The Rules of Engagement

+ Report yourself! Render useless the “Professor Watch List.”

The “starving student” stereotype is not a joke.

A conversation about institutional racism with Ibram Kendi.

Have you registered for the NEA Higher Ed conference?
HUNGER ON CAMPUS
Welcome new unions!

THRIVING IN ACADEME
Motivation, active learning, and more: how to use five “terms of engagement” to your benefit.

STATE OF THE STATES
A new state law in California aims to provide more job security to adjunct faculty.

OPINION
The election’s aftermath: how do we talk to our students about the power of their voice?

PREVIOUSLY KNOWN AS THE NEA EMERGING LEADERS ACADEMY, the new, retooled NEA Higher Ed Emerging Organizers Academy (EOA), is looking for applicants for its next cohort of faculty and staff members. The EOA is an intensive leadership development program that focuses on organizing skills and resources. Members meet three times over the course of roughly nine months, including in a campus-based field experience. Previous attendees have called it a life-changing experience. The deadline for applications is March 31. For more information, visit nea.org/hea.

The NEA Higher Ed Conference: Register now for March in Dallas
REGISTRATION IS OPEN FOR THE NEA HIGHER ED CONFERENCE to be held March 17-19 at the Renaissance Dallas Hotel in Dallas, Texas. As always, the conference offers robust opportunities to share information, learn new skills, and network with higher-ed colleagues, with specific conference tracks around policy issues, member organizing, bargaining and contract enforcement, community outreach, safety, and contingent faculty issues. Keynote speakers include NEA President Lily Eskelsen García. Her nomination shows little interest in “what works best for students, parents, educators, and communities.” Join Eskelsen García in signing an open letter from NEA and AFT members to the future education secretary about the value of a public education: http://bit.ly/2glUbr2P.

We Want You! Apply for the NEA Emerging Organizers Academy
PRESIDENT-ELECT TRUMP’S NOMINATION of Michigan billionaire Betsy DeVos to be the next U.S. Secretary of Education is “horrifying,” said NEA President Lily Eskelsen García. DeVos is best known for her anti-public school efforts to promote K-12 school vouchers and for-profit charter schools. What’s less known is what she thinks, or cares, about public higher education. But regardless of the educational level, privatization or for-profit education is a “phony answer” to the problems of underfunded public institutions, said Eskelsen García. “These schemes do nothing to help our most-vulnerable students while they ignore or exacerbate glaring opportunity gaps.” [Betsy DeVos] has consistently pushed a corporate agenda to privatize, de-professionalize and impose cookie-cutter solutions to public education, said Eskelsen García. Her nomination shows little interest in “what works best for students, parents, educators, and communities.” Join Eskelsen García in signing an open letter from NEA and AFT members to the future education secretary about the value of a public education: http://bit.ly/2glUbr2P.

Education Secretary nominee has corporate agenda, García says

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#WatchMeTeach
#StandUpforAcademicFreedom
#TakeActionNow!

Professor Watch List, a website launched shortly after the presidential election by the right-wing organization Turning Point USA, asks college students to report and “expose” faculty who “advance a radical agenda in lecture halls.” Its founder wrote, “It’s no secret that some of America’s professors are totally out of line.”

Hundreds of professors, including NEA Higher Ed members, have been named to the site. Rodolfo Acuna, a CSU Northridge professor of Chicano Studies, was reported for telling students that Chicano people have been oppressed. Frank Barajas, of CSU Channel Islands, was written up for suggesting to students that they write to California state legislators about how rising tuition affects their lives. Meanwhile, Des Moines Area Community College instructor Darwin Pagnac made the blacklist because he asked students to write about climate-change deniers.

How about you?

Have you promoted free speech in your classroom? Encouraged debate and differing points of view? In other words, are you teaching as if you’re a college professor, enabled by academic freedom to foster critical thinking and the ruthless examination of ideas?

Report yourself, says DeWayne Sheaffer, president of NEA’s National Council for Higher Education. “Let’s invalidate the madness,” he says. “Let’s make this list null and void by putting all of us on it.”

GO TO PROFESSORWATCHLIST.ORG, click on “submit a tip,” and report yourself. Let them know that you, as a higher educator, encourage students to think and speak, to challenge their own assumptions, to investigate the world around them, and to become curious, thoughtful, critical citizens in their communities.

Stand up for academic freedom. Stand up for your colleagues.
UNITE, INSPIRE, LEAD: Strengthening Bridges to Opportunity

THE NEA HIGHER EDUCATION CONFERENCE

March 17-19, 2017 | Dallas, TX

PURPOSE: To share information, develop skills, network with colleagues and organize around the issues that affect higher education.

To register or find out more about specific sessions, visit nea.org/he
“I missed the apples, but I got a lot of other good, healthy stuff,” says Flora, a Bunker Hill Community College (BHCC) student who is cradling a bag of oatmeal, cauliflower, carrots, ground turkey, and enough yellow onions to fuel her favorite sofrito recipe. “I’m Latina, so I have to have my sofrito!” she laughs. She’s also human, so she has to eat, period. Unfortunately, as the costs of college in the U.S. have skyrocketed—not to mention housing, healthcare, and transportation—the old “starving student” stereotype is a terrifying truth for Flora and hundreds of thousands of her peers across the nation. Flora’s bag of free food, gathered during the final minutes of the Greater Boston Food Bank’s monthly visit to the BHCC campus, is what she’ll eat this week.
Other studies have looked at specific campuses or systems: 21 percent of University of Hawai’i students were found to be food insecure in 2009; 39 percent at the City Colleges of New York (CUNY) in 2011; 42 percent on University of California campuses in 2015; and a whopping 59 percent at rural Western Oregon University, also in 2015.

“Students on food stamps doesn’t sound like something that should be happening—but it does,” says BHCC instructor Wick Sloane, a frequent author on the topic of campus hunger and a regular volunteer at BHCC’s monthly food bank.

What else shouldn’t be happening—but does—are faculty on food stamps. When Cape Cod Community College opened its food bank in 2016, the first visitors included the campus’ adjunct faculty, organizers told The Cape Cod Times.

“It’s tough. It’s not a lot of pay,” Cape Cod’s faculty union president Claudine Barnes told a reporter. On her campus, adjunct faculty make between $3,100 and $3,717 for a three-credit class. Even if they teach three classes, over both the fall and spring semesters, that’s $18,600 to $22,296 a year—in a county where the basic expenses of food, housing, and transportation, according to MIT’s living-wage calculator, add up to about $54,000 a year for one adult and one child.

And food stamps, now called SNAP, aren’t what they used to be. Flora, a single adult who lives in Boston, the fourth most expensive city in the U.S., according to popular lists, gets a total of $70 a month through the federal assistance program. “SNAP usually lasts about two weeks, and that’s if I buy smart—things that I actually have to cook,” she says. “If I get myself a coffee in the morning, that’s it for the day!”

And it’s only likely to get worse. U.S. House Speaker Paul Ryan previously has proposed spending cuts to SNAP of $125 billion over 10 years. Put another way, his budget plans would strip 11 to 12 million Americans of food assistance.

Add it up: Food, tuition, transportation... The problems are particularly acute at community colleges, where more than a third of students live in households earning less than $20,000 a year, even as the annual expense of attending a community college is estimated to be about $16,235 a year, according to the College Board. (Meanwhile, community colleges also have the highest percentage of typically low-paid, part-time and adjunct faculty.)

Not surprisingly, these are students who struggle to stay in school, and finish the degrees they need to get good jobs. Last year, the College Board reported that just 14 percent of community college students from families earning less than $30,000 a year had completed their associate’s degrees, six years after they started them.

At BHCC, poverty is a “huge factor” in its 10 percent graduation rate, says adjunct professor David Dow, a nearly 40-year veteran educator on campus, and a regular volunteer at BHCC’s food bank since it started in 2012.

And yet, earning a degree offers the best chance to break out of poverty. By 2020, 65 percent of all jobs in the U.S. will require a degree, according to Georgetown University’s Center on Education and the Workforce. This is a fact that did not escape
President Barack Obama, who in 2016 introduced “America’s College Promise,” a plan for free community college that has not been endorsed by President-elect Donald Trump.

“Now, more than ever, a college degree is the surest ticket to the middle class,” said Obama at a speech in Tennessee. “It is the key to getting a good job that pays a good income—and to provide you the security where...you have a skill set and the capacity to learn new skills. And that is the key not just for individual Americans, that’s the key for this whole country’s ability to compete in the global economy.”

Students know this, too. That’s why they skip meals to pay for books, or cover the rent. In a desperate but hopeful calculus, they opt to starve the student they are now to invest in the nurse, or teacher, or accountant that they someday hope to be. But it leaves them extremely vulnerable, and not very ready to learn, either.

“If you don’t feed yourself, you can’t think clearly, you lack judgment, you can’t build the neurons in your brain!” says Maria Puente, chair of BHCC’s behavioral science department and a regular volunteer at the campus food bank. “I’ve had students who have struggled in class, and the fact is they are not eating well.”

It’s also likely students work more hours to make more money to eat, making it difficult for them to find time to attend class and study. “I’m struggling,” admits Flora, who juggles a full-time job at a local pizza restaurant with a full-time load of nursing classes. But, she adds, “I’m just a few credits from graduating.”

Building a Safety Net

At BHCC, faculty and staff do what they can to help—it’s not enough, but it’s a lot. At “Single Stop,” a small bustling office above a computer lab, students can pick up a donated Panera Bread baguette and a PB&J sandwich every day. Meanwhile, the Boston food bank’s “mobile market” arrives monthly, as it does at two other eastern Massachusetts community colleges, with about 30 pounds of fruits, vegetables, and proteins per student.

Across the U.S., the number of campus-based food banks has increased from four in 2008 to more than 120 in 2014. In a recent study of 10 community colleges across the U.S., more than half of students reported struggling with “food insecurity.” More than one in five said they regularly go hungry.

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To reach Mary Ellen Flannery, author and Advocate editor, contact mflannery@nea.org.
Terms of Engagement

Teaching today is tough, and based on my conversations with faculty all over the country, I know it is just getting tougher. How can we keep ourselves feeling positive about our profession when we face such a dispiriting panoply of pressures?

BY ELIZABETH F. BARKLEY, Foothill College

Here are some of the challenges I see today that simply weren’t there when I started my college teaching career almost four decades ago:

- Escalating pressure to retain students while still maintaining academic standards.
- Student obsession with grades, with seeming disregard for the learning the grades are supposed to represent.
- The need to preserve academic integrity in a culture where what constitutes it is being redefined, opportunities for it are clever and ubiquitous, and efforts to punish it seem increasingly feeble.
- Institutional insistence that we provide assessment data in ways we worry reduce the richness of what we want to teach.
- Recognition that open discussion in our classrooms is critical, while feeling we and students are walking warily through a minefield of political correctness.
- Increased dependence on student evaluations despite low response rates, gender bias and the seeming surge of mean-spirited, personal attacks.

If you aren’t experiencing at least one of the above, I can pretty much guarantee that one of your colleagues is. College teaching can be a deeply rewarding career, but it can also sometimes feel as though we’re caught in a crucible of conflicting pressures. How do we prosper in our chosen career despite these stresses? Although I don’t have easy answers, I do have some suggestions.
The Five Terms of Engagement

Engagement is a funny word. It just as easily references wars as weddings, and it is now so widely paired with other words—say, civic engagement, or client engagement—that its meaning has become a bit muddled. About a decade ago I participated in an effort to clarify what student engagement meant to college faculty. This led me to develop a five-component framework that I now call the “Terms of Engagement.” I share these in the hope they offer a structure with which to respond to today’s academic environment.

CORE COMPONENT 1: MOTIVATION

Many of us have found that if students are genuinely motivated to learn (not just motivated to get a good grade or check off an annoying requirement on the path to graduation), we’re spared a host of potential problems. Students who are eager to learn tend to do their work honestly, persist to the end, and feel positively about their learning experience. Understanding the principles that underlie motivation can guide us to set up conditions that enhance it. There are many different models of motivation, but Brophy—a specialist in student motivation—suggests that much of what researchers have found can be organized within an expectancy x value model (2010). Put simply, this means that for students to want to expend the energy required to learn in our course, they must expect to be able to perform the learning tasks successfully (expectancy) as well as value the process and the task itself (value). Examples of strategies that support high expectancy include scaffolding assignments and build-

TALES FROM REAL LIFE > REDISCOVERING THE REWARDS OF TEACHING

Four decades ago, when I began teaching, things were easy. I lectured, students listened; students studied, I tested—and that was that. Then I took a 10-year hiatus from teaching, and when I returned to the classroom, things had changed: the students sitting in front of me seemed mostly not to want to be there. I once assumed student propensity toward disengagement in my classroom was because I teach in an open admissions college, but conversations with colleagues from an array of institutions have persuaded me that engaging students today is a shared occupational challenge. Most of us chose to be college professors because we had a passion for our academic discipline and we desired to share our enthusiasm. We want students to want to learn what we care so much about. But how do we accomplish that? My experiences challenged me to examine everything I was doing as a teacher. Recognizing that the old ways simply weren’t working anymore, I strove to transform my teaching. This laid the groundwork for my efforts to better understand and promote student engagement, and along the way, an unexpected and delightful thing happened – I became more engaged myself as I rediscovered the rewards of teaching.

Meet Elizabeth F. Barkley

Elizabeth F. Barkley is professor of music history at Foothill College in Los Altos Hills, California. With almost four decades as an innovative and reflective teacher, she has received numerous teaching honors and awards, including California Higher Education Professor of the Year by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, and formal recognition by the California state legislature for her contributions to undergraduate education. A popular keynote speaker and workshop presenter, she and her co-authors, Claire H. Major and K. Patricia Cross, have written three bestselling handbooks for college faculty published by Wiley/Jossey-Bass as the College Teaching Techniques series.
and in safety-nets (such as opportunities to resubmit assignments). To promote value, try to help students see the relevance of their coursework and provide them with some level of personal choice.

**CORE COMPONENT 2: ACTIVE LEARNING**

The terms teaching and learning are so often paired that we can get lulled into thinking one produces the other, and then be disappointed to discover evidence to the contrary. Research demonstrates that to help students truly learn, we must design activities in which they assume an active role in the learning process. “Active learning” is an umbrella term for several pedagogical approaches, including problem-based learning, experiential learning, and cooperative and collaborative learning, which all challenge learners to make connections between what is new and what is known. Active learners integrate new information, ideas, and concepts into their personal knowledge, and also monitor both the processes and the results of their learning. For example, in a LAT 11: Prediction Guide (Barkley and Major, 2016, pp. 148-152), students are presented with a series of questions that ask them to make predictions prior to a learning activity and then, after the learning activity, revisit their predictions to evaluate accuracy and correct potential misconceptions.

Motivation and active learning are like two helices that work together synergistically. The more students want to learn, the more they tend to want to learn. I also propose three conditions that function somewhat like connecting rungs between the two helices of motivation and active learning because they integrate elements of both. These conditions serve as my next three components.

**MOTIVATION AND ACTIVE LEARNING ARE LIKE TWO HELICES THAT WORK TOGETHER SYNERGISTICALLY: AS THEY INTERACT, THEY CONTRIBUTE INCREMENTALLY TO INCREASE ENGAGEMENT.**

**COMPONENT 3: ENSURE STUDENTS ARE APPROPRIATELY CHALLENGED**

Somewhere between “been there, done that” and “lost and confused” are learning tasks that offer students the optimal level of challenge. Vygotsky (1978) invented the term “zone of proximal development” (ZPD) to suggest that learning is most productive when learners are exposed to concepts and ideas just slightly above their current level of development. When students are working on tasks in this zone, they are more likely to be engaged. The challenge most of us face is that we teach classes with lots of students. Because individual learners typically have different zones of optimal challenge, how can we possibly personalize the course sufficiently to meet each student’s unique needs?

One popular strategy is to help students become more self-directing learners so they can help ensure they are working in their optimal challenge zone. Another is organizing one’s course around differentiation principles (Tomlinson, 2014), in which teachers plan for and attend to student differences. For example, consider allowing students who already know a portion of the material to move to more complex applications of the material, while focusing the efforts of other students on building a solid foundation.

**COMPONENT 4: CREATE A SENSE OF CLASSROOM COMMUNITY**

The chasm that sometimes divides faculty and students can seem deep and wide, and when peering across the abyss, it is easy to “otherize” and attribute all sorts of nefarious attitudes, behaviors and values to each other. The gap between faculty and students is not the only one: many of our classrooms are filled with learners reflecting such a dizzying array of backgrounds that students can feel as distant from each other as they feel from us. This sense of separateness sets up barriers of distrust and dislike, creating a crucible of tensions that can erupt in incivility. For us to teach the skills of democratic discourse so essential for liberal education, we and students must feel safe.
to speak up. It can be difficult to establish the trust that creates a sense of community, but try we must. Icebreakers and effective collaborative assignments are helpful, but also consider setting aside time early in the term to meet with students in small groups to encourage more positive relationships and foster a sense of connectedness and community.

COMPONENT 5: TEACH SO THAT STUDENTS LEARN HOLISTICALLY

As college professors, we flourish in the “thinking” world. When we consider college-level learning, we readily understand and value the acquisition, synthesis, and evaluation of knowledge that characterizes abstract thought. This is why Bloom’s Taxonomy of the Cognitive Domain has served as a guide to faculty in all kinds of institutions. But learning involves more than rational thinking, and designing activities that help students cross cognitive, affective, psycho-motor, and where appropriate, moral domains helps students engage in their learning on multiple levels. Strategies that promote holistic learning

THE CHASM THAT SOMETIMES DIVIDES FACULTY AND STUDENTS CAN SEEM DEEP AND WIDE, AND WHEN PEERING ACROSS THE ABYSS, IT IS EASY TO “OTHERIZE” AND ATTRIBUTE ALL SORTS OF NEFARIOUS ATTITUDES, BEHAVIORS AND VALUES TO EACH OTHER.

include teaching so that students use multiple processing modes and offering options for nonlinear learning.

In a nod to a quote attributed to W.B. Yeats—“Education is not about filling a bucket, but lighting a fire”—I have arranged the above five components into the acronym MATCH:

Motivation
Active Learning
Task is Optimally Challenging

FOCUS ON US
How do we keep ourselves engaged? Flipping the MATCH lens to focus on ourselves, here are some suggestions.

Motivation: To stay motivated to teach, we need to be confident we can teach successfully and we need to find value in our work. High expectancy grows with being successful. The challenges you face most likely have been faced by others; reach out to find solutions. In terms of value, remember you are doing work that can change lives.

Active Learning: Take advantage of the resources available to deepen your knowledge of pedagogy: colleagues, conferences, books, workshops, websites, and articles such as this one. Furthermore, consider strategies such as our Learning Assessment Techniques that can help you analyze and paint a richer picture of learning in your courses. This information also can provide evidence to external stakeholders that may be more accurate and compelling than that generated by typical student evaluations.

Task is Appropriately Challenging: In an earlier edition of this journal, Robertson (2008) offered strategies for managing the pressures of our profession. In addition to recommending you read that article, I would like to add the following: fight back. If you are legitimately constrained by campus policies that seem to be counterproductive, work to change them.

Community: You are most likely a dedicated teacher. Surround yourself with like-minded others who value teaching. Just as talking with colleagues who complain about their careers and belittle students can be enervating, so can time with colleagues who celebrate our successes and acknowledge our uniquely privileged professions can be energizing.

Holistic Learning: Permit yourself to care. Taking the time to get to know students can be both humbling (some are quite experts in areas where we are novices) and inspiring (some have gone through quite a lot to get to the point where they can sit in our classes).

I would like to conclude with a quote from a colleague who is particularly inspirational to me: “Teaching is a life of service, and as everyone knows, a life of service is a life well lived.”

REFERENCES AND RESOURCES


A History of Racist Ideas

In his recent National Book Award winner, *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America*, NEA Higher Ed member Ibram X. Kendi challenges the popular folklore of racism. Abraham Lincoln? W.E.B. Du Bois? Barack Obama? Well-meaning people with racist ideas, he suggests. “My definition of racism is a simple one,” he writes, “it is any concept that regards one racial group as inferior or superior…in any way.” Recently, Kendi, an assistant professor at the University of Florida, talked with the *NEA Advocate*.

**This book upturns a common perception about racism, specifically that racist ideas propel racist policy. You say it’s the opposite—racist policies have propelled racist thinking. Can you explain that?** That was something I certainly believed going into the book, that racist ideas drive policy, and I didn’t think I was going to turn it on its head. That wasn’t my intent… I wanted to write a history of racist ideas, and show how historical context produced these people who produced these ideas. I found, over and again, that these producers were not ignorant. Many were the most brilliant minds in American history. And they typically were producing these ideas to defend existing racist policies. The disparities were in place, their effects were profound, and these ideas were an attempt to normalize and justify those policies.

**You describe three kinds of people: segregationists, who are racists basically; anti-racists, who actively reject any idea that Black people are inferior in any way; and, in the middle, the assimilationists. This third group includes people like Lincoln and Obama. Can you describe them better?** The reason I wrote a history of racist ideas, as opposed to a history of racists, was because I realized very early on that there are people who hold racist and antiracist ideas. These are the assimilationists. You can simultaneously believe that the racial groups are biologically equal, that they were created equal, but that they have become behaviorally unequal. Assimilationists will argue that Black people are capable of development, and they believe that this belief is progressive but it also is racist.

**What if you apply this filter to higher education? How do we move higher ed policies from assimilationist to antiracist?** At the higher ed level, you have historically White institutions. You have disparities in student bodies, and faculty bodies, and administrative bodies. What the institutions typically say is that we can’t get more Black students because Black students are not qualified. So, the blame is put on the students. Those are racist ideas—racist ideas have historically placed blame on Black people, as opposed to the policies that lead to racist ideas. Look at the resources allocated to recruiting the best Black athletes, as opposed to the best Black students or best Black faculty, and there’s no comparison… We need to focus on that resource gap.

**How do anti-racists strike back? You describe the act of protesting against someone or some idea as a waste of time.** Racist powers will change policies when it serves their self-interest, and when the protest threat disappears they’ll change them back. It’s a short-term solution. The long-term solution is for anti-racist people to get into positions of power.

**The book strikes a hopeful note in the end, saying there will come a time when Americans realize the only thing wrong with Black people is that they think there is something wrong with Black people, and maybe that time is now. What makes you hopeful?** What has always made me hopeful is the resistance to racist ideas and racist policies. Basically, the continuing presence of anti-racists in American society makes me hopeful. Clearly segregationists and assimilationists have won, on many occasions, but if you’re involved in the struggle, there always remains the capacity to win. The only way in which an antiracist America could never come to be is if anti-racists themselves decide it’s impossible and they stop fighting for it.
THE STATE OF HIGHER ED

Huge effort by CA faculty and students pays off

Hundreds of California Faculty Association (CFA) members and their students contributed more than 5,000 volunteer hours last year on behalf of Proposition 55 and CFA-supported candidates for political office. It was time well-spent: Members’ advocacy helped secure the passage of Prop 55, a tax measure that will deliver between $4 billion and $9 billion to California public schools and community colleges through the maintenance of current tax rates on the state’s top 2 percent of income earners. Without the passage of Prop 55, students likely would have faced tuition hikes or loss of services. The California State University system could have lost an estimated $250 million in state funding each year.

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Jennifer Eagan, president of CFA.

Five years after union vote, the ballots are counted

In summer 2011, part-time, adjunct faculty at St. Xavier University, a private Catholic college in Chicago, cast their ballots on the question of forming a union, to be affiliated with the Illinois Education Association (IEA). From the start, St. Xavier administrators protested, claiming a union would infringe on the free exercise of religion. But the NLRB Regional Office cleared the way for the union election, ruling in 2011 that St. Xavier provided a secular education and that a union wouldn’t infringe on religious expression. Soon after the election, St. Xavier appealed to the NLRB National Office in Washington, D.C., and the ballots were impounded. For five years, through its continued legal maneuvers, St. Xavier was able to delay a vote tally. But this fall, the ballots finally were counted. By a vote of 29-25, the adjuncts had voted to form a union. A similar situation also occurred in New York, with the NEA-AFT affiliated adjunct union at Manhattan College. There, administrators argued the same religious exception, also held up the vote tally for five years, and ultimately lost to the collective voice of faculty.

Protests over faculty cuts in Boston

Last spring, UMass Boston faculty and students were outraged when the university sent notices to about 400 non-tenure-track faculty, saying they may not have jobs in the fall. Come fall, about 100 positions actually were cut, but many instructors already had left to find other work and several course sections were eliminated. At the same time the university raised tuition and fees. So, when state Education Secretary James Peyser visited campus this fall, students, staff, and community leaders were on hand to protest the lack of support, chanting, “Whose schools? Our schools!” Meanwhile, Peyser refused to explain his opposition to the state’s Fair Share Amendment, a constitutional amendment that could appear on the ballot in 2018 and add 4 percent to the state income tax paid by those earning more than $1 million a year. The revenues, estimated at nearly $2 billion a year, would be directed to transportation and public education. “[Campus unions] are working together to fight these cuts and cost hikes as they undermine the mission of UMass Boston,” Faculty Staff Union President Marline Kim told the MTA Advocate.

JOB SECURITY FOR ADJUNCTS: A NEW CA LAW OFFERS NEW PROTECTIONS

Thanks to the hard work of members of California’s Community College Association (CCA), part-time faculty members in California can expect a new degree of job security this year. A new law, signed by Gov. Jerry Brown this fall, and originally sponsored by state Sen. Tony Mendoza in collaboration with CCA, requires community college administrators to sit down with faculty and set standards for job security on every campus.

“This historic measure encompasses the values and beliefs we all share, that part-time faculty deserve to have minimum standards that will create greater job stability, which will not only help those faculty members but will additionally benefit the students they serve,” wrote CCA legislative advocate Jennifer Baker to Gov. Brown.

Currently, 32 of the state’s 72 community college districts offer some sort of re-employment rights like seniority or due process, but these vary across the state, according to CCA. For example, at Butte College, part-time faculty can be moved to a “seniority list” after one semester. But at San Joaquin College, part-time faculty have been trying to bargain for seniority rights for 20 years.

“The majority of faculty have no rights at all. They’re like farm workers, or fast-food workers, who can be let go at any time,” said John Martin, an at-large director for CCA, and an adjunct faculty member at Shasta College.

In an effort to get the law passed, Martin personally visited every state legislator on the relevant committees. He asked all of them: “Why can’t faculty who have been teaching 10, 15, 20 years, have these basic rights?”
BY THE NUMBERS

YES, THERE ARE MORE WOMEN FACULTY THESE DAYS. Yes, there is a greater proportion of faculty of color, too. But a full picture of diversity on campuses shows that women are under-represented in STEM fields and over-represented among non-tenure track faculty, and that racial diversity in the academy has seen slow, uneven progress. Recently, NEA Research, with Coffey Consulting, took a look at the data.

Race & Ethnicity
White faculty remain the predominant group on campuses, while the proportion of faculty of color has grown slightly over the years. At public four-year institutions in particular, this growth has largely been driven by increases in Asian faculty, while the percentage of Black and Hispanic faculty has stagnated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>2-year</th>
<th>4-year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Non-tenured

Tenured

Gender Equity
Over the last 20 years, representation of women among faculty has grown steadily. They now represent 55 percent of 2-year faculty, in particular. But their numbers are not evenly spread throughout the academy—they currently occupy about one-fourth of full-time faculty positions in STEM fields, and they are over-represented among non-tenured faculty.

% Non-tenured of all full-time faculty

Please note: Shares less than 5 percent not noted.
Source: IPEDS, U.S. Department of Education
What’s ahead?

The “Trump Effect” on unions, educators

BY JASON WALTA

THE WORLD IS BRACING ITSELF for the prospect of a Donald Trump presidency. The success of his wildly polarizing and unconventional election campaign took virtually everyone by surprise. Now the hard business of governing begins, and few of us know quite what to expect.

One possibility is that Trump—a political chameleon who has changed his party affiliation at least five times over the years—might just shrug off his fringe-right campaign persona and tack to the center. Early indications, however, suggest that won’t be the case, as he surrounds himself with advisors and cabinet nominees with dubious experience and extreme ideologies. And, with both houses of Congress under Republican control until at least 2018, very little stands in the way of what might be the new administration’s excesses. Unions—particularly those representing workers in the public sector and education—are therefore approaching the Trump era with an acute sense of foreboding.

One of the most significant concerns is the Trump administration’s lasting legacy on the Supreme Court. Following the death of Justice Antonin Scalia nearly a year ago, Senate Republicans stymied President Obama’s appointment of the centrist jurist Judge Merrick Garland to the Court. Now Trump has announced that one of the top items on his agenda is filling that vacancy, and he has indicated his nominee will be drawn from a list of candidates vetted by the hard-right think tank, the Heritage Institute.

Already, many are speculating that once the Court is back at full strength with a reliably conservative Trump appointee, a first order of business will be to weaken public sectors unions by declaring, in essence, that the First Amendment operates as a national “right to work” law in the public sector. The Court nearly reached that conclusion last year, but Justice Scalia’s death resulted in a tie decision that let stand the Court’s decades-old precedents allowing public sector unions to collect fair share fees for the services they provide as collective bargaining representatives. But now, as dozens of cases percolate through the lower courts, a new conservative majority on the Court likely will get another shot at the issue.

Of course, that’s not the only issue likely to be on the Court’s agenda. Over recent years, the Court has issued significant decisions on affirmative action, marriage equality, and reproductive freedom that conservatives are eager to see reversed. And on other issues—including gun control and campaign finance reform—they are hoping to solidify and expand on right-leaning precedents.

Particularly for unions in higher education, we likely will see a turn for the worse. Under Obama, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) steadily strengthened organizing and bargaining rights, making it possible for graduate assistants to unionize and easier for adjuncts and faculty to gain representation. On these issues—and many others—the pendulum will likely swing back as Trump makes appointments to the board, resulting in weakened organizing and bargaining. Or, Trump could cripple the NLRB entirely by declining to appoint a quorum of members. (This occurred for several long stretches during the George W. Bush administration.)

If the Trump administration follows this rightward trajectory, educators and their unions will have a fight on their hands. They will have to dig deep, both in their commitment to organizing in the workplace and in their pursuit of mobilizing members and the public politically. It will take a bold and unified effort to show Trump—who lost the popular vote by two million votes—that he doesn’t have a mandate for the reactionary agenda that seems to be taking shape for his administration.

Jason Walta is an attorney in the NEA Office of General Counsel and an adjunct faculty member at American University’s Washington College of Law.
Nov. 9: The morning after

MY 8 A.M. COLLEGE LITERATURE CLASS began as usual, with a brief discussion of the next assignment. But what followed was not the lesson I had planned.

Faces were somber, or perhaps it was my own post-election sobriety reflected in their silence. I confronted the elephant in the room, or the one I saw, and asked students for their reactions to the election results.

Only a handful had registered to vote. Almost none had voted. When I questioned why, they responded: Why cast a vote against the lesser of two evils? Shouldn’t a vote be cast for someone, not simply against another? What difference would my vote have made? Politicians are corrupt. They don’t speak for us.

I acknowledged their cynicism. We spoke about political discourse, facts and fiction, and the negativity of this way-too-long election season. We discussed how simply stating something doesn’t make it true. That rhetorical statements need evidence and corroboration. That ideas need analysis and reflection. That how we talk to each other matters. That name-calling and shouting close minds, not open them. That Facebook and Twitter politics has led to more polarization, not a greater understanding of the complex and diverse worlds we inhabit. That kindness and respect matter.

I emphasized that politicians, like the rest of us, are imperfect people. That many work hard to serve their constituents and do the right thing. That it is the responsibility of the electorate to educate elected officials about issues that matter.

I urged students, going forward, not to remain on the sidelines. Their future is at stake. So much of immediate importance affects their academic lives alone. But students also must see the big picture. Take the issue of college affordability. Students should advocate for reduced college costs, but also recognize a key factor for these high fees is inadequate state investment. State funding for public higher education in Massachusetts is down 11 percent from 2002—despite increased student enrollment. The dramatic rise in college fees over the past decade is but one consequence of such chronic institutional underfunding.

At community colleges, thousands of non-benefited adjuncts are hired yearly to ensure student access, but this creates faculty employment disparities. Plus, access does not ensure success. Too often, academic support services are inadequate to serve all students effectively. Increased state investment in public colleges is critical to address these inequities.

My closing plea to students: Get to know your legislators. Email, call or visit their local offices. Identify concerns. Partner with politicians to get results. Then hold these officials accountable at the ballot box.

Beyond diminishing the cynicism, educators must engage students in the political process — because their informed voices matter in this democracy. But only if they use them.

Diana (Donnie) McGee is a professor of English at Bristol Community College in Mass., and also a member of the NEA Board of Directors.