



November/December 2025



ECCFA NEWS


The Sentinel: Elgin Community College Faculty Association Newsletter



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ECCFA President's Message

I know Thanksgiving has passed, but there are so many to be thankful for as ECCFA President that it felt right to make this a letter of thanks. First, I'm thankful for the Senators who volunteer their time to join an extra Zoom meeting every other week to help drive this union. I'd like to particularly thank our newest Senators, Brian Bohr, Diane Kondratowicz, Carissa Miller, and Kyle Witek. I'd like to also thank my old friend, Dave Reich, for filling in on short notice to finish out a colleague's term.

Steve "Woody" Wood continues to ground me in making sure we're on good financial footing as ECCFA Treasurer, and Alison Douglas as our Secretary does more behind the scenes than you know.

I'm thankful for long time ECCFA officers Luis Martinez and Diane Flahaven, who have been wrapped back into the fold as 1st and 3rd VP, respectively. Their experience has been invaluable during these negotiations. And Lisa Del Giudice has done a fantastic job representing the UAF2s in her first term as 2nd VP.

I'm thankful for Lauren Sullivan, who has done a masterful job as Communications Liaison during our ongoing negotiations and recently took on the additional role of ECCFA Webmaster.

I can't even begin to thank all the amazing members of your Negotiating Committee, who have put in countless hours already this semester - Tina Ballard, Roxanne Bell, Javier Aliegro, Patrick Gordon, Beth Hultman, Dana Kurpius, and Lauren Sullivan (plus the 3 VPs). This is only the second team I've fully participated in, but they work remarkably well together and you should all be thankful that they've volunteered to represent you.

My great friend, Kim Tarver, deserves more than thanks for her work as Chief Negotiator. Kim has taken on many roles within the ECCFA, including previously serving as our President for multiple terms. As her career begins to wind down, Kim has stepped into the most vital position within our union. As I've said before, she is the right woman for this moment, and I'm so grateful for her.

And finally, I'm thankful for all of you, members of the ECC Faculty Association. Without your support, none of this would be possible. We exist to represent you. Every decision we make is grounded in what is best for you, our members. You are what gives us power. We're only as strong as our members, which is critical to remember as we work to finalize a fair contract over the coming weeks. Only you can make that happen!



In Unity, Dan Kernler, Prof. of Mathematics - President, ECCFA, IFT Local #3791

We are stronger together!

Negotiations are still ongoing so to make sure you get up-to-date information and ways to show our collective strength, please sign up for the ECCFA Discord. This is the **ONLY** place where we will be posting this kind of information. To sign up, please be sure to send an email to lsullivan20@gmail.com from your personal email and Lauren Sullivan will send you a link.

We have more ECCFA T-Shirts on order, so once they arrive, we'll update you with where to pick them up. Be sure to claim one if you do not already have one!

Finally, be sure to join us on Opening Day! We will have updates for you at the luncheon, and we'd love to see you in person if possible.

"In Unity and Solidarity" By Kim Tarver

Colleagues, I want to give a shout of gratitude to our negotiations team: Beth Hultman, Dana Kurpisu, Diane Flahaven, Javier Coronado-Aliegro, Lauren Sullivan, Luis Martinez, Lisa DelGenio, Patrick Gordon, Roxy Bell, Tina Ballard, ECCFA President Dan Kernler, and Numbers & Financials Consultant Chris Cunningham. **Please extend your support, appreciation and encouragement to each of them.**

We have also been sharing ways to demonstrate our unity and collective strength. The anchors behind our proposals are solid, and we stand behind them together. Visibility matters and each of us can help by: **Adding signs on our office doors, putting on ECCFA buttons, and wearing ECCFA T-shirts or ECCFA blue on action days**

These small actions add up. We have coordinated efforts planned for the spring and your visible support during finals week could

play a major role in helping us secure the contract we deserve, sooner rather than later. I'm guardedly optimistic that we'll have good news to share before the new year, and if not I'll have other news to share.



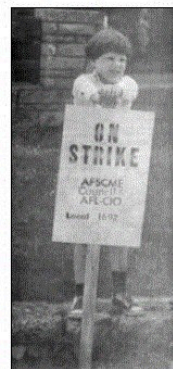
A Blast from the Past!

ELGIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE FACULTY ASSOCIATION

OCTOBER 2023

Union Membership is a Family Tradition

The following is a new edition to The Sentinel. It will highlight ECCFA members and the role unions played on them and their families. The goal is to emphasize the importance of unions.



Dan Kernler on strike in 1981 with his dad, Chuck Kernler.

By Dan Kernler

Unions have always played a significant role in my life, beginning with my father's early experiences as a union treasurer and steward when I was young. He worked as a seasonal laborer for Whitewater State Park in southeastern Minnesota for 13 years before getting a full-time job at a state fish hatchery, and served in leadership roles in AFSCME Local 1692 for most of that time.

I have memories as a young boy of seeing my dad with the union budget documents spread out across the kitchen table, with his calculator recording every expense. I recently asked Dad about what got him started, and he said it was the negotiation process and improvements he hoped for, and situations where park employees had been hurt by decisions made in the main office in St. Paul, MN. He gave an example where one employee was forced to retire at age 65, but then not allowed to come back to work when the mandatory retirement age was later raised to 70.

One of the most interesting aspects of my dad's union service is something I hadn't realized until recently - throughout nearly all of his time as both treasurer and

steward, he was only a part-time employee. In 1981, I joined my dad on the picket lines as a 6-year-old. Looking back on that strike now, he noted, "The main issue was the cost of health insurance, for which I was ineligible as a seasonal employee!" (I should note that Dad was eventually able to negotiate partial payments for health insurance for seasonal employees.)

This, to me, is the power of unions. While there is certainly value to the individual for being in a union, we don't bargain for individual benefits, or make decisions solely for what is best for us as individuals, or strike for what is best for us as individuals. It's easy to drown out the "In Unity" as white noise, but this is exactly why unions were first formed.

After some promotions later on in his career, my dad became a member of the Minnesota Association of Professional Employees. I distinctly remember his distaste for that particular union, especially their view of hourly employees. Even thinking about it now, Dad writes, "I resent the 'professional' label, inferring that laborers and technicians are not 'professional'."

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...Family Continued

It's experiences like these that have shaped my own view of unions, and the role I can play in creating equity within them. I'm not privy to the deliberations the ECCFA's negotiation team has had, but I hope they give me the opportunity to return the favor my father granted in his support for benefits he didn't have. While there are certainly increases I expect to see in the full-time contract, our members with the most need are those teaching part-time. I firmly support any efforts to work toward ensuring that my part-time colleagues are treated fairly and paid equitably for the work they do, and I am proud to continue in the family tradition of both membership and active participation in my union.

Here's a COPE update!

ECCFA-COPE is the ECCFA's political action committee. COPE informs and mobilizes union members to encourage their participation in the political process. Two months ago, a student was detained by ICE on ECC's campus. Since then, COPE members have stepped up in multiple ways to try to make our campus a safe and dignified place for everyone to study and work.

In November, ECCFA-COPE made a \$1,000 donation to a Centro de Información mutual aid fund that helps local families dealing with detention and deportation. COPE also contributed \$500 to a fundraiser for the We Rise Undocumented Student Club.

Please join the dozens of ECC faculty that make change by donating to COPE. Follow us on Facebook under "ECC Faculty Union COPE" for updates. To donate, email: eccfacope@gmail.com or go to eccfaculty.org and click on "COPE."

Picture caption (if possible): Centro de Información Executive Director Dianha Ortega-Ehreth and COPE members