

ALL FACULTY SANTA ROSA JUNIOR COLLEGE ASSOCIATION

AFA Report to the Board of Trustees, December 13, 2024
Anne Donegan, AFA President

Good afternoon President Chabon, Trustees, President Garcia, and the College Community:

I am sorry to not be with you in person, but I am hunkering down with my soup making husband for this coming rain.

I wanted to start my report today to say thank you to the district for sending an email providing information for our undocumented students. This is an anxious time and this anxiety is only going to grow in the coming months, so AFA urges the district to send like messages out to the college community often next semester. Such messages should remind the community that we are a sanctuary campus and provide much needed information to mixed-status households.

I also want to thank Humanities professor Rafael Vasquez Guzman in organizing his undocu-ally trainings. This is a great service that he is providing and AFA appreciates his efforts here.

I also want to remind the college community, that faculty members in the EMLS department, especially associate faculty, are also dealing with anxieties. As Professor Licht pointed out in her public comment, associate faculty members are concerned that many EMLS students will not register for classes this Spring in fear of getting entangled in Trump's deportation plans. This has huge impacts on load for our associate faculty. Please consider this when you are faced with possible lower enrollments in the Spring semester. Associate faculty are amongst our most vulnerable employees and cancelling sections will have real impacts on their livelihoods and access to healthcare. Please take these concerns seriously.

There is also growing anxiety at our college, about the growing restrictions on our students from taking pre-transfer level English and Math classes because of AB 705 and AB 1705. Long time SRJC Math Instructor Nora Wheeler wrote in an email to me and a number of administrators in late November the following, :

The other main challenge I am facing, however, is the effect that AB705 and AB1705 have had and will continue to have on my ability to enjoy my job. I have always loved teaching and felt that it would be no problem to teach full-time until I was 62. But due to the

legislation that has rocked our world in the math department, I am counting the days until I'm 55 so I can go on reduced load. It makes me quite sad.

Now, I am creating new materials for a class that I know I will not be able to use after this semester. It is frustrating and tiring to know that, while mathematics is not changing at all, we have to constantly adapt our approach based on what a bunch of ignorant politicians decide with no faculty input.

Another result is that I have students in my classes who have no business being there and who make the entire class more difficult to teach. As an example, in one of my precalculus classes (now an entry-level class), I have a student who loves to participate and ask questions. The problem is that their questions show a complete lack of any knowledge of mathematics. One time they asked, during class, for the formula to convert degrees to feet. It's disruptive, and in the past, I would have definitely have recommended they take a lower-level class. But now there are no options.

And that's the worst of it. The worst thing that the new legislation has done is to give NO options to students who are unable to pass transfer level math classes without having the prerequisite class(es). The state of California has basically given those students the finger and slammed the door in their faces. Only the politicians (and administrators) don't have to be the ones who are looking them in the eye as the door is slammed. That's us, the teachers, on the front lines given the impossible task of trying to find a way for these students to be successful. It is an IMPOSSIBLE task. And somehow that's my job right now.

What are these students supposed to do if the community college system is turning them away? We are denying them a college education and leaving them stuck in whatever difficult lives they are in. And what I learned during my leave is that I can't care anymore. It is beyond my capability to stare into such despondency and be emotionally vested. The thing that makes a teacher great is passion. I can no longer strive to be a great teacher. Mediocrity, here I come.

I am sharing all of this because this is a demoralizing and discouraging working environment, and I am not the only one that feels this way. You are my supervisors which is why I'm letting you know this. It's not sustainable.