

VANGUARD

Official Newsletter of the Adjunct Faculty Association at Nassau Community College
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About Our Students,
Our Members,
Our College!*

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From the President's Desk



Stefan Krompier

TIAA Retirement Issue

In mid-spring, I received an email from a full-time faculty member who is also an AFA member and is enrolled in the **TIAA Retirement Plan**. She was, and still is, contemplating retiring from her full-time position. Her plan was to retire from her full-time position and to continue teaching as an adjunct. **She was told by her TIAA Financial Consultant that to be able to draw funds from her TIAA Retirement Account she had to retire from both her fulltime and adjunct positions. This rule, for lack of a better term, DOES NOT apply to those enrolled in the New York State Retirement System (NYSRS) Plan.**

Learning this, and understanding the catastrophic effects that such a requirement would have on many of our adjuncts, I took immediate action to determine if this was, in fact, true. I contacted TIAA, our Human Resources office, SUNY ORP, and SUNY's Chancellor's Office. I learned that the requirement, a SUNY ORP requirement, is in place and is being enforced by TIAA.

As did I, the college received many inquiries about the SUNY Optional Retirement Plan that included the TIAA option. They entered into discussions with

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From the President's Desk



Stefan Krompfer

the SUNY Benefits Team on the matter. On October 12th, I received the following email from Dorlina Dunbar, Associate Vice President, Office of Human Resources:

As you know, the Office of Human Resources (HR) has been in discussions with the SUNY Benefits team regarding employee inquiries about the SUNY Optional Retirement Plan (“ORP”) administration of plan distributions. In our discussions with the SUNY Benefits team, HR has advised the team of these inquiries of concern and attempted to ascertain if there was any flexibility in order to best support our academia with the most optimal policies to encourage continued engagement and service from our long-term faculty members.

The SUNY Benefits team has announced that they have performed their due diligence on the matter. They have stated that the current SUNY rules regarding the ORP needs to be followed.

However, the SUNY Benefits team did state that they will continue to explore how to get a SUNY Board of Trustees resolution to be able to accommodate some flexibility with the SUNY ORP in the future. Unfortunately, at this time, SUNY Benefits indicated that they cannot change the current rules for any short-term or immediate needs.

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From the President's Desk



Stefan Krompfer

If you have questions regarding this issue and/or my plan of action to turn this misguided and onerous requirement around, please email me at stefcarol7@aol.com.

Stefan Krompfer
President
Adjunct Faculty Association

Message from the Vice-President



Scott Stark

Maitland Jones Jr. is one of the nation's top organic chemistry professors. He was tenured at Princeton, where he pioneered a new way of teaching that emphasized problem-based learning over a "lecture-memorize-regurgitate facts" style, Princeton University's Dean of Faculty wrote¹. Professor Jones also wrote an influential textbook, retired, and went on to teach at NYU as an adjunct professor.

This year, though, he was fired after 82 of the 350 students in his Organic Chemistry course signed a petition because, they said, their low scores demonstrated that his class was **too hard**. NYU, in defense of their decision to terminate Jones's contract, stated

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Message from the Vice-President



Scott Stark

that the professor had been the target of student complaints about “*dismissiveness, unresponsiveness, condescension and opacity about grading.*” It is worth noting that according to the *Times*, students expressed surprise that Jones was fired, which their petition did not call for.

While I do not condone dismissiveness, unresponsiveness, or condescension, I am more disheartened by the actions of NYU, where their adjuncts are hired, **and fired**, at will. With students paying in excess of \$80,000 annually to attend and live at NYU, one can only wonder how much of this decision was economic?

Could this happen at Nassau Community College? The college is in dire financial straits and this generation of students have grown up in what I sometimes refer to as the ‘participation trophy’ generation. They expect rewards with little, if any, effort. This is also a generation that believes in equal outcomes, as opposed to equal opportunity. Student complaints very often accompany poor grades. I will not say that poor grades are always a result of little effort, but I will say that little effort almost always results in poor grades. Are you at risk of student complaints? Yes, you are, and it is happening with increasing frequency.

Had Professor Jones Jr. been an adjunct at Nassau Community College, he could not have been dismissed as he was, without interventions. Our contract calls for a process of evaluation (observation) that is designed to improve instruction of the adjunct faculty at Nassau Community College. In the event an adjunct faculty member receives an unsatisfactory evaluation following a classroom observation, the supervisor shall make every effort to help the teacher improve his/her instruction and to correct the deficiencies noted in the observation report. Before removal can be considered, there must be two more observations after the initial. The third observation must be conducted by a neutral third party. This has not happened during our tenure in leadership.

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Message from the Vice-President



Scott Stark

Non-members, or free riders as I like to call them, are on their own when they receive the email from the college to make an appointment to address a complaint. Our members will be accompanied by a member of the Executive Board of the AFA throughout the process. Also, if necessary, our expert legal counsel. When it comes to unfounded student complaints, the Adjunct Faculty Association is undefeated when representing our members. Free riders are on their own. **Membership certainly has its privileges.**

Scott Stark
Vice President
Adjunct Faculty Association

1. <https://dof.princeton.edu/about/clerk-faculty/emeritus/maitland-jones-jr>

From the President's Desk



Stefan Krompfer

POLITICAL STATEMENTS

Our Association does not endorse candidates for public office. We do invite candidates – Republicans, Democrats, and independents - to submit letters that support their candidacy. As you know, political support for NCC, particularly when it results in adding funds to the college's coffers, is essential to the college's well being and by extension to all of us as well. Please consider the content of these submissions, as you determine the individuals for whom you will cast your vote on Tuesday, November 8th.



Anthony D’Esposito - Candidate for Congress

Dear Friend:

Throughout my time in public service, I have had the distinct pleasure of representing large swathes of Nassau County, where generations of Long Islanders have been proud to live, work and raise families. Indeed, Nassau County’s widely acclaimed reputation stems from a host of factors, but chief among them is our community’s renowned public education network – with Nassau Community College leading the way.

Nassau Community College is the engine of opportunity that both powers our local economic success story, and educates informed, worldly students who will serve as Long Island’s next generation of leaders. As a place of higher learning, Nassau Community College is home to an accomplished faculty boasting an array of skills, talents, and experiences – traits that greatly benefit the college’s diverse student body. I am grateful for the contributions to our local public education infrastructure made by Nassau Community College’s dedicated faculty members, administrators, and support staff. The committed service of Nassau Community College’s public education professionals is admirable, and I pledge to do everything in my power to support you in your mission to educate the youth of our community.

As a Hempstead Town Councilman, I advocated for our community’s public schools – I will do the same as your next member of Congress. I will work with the Department of Education to ensure that educators serving the public have the tools necessary to teach and inspire our students. What’s more, I believe in expanding the pipeline between colleges and the workforce – ensuring that students are equipped with the knowledge and skills to be changemakers in the economy of the future. This transformative policy can be achieved through an engaged United States Department of Labor utilizing enhanced jobs training programs geared specifically towards the diverse learners of Nassau Community College.

As a public education professional, you have taken a sacred oath to work towards bettering our community’s youth – I will advocate tirelessly at the federal level to support you in this endeavor as a member of Congress.

Sincerely,
Anthony D’Esposito
Candidate for Congress

JACK MARTINS – NYS Senate 7th District

Education is the key that unlocks the door of opportunity. For myself and so many others who are the first genera-

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tion to attend college, this simple statement is particularly poignant. You see, we understand all too well the gift that comes with learning and the opportunities that flow from the application of the skills we've learned. I often reflect on those under whose tutelage I developed the skills that have molded me into the person I am today, a person driven to be a life-long learner. I am grateful for the skilled teachers I have learned from and trained under during my formative years and have tried to, in turn, be a mentor to others. Although I enjoy reading and exploring new topics, it is in mentoring, in passing that knowledge to others, that I find the greatest satisfaction and in doing so I understand that I have informally touched upon the joy of teaching.

Nassau Community College occupies a critically important place on the path to higher learning. For some it is the continuation of a formal education and the pursuit of a particular degree. For others it may be a stop on the journey to explore a particular subject or class. And for yet others, it is a place where they will learn a particular skillset that will connect them to a particular job or trade. Regardless of the chosen path or direction, the importance of NCC cannot be overstated – for all who attend and learn, regardless of socio-economic status, the door of opportunity, an opportunity for a brighter future, remains truly open.

To those who hold the door of opportunity open - to our professors - who pass their knowledge and skills to others in furtherance of the goal of opportunity and success, please accept my thanks and my commitment to continue to support your efforts and the efforts of the great institution that is our College.

As we look out onto the world into which the door opens, we cannot help but be struck by the challenges before us. There is a strong sense that New York is headed in the wrong direction. We feel less safe in our own communities and with the ever-increasing cost of living, inflation, and taxes, we each feel less secure in our futures. Small businesses are struggling with ever-increasing costs and red tape which translates directly to fewer opportunities for those entering the workplace. We need to provide judges with discretion in sentencing, support law enforcement, curb out of control state spending and regulations, and provide relief to middle class New Yorkers. We must commit our State to equity and ensure that choice in healthcare decisions remains a right in New York and we must redouble efforts to protect our environment, protect our sole source aquifer, ensure clean drinking water, and commit to protecting and restoring coastal wetlands.

As we usher our students, well equipped with the knowledge and skills they have gained while at NCC, through the door of opportunity and out into the world, let us commit to restoring civil discourse and working together to address these issues and others, understanding that government works best when we work together.

Thank you.
Jack M. Martins

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James Coll - State Senate 6th District

I am proud to share with you, my colleagues in the AFA, that I am running for New York State Senate in Nassau County’s newly-formed 6th District this year. As a lifelong New Yorker, a retired NYPD police officer who served in uniform for over two decades and a father of two teenagers, I believe that I have unique insight into the challenges facing our neighbors as we struggle to deal with the increasing difficulties of living in our state and our county.

Of all my qualifications for this office, perhaps most important to AFA members is the fact that I am one of you. I have taught at Nassau Community College as an adjunct in the History Department for over 21 years. I can still remember when I received the initial call from the late Dr. Richard Hunt. It was exciting--and a bit frightening--when he informed me that that I would be teaching two courses in the summer of 2001. While the number of students I have been fortunate to have in my classroom since those first sessions must now number close to 1,800, I still feel that sense of excitement when I enter the classroom today.

NCC’s role in educating local residents and being the starting point to so many success stories cannot be understated. Far too often, however, it is by those who know little about the necessity of the institution in shaping the lives of so many. Unlike them, I have the experience to speak firsthand about our extended NCC family. I look forward to bringing that perspective--representing them and all their promise; you and all yours--when I get to Albany.

Thank you in advance for your support.
James Coll

Patricia Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick – NYS Senate 9th District

Dear Members of the Adjunct Faculty Association at Nassau Community College,

My name is Patricia Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick, and I’m running for New York State Senate District 9, the open seat to replace Senator Todd Kaminsky.

As a graduate of New York University School of Law, St. John’s University School of Law and College of Business Administration, and Maria Regina (Kellenberg Memorial) High School, I believe there’s nothing more important than the careful education of our ourselves and the next generation of leaders. Thank you for the tre-

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mendous role you play each and every day in laying the foundation of our future through education - a top priority of mine. Nassau Community College is an important part of the community bringing challenging classes and programs to individuals who might not otherwise take college courses.

As State Senator, I will be a vocal advocate for the expansion of BOCES Programs and Career and Technical Education (CTE). Participation in these programs increases on-time graduation rates, college enrollment, attendance, and future earnings and provides a bevy of academic benefits while also training students for in-demand middle and skills jobs. Furthermore, I support fiscally responsible efforts to reduce the burden on component school districts that host BOCES Programs.

I will also work to establish a community business initiative that provides grants to postsecondary educational institutions for the development of a school-based incubator to train applicants in business education, financial literacy, and marketing in order to develop local businesses that contribute to the local economy and address community needs - a program that aligns perfectly with Nassau Community College's Career Preparation efforts.

In addition to education, other issues I plan to address include cutting income taxes for middle class families to help New Yorkers keep more of their hard-earned money as inflation soars, making the gas tax cut permanent, and reversing the \$1 Billion Commuter Tax on Long Island Drivers entering Manhattan. As the former Police Commissioner of New York's Second Safest Village to live in, I'll invest in police to help protect our neighborhoods amidst crime spikes statewide, work to reform bail laws that release violent offenders, and enforce stricter penalties for hate crimes.

Thank you for the role NCC plays in preparing our next generation of leaders. I look forward to partnering with you in the future.

Best,
Patricia Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick

Gina L Sillitti - NYS Assembly 16th District

I write to express my deepest appreciation to the Adjunct Faculty Association for their hard work and dedication to every student attending Nassau Community College. Our Community Colleges serve not only as an institution of higher education, but as a steppingstone to the Middle Class or an opportunity to prepare for an unexpected re-entry into the workforce.

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I owe quite a bit to our Community Colleges. Before my dad passed, my mother went back to school at one. Without much by way of childcare options, I went with her, an eight-year-old in the back of the classroom with a pack of crayons and some coloring books. I never thought much of it at the time, but looking back, her determination for a better future for me – and my siblings – created opportunities that none of us could ever have dreamed of. Community College made that possible. Teachers like you made that possible.

These past two years of my first term in the Assembly have been truly incredible. But despite the pushing and pulling of countless – albeit important – interests, my priority is, and will always be to make sure our next generation has the opportunities I did. A strong public education system – at every level – is the cornerstone of achieving that goal.

And that requires resources. It requires funding to make higher education affordable for students, and for competitive benefits to attract and retain the educators who shape, encourage, and foster those students. This year’s budget included an effort to reach those needs, but there is more to do.

I want you to know that the Adjunct Faculty Association at Nassau Community College has a friend in me. If there is anything I can ever do, in any capacity, please do not hesitate to let me know.

With deepest appreciation,
Gina L. Sillitti

Laura Gillen - Candidate for Congress

My Fellow Educators,

As we enter the final days of the 2022 midterm election cycle, I am focused on the critical issues we face as a region here on Long Island. As Hempstead Town Supervisor, I advanced a good government agenda, not a partisan agenda. I will continue that important work if elected to Congress by working to get guns off our streets and keeping them out of our schools, addressing our student loan debt crisis and making college more affordable, and working to reduce middle class taxes by repealing the SALT deduction cap. As the only candidate in this race who has never voted to raise your taxes, you can trust me to understand the affordability issues Long Islanders experience every day.

Long Island faces many challenges in the years ahead and I am ready to work hard for you if I am elected to Congress. One issue I am very passionate about is the mental health and substance abuse crisis we face across the

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country. As educators, we often have a front row view of these issues. Young people are experiencing depression, general anxiety, or other forms of undiagnosed and untreated mental illness. Without treatment, young people turn to harmful behavior in the form of alcohol abuse, drug use, or in the very worst cases, self-harm. This takes an emotional toll on everyone, including educators.

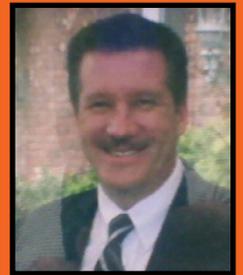
College campuses are rethinking approaches to mental health services, and it is a welcome revolution. The inclusion of group therapy, telehealth options, and peer counseling all have a place in today's college campus setting. One of my goals, should I be elected to Congress, is to increase funding to public institutions so we can tackle these issues more forcefully. Earmarking federal dollars to bolster mental health and substance abuse programming at institutions like NCC will allow us to help thousands of young people concentrate on their futures and allow professors to focus more of their energy on classroom activities.

As educators, we take our responsibility to our students very seriously, and one of those responsibilities is to make sure that each student can participate in a learning environment free from added stress or pressure. By increasing access to mental health and substance abuse services, adding professional staff to college health and wellness centers, and rethinking ways to meet our students' needs, we can make college campuses a healthier, more learning friendly environment. This will always be a priority of mine in Congress.

Warm Regards,
Laura Gillen

The Inside Scoop

It has been a while since I wrote about unionism and with the increasing headlines about faculty members coming under siege and losing their jobs, this is most likely a good time to revisit this topic. The AFA is our union, with an emphasis on OUR. The lifeblood of any union is its members. Several years ago, at our last Spring Conference, I opened the event by welcoming our invited distinguished guests and I recognized many friends and colleagues among the 500 in attendance. I then



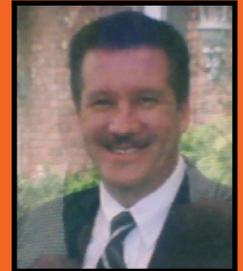
Richard D. Erben

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The Inside Scoop

pointed out as I looked at the 500 individuals that what I see most is the heart and soul of the AFA. Without question, when we save a faculty member’s job; when we negotiate enhanced wages and benefits; and when we fight for safe working conditions and all other achievements we make, we owe a debt of gratitude to each of you because you are the reason we can accomplish what we do.



Richard D. Erben

Every member, whether they are classroom, non-classroom, or professional faculty has an equal share of our union. Many of you have been members for years and recall when our union was in a crisis in 2014. When the sun rose after a “long night,” a ravished parched earth of ash was seen. But, even during such turmoil, I could still feel the passion that existed among our members. I recall depicting an ash-covered land that in the distance existed a flickering flame of passion, one that described our members’ resolve and commitment to rebuilding our union. I pleaded with the members to keep that flame burning until it erupted into a great blazing fire of resolve and commitment. As I suspected on that day, January 1, 2015, 796 AFA members took up that challenge. The new leadership along with those members rebuilt the union, and gave it back to its rightful owners, the membership. Our membership grew from those 796 individuals to over 1,700 on this present day. Over the past two weeks, 20 new adjuncts have joined our union family. The saying in these precarious times has more meaning than ever before: Together, we continue to do great things! Thank you for your dedication and support of OUR union!

Richard D. Erben
Chief Information Officer
Adjunct Faculty Association



Adjunct Spotlight

Mark Malaszczyk



By Ruth Silverman

In this issue of the *Spotlight*, I am focusing on Adjunct Professor of History Mark Malaszczyk, one of the winners of the SUNY Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Adjunct Teaching. There have been 16 awardees at Nassau CC thus far. *Spotlight* has focused on six of the winners at this point with Mark being the seventh. He won the award in the academic year 2018-19. All awardees are anonymously nominated. It is not enough to be nominated. All nominees must then submit a detailed portfolio of their careers and professional accomplishments, which is then adjudicated by a jury of their NCC colleagues. If the jury approves the summary, then the nominee becomes a winner of the award. Every winner has said that the award is a great honor and the highlight of their adjunct teaching career.

Professor Malaszczyk has taught in the Department of Geography, History, and Political Science for the past 22 years. He teaches coursework in Western Civilization, American History, and World History. He received his B.A. in European History, M.A. in American Diplomatic History and D.A. in Modern World History, all from St. John’s University. His dissertation, *Global History via the Web* [2002] has been cited a multitude of times and is more relevant than ever in these days of hybrid, remote, and asynchronous instruction.

In 2007, Professor Malaszczyk received a Ford Foundation Fellowship to Stony Brook University, where he co-authored a news literacy curriculum for secondary school social studies classes. This curriculum is now used in many Long Island school districts for grades 7-12.

Professor Malaszczyk enjoys making history relevant to students and helping them to draw connections to the world we live in today. Towards that end, he said, *“I challenge my students to be actively engaged in the learning process. To be a student of history is not a passive experience. It represents the opportunity to gain knowledge, examine scholarly insights, challenge orthodoxy, and cultivate personal wisdom that allows the learner to become an actively*

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Adjunct Spotlight

Mark Malaszczyk

engaged member of society. In studying the past, it is vital to make connections to the world that we live in. As the philosopher George Santayana said, ‘Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.’ Students in my classes are encouraged to question everything presented to them. Lectures often turn into dynamic discussions of content and its relevancy to the world we live in. For example, an explanation of the various types of Roman citizenship can rapidly evolve into a discussion about the immigration and naturalization debate in contemporary American society. Moments like this represent my aspiration for all who sit in on my classes, including my senior observers; I want my students to push themselves to

their intellectual limits, and discover that there are no limits to their intellect if they push themselves. Nothing pleases me more than to be a small part of that learner’s academic journey.”

In conclusion, Professor Malaszczyk finds teaching at Nassau to be highly rewarding, and looks forward to many more productive semesters and student experiences in the years ahead.

