

CHALLENGING THE ACCREDITING COMMISSION

Statewide Academic Senate leaders increase critiques of ACCJC at Fall Plenary Session

By Marty Hittelman, former President of the California Federation of Teachers

The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (ASCCC) met in Plenary Session on November 13-15, 2014 at the Irvine Marriott. The topics discussed included what to do about the Accrediting Commission for Colleges and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) and the negative impact that their sanctions were having on the colleges.

In breakout sessions faculty representatives spoke to the excessive workloads involved in developing college reports addressing the often-vague requirements imposed by the Commission. A college chancellor advised faculty on how to battle the ACCJC when their college received less than a clean slate on the ACCJC standards. He was forthright in his condemnations of the ACCJC.

Blunt criticism of the Commission

The discussions were filled with bluntly-stated negatives regarding the Commission. The new bluntness was a turnaround from past Senate sessions where delegates stepped lightly so as not to bring down the wrath of President Barbara Beno of the ACCJC on their colleges. I would attribute this achieved courage to a new perceived reality coming out of the fight to save City College of San Francisco and the revelations from the testimonies in the People vs. ACCJC trial. People often feel more willing to fight back against a bully when they see others successfully fight back.

The Senators present at the Plenary voted to approve a number of resolutions related to the ACCJC. They included:

- Criticism of student learning outcomes (SLOs) with regard to evaluation of faculty including a proposed interpretation of Standard III A.6: *"Faculty are responsible for using the results of the assessment of student learning to participate in college processes to evaluate student achievement at the course, discipline, and college-wide scale as appropriate. Faculty should engage in professional growth and development that improves teaching and learning. The active participation of faculty in these collegial processes may be a factor in the evaluation of faculty; however, the results of assessments of learning outcomes are not a basis for faculty evaluation."* This is not a direct attack on the imposition of SLOs or the intrusion into collective bargaining, but it is a start.

- Criticism of the overturning of accreditation evaluation team findings by the Commission (as in the case of CCSF) and calling for *"the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges to provide comprehensive training to its evaluation teams that is of such depth and scope that the recommendations of evaluation teams will normally serve as the primary basis for a college's evaluation."*
- A call for transparent justifications given by the ACCJC *"when they are not congruent with the evaluation team's recommendations."* This would have the effect of **making public the recommendations of Visiting Teams.**
- Criticism of the ACCJC for the underrepresentation of faculty on ACCJC External Review Committees. This is one of the ACCJC deficiencies found by the U.S. Department of Education Office of Postsecondary Education. The resolution approved noted *"the California Community College Chancellor's Office*

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New faculty greeted with AFT 1493 t-shirt, tote bag, and great information! See pages 6-7.

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PART TIMERS

Should District adjunct faculty have an advantage in hiring for full-time positions? Let us know what you think

At November's AFT 1493 Executive Committee meeting, a faculty member from Skyline College proposed that adjunct faculty should receive priority status for full-time job interviews. The proposal reads as follows:

All Adjunct Faculty who have been teaching within the district for a minimum of 5 years and meet all evaluation expectations be given a "Priority Interview Status". This status awards additional points to the application screening status for determining who to interview, provided that the applicant has properly filled out and submitted all the required documentation and meets the minimum job qualifications.

In addition it should be noted that adjunct faculty applying for a job cannot be knocked down in points for criteria that cannot be applied to all applicants, such as personal information.

This issue had been discussed at length at October's Executive Committee meeting. Some faculty agreed that some sort of priority treatment in full time hiring was warranted for adjunct faculty,

but others felt that hiring committees, which are, in fact, chaired by and composed of faculty, currently follow a rigorous process that does not discriminate against current adjunct faculty.

Faculty in these discussions at the AFT meetings have also suggested that AFT and the Senate host hiring workshops for adjunct faculty. It is the case that applying for full time jobs requires a very particular set of skills, and like all skills, they can be improved through instruction and practice—both in presenting oneself in the paper work and in the interview itself. AFT is very interested in developing such a workshop.

AFT needs to hear from more faculty about their experiences in hiring—as hiring committee members and as adjuncts or former adjuncts applying for full-time positions. We would like to have a fuller discussion of this issue in an upcoming issue of *The Advocate*. Please share your experiences and observations with AFT. Submit your opinions to Dan Kaplan, AFT 1493 Executive Secretary, at: kaplan@aft1493.org.

The Advocate

The Advocate provides a forum for faculty to express their views, opinions and analyses on topics and issues related to faculty rights and working conditions, as well as education theory and practice, and the impact of contemporary political and social issues on higher education.

Some entries are written and submitted individually, while others are collaborative efforts. All faculty are encouraged to contribute.

The Advocate's editorial staff, along with the entire AFT 1493 Executive Committee, works to ensure that statements of fact are accurate. We recognize, respect, and support the right of faculty to freely and openly share their views without the threat of censorship.

AFT 1493 discourages full-timers from taking on excessive overload

The following resolution was passed at the April 13, 2011 AFT 1493 Executive Committee meeting:

Whereas economic instability and budget cuts are affecting the employment status and livelihoods of part-time faculty in the SMCCCD,

Be it resolved, that the AFT 1493 Executive Committee recommend that full-time faculty members **seriously consider refraining from taking on excessive overload in situations where part-time faculty will be displaced from courses to which they would have otherwise been assigned.**

Introducing new AFT 1493 Executive Committee Reps.

Stephen Fredricks, Skyline College Executive Committee Rep.

Greeting colleagues! I am proud to be a part of the AFT Local 1493's Executive Committee.

I have been working at Skyline College since 2005, and I have been working in the district since 2002. Currently, I am a faculty member in the Mathematics Department, and I am the Mathematics, Engineering Science Achievement (MESA) Director. I earned my A.S. in Mathematics from College of San Mateo, my B.S. from UC San Diego, and an M.A. from SFSU.

My job is a very special position – I work closely with first generation Science (aka STEM) majors to facilitate successful transfer pathways for STEM based majors.

I look forward to serving all faculty voices in the American Federation of Teachers, Local 1493.

Thank you.



Stephen Fredricks

Najla Abrao, Skyline College Part-Time Faculty Rep.

Hello SMCCCD! My name is Najla Abrao and I am thrilled to become AFT 1493's Skyline College Part-Time Faculty Representative. Thank you for the opportunity.

I have been teaching in the Bay Area for 15 years, primarily at private high schools. I just began my 12th year teaching at Saint Ignatius College Preparatory. We're a private high school in the Outer Sunset neighborhood of San Francisco. Find the foggiest part of the city and you'll find our school. In my time there, I have taught AP Statistics, AP Calculus, and Precalculus. Other roles I have held while at SI have been Precalculus level leader, SI Live (comedy troupe) moderator, JV Tennis coach, and Faculty Representative.

Before teaching, I began my college career at Diablo Valley College. From there I transferred to UC Davis, where I earned both my Bachelors and Masters degrees in Mathematics. Previous to Skyline, I also taught at UC Davis and Foothill College. I began teaching at Skyline this past summer and look forward to many years to come.



Najla Abrao

PART TIMERS

Board urges State to increase funding for adjuncts' pay & office hours

by Dan Kaplan, AFT 1493 Executive Secretary

On November 24, the Board of Trustees unanimously passed a resolution urging the State of California to provide additional funding for parity pay for part-time faculty members and for paid office hours for part-time faculty.

This resolution is in support of a statewide effort by the California Federation of Teachers now underway to secure additional funding for part-time faculty in the California Community Colleges. Several years ago the national AFT published a pamphlet entitled "The Disappearing Professoriate" concerning the increasingly high percentage of faculty in higher education that are not on the tenure track or tenured. At that time, the percentage of faculty in this condition was over 50%. It is now considerably over 50% in California in the CSU, UC, and CC systems. Additionally, even though temporary part-time faculty in the community college system are required to hold the same academic qualifications and credentials as their full-time colleagues, they typically earn in

salary just 50% of what a FT faculty member makes.

Not only does this have an impact on the quality of education provided to students, it also has an impact on the curriculum and on academic freedom.

In the San Mateo County Community College District, after many years of negotiations, the AFT was able to successfully achieve paid office hours for part-time faculty at the rate of one office hour for every 3 FLC's (faculty load credits) taught. But this is still not the norm throughout the community college system in California.

In its most important passages the Board resolution states:

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Trustees of the San Mateo County Community College District requests that the Governor and the Department of Finance allocate additional funds in the January 2015 budget proposal for parity/equity compensation and paid office hours for part-time temporary faculty in

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DISTRICT BUDGET**Board wants to increase reserve fund to 15-30% but Cañada & CSM Senates oppose idea**

A new District Board of Trustees policy has been proposed that would set “the appropriate level of reserves that the District will strive to maintain in its Unrestricted General Fund” at 15-30% of the District’s annual Unrestricted General Fund. (see proposed Board Policy 8.12) This would be a significant increase over past budgets. The Contingency Reserve in the District’s 2012-13 final budget, for example, was 5%, an amount that was described in the budget as “strongly recommended by the State.” Additionally, the proposal would require a two-thirds vote of the Board to use any monies in the reserve.

The new reserves proposal has come up for discussion before both the Cañada College and CSM Academic Senate Governing Councils and both Senate bodies opposed the new reserve levels.

15-30% is much higher than required & Basic Aid funding from County is strong

At the November 13th Cañada College Governing Council, Spanish Professor Monica Malamud spoke against the new reserves proposal on a number of grounds. She pointed out that a reserve of 15-30% is much higher than required by law and is unwarranted at this time, given that the District is now Basic Aid, which provides a much more reliable revenue stream. Since our funding is now based on property taxes, it is extremely unlikely to go down or even remain stable, especially since property values in San Mateo County have not tended to go down, even when they do in other areas. Monica explained that while the District’s reserve in their proposed budgets has typically been at the 5% level, their final budgets normally have a higher ending balance, commonly in the high teens. What this shows is that the District spends less than they budget for, or that they budget quite conservatively. Monica emphasized that having budgets that result in ending balances in the teens is very different from institutionalizing, by Board policy, such a high reserve level. She also added that the requirement of a 2/3 vote of the Board to spend down any part of the reserve would require 4 out of 5 votes in favor rather than the normal majority vote of 3 out of 5, thus making that money more “untouchable”.

**NEGOTIATIONS UPDATE****Negotiations continue on medical caps & language on part-time employment & full-time teaching**

AFT 1493’s negotiating committee has been meeting with the District’s negotiators with the goals of increasing medical caps for both full-time and part-time faculty, strengthening language for part-time employment and improving language for full-time teaching assignments. No agreements have been reached as of December 1.

AFT initially proposed an increase in the part-time faculty’s medical reimbursement from \$600 to \$1800 per semester, but so far, the District has only agreed to go up to \$800.

For full-time faculty, AFT’s initial proposal was to increase monthly medical caps \$100 (for individuals), \$150 (for 2-party) and \$200 (for 3+). At this point, the District’s offer is \$50/\$75/\$100, which has already been agreed to by CSEA and AFSCME.



Negotiations on improved language for part-time employment and for full-time teaching assignments has been slow. The District has rejected several AFT proposals to improve part-time employment rights, and so far has only agreed to post seniority lists in division offices. On full-time assignment rights, the District has not accepted any AFT proposal, except to put in writing an explanation of why a faculty member’s request was not honored. In exchange for the faculty assignment language, the District wants language on the rights of administrators to teach classes.

The AFT will provide negotiations updates when there is more to report.

Ultimately, the Cañada Senate leaders voted unanimously to oppose the newly proposed reserve levels.

At the CSM Academic Senate meeting on November 25, the same arguments were made against the new policy as were made at Cañada’s ASGC meeting. Although there was no vote at the CSM meeting, as it was an information item, unanimous opposition to the new reserves proposal was expressed. Executive Vice Chancellor Kathy Blackwood will be attending the next CSM Senate meeting in December. The CSM Senate’s position of no support to this proposal will be shared with Kathy at that time so she will have the opportunity of responding to Senate criticisms of this new reserves proposal.

How repeatability regulations are devastating the arts and taking the community out of our colleges

by Maya Bendotoff, Executive Director, Cabrillo College Federation of Teachers, AFT 4400

In the summer of 2012, prior to the passage of Prop 30, when there were hundreds of thousands of students that the California Community College system was unable to serve, the Community College Board of Governors passed regulations that prohibit a student who successfully completes a class from repeating it, except under certain circumstances. (Students can repeat courses required for transfer to the University of California or California State University, related to participation in intercollegiate athletics, or required for vocational or licensure reasons.) The regulations became effective in the fall of 2013.

In the context of five years of some of the worst budget cuts colleges had ever seen—the Chancellor's office reported that some 20% of classes had been cut system-wide—these measures made sense to some.

Funding has stabilized, but restrictions remain

Then, in November of 2012, voters passed Prop 30 (primarily a tax on the wealthy to fund education). Prop 30 helped resuscitate public education in our state, where all levels of education had been severely reduced. Funding for the community college system more or less stabilized. But these restrictive regulations are still in place.

The regulations aimed to cut down enrollment in the arts and physical education, where statewide enrollment was high. Under pressure to cut enrollments, and in conjunction with other trends in education leaning towards objectives and outcomes, the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (ASCCC) provided guidance (in 2011) that informed the new regulations. The thinking behind this was that curriculum should be leveled where appropriate, and students should not need to repeat a course that they have passed successfully. As ASCCC leaders explain in a recent article, "The educational principle behind credit courses is based on achieving objectives and outcomes . . . If the student achieves those objectives and outcomes, the student passes; if the student does not, the student should not pass."

A huge blow to anyone serious about art

Under the recent regulations a student can only successfully complete a course one time in most cases. There is an additional factor for students in the arts and kinesiology: students may have no more than four enrollments in any

given group of active participatory courses that are related in content (commonly known as a family of courses). This is a huge blow to anyone serious about art, especially those students who didn't (and don't) have access to private music, theater, or other arts classes. In many cases, the new regulations make the maximum number of courses allowed in community colleges the minimum needed for transfer to State or UC. This doesn't take into account the fact that some students may need more than that minimum to build proficient performance skills and portfolios that will be needed to get into many four-year colleges.

Cabrillo has sent many students of the visual and performing arts to top-notch institutions in the past; but now students will be restricted from following similar paths of success.



Other areas impacted by these changes include the Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs such as Journalism, Digital Media, Computer Information Systems, Welding, and Culinary Arts, areas where curriculum or technology changes over time, or bilingual students may want to take a course in two languages (note that a petition process is applicable in situations that are needed for transfer or certificates). Students are also limited in areas such as Creative Writing and World languages. And Work Experience students/courses have been heavily impacted (the ASCCC is in the process of addressing this item.)

A narrow vision that pushes students through fast

Overall, the changes to repeatability align with a narrow vision of colleges that focuses on academic transfer and CTE certificate or licensing programs and allows students two years to get through the system. It does not take into account those updating skills for jobs not associated with licensing requirement or students attempting to pursue goals outside of transfer.

These regulations have gone too far. While some colleges have managed the curriculum in a way that enables them to maintain their programs, from what we are hearing students in numerous programs across the state are, and will continue to be, severely impacted by these regulations.

We would love nothing more than to get back to a Master Plan Vision of education that provides quality education for all Californians. In the meantime, we'd like to save our art programs and bring back access for students who may need to repeat a course for a reason other than (low level) transfer or a certificate. We hope you will join us.

STRATEGIC CAMPAIGN INITIATIVE

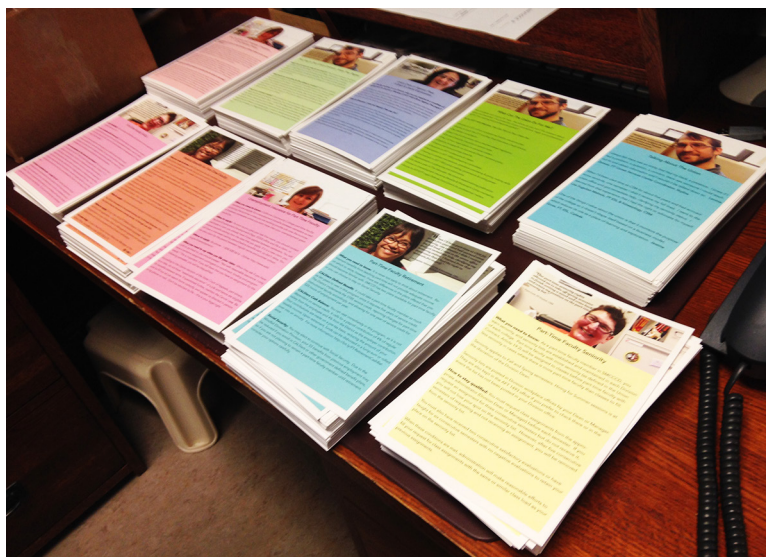
New faculty welcomed by AFTers bearing gifts

By Katharine Harer, AFT Strategic Campaign Initiative Organizer

Our campaign to meet and welcome new faculty hires is off to a great start. Strategic Campaign Initiative Organizers, Katharine Harer and Michelle Kern, have created a snazzy new packet of materials especially for newly hired faculty members. The packet includes a folder of ten colorful cards, each outlining in accessible language issues and questions that faculty may have about their rights and working conditions; a flyer explaining our Committee on Political Education (COPE); and a revamped AFT 1493 membership form and welcome letter.

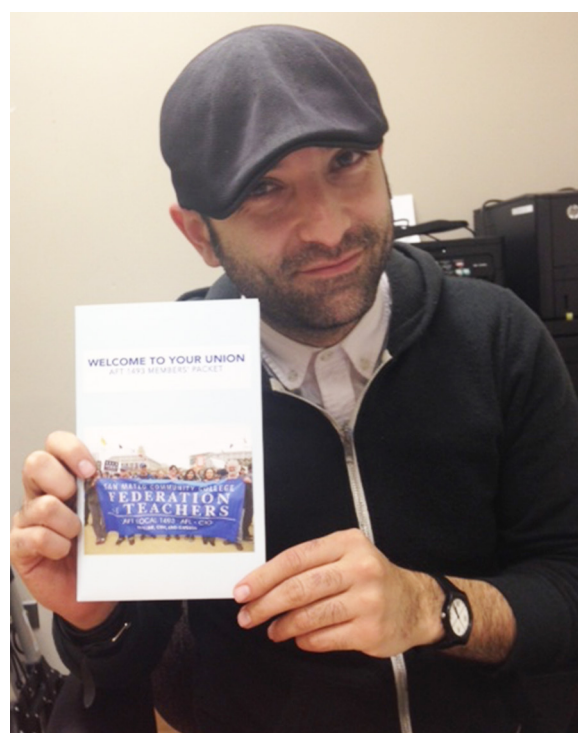
Starting in the beginning of the fall semester, Katharine interviewed a number of full and part time faculty members on all three campuses and elicited quotes and stories from each of them about the value of our union. These inspiring quotes along with each faculty member's photo appear at the top of each piece of the new literature, giving our members a voice in speaking for the union.

Together Katharine and Michelle conceptualized what they thought would be helpful for faculty. Michelle, an art instructor at CSM, did all of the design work in close consultation with Katharine, and they both worked on the writing and research necessary to produce these informative pieces.



Sets of AFT 1493 literature pieces, written and designed by Katharine Harer and Michelle Kern, describing different issues and questions that faculty may have about their rights and working conditions

The goal was to make each piece attractive and useful, and the response so far has been incredibly positive. As Katharine and Michelle travel our three colleges meeting with as many newer faculty as possible, they come bearing gifts: everyone receives a beautiful red tote bag with the union's new logo displayed on the front (also designed by the talented



Two of the new full-time faculty who have received the AFT packets were Jessica Hurless (left), Communication Studies, and Mustafa Popal (right), History, both welcomed at Skyline College

Michelle). Tucked inside each tote bags are the new materials described above along with some AFT swag, a few treats for tired teachers, and one of our newly designed bright red AFT 1493 t-shirts.

AFT 1493 has a face, many faces in fact, and we are enjoying getting out there to meet and welcome all of you. *Some examples of the faculty quotes and photos are shown below.*



I have to catch myself when I start thinking that I'm lucky to have benefits and job security because it's really the vigilance and organized power of our union that makes that possible.

-- Michael Hoffman, FT Math, Canada

I was part time for twenty-seven years. Fifteen years into it, I read in The Advocate that part timers could apply for unemployment, and a light went on. I called the Union office and found out about the process to apply and how I should present myself. For years I applied and received seasonal unemployment insurance.

-- Lavinia Zanassi, FT Career Services Center Coordinator, Skyline



When I'd been part time at CSM for about five years and had accrued some seniority, one semester I didn't receive my full load. I went to the union office and got immediate help, clarifying my seniority status. I learned from that experience that I had the right to advocate for myself.

-- Lisa Suguitan Melnick, PT ESL & Kinesiology, CSM

Our part-time seniority rights allowed me to take off spring semester to finish writing a novel and come back and retain my position on the part-time seniority list.

-- Joyce Luck, PT English, CSM



Statewide Academic Senate leaders increase critiques of ACCJC at Fall Plenary Session

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Fall 2013 Report on Staffing, that faculty represent 67% of staffing in California's community colleges while administrators only represent 5.6%." The Senate took a path that so far only a couple of Visiting Teams have met and recommended that the ACCJC "appoint college External Evaluation teams with at least 40% faculty representation."

- A resolution also called for a "report out at the Spring 2015 Plenary Session on the proportion and number of faculty on each of the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges visiting teams for Spring 2014, Fall 2014, and Spring 2015."
- Although the ASCCC had in the past called for the removal of the ACCJC as the sole accreditor for California's community colleges and that the California Community College Board of Governors heard at First Reading in November a proposal to remove the ACCJC as the sole accreditor, the Senators voted to refer a resolution to the ASCCC Executive Committee that Senate representatives "bring to the next Consultation Council meeting a proposal to reach out to the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools and the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities to determine their interest in accrediting community colleges in California." The resolution had a Whereas that provided the information that "the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools accredits colleges in Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, West Virginia, and Wisconsin; and the North-

west Commission on Colleges and Universities accredits colleges in Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington." Hopefully, once the Executive Committee researches the two accreditors, the Senate will join others in contacting these accreditors to find out if they would be interested in applying to the U.S. Department of Education for the ability to accredit California's community colleges.

The Board of Governors will vote in January 2015 to remove the ACCJC from Board of Governors regulations which will allow the selection of a new accreditor for California's community colleges. The U.S. Department of Education will likely determine whether ACCJC satisfies their requirements to be an accreditor in Fall of 2015. The Board of Governors will address a timetable for the return of the elected CCSF Board of Trustees to power and the removal of the Special Trustee with Extraordinary Powers (although this is contrary to the current fad regarding super heroes) at its January meeting. This will depend somewhat on the decision in the case of The People vs. ACCJC, which is expected in late December or early January. Final arguments in The People vs. ACCJC will take place on December 9 at the San Francisco Superior Court beginning at 1:30 P.M.

The tide has turned but the final results are not yet all in. We will persevere.

For more on the ACCJC, visit accreditationwatch.com, where Marty Hittelman regularly provides extensive, up-to-date information on all aspects of the Commission's actions.

Board urges State to increase funding for adjuncts' pay & office hours

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the California Community College system in the amount of \$30 million for paid office hours, and \$50 million for parity/equity compensation in on-going funds.

The Board resolution concludes with:

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Trustees of the San Mateo County Community College District requests that the Governor and the State Legislature allocate ongoing funding for the conversion of part-time faculty positions to full-time positions.

In addition to the Board resolution, the District Academic Senate will be considering its own version of this resolution at its next meeting in early December, and AFT 1493 is scheduled to pass its version of this resolution at its December 10 meeting.

As with its recent resolution concerning the ACCJC, the San Mateo Board of Trustees has again taken a very progressive position on an important issue regarding the rights and conditions of faculty. It is hoped that other community college boards of trustees will now make the decision to emulate the work of the San Mateo Board by passing similar resolutions in their districts.

AFT 1493 Executive Committee/ General Membership Meetings:

**Wednesday, December 10 , 2:15 p.m.,
CSM, Building 10, Room 401**

**Wednesday, January 28, 2:15 p.m.,
Cañada, Building 3, Room 104**

**Wednesday, February 18, 2:15 p.m.,
Skyline, Room 6-203**

Get your AFT 1493 T-Shirts!

If you are interested in obtaining an AFT 1493 T-Shirt, as shown in the photo on page 1, please contact the AFT Chapter Chair on your campus. Please let us know which size you would like- Men's or Women's Small, Medium, Large, or Extra-Large. (They are free for AFT 1493 members.)