

**To: English Faculty of Florida**

**From: Maurice O'Sullivan**

**Date: 1 March 2001 (St. David's Day, the day on which Ralph Ellison was born in 1914 and Robert Lowell in 1917)**

**I am writing to encourage all Florida English faculty to join and support the Florida College English Association. As funds shrink, as challenges to our profession grow both inside and outside the academic world, and as the public appears increasingly confused over the purpose and value of education, we need to find a more effective way to explain the importance of what we do. We need to convince not only politicians but often our own administrators that those faculty charged with teaching students to use language with care and precision should not be the least important part of their budgets. At the same time, we need to communicate more effectively the joy of literature and language.**

**FCEA is not a lobbying organization, but it does offer us an opportunity to explore what we share in common as teachers of English and to articulate those common values to the world around us. We have clearly not been making as strong a case as we should for the importance of English--and we have certainly not been making a strong enough case for the importance of full-time faculty positions and adequate compensation. We on the board of FCEA would like to help facilitate this discussion across all the colleges and universities of our state.**

**After a year of transition, with quite a few changes in the FCEA Board, we have scheduled what we hope will be one of our most important and exciting annual conferences:**

**Florida College English Association**

**2001 Annual Conference**

**Thursday and Friday, October 18-19, 2001**

**We will hold the conference at the Marina Hotel and Conference Center on Lake Monroe in Sanford. (In fact, we are actually meeting in Lake Monroe, because the Marina Hotel has been built on a landfill that juts into the lake.) As always, we will keep the cost of the conference low to encourage as many people to attend as possible. Rooms at the hotel will be only \$55. Reservations must be made by mid-September (1-800-290-1910).**

**You will find a call for papers with this letter. We are, of course, hoping for papers and panels on all aspects of our lives, work, and pedagogy as teachers of literature and writing. We welcome abstracts for papers on Shakespeare and Morrison, on pedagogy for underprepared students and new modes of rhetorical analysis, and, of course, on Florida writers. But we also welcome talks on where we are as a profession. In addition, we will be holding panels on distance education, workshops on publishing, dialogues with writers, and**

**a cruise on the St. Johns. And we will be announcing the FCEA's first Outstanding Colleague Award.**

**Over the next few months the board will be communicating with you about some of the special aspects of our program. And we encourage you to continue sending in op-ed pieces to your newspapers, speaking up at faculty meetings, and talking with your friends and neighbors about the importance of what we do. If we do not make a case for our profession, who will?**

**We are moving our web site to a new address: <http://www.FLACEA.org>. Please visit the site and let those of us on the board know what you believe we can do to support our common mission as teachers of English.**