

## CFT and other unions make ballot recommendations for November 4<sup>th</sup> election

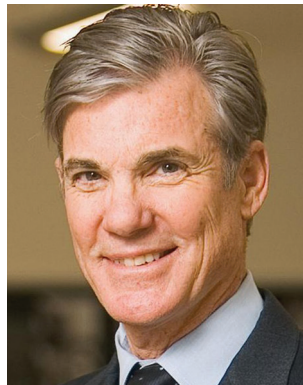
*The following are summaries of ballot recommendations from the California Federation of Teachers, the California Labor Federation, the San Mateo County Labor Council and other unions for key races in the November 4th general election.*



### State Superintendent of Public Instruction

#### Tom Torlakson

Tom Torlakson is a former high school and community college teacher who has been a staunch advocate for quality public education for all students. Melinda Dart, President of the Jefferson Federation of Teachers, pointed out that Torlakson, a CSM alumni, "was a student in Daly City schools, and later, a teacher. He has consistently supported teachers in our quest for a quality public education for all children, a full education--which includes music, art, sports and all the enrichment that make school a vibrant and fulfilling experience."



Tom Torlakson

Torlakson's opponent, Marshall

***This is an extremely important and very close race.***

Tuck, is a former Wall Street banker and a corporate charter school CEO who has no degree in education and no classroom experience, with huge support from very wealthy donors. While Torlakson has opposed the Vergara decision, which undermines teacher tenure, Tuck supports the decision. This is an extremely important and very close race.

Torlakson is endorsed for re-election by the California Labor Federation, the California Federation of Teachers, and the California Teachers Association.

### Statewide Ballot Propositions

#### Proposition 1: \$7.5 Billion Bond for California's Water System

This measure would cost California taxpayers \$14 billion in total new debt in 40 yearly payments of \$360 million. The biggest expenditure would facilitate water transfer at no cost from the Sacramento River Delta

to the western San Joaquin Valley agribusiness, not to small farmers, infrastructure repair or conservation. These public funds go in part to private water companies. This is a gift to big business and water privatizers that have been twice previously stopped at the ballot.

CFT has taken a YES position on this Proposition. AFSCME Council 57 and a host of environmental organizations have urged a No vote.

#### Proposition 2: Budget Stabilization Account

The key part of this complex proposed amendment to the State constitution is that it requires spending from \$800 million to \$2 billion annually from general fund revenues to repay existing State debts. It also changes how school reserves are funded with the result that, in lean fiscal times, schools will have more difficulty balancing their budgets.

CFT and the California Labor Federation have taken a Neutral position on this Proposition.

#### Proposition 45: Healthcare Insurance Rate Changes

This measure would mandate that any rate changes to health insurance premiums in California must be approved by the elected insurance commissioner. It would also prohibit health, auto, and homeowners insurers from determining policy eligibility or rates based on lack of prior coverage or credit history. Health insurance companies and the Chamber of Commerce are funding a fear-mongering ad campaign against 45. The CFT, the California Nurses' Association, and many consumer rights organizations have taken a YES position on this Proposition.

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## A response to District's views on procedures for adjuncts applying for full-time positions

*The following is a counter-response by a Skyline adjunct faculty member (who wishes to remain anonymous) to an article in the September Advocate by Barbara Christensen, SMCCCD Director of Community/Government Relations, which responded to an initial article in the May issue by the same adjunct instructor.*

I would like to address some arguments put forth by Barbara Christensen.

First of all, Ms. Christensen seems to be under the impression that this is an isolated single person issue. The truth of the matter is that the article was written by a single person speaking up on behalf of a large number of part-timers with the support of a large number of full-timers. Indeed, giving priority consideration to in-house employees is a policy widely supported by the vast majority of part-timers and full-timers.

Secondly, although the hiring process for faculty is faculty driven, employers still have a duty under the Equal Opportunity Act to ensure that the workplace is free of discrimination and harassment. The employer may be held vicariously liable for acts that are carried out by employees or persons acting under their supervision unless it can be demonstrated that all reasonable steps have and are being taken to prevent the prohibited conduct.

### 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.

Third, Section 53021 of Title 5 of the Education Code simply states that "in-house or promotional only" recruitment should not be used to fill any new opening for a faculty position. Title 5 says nothing against giving preferential status to applicants already working at the college for a certain number of years.

Fourth, the District's track record in hiring adjuncts is not a reason to refuse to deal with problems when they do arise. Barbara Christensen claims that, in 2013-14, 70% of faculty hires came from adjunct faculty within our District. Well, that means 30% of hires came from outside the District and current District adjuncts were not hired for almost a third of our District's openings.

Fifth, why is the District fighting this very modest proposal of giving preferential status in the hiring process for those who have already been working there a certain number of years? It would cost the District nothing. The vast majority of faculty want it and certainly public sentiment would also be supportive. So what is the District gaining by coming out against this proposal especially when other districts such as CCSF, Peralta, and College of Marin, have such proposals in their contracts?

### 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 members

## Rob Williams, Skyline College Chapter Co-Chair

Hi Everyone,

Thank you so much for the warm welcome. I feel great pride in being your Skyline College Chapter Co-Chair (Co-Chairing with the wonderful Janice Sapigao). I was born and raised in San Diego and received my B.A. in English from Arizona State University and my M.F.A. in Fiction from Columbia University. In my spare time (what spare time?! ) I enjoy writing—yes, I am writing the next great American novel, creating art, hiking, and spending time with my dog, Hal Holbrook.



Rob Williams

I recently celebrated an amazing first year as a full-time faculty member in the English Department where I teach Creative Writing and Composition. Before coming to Skyline I taught for 7 years as a part-time instructor at various San Diego Community Colleges, where, in addition to teaching, I worked on curriculum development, SLO committees, Literary Arts Festivals, Learning Communities and Community Service Learning. I have also served as faculty advisor to the Gay/Straight Alliance at both of my previous community colleges and here at Skyline College. Currently I am the co-faculty advisor for The Dead-Beat Writers Club, a new club at Skyline College for Creative Writers.

In addition, for four years in San Diego I was the Program Coordinator for San Diego Writers, Ink, a non-profit writing and arts organization that served as a hub for the literary community and provided artistic development for writers at all levels.

I'm looking forward to getting to know all of you. Please contact me or come by my office if you need anything.

## Get your CFT Pocket Calendar

If you have not yet received your 20014-2015 CFT pocket calendar, please call the AFT office (x6491) or get in touch with your AFT Chapter Chair on your campus and ask for one.

## Doniella Maher, Cañada College Executive Committee Rep.

Hello!

I am excited to represent Cañada faculty as part of the Executive Committee. I have been working at Cañada as an adjunct in the English department since 2009 and feel honored to be part of the San Mateo Community College family. I have also taught at Chabot and City College of San Francisco over the last few years, but I am thrilled to narrow it down to Cañada, where I've begun teaching full-time this fall.



Doniella Maher

I started getting involved in activism in high school and never stopped! Here, in the Bay Area, I have been very involved in immigrants' rights work, anti-war work, and issues in education. I am a California local and a fierce advocate of California public schools (I received my BA from Sac State and my MA from SFSU). My graduate work was in Comparative Literature with an emphasis on contemporary Italian fiction and I can often be found with an espresso in hand. Besides coffee, I love reading, hanging out in the mountains and cooking.

I look forward to representing my colleagues at Cañada!

## Get your AFT 1493 T-Shirts!

AFT Local 1493 has beautiful new AFT 1493 T-Shirts available for faculty to wear. Let us know if you would like to have one to add to your wardrobe now.

If you haven't seen a colleague wearing one yet, see the bright read shirts worn by the Executive Committee members on the homepage of AFT 1493's website:

[aft1493.org](http://aft1493.org). The text reading: "Advocating for faculty since 1963," is on the back.

The T-Shirts are available in Men's and Women's Small, Medium, Large, and Extra-Large.

If you are interested in obtaining an AFT 1493 T-Shirt (free for AFT 1493 members), please contact the AFT Chapter Chair on your campus. Please let us know which size you would like.



SCHOLARSHIP FOR SMCCCD STUDENTS

## Joe McDonough AFT Social Justice Scholarship to award \$5000 annually

AFT Local 1493 and the family of Dr. Joe McDonough are pleased to announce the new Joe McDonough AFT Social Justice Scholarship.

Joe McDonough was a professor of psychology for more than 30 years at CSM (1969-2000). A clinical psychologist, he loved his teaching job (he was a bit of an actor) and the students. What he also loved to do was fight for faculty rights. Active in the campus anti-Vietnam War movement, Joe served in a number of AFT Local 1493's leadership positions as well, including President for two terms (1982 and 1987), terms as Vice President and Chief Negotiator, and Chair of the Membership Committee. Joe was a political leader, an extraordinary organizer and a skilled budget analyst able to find just where



Joe McDonough with armband at Peace Demonstration against Nixon's invasion of Cambodia, 1970, CSM. Photo by Isao Tanaka.

the District was hiding money. Joe tirelessly recruited faculty members to join the union, and during his tenure CSM had one of the highest percentages (90%) of faculty carrying full union membership. The California Federation of Teachers (CFT) recognized his efforts by awarding him its highest honor in 2000: the Ben Rust Award.

It is this spirit of activism and advocacy that frames the Joe McDonough AFT Scholarship. The \$5,000 annual scholarship shall be awarded to a full-time (12 units or above) SMCCCD (district-wide) student who maintains a 3.0 grade point average, has a declared major or career track certification program, and demonstrates past and current involvement in community/labor work or other social justice issues.

### RETIREES

## DART organizes hike in Crystal Springs watershed

by John Searle, DART President

The local DART (District Association of Retired Teachers) chapter organized a small mixed group of faculty, both retired and current, and two Stanford nurses, to take advantage of a docent-led hike into the local watershed area above the Crystal Springs Reservoir this past June. Traditionally off limits, it was an easy four miles in and four miles out. The weather cooperated, beginning with the traditional fog/mist, which soon broke to give us a gorgeous sunny day, with

views to match. We hope to repeat the hike next year with a larger contingent of participants. Look at the photo from the hike (below) to be inspired to join us next time.

The next DART activity planned is a social afternoon, with food and beverages, to usher in the new 2015 year. The details are in the works, but the date is set for January 8, 2015, and will most likely be at the College View clubhouse next to the District Office.



Hikers (from left) Thuy and Theresa (nurses), Kim Lim, current Skyline librarian, Gladys Chaw (retired CSM librarian) and John Searle (retired CSM chemistry professor and DART President)



A view during the hike of a hidden lake in the watershed area above the Crystal Springs Reservoir



# How the dream of American higher education has been sabotaged by social inequality and plutocracy

by Tom Mohr, Trustee, San Mateo County Community College District

*Mettler, Suzanne. Degrees of Inequality. How the Politics of Higher Education Sabotaged the American Dream. Basic Books, New York, 2014*

We educators have been greatly dismayed for several years concerning the crisis within higher education. We live it daily, having witnessed first-hand how the severe reductions in budgets and classes have



Tom Mohr

eroded young people's opportunities for establishing dreams and charting clear, doable paths to goals that could bring them and their children rewards that most Americans believe to be their birthright as citizens of this great republic. It is relatively easy for us to focus on the phenom-

ena of high tuition, high student debt and weak employment prospects in a slow moving economy, but there is much more to identifying and understanding the etiology of the higher education crisis. Suzanne Mettler, Professor of Government at Cornell University, draws for us a more complete picture of this crisis, bringing forward with coherence and interconnectedness the forces that, taken together, have resulted in America's disinvestment in and squandering of the great legacy of higher education so long considered throughout the world to be a model of excellence and accessible to an increasingly diverse citizenry.

## College completion rates directly reflect socio-economic level

Mettler begins with data that demonstrates that the rates of college graduates are distressingly unequal when understood according to socio-economic level, highlighting the striking advantage of the affluent in relation to the bottom three quartiles of the U.S. population. For middle-income Americans, the graduation rate hovers around 30%, and for those Americans in the lower middle quartile, the college completion rate over the last fifty years has increased a meager 11%. Income equality is paramount. Within the highest income group, 97% of entering students complete college while among those in the lowest quartile, the completion rate is approximately 23%.

What has gone wrong? Landmark policy achievements in the middle of the last century, from the GI Bill through Pell grants, helped the US become the world's leader in college graduation rates. They provided for individuals from

across the income spectrum genuine opportunity to attain college degrees. In more recent years, however, we've seen the relentless ascent of tuition and fees and the assumption of heavy debt by the majority of college graduates. These developments discourage many students from staying in college long enough to graduate and they promote rising indebtedness that for some, depending to some extent on the college major and the remuneration of the career undertaken, can readily lead to financial ruin or, at the very least, job choices that were assuredly not the original intention of the graduate.

## The wealthy control political decision-making

The problem, as described by the author, is not that the policies that made higher education accessible and affordable for millions of Americans were eliminated, but that new political forces, becoming gradually more powerful after 1980, have made the necessary maintenance and updating of these policies impossible. In the political context of the time, the policies that had been so effective from the 1940s to the 1970s produced new political dynamics and new unintended consequences that affect the resources, incentives and power of political leaders and their organizations. Whatever the development of policies over time and whatever subsequent effects and evolution of policies there may be, new political work must be accomplished by national and state leaders if the affordability and accessibility of college for all are to be protected.

Policies affecting higher education and students today, explains Mettler, need the attention of renovators who know not only what changes in old laws and policies are necessary but who also have the ability to convince highly polarized political bodies that support for the changes is in the interest of the people. Unfortunately, the rise of political partisanship has prevented the development of any bipartisan leadership that could lead to constructive and meaningful change in old policies and laws.

In the midst of rigid stalemate, only the influence of the wealthy seems able to capture the cooperation of those in either party. The rise of the Plutocracy explains, according to scholars who have studied lawmaking for decades, why public officials have so remarkably adhered to the preferences of the affluent and why, concerning whatever issue is before them, they seem only to respond to the vested interests of the elite. It is unfortunately true that "money talks" more loudly than ever before, and, given the cost of running and succeeding in politics today, that voice gets the attention of lawmakers and gains the support necessary

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# Unions make ballot recommendations for Nov. 4th

*continued from page 1*

## **Proposition 46: Drug and Alcohol Testing of Doctors, Medical Negligence Lawsuits**

This measure would increase the limit on damages in medical malpractice lawsuits, require doctors to check a statewide patient database prior to prescribing narcotics, and require doctors to undergo drug and alcohol testing. Raising the much-too-low limits on medical malpractice awards is a good idea, but this Proposition has a blame-the-victim approach to drug abuse, while letting the mega-wealthy pharmaceutical industry off the hook, and it violates the privacy rights of doctors and patients.

CFT and the California Labor Federation have taken a **Neutral** position on this Proposition.

## **Proposition 47: Criminal Sentences, Misdemeanor Penalties**

This measure would reclassify nonviolent drug and property crimes from felonies to misdemeanors, and mandate that saved funds go toward school drop-out prevention programs and other public, mental health and drug rehab services. By prioritizing treatment and eliminating mandatory minimums, legacies of the racist “war on drugs”, this measure will reduce barbaric overcrowding in

prisons. It saves the State hundreds of millions of dollars.

CFT and the California Labor Federation have taken a **YES** position on this Proposition.

## **San Mateo County Ballot Measure**

### **Measure H: San Mateo County Community College District Bond**

Measure H is a \$388 million bond to modernize math and science classrooms and labs, upgrade technology and job training facilities, upgrade access for disabled students, ensure facilities meet disaster preparedness requirements, and replace aging infrastructure with energy efficient systems. The bond will be subject to annual audits and monitoring by a Citizen’s Oversight Committee, and construction work will be done under a Project Labor Agreement with the San Mateo Building Trades Council.

The San Mateo County Central Labor Council has taken a **YES** position on this Measure.

**Attention faculty: If asked to meet with an administrator for any matter that might involve discipline, please call the AFT office first for advice and assistance.**

## **Book review: Degrees of Inequality**

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to shape policy and law that enhances the profits and tax advantages of the powerful.

### **For-profit colleges enrich investors at the expense of the public**

The author’s scholarship, involving rigorous and through examination of the record and the use of extensive interviews, clearly describes how the for-profit colleges participate in extensive profiteering that enriches investors at the expense of the public and the students they allegedly serve. Despite widespread concern by lawmakers, investors have made escalating profits (even during the recession) through the use of federal dollars and have taken opportunistic advantage of veterans and the dollars accorded by the new GI Bill. And even though their abysmal graduation and employment records and the unethical marketing, recruiting and lending practices have been reported widely, the for-profits are still able to overcome the efforts to regulate their almost unfettered use of federal money and the concomitant creation of debilitating student debt through the use of a lobby that leverages their protection with the lavishing of money. When the Obama Administration announced its intent to limit the use of federal

dollars through the application of measured for-profit college outcomes, a firestorm resulted. The for-profit lobby brought to bear 11 million dollars of influence that created a coalition from both parties necessary to bury such actions. The presence of plutocratic power overcame the political stalemate and made possible bipartisanship that no one would have thought possible.

In Suzanne Mettler’s book, the reader is brought to a close understanding of the nature of the higher education crisis, why the system is unable, despite original intention and use of law and policy, to provide access to affordable education to all who aspire to a college degree, and why it is shaped presently to the advantage of the affluent and powerful. Her work brings into sharp focus the political forces burgeoning in Washington that make it possible to forgo the voice of the people and contrarily exacerbate social inequality.

## **AFT 1493 Executive Committee/ General Membership Meetings:**

- **Wed. November 12, Skyline, 6203, 2:15 pm**
- **Wed. December 10, CSM, 10-401, 2:15 pm**