

## NEGOTIATIONS UPDATE!

# Why We're At Impasse & How You Can Help

On July 6, 2016, after five months of negotiations, the District declared Impasse. Here's a run-down of some of the most critical issues.

### The District insists on:

- establishing a new way of looking at total compensation that represents about a **2% salary increase** even though under the property tax-sharing formula in our 2013-2016 contract our raises would be **4.77%**
- imposing major changes to faculty evaluation procedures, such as administering **student evaluations in all classes, for all faculty, every single semester**, requiring deans to do in-class observations of all tenured faculty, and adding VPI class observations for all tenure-track faculty
- **refusing to negotiate our Workload Equity Proposal** and suggesting that faculty workload is just fine as it is
- eliminating flexibility on Flex Days, meaning faculty would be required to attend **only District-sponsored** Flex activities

### AFT believes all faculty deserve:

- benefits and compensation that are fair and reasonable, especially given that our community-supported District enjoys a predictable funding stream
- respect for our recently revised evaluation procedures and recognition that faculty evaluations are a faculty-driven process
- an equitable workload and a clear definition of work duties
- respect for faculty's judgment to choose professional development activities we believe will be most beneficial to our students

### What's next? We're going to fact-finding

AFT and the District negotiated with the assistance of a state-appointed mediator including mediation sessions on August 22 and September 6. On September 16 **the mediator announced that he was unable to bring the two sides close enough to any resolution, so he was releasing the case to fact-finding.** The District and AFT will now select a fact finder from a list offered by the state Public Employment Relations Board (PERB) and the timing of when fact finding sessions will be held will depend on the fact finder's and negotiating team members' availability and required preparation time.

### How can you help?

- **Sign the Workload Equity Petition now!** (Go to [aft1493.org](http://aft1493.org) to sign)
- Attend the **Board of Trustees meeting on September 28, 2016** (6:00 p.m.)
- Talk to your colleagues about supporting the AFT negotiating team
- Be ready to wear your red AFT 1493 t-shirt. Keep it in your office or your car so you can put it on at a moment's notice! If you don't have a t-shirt, call the AFT office to get one!

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**ACADEMIC SENATE**

# Skyline AS Governing Council splits vote on whether non-tenured faculty should serve on screening committees

by Rick Hough, Skyline, Mathematics Professor

It's been many years since I sat on the Academic Senate Governing Council, so I decided to join again this year as SMT co-rep. The first meeting was a great introduction with the general business items followed by an online scavenger hunt designed to familiarize the committee both with the State Academic Senate website, but more specifically with the many awards that are available to faculty through the Academic Senate. "How nice!" I thought.

## Non-tenured faculty appointed to initial VPI screening committee

One of the points that was briefly discussed was the forming of screening committees for the two administrative positions: Dean of ASLT and Vice President of Instruction. There were some questions about some of the non-tenured faculty appointments on the committee for the VPI, so this topic was put on the agenda for the next meeting.

When the topic was brought up again at the meeting on September 1, the discussion started with background information.

Back in May, the AS had charged President Kate Browne with conducting business in their absence during the summer months. Both Screening Committees were formed during that time, so the President attended to those faculty selections and gave the committees an initial AS stamp of approval so that the work could begin while many of the faculty were away for summer break. The questions about faculty selection criteria and the inclusion of non-tenured faculty on screening committees had been researched and were presented. Although the criteria appeared understood, and the fact that non-tenured faculty were allowed by selection protocol, concern about non-tenured faculty membership surfaced again by several faculty in the audience as well as a question by one governing council member regarding the process of summer update.

## Concerns about non-tenured faculty on screening committees

The two main concerns were that the institutional memory of a "new" faculty

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## 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.**



# Help our children thrive, vote YES on Proposition 55!

California students, schools and colleges can't afford to go back to the days of massive teacher and staff layoffs, larger class sizes, and cuts to programs like art and music, and the state should protect essential services. Proposition 55 does not raise taxes on anyone; it simply maintains the current income tax rates on the wealthiest Californians. Prop. 55 prevents nearly \$4 billion in funding cuts to public education and protects other vital services, like children's health care. Money goes to local schools and the Legislature can't touch it. Proposition 55 contains strict accountability requirements to ensure funds designated for education go to classrooms, not to bureaucracy or administrative costs.



## What Does Proposition 55 Do?

- Prop. 55, the California Children's Education and Health Care Protection Act of 2016, temporarily extends current income tax rates on the wealthiest Californians for 12 more years – couples earning more than \$500,000 a year and singles earning more than \$250,000.
- Prop. 55 does not raise taxes on anyone.
- Middle-class families and businesses will benefit when the temporary quarter-cent sales tax increase expires as planned at the end of this year. Prop. 55 does not extend this sales tax.
- Prop. 55 will generate an estimated \$8 billion per year on

average to help our schools and colleges avoid cuts.

- Revenues go into the Education Protection Account, a dedicated fund that directs monies to K-12 public schools and community colleges.
- Revenues will also be used to improve access to health care for low-income children and their families.
- Prop. 55 includes tough accountability and transparency requirements, including annual audits.

## Why Proposition 55 is So Critical

- California public school funding was cut to the bone during the recession and our schools and colleges are just starting to recover. In fact, we still rank among the lowest in the nation in per-student funding.
- Prop. 55 protects our students and public schools from returning to the days of massive budget cuts, educator layoffs, larger classes and tuition hikes.
- Prop. 55 also provides funding for state health care programs for low-income children to allow for improved access and care, so they have the care they need to come to school healthy and ready to learn.
- Prop. 55 is not a tax increase. The wealthiest will temporarily continue paying the same amount they are now to protect schools and vital services from deep cuts.

## Non-tenured faculty on screening committees?

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hire might not be sufficient for such an important position as the VPI, and that a non-tenured faculty member might feel pressure in general if they were interviewing or paper screening their immediate supervisor, particularly if the supervisor were chair of their tenure committee. As the discussion progressed, the latter concern became the priority.

The intention of the people forming the committee – to have a broad set of committee members with skills and expertise across a wide spectrum of the college, including counseling, career tech [CTE], GE /Transfer and expertise in the different initiatives on campus – was explained, as well as that the policies for screening committees of VPIs did not prohibit non-tenured faculty. Also brought up was the fact that this is a screening committee charged with finding good candidates, not a hiring group. As the clock was ticking and motions were passed to extend the time allotted for discussion, it was brought up that we should separate out discussing the approval of this particular committee from a discussion of a policy revision.

Finally it was time to vote. The cacophony of ayes, nays and

abstentions was too difficult to wade through, so instead each individual had to call out their vote clearly one at a time. The result? Split vote – motion to approve the committee failed.

## President proposes revised committee

At the following Governing Council meeting on September 15, President Regina Stanback Stroud came to discuss the issue of the VPI selection committee. She stated that although she believed that the original selection committee members that had been proposed by the administration were highly appropriate, that a revised set of names for the committee was being proposed which replaced the names of the two non-tenured (tenure track) faculty members with two tenured faculty members. The Governing Council then proceeded to approve the revised committee.

## Possible policy revision to be discussed

A discussion of a possible policy revision that might exclude non-tenured faculty members from serving on selection committees was agendaized for an upcoming meeting.

STRATEGIC CAMPAIGN INITIATIVE

# Faculty Demands Workload Equity; District Discounts Its Importance

By Katharine Harer, AFT 1493 Co-Vice President & Strategic Campaign Initiative (SCI) Organizer

Major new Union surveys and hundreds of one-to-one conversations with colleagues continue to relay the same bad news: SMCCD faculty is being overloaded with non-teaching duties, and our contract supplies no parameters



or protections. That's why your union took on this issue as a key proposal in negotiations and organized a faculty presentation for our Board of Trustees on May 11th where five faculty members communicated the extent of the problem. The Board listened thoughtfully as faculty spoke about the

detrimental effects of overwork on morale, availability to students and the painful loss of time for loved ones. Nearly 60 faculty members showed up for the Board meeting, packing the room and wearing stickers proclaiming their support for Workload Equity. However, the District has refused to negotiate Workload Equity; they declared Impasse on July 6 and now negotiations are going to fact-finding. (See page 1)

During April & May, we gathered hundreds of signatures on a petition backing the AFT's Workload Equity proposal. In the first weeks of the fall semester, more faculty members have signed, and more are signing as I write this article!

If you haven't yet signed the petition or want to find out more about the Workload Equity proposal, go to [AFT1493.org](http://AFT1493.org). Your AFT Chapter Chairs and Executive Committee Reps on your campus are eager to talk to you about it. Michelle Kern and I, in our positions as Strategic Campaign Initiative (SCI) Organizers, would love to have a conversation with you about this and any other issues, questions or concerns that are bubbling in your mind. Do not hesitate to flag us down when you see us, or email us at: [harer@aft1493.org](mailto:harer@aft1493.org) & [kern@aft1493.org](mailto:kern@aft1493.org). Our job is to listen to you, bring you informational materials (plus apples and chocolates!) and help you in any way we can.

## Working for tenants' rights

As you may know, the real estate crunch is affecting rental prices in San Mateo County. Many faculty already live outside of the District due to the cost of apartments and

houses, and families that live and work in the County are seeing draconian rental hikes and even facing mass evictions. Michelle was involved last spring working with the 4 North County coalition, where the housing crisis was identified as a key issue facing working people, education, and community equity. This summer, these 4NC and other coalitions such as Burlingame Advocates for Rental Protection, San Mateo County Anti-Displacement Coalition, Urban Habitat, and Faith in Action gathered enough signatures to put measures for tenant protections on the ballot for the November 8th election.

Yes on R in Burlingame and Yes on Q in San Mateo will help renters gain some control in a market that is now without any limits on how high a landlord can raise rents or show cause for eviction. This month Michelle and other members of 4NC, along with other members of the coalitions, attended a rally for eight families in Burlingame who were all served with eviction notices, to empty the building. The tenants who spoke were all working mothers who highlighted that this eviction came right as their children were beginning the school year, and the women all spoke of the chance for greater educational opportunity in San Mateo County for their children as the reason they were fighting so



Michelle Kern (at right) fights evictions with the 4NC coalition in Burlingame

hard to stay. Our present and future students are being displaced, and our union will be working to support the tenant protection measures in the election.

**AFT Local 1493 has endorsed the rent stabilization and just cause eviction measures in Burlingame (Measure R) and San Mateo (Measure Q) that will be on the November ballot.**

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# Studies find that student evaluations are unreliable and biased measures of faculty performance

By Eric Brenner, Advocate Editor

In the current contract negotiations with our Union, the District has proposed significant changes to the faculty evaluation procedures, including student evaluations in every class every semester. Numerous recent studies of student evaluations of faculty, however, have raised serious questions about the accuracy, reliability and usefulness of student evaluations of faculty. Some examples of these studies are described below.

An [article](#) in the January 11, 2016 issue of Inside Higher Ed, reported that, "There's mounting evidence suggesting that student evaluations of teaching are unreliable. But are these evaluation so bad that they're actually better at gauging students' gender bias and grade expectations than they are at measuring teaching effectiveness? A new paper argues that's the case, and that evaluations are biased against female instructors in particular in so many ways that adjusting them for that bias is impossible." The [paper](#), titled "Student Evaluations of Teaching (Mostly) Do Not Measure Teaching Effectiveness," was published in the January 7, 2016 issue of ScienceOpen Research.

A [research study](#) titled "Evaluating students' evaluations of professors" in the August 2014 Economics of Education Review, compared the student evaluations of a particular professor to how well those students performed in a subsequent course. The study found that professors whose students got higher grades in later classes (an objective measure of effective teaching based on student outcomes) received lower ratings from their students. An author of the study concluded that, "If you make your students do well in their academic career, you get worse evaluations from your students."

**"Do evaluations less often but more deeply... If decision makers... permit important personnel decisions to proceed on the basis of potentially misleading or biased data, then they ethically fail the professoriate, students, and the institution."**

A 2010 [literature review](#) in "The Relationship Between Student Evaluations of Teaching and Faculty Evaluations" in the Journal of Education for Business, cited "much evidence suggesting that SE [student evaluation] ratings are influenced by extraneous factors that are not a valid indication of teaching performance... The authors provided a comprehensive list of references and noted that SEs can be influenced by student characteristics (e.g., motivation for taking a course, disposition toward instructor and courses, expected course grade, etc.), instructor characteristics (e.g., gender, rank, experience, personality traits, etc.), course characteristics

(e.g., class size, grading leniency, course difficulty, etc.), and other environmental characteristics (e.g., physical attributes and the ambience of the classroom)."

A January 2014 [annotated bibliography](#)

from Auraria Library of the University of Colorado, Denver, listed eight different studies finding "Bias in Student Evaluations of Minority Faculty." One of the studies described was "Are Student Teaching Evaluations Holding Back Women and Minorities? The Perils of 'Doing' Gender and Race in the Classroom" (Chapter 12 of *Presumed Incompetent: The Intersections of Race and Class for Women in Academia*, from University Press of Colorado; Utah State University Press, 2011.) Some of the conclusions of this study were: "Do evaluations less often but more deeply. Get students to think, not react intuitively... Think of teaching as an ongoing process not an end product... If decision makers do not take the time or care to fully understand the candidate's teaching file, including evaluations, and permit important personnel decisions to proceed on the basis of potentially misleading or biased data, then they ethically fail the professoriate, students, and the institution."

## LETTER TO THE ADVOCATE

### District's proposal to increase student evaluations is impractical

As a part of current contract negotiations, the District is proposing that student evaluations of faculty be given to every professor, in every class, each semester. This proposal is ludicrous for many reasons. Although this proposal may be well intended, it would be so labor intensive that it is unworthy of serious consideration.

To begin with, let us compare what is currently done with what is proposed. Currently, one class is assessed on each professor every three years. This proposal would re-

quire all classes to be assessed. Since a full-time professor teaches 30, three-unit class in a 3-year period, this would result in increasing the work load needed for these student evaluations by 29 times.

Now, who would be affected by this increased evaluation process? Firstly, the students would be affected. This would guarantee that students would lose at least a half-hour of instruction in every one of their classes. Students are

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# Student learning outcomes & assessment: Is the goal “return on investment” or a thoughtful population?

by Madeleine Murphy, CSM, SLO Coordinator

It's been a little over a decade since CSM faculty gathered in the large back room of the old, tatty Building 5 to hear about a major new accreditation requirement. It went by the name of Student Learning Outcomes Assessment, and it consisted of three main components: defining exactly what knowledge, skills and abilities we wanted students to leave our courses with (SLOs), measuring what they'd actually learned (data collection), and using the data to look for possible improvements (assessment). Oh, and we had to document each step, so that a casual inquirer – say, a student, or a member of a visiting accreditation team – could see, at a glance, what we were up to.

Over the subsequent decade, SLOs have become a major feature of accreditation. They dominate Program Review, which now asks us to discuss curricular innovations by linking them to SLO assessments. Everything has defined outcomes, and the outcomes are all linked into a kind of institutional learning plan, a map of the student's journey in which everything must have its appointed place. It's not enough to say that successful MUS 100 students should end up knowing how to “write and recognize written major, minor, and perfect simple intervals;” how, exactly, does this contribute to their general education?

SLO requirements keep changing, and they're about to change again. When ACCJC comes to visit in 2019, they will want to see that we are disaggregating our SLO data. PRIE will do the actual disaggregating, of course, but to make this possible, faculty will need to collect student data pretty much like course grades: for every student, every semester, and with each result associated with a specific student G-number. For some of us, this is a game-changer.

So: it seems like a good idea, poised as we are at the brink of change, to take stock of SLOs as a whole. How have they played out at CSM? Where did they come from? And where should we go next?

I'm an optimist. We are a dynamic college, bristling with initiatives that promote student learning. I'm sure we can make SLOs more meaningful, and less onerous. But before we get to visions for a brighter future, we need to take an honest look at where we are.

## CSM faculty experiences with SLOs

When I took over as CSM's SLO coordinator in Spring 2015, I wanted to hear from as many faculty as possible about their experiences with SLOs. I knew what we in the English department thought about them (as useful as a choc-

olate teapot, and three times as much work to keep them intact). But maybe we were outliers. So I interviewed thirty-four faculty SLO contacts, and here's what I found: with a very few exceptions, we have gotten next to no use out of SLOs.

The reasons won't surprise most readers. First, it turns out that data about student learning doesn't tell us anything we don't already know. We seemed to be trying everything: surveys, group grading, capstone assignments, pre-and post-quizzes – and yet almost no one had found a use for SLOs.

This was, in fact, how many of us had felt at the meeting ten years ago when SLOs were first mooted. The whole process felt redundant. We already had SLOs, having revised our course outlines years earlier, so that the objectives were expressed as student learning outcomes. As for collecting data about student learning – it's called “grading,” and represents around forty percent of our work. Did ACCJC think we never gave a quiz? And we'd always assessed and overhauled our programs. It wasn't clear what was new here.

## SLOs don't lead to “success stories”

Ten years later, it still isn't. As coordinator, I recently completed an ACCJC update document which asked, amongst other things, for some “SLO success stories.” I wanted to write about some of the wonderful initiatives that had come about because someone identified a student need, got administrative support, and saw it through: Puente, Project Change, Umoja, Mana, Writing In The End Zone, teaching circles, the learning support centers, the Basic Skills initiative, the Honors Project, Summer Bridge, Family Science Day, Year One – and those are just the ones I happened to know about; no doubt there are many more. What were all these activities, if not creative ways to engage students of all kinds, and promote interdisciplinary learning? But not one of these arose out of a study of learning outcomes data. All SLO data can do is help us spot who isn't learning what, and frankly, this is usually pretty obvious already.

Second, most frustratingly, SLOs have taken up thousands of hours. They're hard to write and difficult to measure, and each revision triggers a new passage through Committee on Instruction. They don't always map clearly; in some programs, like English, everything is connected to everything else, so it's not so much a map as a spiderweb. Other disciplines, like Music or Art, have to make a fake case for their subject by claiming spurious connections to GE-SLOs. Faculty SLO contacts spend hours hassling colleagues for data that no one gets any use out of. This all takes so much time – which means less time for students, peer men-



toring, research, and the curricular revision that SLOs are supposed to facilitate.

### **For many courses, SLOs don't make sense**

Finally, we don't all have the same kind of "outcomes." SLOs suit some disciplines, usually ones where faculty are measuring something pretty specific: Spanish, or real estate law. (Though faculty in most of these disciplines already have better ways of gauging their effectiveness, like success in licensure exams.) But for many courses, SLOs don't really make sense at all. Many disciplines promote attitudes that can't be measured at the end of a semester – a love of art, or civic-mindedness, or appreciation of diversity. A lot of teaching is like planting a seed: who knows when it will bloom? Ethical and critical thinking are habits of mind, not skills like driving or speaking French, and we don't approach them by discrete, measurable steps.

Overall, then, faculty pretty much dislike SLOs, and for excellent reasons. They contribute nothing, they reduce the scope of education, and they take up valuable time. But a few faculty did report good experiences at other campuses; and even in English, we did find SLOs a useful way to streamline the curriculum. There is something, perhaps, to build on.

### **Problems and solutions in higher education: Assessment and accountability**

So – where did all this come from?

We complain about ACCJC. But they didn't invent SLOs; the SLO requirement represents a compromise between different movements in higher education, all focused on the need for colleges to reform the way they assessed their work.

It was teachers, in fact, who first expressed dissatisfaction with the status quo. College, they pointed out, with its fragmented general education curriculum, is training students in "bulimic learning." Students rush from one required course to another, cramming and regurgitating information, retaining almost nothing. This isn't learning at all, but a gesture, a ritual representation of learning. Fac-

ulty teach in their separate silos; what students learn in one course is rarely reinforced in another; and thus, students don't end up with a coherent educational experience. Their credits remain a heap of lights, some bright and some dark, but never strung together to shed some permanent light on the mind. Unsurprisingly, students disengage, looking for any available shortcut to a decent grade. The ultimate expression of disengagement is cheating, and this is rife. Glum studies, like Arum and Roksa's 2003 book *Academically Adrift*, revealed that most students make almost no measurable improvements in their first two years of college.

All of this rings true to most of us. We've all taught students who not only didn't remember anything from their previous classes, but couldn't remember the instructor's name. ("Um, he was tall – and I think he had a beard?") Many students seem fixated on the idea that each discipline is its own thing; what happens in ECON 101, stays in ECON 101. They are often surprised, and sometimes a bit put out, when faculty introduce other ideas into class discussions. I've read student evaluations where students commented, disapprovingly, that their teacher was really teaching history, or political science, or biology, and not English like he or she was supposed to. Having been educated in an entirely different system in the U.K., I have always found something a bit bizarre in the way students compile their general education curriculum. They look like people in a Weight Watchers program putting together a meal: three points of humanities, two points of math/science, two points of arts, and one P.E. What a way to approach one's education! All my friends and I asked ourselves, in the U.K., was, "What subject do I really like?"

### **Assessment leads to collaboration**

These concerns sparked the assessment movement, and it focused on goals most of us would probably approve of: institutional clarity, coherence in courses and programs – but most of all, collaboration. Assessment evangelists stressed the need for faculty to emerge from their classrooms and make connections, to work together, so that what students learn in Philosophy 100 continues to enrich their understanding of what they go on to study in Political Science, or Math, or Nursing. This is what the assessment movement meant by outcomes: yes, Frank got an A in your class, but what has he taken with him?

In fact, we have a history at CSM of fostering this kind of interdisciplinary collaboration. We have, as noted earlier, a lot of learning communities; an Interdisciplinary Studies department, currently home to the Honors seminar; a Center for Academic Excellence, which encourages initiatives by faculty, but also staff and administration, to "enhance pedagogy and student support through innovation and collaboration." Everyone I spoke to was enthusiastic about the idea of getting together with colleagues, from other departments

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## From SLOs to assessment and accountability

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and disciplines, to work on creative approaches to improving student learning. (Many departments consist of only one full-time or adjunct faculty, so they're especially keen on joint activities.) Of course, the problem is finding the time. Assessment itself, however, seems very appealing.

But SLOs don't really feel like assessment, do they? They focus, it seems, on hard results, on quantifiable and measurable improvements. They emphasize the magic of data, with the implication that unless we can express it as a percentage, our professional judgement and experience doesn't count. Trying to evaluate our work as teachers using SLO methods sometimes feels like using a measuring tape to figure out the health of your marriage.

### **Fears of an "education crisis" lead to the need for "accountability"**

This is because academics weren't the only ones worried about higher education. In the culture at large, the perception has been growing, for the last fifteen years, that education – K12, but also college – is in crisis. The conversation goes something like this: Our education system used to be great, but has recently declined dramatically. Faculty are listlessly waving through students who can't read, write or think; accreditation agencies are waving through institutions that aren't preparing students adequately. Unless we start insisting on some real results, and hold our institutions accountable, our economy – perhaps even this great Republic – is doomed.

Like a herpes virus, fears about public education seem always to lurk somewhere in the public discourse. When conditions are right – when the Japanese start making cars, or the Chinese start making everything else, and we stop looking like Number One – these anxieties break out, causing us all pain and dismay. The most recent flare-up really began with the George W. Bush administration. After raking K12 education over the coals with "No Child Left Behind," his Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings said that it was "time we turn this elephant [higher education] upside down and take a look at it."

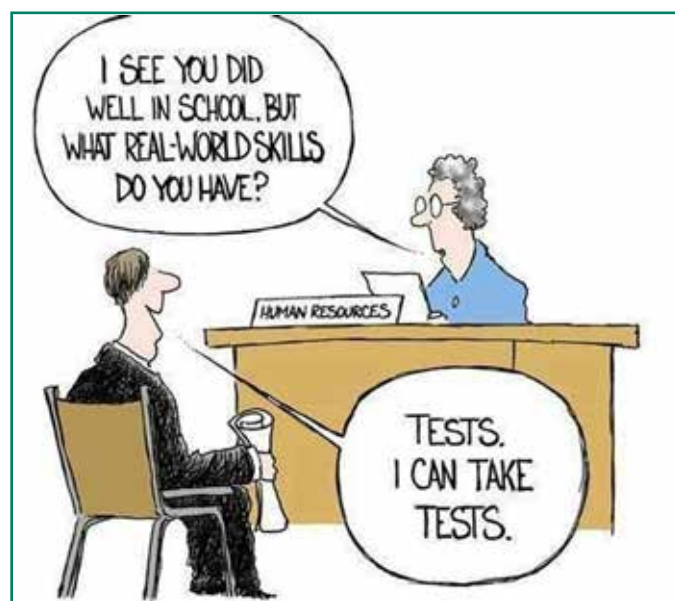
In 2006, the Spellings Commission released a report entitled *A Test of Leadership: Charting the Future Of U.S. Higher Education*. Like the college professors who had spearheaded the assessment movement ten years earlier, the Commission concluded that students weren't learning. But its prescription focused on accountability. Faculty must test regularly, using as objective methods as possible, whether students really are learning what they are supposed to learn, and use this data for planning and improvement. Teachers themselves need to be more open to innovation and change. Like steel manufacture or railroads before them, the Commission observed, higher education was an industry that "has become what, in the business world,

would be called a mature enterprise: increasingly risk-averse, at times self-satisfied, and unduly expensive." In other words: Wake up and smell the globalization. Teachers are falling down on the job, and need to have their feet held to the fire.

But we weren't the only ones not doing our job properly. Accreditation agencies, too, came in for severe criticism. Accreditors were looking at inputs, like student-to-teacher ratio, governance procedures, and policies. What did any of this matter, if students weren't learning anything? Instead of operating as gatekeepers for quality higher education, most accreditation agencies had become, as Arne Duncan said, "the watchdog that doesn't bite." So accreditation agencies, too, had to be held accountable for holding us accountable. It was the Department of Education that instituted the two-year rule, a mandate that requires colleges to correct deficiencies within two years. And agencies that did not get ready to sink their teeth into uncooperative institutions could expect dire consequences. "At risk," said Barbara Beno, defending some of ACCJC's unpopular verdicts, "is the commission's recognition." We think of accreditors as peer evaluators, but in Washington D.C., they are expected to act as police. Even the impeccably progressive Elizabeth Warren likened accreditors to the pre-2008 SEC – too cozy with the sector they are supposed to hold accountable.

### **Corporations demand "return on investment", not a thoughtful, informed population**

Teachers are deeply suspicious of this kind of rhetoric, and they're right. It reflects a bottom-line approach, a desire to see quantifiable and immediate results from learning, and a readiness to blame teachers for not achieving the impossible. It carries with it an implicit definition of a college education: as a kind of manufacturing process, one that takes raw students through specific and definable steps, and turns them into participants in the global economy. It sees education





not as an end in itself, but as a means to an end. It comes from politicians and parents who demand ROI (the magical “return on investment”) on tuition dollars, and from the students themselves, most of whom come to college because they have been told that it is the only path to a better paid job. And by “ROI,” no one means a life-long interest in Persian poetry, or a clearer public understanding of science, or a thoughtful, well-informed population. They mean a better paid job.

None of this, unfortunately, is going away. We see it all over the culture; everyone seems to accept that the goal of education is to train the workforce. A Harvard professor reports students leaving her seminar on history and literature, having been texted by angry parents who insist that the students not waste their time. Business-related majors now account for over one-third of majors, and it’s not because one third of the student body plan to open a business. Many in the business sector feel that they have a proprietary interest in public education, because, as one businessman argued, “businesses are the primary consumers of the output of our schools, so it’s a natural alliance.” (The veteran teacher and education blogger, Peter Greene, calls this the “wrongest sentence ever” in education reform debates. “Students are not output.... Students are not consumer goods.... the purpose of education is NOT simply to prepare young humans to be useful to their future employers.”) Private corporations and philanthropists have become passionately interested in education. No surprise that of the nineteen people on the commission, only six were professors or college administrators, while most of the others came from large corporations (from Boeing, IBM, and the ubiquitous Microsoft) or edupreneurs like Kaplan Learning. No surprise, too, that the Commission emphasized the need to make room for the kind of “innovations” that offer opportunities for private interests to get involved in the dollar behemoth that is education.

### **What we can do?**

Here’s one thing we can’t do: We can’t throw our keyboards to the ground and start an “Occupy Tracdat” movement. The call for accountability and assessment didn’t come from our own administrators, nor even from ACCJC, but from the United States Department of Education, and the culture standing behind it. So whatever happens to ACCJC, SLOs aren’t going away.

But we can, and should, do a lot.

### **Make collecting data easier**

First, at CSM at least, we can make this process much less of a chore. The biggest source of grief right now is the way we collect and record SLO data. Surely we can

improve this. We collect data on learning all the time – it’s part of our job. How we record this data, and store it in a database, is an administrative problem we can solve as we go. Right now, though, there must be ways we can use what we already do, or implement painless ways to collect data.

### **Build a culture of assessment**

Second, we can build a culture of assessment. Perhaps we could have a set day in the calendar, each semester, set aside for collaborative projects? We’ve got a new division to provide academic support for this kind of interdisciplinary, inter-constituency project (Academic Support and Learning Technologies). Maybe ASLT could put out a newsletter featuring some of the more noteworthy projects. I’d love to hear more about what my colleagues are doing. I expect I don’t know the half of it. These are just some possibilities we’re going to think about at CSM.

There are two important reasons for embracing assessment. First, the kinds of things we’re talking about are useful, and meaningful, and fun. Focusing on assessment would allow us to put our many existing activities, like learning communities and so on, squarely in their proper context: activities that support and enhance student learning.

### **What is college for?**

But it’s also our way of taking some ownership back over education. To define an outcome is, by extension, to define what we mean by learning. The real question, at bottom, is this: What is college for? The government, the business sector, even students seem to think college exists solely to train the workforce, and improve our nation’s economic standing. But we can offer a different answer, I think. We can tell much better stories about what college can do for our students.

Here’s one of my favorites. In an article a couple of years ago in *The New York Times*, the actor Tom Hanks looked back at his two years at Chabot College. By the current standards of SLO assessment, he didn’t fare too well. He dropped classes he wasn’t prepared for, endured classes he loathed, and spent a lot of time goofing around trying to pick up girls. But he also picked up unexpected benefits: riveting lectures, a strategy for making outlines, an ability to speak in public, and other bits and pieces which “rippled through [his] professional pond.” The college, it turned out, changed his life in ways he could not have anticipated. “I drove past the campus a few years ago with one of my kids,” Hanks concluded, “and summed up my two years there this way: “That place made me what I am today.”

# New history of California labor authored by former CSM instructor and AFT 1493 staffer

by Dan Kaplan, AFT 1493 Executive Secretary

In the early 1980s Fred Glass was a part-time faculty member at CSM, working as an instructional designer in the technology division. He next became the first Executive Secretary of AFT Local 1493 in 1984, and then, in 1989, he was hired by the California Federation of Teachers (CFT) to be their Communications Director, a position that he still holds today.

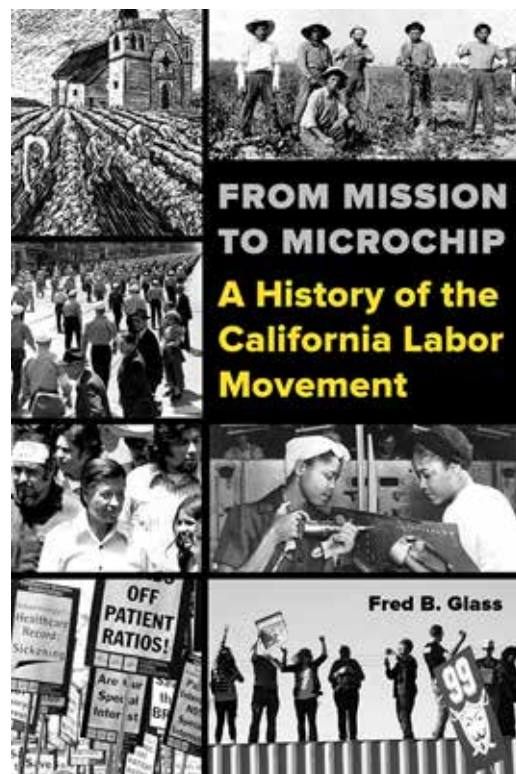


Fred Glass

While working for the CFT, in the late 1990s, Fred made the documentary film, *Golden Lands, Working Hands*, on California labor history, and since that time he has taught labor history classes at City College of San Francisco. This summer he completed a major work, *From Mission to Microchip: A History of the California Labor Movement*, a book that he tells the reader took him 25 years to complete given that he worked on it mainly during his summer vacations. What perseverance!

Even though it is published by the University of California Press, the 544 page book (including bibliography) doesn't read like an academic text. Rather it reads like a riveting narrative of both the past and present California labor movement, with the past truly informing the current moment in California history. Looking at the "Sources" at the end of the work, it seems that Fred has read almost every book and article that has been published related to California labor history.

What is especially appealing is the language and the vocabulary that Fred uses to tell his story. It is the language and vocabulary of a sophisticated class analysis that is employed to tell the history of the



labor struggles that make California the place it is today.

All faculty would benefit by reading this magnificent work of history, no matter what particular discipline you teach. To be an informed citizen requires some knowledge of history, and you can do no better than to acquire that knowledge by reading this fine book.

"It took work to create California. Fred Glass now chronicles that epic of labor in a masterful narrative that will in short order establish itself as one of the best—and certainly the most up-to-date—histories of the labor movement in California." - Kevin Starr, USC professor and author of *Americans and the California Dream*, a five-volume history of California.

If you would like to purchase the book, order it on [the UC Press website](http://the UC Press website) (enter 16M4197 for a 30% discount). If you wish to consider adopting the book for a course, you can [order an examination copy from the publisher](#).





## CFT calls on Dept. of Ed. to replace ACCJC with new accreditor

In early August, the California Federation of Teachers filed a substantive new complaint against the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, arguing that the accreditor of California's community colleges has failed so completely to fulfill its duties that the U.S. Department of Education should immediately "delist" it—that is, deny its renewal as an accreditor. The CFT was joined in the complaint by the faculty union at City College of San Francisco, AFT Local 2121, and its parent organization, the American Federation of Teachers.

A previous complaint filed by CFT in 2013 resulted in a finding by the Education Department that the ACCJC was in violation of numerous accreditation standards.

"For years, the ACCJC has pushed forward with self-serving, illegal accreditation practices that unjustifiably sullied the names of colleges and universities throughout California, like our own City College of San Francisco, while allowing bad actors like Corinthian Colleges to defraud and even bankrupt thousands of students," said AFT President Randi Weingarten, whose 1.6 million members include more than 200,000 professionals in higher education. "Even after it's been found at fault, the ACCJC is still in business, with the potential of devastating the college's functioning and, with it, the ability of faculty to deliver a high-quality education to our students. Enough is enough. It is time to delist this failing commission and return hope to the community and every student City College serves."

The complaint notes that the ACCJC is widely scorned because of its actions and no longer has "wide acceptance"

among the California community colleges it oversees, a crucial standard for continued recognition for regional accreditors by the Department of Education.

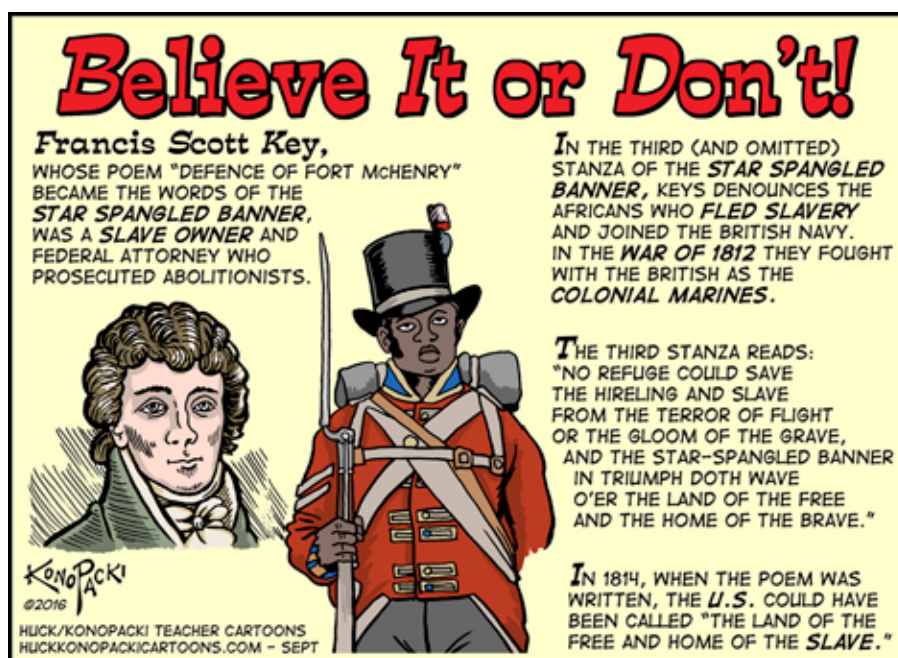
"It is past time that we move on to a fair, competent accreditor for the colleges that serve more than 2 million students," said CFT President Joshua Pechthalt, who is an AFT vice president. "The department should pay close attention to the long list of abuses of power and violations of accreditation norms committed by this agency, and help us find an agency that can do the job properly."



The complaint zeroes in on an immediate problem created by the ACCJC for City College of San Francisco. In responding to a wave of criticism of its unfair and unlawful attempt to disaccredit City College in 2013, the ACCJC came up with a new policy, which it called "restoration status," to give City College two more years to address the problems identified by the agency.

"Restoration status wasn't designed to help City College," says Tim Killikelly, president of AFT Local 2121. "It was designed to make it appear that the ACCJC was reasonable and responsive, so that it could survive all the scrutiny and actions that were coalescing against it from the courts and government agencies. But it is a policy that leaves all decision-making in the hands of the ACCJC and provides no due process or appeal procedures for City College."

This policy, notes the complaint, does not align with accreditation norms, causes grave harm to the students and faculty of City College, and could allow the ACCJC to order City College closed in January 2017 with no opportunity for appeal.



### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Why we're at impasse and how you can help
- 2 Non-tenured faculty on screening committees?
- 3 Proposition 55 critical to education funding
- 4 Faculty demands workload equity
- 5 Studies find student evaluations are unreliable
- 6 From SLOs to assessment & accountability
- 10 New history of California labor by Fred Glass

### LETTER TO THE ADVOCATE

**District's proposal to increase student evaluations is impractical**

*continued from page 5*

already distracted by other surveys currently given out routinely by the Office of Planning, Research, and Institutional Effectiveness.

Who would administer these evaluations? It would fall on the faculty to give these to all of the classes taught in their department. How much time would this add to a professor's work week?

Who would score these assessments? This would fall on the Office of Planning, Research, and Institutional Effectiveness. How much work would this be for every student, in every class, for the whole district, every semester? Maybe the district's Human Resources Department could volunteer to do this task?

Who will interpret the results of these assessments and communicate the results? Will the Deans of each division need to interpret these findings (5 classes for each professor, each semester) and schedule individual meeting times with faculty to go over them? Will the Deans need to write a report, each semester, to be submitted to the District summarizing how well their division is doing overall and break it down by departments? How much time would this all take?

Before embarking on a course of action that would involve increasing the workload for a task by a factor of 29, the consequences for each member in a system of students and educators needs to be carefully considered. More frequent student evaluations may bring a small increase in insight over what is currently being done, or it may not. However, the cost of this proposal, to everyone, is so great that it should not be considered. There is an old adage, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

*The faculty member who sent us this letter requested that their name be withheld from publication*

## AFT 1493 Calendar

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

**Wednesday, October 12, 2:15 p.m.**  
**Cañada, Building 3, Room 104**

**Wednesday, November 9, 2:15 p.m.**  
**Skyline, Room 6-203**

**Wednesday, December 14, 2:15 p.m.**  
**CSM, Building 10, Room 401 (City View)**

### STRATEGIC CAMPAIGN INITIATIVE

*continued from page 4*

### All Out For Prop 55!

Proposition 55 is on the November ballot and we hope all of you will help us tell faculty and staff colleagues to vote YES on Prop 55 to ensure a stream of funding for California public schools and community colleges. (See article on page 3 for details about Prop 55.) Look for Prop 55 tables on your campus and flyers in division workrooms. Your union will be taking part in phone banking "parties" at the San Mateo Labor Council on these dates: Tuesday October 18 and Tuesday November 1st from 6:30-8:00 with a free dinner and lots of camaraderie guaranteed. Call the AFT office (x6491) to let us know you'd like to join us. Even if you can just stay an hour – we want you with us! Workers from other unions are phone banking for public schools, and it's only right that we be there with them getting out the vote. Spread the word to colleagues, students and friends to support public education in California by voting for Prop 55.

Katharine and Michelle are continuing to visit new and new-ish faculty, with Michelle focusing on part-timers and Katharine on full-timers. We come bearing gifts! We bring a tote bag stuffed with goodies – your free bright red AFT t-shirt, a members' packet of valuable information and other useful materials and gifts. If you haven't seen or heard from one of us yet, just contact us and we will arrange a visit.