

ALL FACULTY SANTA ROSA JUNIOR COLLEGE ASSOCIATION

AFA Report to the Board of Trustees, October 8, 2024

Anne Donegan, AFA President

SAFETY and COMMUNICATON

President Chabaan, Board members, President Garcia, and college community. It is nice to be with you all in Petaluma, yet it is disturbing speaking to you all after the events of Wednesday night.

I want to start by talking about the AFA contract. I have heard many colleagues refer the contract as AFA's alone. I have often heard things like, "AFA makes us do that, because of the contract." Such thinking is incorrect.

The contract is a legally binding agreement between the faculty and the District. AFA represents the faculty, and you the Board, represents the District. So our contract is an agreement b/t AFA and the Board.

I would like to focus on Article 31 of the contract which states, that the District will maintain safe working conditions. Our agreement says this is your responsibility. Recent incidents on the Petaluma and Santa Rosa campuses show that this commitment to safety is not being followed.

On Wednesday, October 2nd a student reported that there was an individual with a gun on the Petaluma campus. Since then, Petaluma Faculty members have expressed significant concerns regarding safety protocols. Many were upset that there was no alert issued during the incident, since there were many classes in session when this event happened. When an email was sent out by the District after the fact, faculty members and students felt like this just wasn't enough. Student absences the following day were high due to safety concerns. Faculty members reported that they had to take part in "damage control" to try to make students feel safe on the campus.

On September 16, an incident of vandalism occurred in Lark Hall on the Santa Rosa campus, that further emphasized these safety concerns. An EMLS instructor discovered boarded up windows and broken glass in the morning, yet there was no prior warning about the situation from the District to the employees that work in Lark. That evening, a faculty member emailed campus police and the entire EMLS department to question the protocol of the incident. Faculty felt they

should have been alerted, as they essentially walked into a crime scene without any forewarning. There was also a growing concern that the vandalism could be classified as a hate crime, particularly targeting EMLS students, who are overwhelmingly immigrants. The police responded via email on the morning of September 17, providing some explanation of the situation. However, neighboring departments were not informed of the incident. One department chair remarked that while they observed the glass and suspected vandalism, they were left in the dark about the full context of the events.

Communication from the District to its employees during potentially violent situations must improve. This is critical in order to create safer working conditions.

Please see below a statement that was read at the Board meeting on behalf of Amanda Greene:

Hello Everyone, thank you for reading my statement today and I apologize that I cannot be there to read it myself. My name is Amanda Greene and I am the Department Chair in Counseling.

I wanted to share with you an incident that happened in the Counseling Office this past June with regards to Counselor safety, or lack there of.

A student came to Counseling and asked to see a Counselor on same-day drop-in. Our Counselor took the student back to her office and the student immediately shut the office door and started to become agitated and then irate. The student ended up barricading the Counselor in her office and held her hostage, while he threatened her life and the lives of her children (whose pictures he saw in her office). He was very graphic about what he was going to do to them. The Counselor stayed calm, and using de-escalation techniques she eventually was able to talk the student into leaving her office. When she was finally freed, the Counselor was able to call campus police and the student was arrested. There is now a restraining order against the student, however this order really means nothing since none of us besides the Counselor who was victimized could identify him if he walked in again.

The Counselor immediately sought medical intervention, and therapy. The Counselor has severe PTSD, and produced a doctor's note immediately after the incident requesting remote work until the student was sentenced and safely locked up because she feared for her safety on campus. This accommodation was requested prior to the start of the fall semester, and it is now 8 weeks into the semester, and almost 3 weeks past when the accommodation ended, and the Counselor still has not heard a response from HR. The Counselor involved AFA, and AFA advocated for HR to respond to the Counselor, and here we are still waiting.

While the situation with this student was extreme, Counselors meet with students one-on-one with our doors shut for confidentiality purposes, and in most instances we have been able to discreetly alert someone to come to our office and check on us, but tipping off a student to this could end very badly.

Counselors need some sort of software program like a virtual panic button on our computers that can

alert the front office we need assistance. We need a way to discreetly communicate with the team if we are in danger.

How is HR and the District committed to our safety when we can't even get a response to a reasonable accommodation request? I thank you for taking the time to listen to my concerns, and I hope the board can support increasing safety measures for the campuses.

Thank you,

Amanda Greene