear a variety of perspectives as well as voice their own opinions and experiences without fear of retaliation. FA will certainly support its members in these efforts and in defending their right to free speech and academic freedom. We can only hope that our institutions will follow suit since they certainly have not taken the lead.

## FA Leadership Positions Open



The 2023-24 FA leadership positions of President, Vice President, Executive Secretary, and Associate Secretary for Part-Time Faculty Interests are open at the end of the quarter for one year terms. Candidates must have tenure or re-employment preference and have served on either the Executive Council or in an FA executive staff position for at least one year. To apply, email a letter of interest, addressed to the Executive Council, to the FA office ([ElwellSusanne@fhda.edu](mailto:ElwellSusanne@fhda.edu)) by May 13. Appointments will be made at the May 15 Council meeting.

## Negotiations Update: It's Time to Do the Right Thing

**Kathy Perino**  
Chief Negotiator

Since October, FA has been in negotiations with the District regarding a major improvement in health benefits for part-time faculty. After six months of discussions, it is time to do the right thing and provide a much-needed improvement for our part-time faculty. After all, why wouldn't we make an improvement if doing



so actually produces a cost savings to the district?

Under the current FHDA benefits program, part-time faculty with reemployment preference who work at least 40 percent of a full-time workload during the academic year are eligible to participate in district health benefits, but they pay more than full-time employees.

The amount paid by the part-timer depends on their load during the year. For faculty who work 40 to 49 percent of full-time, the district contributes a dollar amount equal to 60% of the Kaiser premium toward any plan that is available through the district, and the employee pays the rest. For faculty who work 50 to 59 percent of full-time, the district contributes 70% of the Kaiser premium, and for faculty who work 60 to 67 percent of full-time, the district contributes 80% of the Kaiser premium. Therefore, part-timers who choose Kaiser will pay either 40%, 30% or 20% of the premium depending on their load; other plans are a “buy up” or “buy down” from that.

Prior to the last open enrollment for plan year 2024, we had about 340 part-time faculty who qualified (taught at least 40% and have reemployment preference). Of those eligible for our current program, we had 93 (27%), enroll in our benefits program. Part of the reason for the low enrollment is that having access to benefits through either another employer or a spouse disqualifies participation in our program. The other reason for the low enrollment numbers is that although the district contribution is better than some districts, the cost to the employee is still quite high. For a part-time faculty member teaching 50% load, the cost to cover themselves and a spouse on Kaiser is \$613 per month; the cost if they choose the PERS Platinum PPO (another popular plan for full-time employees) is \$1200 per month. This cost is just too much for many of our part-time faculty. A recent survey of our part-timers shows that many choose a plan through Covered California, and some have no health benefits at all.

With the cost of health benefits increasing each year and our state revenue from the Student Centered Funding Formula and Hold Harmless fixed, how can we possibly afford to improve health benefits? Because the state has a fund to pay for all of it.

After years of advocacy to provide funding to improve the lives of part-time faculty, the 2022-23 state budget included 200.5 million dollars (ongoing) to fund health benefits for part-time faculty across the state. This funding created the [Part-Time Faculty Health Insurance Program](#) in order to encourage districts to provide affordable health care for part-time faculty.

Under this program, districts have two options: the 50% reimbursement option and the 100% reimbursement option.

If a district negotiates any level of health benefits for part-time faculty, the district can receive half of those expenses back in reimbursement. Since we already have a benefits program for our part-time faculty, we are already eligible for 50% reimbursement. In fact, in 2022-23 we spent about \$1M on part-time benefits, and we received about \$500,000 back, for a net cost of roughly a half a million dollars. For plan year 2024, the projected expense is about \$1.3M and we can expect to be reimbursed for half of that, creating a net cost of \$650,000. Under the 50% reimbursement plan, when the total cost of benefits increases, so does the net cost to the district.

If, however, a district is willing to improve the benefits plan in a very specific way, the district can receive “up to” 100% reimbursement, most likely resulting in a net cost for part-time benefits of \$0 (more on this later). Under the 100% reimbursement plan, when the total cost of benefits increases, the net cost to the district remains \$0.

In fall, *FA* proposed that we move to the 100% improved benefits plan for part-time faculty. The improved plan necessary to get the full reimbursement has two requirements:

1. All part-time faculty working 40% or more in FHDA will be eligible to participate in the district benefits plan and contribute no more than full-time faculty, and
2. For part-time faculty who work less than 40% in FHDA but work at multiple districts and accrue a total of at least 40% of full-time in the CCC system, the district must reimburse a portion of a self-purchased health benefits plan, up to a proportionate amount of the most enrolled FHDA plan. These faculty are referred to as Multidistrict Faculty.

This improved plan would still be restricted to part-time faculty who have no access to benefits through another employer or spouse, or by working more than 40% in another district offering a plan through a 100% reimbursement program.

For part-timers working 50% of full-time, this would decrease the cost of Kaiser coverage for themselves and a spouse from \$613 per month to \$306 per month, and the PERS Platinum PPO would decrease from \$1200 per month to \$394 per month. That's quite a



savings, and indeed it would meet the spirit of the state program which is to provide affordable health care for part-time faculty.

If we agree to this new program, will the District spend more to provide health benefits to more part-time faculty? Yes, of course they will. That's the whole point of the state program. The benefits will be more affordable for faculty, which in turn means the district is covering more of the cost. This is what the state funding is for! By providing "up to" 100% of the funding for these costs, there is actually a net savings to the District. To review, if we spend \$1.3M on part-time benefits and are reimbursed for half, we will have a net cost of \$650,000. Even if the new 100% program triples the cost and we spend \$4M on part-time benefits, we will be reimbursed for the full \$4M, making the net cost \$0.

The District's biggest concern about moving to a new program, as best I can tell, is that the language from the State Chancellor's office does not guarantee 100% reimbursement; instead, it says "up to" 100%. In addition, with the state budget issues this year, there is concern that the \$200.5M in ongoing funding will disappear.

Regarding the 100% reimbursement, the only way our district would receive less than 100% reimbursement is if the claims submitted by all districts exceed the available \$200.5M. In 2022-23, of the \$200.5M, [only \\$23.3M was claimed by districts](#). While the numbers aren't final yet for 2023-24 (districts have until June 1 to submit reimbursement requests), the projection is that this year about \$35M will be used as more districts negotiation participation in the program. Based on these numbers, it is unreasonable to expect the claims in 2024-25 will exceed \$200.5M.

But what if the funding disappears due to the state budget? The Chancellor's office and the state have reiterated their support for the program. We know that the unspent dollars from 2022-23 (about \$177M) and from 2023-24 (projected to be about \$160M) will be swept by the state. The language in the program documentation says unspent funds return to the state general fund. However, we have not heard any talk of eliminating the ongoing funding at the state. And even if they did (we'll know more with the May revise), FA has offered "escape language" similar to that of other districts with this type of program. That is, the program would stay in place as long as the district is reimbursed 100 percent of their expenses.

FA has been patiently working with the District since October trying to reach agreement. The time to reach agreement is closing quickly with the end of the year near and preparations for open enrollment upon us. Health care is (or at least should be) a fundamental right and we have an opportunity to make the lives of our colleagues a little easier at no additional cost. We are spending plenty of time talking about a building a county health clinic to serve our community members who struggle with affordable health care. Let's actually recognize how important health care is and do the right thing for our part-time colleagues.

## New FA Appointments

Foothill Counselor **Fatima Jinnah**, De Anza Counselor **Chai Schweikert** and De Anza History Instructor **Ben Kline** were appointed to the Executive Council to fill the vacancies for the Spring quarter.

Foothill Physics Instructor **Ellen Judd** was also appointed to the new FA Membership Coordinator position for the remainder of the academic year.



## Important Deadlines

The full academic year list of ["Important Deadlines"](#)

2024



Following is a list of many, but not all, important contractual deadlines for the 2023-24 academic year. If any of these deadlines apply to you, be sure to mark your calendar and read the the *Agreement* text referenced in parentheses (fafhda.org).

The campus conciliator can assist you if you need help:

- De Anza, [Ilan Glasman](#) (408.864.5574)
- Foothill, [Eric Reed](#) (650.949.7091)

Questions can also be directed to the [FA](#) Office Manager [Susanne Elwell](#) (650.949.7544)

Please note: if you miss a contractual deadline, even by a single day, you may lose significant benefits or have to wait a full year before becoming eligible again. This calendar is on the *FA* website under “*FA* Current Announcements.”

**May 1:** Full-time faculty submit application for Training/Re-Training (Appendix R) to District Office of Human Resources (35.5).

**June 3:** Full-time faculty submit Professional Growth Activities to campus Personnel Office for salary step advancement (Appendix A, B) and/or Professional Achievement Award application (38.3).

**June 30:** Full-time faculty file intent to change salary column for (the next) academic year with campus Personnel Office (Appendix A, B).

**July 1:** Full-time faculty submit Professional Achievement Award application to division dean (38.2.1, 38.3).

**Aug. 23:** Part-time faculty file intention to change salary column starting in the Fall Quarter with campus Personnel Office (Appendix B.1, C, E, G).

**Sept. 15:** Full-time faculty submit completion of requirements documentation for salary column change in academic year 2024-25 to campus Personnel Office (Appendix A, B).

## JOIN OUR FACEBOOK PAGE



### Particularly for Part-Timers

**Raymond Brennan**  
**Part-time Associate Secretary**

**Legislative update:** Assembly Bill 2277 (Wallis), which, if enacted into law, would raise the cap on part-time teaching load from its current 67% to 80–85%, passed out of the Assembly Higher Ed committee with no opposition this past Tuesday. It next goes before the full Assembly for a vote where, like its two predecessors, it is expected to pass unanimously. Since the bill is a no-cost bill, it does not need to go to Appropriations. It will next be heard by the Senate Higher Ed committee, where, as it did in the house, it is expected to pass without opposition. Its last stop before being sent to the Governor is a vote by both houses, and it bears repeating that two previous iterations of this bill passed both chambers and a full floor vote without opposition.

The Governor vetoed the previous two efforts to raise the cap, citing concerns about the potential costs that could be incurred if the raised cap entitled part-time faculty to health coverage under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). The Internal Revenue Service was asked for a ruling on this question, and without getting into the arcane, the IRS stated that an 85% load for a part-time faculty person would

not trigger ACA mandates. The explanation from the IRS has been incorporated into this most recent version of the bill in hopes that it will assuage the Governor's budgetary concerns. Should that be the case, once enacted into law, all community college districts would be allowed—at the district's discretion—to offer a teaching load up to 85% of a full-time load. For most faculty, this would mean an additional course per academic year. (Summer school is not calculated into their academic year load.)

The logic for raising the cap remains the same. Should part-time faculty be offered a full load under the new rules, that might enable some to reduce the number of campuses they would need to teach at to make a living wage. It would also allow those faculty to engage more fully in the campus culture and be more accessible to their students, and studies have shown that student success is enhanced when they have access to their instructors.

**Promote yourself with Professional Development:** De Anza's Office of Professional Development offers a wealth of opportunities to upgrade skills and at the same time accumulate credits needed for column advancement on the pay scale. Additionally, the Office offers an orientation for newly hired faculty, and these orientations are open to any faculty who may wish to attend as a refresher or because they missed the orientation when initially hired. Part-time faculty are paid for attending an orientation, whether it is their first or twenty-first time.

**May Listening Hour:** The Faculty Association will again be offering a Contract overview and Q&A via Zoom in mid-May on a day and time to be announced. Part-time faculty will receive an email notifying them of the Listening Hour. The hour is largely given over to discussions of issues of concern expressed by attending faculty. This hour is a good time to get questions about their work life in the District answered. Speaking of questions, the answers to many of the most frequently asked questions can be found on the part-time link on FA's home page. Among other information available is the ABCs of Faculty Part-time Employment, which is an alphabetical list of nearly everything a part-time faculty person might wish to know.

There is no need to wait until May if there is a question or concern. The *FA* has your back, and it exists to serve the needs of the faculty, so should there be questions or concerns at any time, please let the *FA* know so that they can answer the questions or help resolve the concerns. The *FA* is the first point of contact for part-time faculty and you can contact me for help at [brennanraymond@fhda.edu](mailto:brennanraymond@fhda.edu).

## FA Thanks Our New Members



# Welcome

**Daniel Barringer DA**  
**Angela Castillo DA**  
**John Francis DA**  
**Karrina Hurley DA**  
**Alireza Naddaf DA**  
**Alexander Otruba DA**  
**Christa Steiner DA**

# Join FA Today!

## Classroom Hacks: Grading

### Empowering Student Learning through Peer Review and Self-Assessment Strategies Across Disciplines or Save Yourself from Burnout with this Grading Hack!

As educators in the Foothill-De Anza College District, we've undoubtedly toyed with ideas of peer review and self-assessment in enhancing student learning across a spectrum of disciplines, but have we all realized the dual benefit inherent in a comprehensive peer review and self-assessment assignment? These teaching strategies cultivate critical thinking, communication, and self-reflection, essential skills for success both in academia and beyond, but they also offer a second benefit beyond enriching student learning experiences: they alleviate the growing grading load that we all feel across both campuses. By sharing the grading responsibility among students, instructors will have more time to focus on delivering targeted feedback, ultimately improving the quality of assessments.

Engaging in peer review and self-assessment nurtures critical thinking skills as students evaluate their own work and that of their peers, refining their ability to construct compelling arguments. Actively grappling with course material in this way not only bolsters comprehension but also fosters better retention and understanding. Providing constructive feedback and reflecting on personal strengths and weaknesses cultivates vital communication and metacognitive skills essential for academic and professional success. These practices foster a supportive learning environment where students not only develop their intellectual skills but also work on reclaiming a sense of community in the classroom.

Using tools like the [Canvas peer review function](#) proves invaluable for hybrid and asynchronous courses, making collaboration and feedback exchange a breeze. This not only saves precious class time but also ensures engagement and interaction among students. Peer review and self-assessment are indispensable strategies for both effective learning and streamlined grading processes in today's ever-evolving educational landscape.

\*\*\*\*\*

If you are interested, here are suggestions for peer review assignments and self-assessment activities for a variety of disciplines, courtesy of *ChatGPT*

#### 1. Artistic Expression:

- Peer Review Assignment: Students create artwork based on a specific theme or concept and exchange their pieces for peer review. Peers provide feedback on various elements like composition, color usage, technique, and emotional impact.
- Self-Assessment: After completing their artwork, students write a reflective artist's statement where they analyze their creative process, artistic decisions, and the effectiveness of their piece in conveying the intended message or emotion.

#### 2. Business and Finance:

- Peer Review Assignment: Students develop business proposals for new products or services and exchange them for peer review. Peers evaluate aspects such as market research, financial projections, feasibility, and strategic planning.
- Self-Assessment: After completing their business proposal, students create a self-evaluation rubric based on the peer review criteria. They assess their own proposal against key metrics and reflect on their strengths and areas for improvement in entrepreneurial thinking and planning.

#### 3. Health and Life Sciences:



- Peer Review Assignment: Students conduct research projects on topics like the effects of a particular drug on the human body and exchange papers for peer review. Peers evaluate factors such as hypothesis clarity, methodology, data analysis, and interpretation of results.
- Self-Assessment: After completing their research paper, students engage in a self-assessment activity where they evaluate their paper against specified criteria. They reflect on their research process, identify strengths, and areas for further development in scientific inquiry and communication.

#### 4. Language and Communication:

- Peer Review Assignment: Students write persuasive essays on current social or political issues and exchange papers for peer review. Peers provide feedback on argument strength, organization, evidence usage, and clarity of writing.
- Self-Assessment: After completing their persuasive essay, students complete a self-assessment questionnaire evaluating their own writing strengths and weaknesses. They set goals for improvement based on their self-reflection in written expression and argumentation.

#### 5. Physical Sciences and Technology:

- Peer Review Assignment: Students develop software applications or algorithms in a programming course and exchange code for peer review. Peers evaluate functionality, efficiency, readability, and adherence to coding best practices.
- Self-Assessment: After completing their programming assignment, students conduct a code review of their own work. They identify areas for optimization or enhancement and outline steps for improvement in coding proficiency and problem-solving.

#### 6. Social Sciences and Humanities:

- Peer Review Assignment: Students design and conduct research studies on topics like human behavior and exchange research proposals for peer review. Peers provide feedback on variables, research design, ethical considerations, and potential implications.
- Self-Assessment: After completing their research proposal, students write a reflective self-assessment essay. They critically assess the strengths and limitations of their proposal, propose strategies for refining their research design, and reflect on their growth in scholarly inquiry and ethical reasoning.

## What Do you Think?

**We welcome your feedback. Use the "Share Your Voice" link below!**

- Feedback on Scheduling Negotiations
- Content Suggestions
- Formatting Suggestion
- Private response to writer or editor (will not be published)
- Letter to editor in response to content. This may be published in a future issue of the *FA News*.
- Request to have your relevant article or information published in the *FA News*. Please include a detailed description of your planned article.
- Any other constructive feedback you would like to provide.



# Share Your Voice: Shape Our Future

*Fhda Faculty Association*

## *FA Executive Council Members*

Rich Booher (DA)  
Raymond Brennan (DA)  
Mary Donahue (DA)  
Laura Gamez (FH)  
Jordana Griffiths (FH)  
Julie Jenkins (FH)  
Fatima Jinnah (FH)  
Ellen Judd (FH)  
Ben Kline (DA)

Brendan Mar (DA)  
Rachel Mudge (FH)  
James Nguyen (DA)  
Kim Palmore (DA)  
Kathy Perino (FH)  
Chai Schweikert (DA)  
Tim Shively (DA)  
Bob Stockwell (DA)  
Felisa Vilaubi (DA)

FA News is normally published ten times during the academic year by the Foothill-De Anza Faculty Association, an independent California corporation certified by the California Public Employment Relations Board as the exclusive employee representative for the faculty of the Foothill-De Anza Community College District. Letters and articles from District faculty are invited. Ph: 650.949.7544 FA

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT: Susanne Elwell

FA NEWS EDITOR: Kim Palmore



Copyright © 2024 FAFHDA\*, All rights reserved.

Want to change how you receive these emails?  
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).