

# THE WORD FOR THE '90s: TOLERANCE

The letters you have before you were printed in two separate issues of the Faculty Newsletter, at De Anza College. They deal with the issues of multiculturalism, racism, and political correctness. We offer them as "food for thought," without any comments from us. *La Voz* has made only minor alterations due to spatial constraints.

## Racism among DAC faculty

By Susanne Chan  
DAC Instructor

During this year's Fall Flex Day, I facilitated one of the afternoon small (35+) groups on "Successes and Challenges." The comments made by many of the faculty and their expressed sentiments greatly concerned me. I want to relay them to you. I believe many of the faculty of De Anza College are not only conservative, but downright racist and bigoted in their approach to teaching and our multi-ethnic student population. We, as a group and an institution, have not changed greatly since the time of the Civil Rights Movement of the '60s and '70s. We have only replaced the words that were used and have substituted them with a "kinder, and gentler" vocabulary. The racism on our campus now is also more insidious than that of the past because we project out a superficial veneer of acceptance while not changing one iota of our underlying feelings and emotions.

Many of my esteemed colleagues, I believe, are hiding behind the shield of high academic demands and rigor in order not to change their curriculum to reflect a multicultural and pluralistic perspective. Some of the sentiments expressed in the small group include: "they have to speak English ... they have to be able to pass my exams and state tests ... this is the United States and English is the national language ... I have too much technical material in my curriculum to make accommodations ... how are they going to get a job in the 'real world' if we don't make the same demands like industry" ... ad nauseam, ad nauseam.

Please don't get me wrong, there were a number of "enlightened" faculty in the room who tried as best they could to inject their view and more importantly, that one does not have to climb Mt. Everest to incorporate a multicultural perspective into their classroom. But unfortunately, their efforts, albeit persistent, were met with preconceived barriers that were just too high to scale.

Last year's opening Flex Day's activity, La'Fa, Ba'Fa, was well received by most of the faculty. They embraced it, I feel, because it was an exercise and a game. It is easy to play a game and have reactions. But I don't think this faculty is ready to take the next step and to examine their thinking and feelings. As Lillian Roybal Rose so well expressed, "we have to address our emotions." Is De Anza ready for the next step? I believe that a great deal of work remains and that the "newer" faculty will make changes to fully incorporate multiculturalism, not only into their classrooms, but also their own repertoire for personal beliefs and behaviors.

My request for you, is not to get off this ship called "advocacy." I think we have been traveling through a mine field and have suffered a few "hits". At this time, I don't have any specific suggestions for activities, but I will give you the assurance that I will try to help and assist as best I can. When I try to remember back to all of the other opening days, this year surely is the one that can be described as most somber and depressing. I am sad about where my colleagues are and disappointed in their slowness. However, I refuse to succumb to the depression; there is a great deal of work to be done. I am reminded of the song from the '50s: "ants can move a rubber tree plant, 'cause he's got high hopes, he's got high hopes..." More importantly, we must remember the original "Boat People" were the Pilgrims who landed on Plymouth Rock. They paved the way for the groups of people who followed and now make up this nation we call these United States.

## Multiculturalism isn't everything

By Scott Peterson  
DAC Instructor

The open letter from Susanne Chan printed in the FAS newsletter was so unbelievable outrageous that a response is required. Never in my tenure at De Anza have I seen a letter so arrogant, so lacking in a rational discussion of the issues, and so attacking on a personal level without any justification.

Ms. Chan got a chance to listen to a very small sample of De Anza faculty for a short period of time. Based on this limited exposure, she has the gall to label a majority of the faculty as "racist and bigoted in their approach to teaching." This statement is ridiculous and mean spirited. Basic statistics should tell Ms. Chan that from this limited sample, one may not draw conclusions about the total population of faculty. It is also clear that her conclusions are a result of her own personal prejudices. I would suggest that she examine those prejudices before she labels anyone else.

The letter also points out another problem we have at De Anza. Those proponents of multicultural pluralism and affirmative action seem unwilling to partake in an intelligent, rational discussion of the positive and negative aspects of these issues. These people immediately label anyone who does not enthusiastically jump on the bandwagon as "racist".

I would like to state that there are many of us who have strong reservations about the implementation of multicultural curricula, particularly here at De Anza where these issues have been given visibility almost to the exclusion of all other issues regarding teaching. Indeed, the Professional Development Day that was canceled last school year had forums devoted exclusively to multicultural issues and affirmative action. While these are important issues to be discussed, there are many other issues that need to be explored, such as how are we going to train students to deal with technological changes that are proliferating the world today. I believe that all of us need to understand that balance is required in the development of both faculty and students.

I am outraged by the implication that multicultural and pluralistic perspectives should take precedence over academic quality. What a sad statement this makes about the future of our country if we are willing to sacrifice excellence to massage a guilty conscience. Ms. Chan also implies that all disciplines should be exploring curriculum changes to the same level of vigor that she perceives. While teaching in the math department, it is inconceivable for me to understand how to make significant changes in Calculus instruction to accommodate different cultural perspectives. If Ms. Chan can provide insight into how I should change this perspective, I am certainly willing to listen.

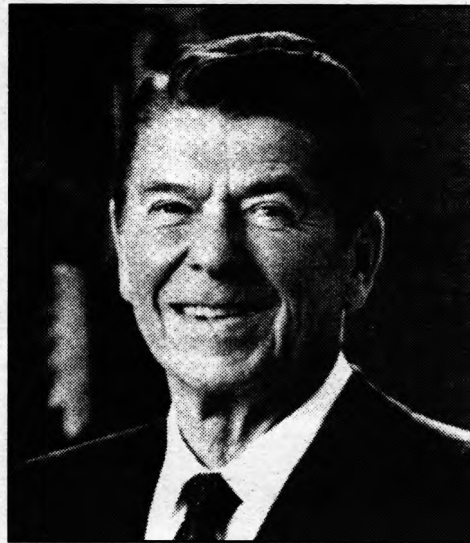
Finally, I have some personal comments to make to Ms. Chan and all those who embraced her letter. How dare you label people as racist and bigoted without spending time talking with these people in detail about the stands they take! How dare you imply that multicultural curricula is more important than academic rigor! How dare you insult those who take opposing views without examining in detail your own prejudices! How dare you imply you know what is best for my class without having ever taught the class or worked with the material! Until you come up with concrete solutions or suggestions that rational people can discuss, keep your arrogant, self-serving insults to yourself. You owe this entire faculty an apology.

## Two views on Ronald Reagan's visit: Reagan destroyed our schools

By Orlando Santos  
News Editor

Former U.S. President Ronald Reagan is scheduled to visit the De Anza campus this Friday, December 6, at 7 p.m. The former president, ironically, will not be addressing students at De Anza, but will instead address a sellout Flint Center audience as part of the Celebrity Speaker Series, which usually doesn't include many De Anza students.

A group of De Anza students from the Student Action Coalition plan to hold a protest rally against Reagan for his poor record on education issues. The De Anza Student Body Government made a somewhat controversial move in endorsing the rally. While this action may be questionable for a government body that is supposed to represent the 27,000 students of this campus, student anger at Ronald Reagan for his educational record is entirely justified.



Students on all levels are paying for the misguided policies of Ronald Reagan's presidency. During his eight years in office, Reagan's stated objectives for education included abolishing the Department of Education, obtaining a constitutional amendment to permit organized prayer in public schools and extending tuition tax credits to parents of pupils in private schools. None of these issues addressed the true needs of education. Instead, they diverted attention away from what schools really needed: money.

During his two terms in office, Reagan cut education block grants to states

by 63%; vocational education by 29%, bilingual education by 47%; and college work-study by 26.6%. Only students who had parents with enough money to send them to an expensive private school were left unaffected by Reagan's funding cuts.

The Reagan Administration repeatedly attempted to shrug off all responsibility for this country's educational woes by blaming teachers for blocking reforms. Yet, it was Reagan's funding cuts that made necessary reforms impossible.

The \$3 trillion national deficit Reagan left us has also had a tremendous effect on the educational system of this country. Yes, we have Reagan to thank for tripling the national debt; the one who convinced Americans and Congress that we could balance the budget while at the same time double military spending by lowering taxes by one-third. Efforts to balance this lopsided budget mean less money for individual states which in turn results in less money for education. State cuts in education funding in California are already in the works for next year's budget.

Here at De Anza, our recent budget crisis, coupled with state cuts could have disastrous effects for this school's future. Some of the repercussions of further state cuts will be more crowded classrooms due to a cut-down of classes, less instructional support, and less financial aid, among many other cutbacks, and you'll have Ronald Reagan to thank for the mess he left behind.

## DASB can't support a Reagan protest without student approval

By Steve Rickman  
Managing Editor

At Monday's De Anza Associated Student Body (DASB) meeting, a proposal was placed before the body for debate and vote by Donal Wilkinson, the Vice-President of programs. He asked DASB to officially endorse a peaceful assembly, sponsored by the Student Action Coalition, which will be held outside Flint Center during former President Ronald Reagan's speech on Friday. After a lengthy debate, the proposal passed nine to seven, with one abstention.

I ask the senators who voted yes, how can they, as members of an organization that supposedly represents the student body as a whole, make such a controversial decision without holding either a public vote or a random sampling opinion poll? My political views, as far as the rally goes, are irrelevant to the point I am trying to make. DASB should not endorse an event like this without the approval of the students. Wilkinson said that he had visited six classrooms last week and asked the students if they thought DASB should take political stands. And according to him, all the students said "Yes". Well, that's all just fine and dandy, but

golly gee, Donal, I wonder why you didn't ask them if they supported the proposed endorsement for this specific event? I think that in the future DASB should publicize potentially controversial proposals one week before the vote through the use of the student newspaper, flyers, and those wonderful display boards so strategically placed throughout the campus.

And through the use of these media, publicly invite all interested students to voice their opinions during the following DASB meetings. As long as I am still on my soapbox, Angelica Zorrilla, student senator, said that the endorsement of such an event might bring attention to DASB and help stop some of the famous student apathy towards DASB.

Well, a child can throw a tantrum to draw attention to himself, but what does negative attention solve? Nothing. What will solve student apathy towards DASB is, as I mentioned before, the use of media to publicize debate on controversial issues before votes. Get people worked up about the issues before they are voted on - since what they say might have some bearing on the outcome - not after, when it's too late.

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