

The Advocate

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DAVIS SIGNS AB 420, FUNDING PART-TIME HEALTH INSURANCE & PAID OFFICE HOURS

The passage of AB420, originally known as the omnibus part-time faculty rights bill, seemed like an uphill battle several months ago. But though both the equal pay for equal work provision and a rehiring rights provision for instructors in the California Community Colleges were postponed for consideration until the next legislative session, this bill signed October 8 by Governor Davis represents a major step forward for the 29,000 "temporary" instructors in our community college system.

Statewide Study to Compare Part-Time & Full-Time Compensation & Conditions

In its amended form, AB420 mandates a study by the California Postsecondary Education Commission of the system's "part-time faculty employment, salary, and compensation patterns as they relate to full-time community college faculty with similar education credentials and work experience." Preliminary findings are to be reported to the legislature by March 31, 2000. The problem is the same as in many other sectors of the workforce: employing contingent labor at a much lower pay rate, no job security, and usually no health benefits. National professional organizations such as the American Association of University Professors and the Modern Language Association have been lamenting this problem for years, but AB420 is a first in providing for a legislatively mandated study with the goal of legislative reform.

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Online Education Conference Draws Over 250 Faculty From Around the State

Well over 250 faculty members from about 50 different community colleges throughout the state (including about 65 from our own district) attended the very successful Conference on Online Education in California Community Colleges at CSM on Saturday, October 9. Entirely planned and organized by faculty in our District, the conference brought together an unusually wide range of views on the many issues related to teaching online courses.

The first keynote speaker was CSM's own Cathleen Kennedy, who challenged the assumptions of those who think of online education as an extension of something we already know. Instead she stressed the need to develop new paradigms for online education. She has found that online students tend to have personality traits that distinguish them and lead to different teaching approaches than one might expect. She reported, for example, that online learners' self-reliance and expediency has made group work an impediment for these students.

Bill Scroggins, Past President of the California Community College Academic Senate, who spoke next, emphasized the need for maintaining the educational

quality of online courses by following a set of thorough design principles.

Perry Robinson, Deputy Director of the AFT's Higher Education Department, focused on numerous professional issues that have been raised by the growth of online courses. In particular, he expressed concerns about the loss of intellectual property rights and course compression, which could lead to "the mass customization of courseware."

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**IMPORTANT BOARD & BOND
ELECTION NOVEMBER 2;
DON'T FORGET TO VOTE;
SEE PAGES 4 - 7 FOR DETAILS**

The conference opened with brief greetings from CSM President Robert Verzello, Board President Karen Schwarz (who introduced the other Board members) and CSM Academic Senate President Kate Motoyama. AFT 1493 Executive Secretary Dan Kaplan then gave opening remarks for the conference planning committee.

Presentations by five featured speakers filled the rest of the morning plenary session and set the tone for discussions that continued through the day.

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The Advocate

San Mateo Community College
Federation of Teachers
AFT Local 1493, AFL-CIO

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AB 420 Funds Part-Timer Health Insurance & Office Hours, Mandates Study of Part-Timer Conditions

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The California Community College system is the largest educational system in the world. It should be providing leadership in academic excellence — not following the herd in getting by on what it can get away with. The decades-old legislative classification of “temporary” instructors, hired by the class and not allowed to work over 60% of a full-time load, was designed to deal with fluctuations in enrollments — not as a way to balance the budget. But now, over half of the community college classes are taught by these “temporary” employees, many of whom have taught the same classes on the same campuses for ten or twenty years. Only rarely do the colleges for whom they work provide them with offices in which to meet with students and prepare for classes. Too many of them teach 150% or more of a full-time load by commuting from one district to another, still earning less than \$25,000 a year.

Besides mandating the study, AB420 removes some of the eligibility restrictions on matching funds from the state for district-implemented programs to provide health benefits for these instructors and office hours for their students. It adds a million dollars to the state budget for these health benefits and office hours —

only a start, but it counts.

Assemblyman Scott Wildman is to be commended for his courageous and continuous advocacy on behalf of academic integrity in the community college system. In signing the bill, Governor Davis has made an important step in recognizing that a problem exists. The faculty organizations that drafted and supported the bill — the Faculty Association of California Community Colleges, the California Federation of Teachers, and the California Teachers Association - also deserve recognition. We hope that in the months to follow, the Board of Governors and Chancellor’s office of the California Community Colleges will join in calling for change of a system out of control.

— Chris Storer, Executive Council Chairperson of the California Part-time Faculty Association, and Sandra Baringer, Palomar College CPFA chapter.

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Reminder to All Faculty on Committees: Keep Track of Your Hours

The issue of committee compensation will be revisited at the bargaining table in the next round of negotiations. We need your help in gathering the data necessary to support our discussions on the issue of excessive committee work.

Therefore, **please keep track of all hours spent in evaluation and screening committees during the Fall semester.**

If you have misplaced the form sent to you, simply keep your information in any form you wish, and **send it to Connie Beringer, LA/LR, Skyline College by the end of the Fall Semester.** Including your name and school will be helpful but is not necessary. No individual’s information will be reported to anyone. Your information is crucial in gathering adequate data. Thank you for your time and effort.

The Online Education Conference: A Part-Timer's View

by Kathleen de Azevedo Feinblum,
AFT Part Time Faculty Coordinator

I attended the AFT 1493-sponsored Conference on Online Education in California Community Colleges and I was impressed. The five excellent panelists at the Morning Plenary Session reflected diverse views, ranging from Bill

*Kathleen
de Azevedo Feinblum*

Scroggins, past president of the Academic Senate, who talked about how online instruction can accommodate different learning styles; to David Noble, who warned that the Digital Revolution is being initiated by corporate interests who see schools as the next major money-making conquest. Blessedly absent were the hi-tech marketeers who so often seem to infiltrate education conventions.

We Must Pay Attention

Part-timers tend to think in present tense as opposed to future tense. We have classes for this semester only, we have (or don't have) enough money for this month only. It is difficult to pay attention to trends over the horizon, but pay attention we must. The Digital Revolution is here to stay (at least for a while) and part-timers must consider its implications.

Community colleges are bracing themselves for Tidal Wave II, the forthcoming swell of enrollment. By the year 2005, the enrollment is expected to increase by more than 35,000. Community colleges are not getting the funding needed to accommodate these changes. In fact, community colleges receive the lowest percentage of funding compared to the K-

12 and university systems. There are no plans at present to construct new community colleges and in fact, many schools are looking to cut costs. Therefore, I would not look for a surge of full-time jobs to rescue us in the wake of this flood. David Noble claims that the "commodification of education", where schools become money-making entities of corporations, require reduction of labor costs to make a profit. If Noble's prediction is right, and if present patterns prevail, the axe will fall on part-timer jobs.

Teaching Online Saves on Commute Time But Adds on Prep & Teaching Time

For many part-timers, teaching an online course is a good idea. Besides saving on commute time, some instructors may feel more comfortable teaching online than they do lecturing. However, at the conference, many instructors teaching online said they spend nearly twice as much time with online courses as they do with conventional courses. Susan Adrian of Mission College, one of the most enthusiastic supporters of online education, admits to clocking in 7 hours a day with her four English classes. At present, there is no compensation for working overtime. Therefore, part-timers who choose to teach an online course are faced with even more overwork along with their varied commutes. Online courses also take more pre-planning than regular classes. And so, consider this: Would you be willing to spend undue time developing a course when your school could lay you off at the drop of a hat? (Or a drop of enrollment?)

Most teachers have computers, but the set-up for an online course requires extra equipment, and tech support, and the cost often falls to the instructor. Since adjuncts aren't always privy to professional development grants, setting up to teach online can become an expensive

out-of-pocket investment.

Some Part-timers Feel Pressured to Teach Online Courses

Participants frequently mentioned that online education works for some students, and some instructors; there is an implication that both instructors and students should have a choice. However, several adjuncts mentioned that part-timers often do not have "a choice" and if some refuse to teach an online course, and refuse to put in the extra time and expense, there are others who will.

Almost everyone agreed that online education is new and many of the "kinks" haven't been worked out yet. There are also many professors who use or want to use computers as part of their regular class curriculum. The Digital Revolution will affect all of us, but part-timers need to be extra vigilant, so that our laws and contracts treat us fairly. Technology must be a means of empowerment, not exploitation.

AB420: Union & Part-timers Fought Together

Governor Gray Davis signed AB 420 on October 8. In its amended form, AB420 mandates a study to examine the work and wage patterns of part-timers and adds a million dollars to the state budget to provide better health benefits and office hours. (See page 1 for more complete story.) Of course, these items still need to be negotiated into district contracts. The union and many part-timers fought for this bill, through letter writing campaigns, lobbying and perseverance. Our own local got us a few improvements in negotiations. We have a ways to go, but no one can claim the union "does nothing for us."

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AFT Endorses Miljanich, Schwarz & Constantino for Board

by **Joaquin Rivera,**
AFT 1493 Co-President

On November 2, the residents of San Mateo County will elect three members to the Board of Trustees of our Community College District. I am proud to announce that our local's Committee on Political Education (COPE) has endorsed the three incumbents for reelection to our Board: Patricia Miljanich, Karen Schwarz and Tom Constantino. Statements from each of these candidates are below.

Pat and Karen were elected to the Board four years ago (with the endorsement of the AFT) and their election brought many big and positive changes. Before they joined the Board, the relations between the Board and the AFT were not good. Negotiations were extremely antagonistic. Many of you may remember negotiations that dragged for more than two years before a settlement was reached—or the year we had to go to fact finding (the step just before a strike).

After their election, Pat and Karen

brought a new vision and new leadership to this District. Although at the time they were only two in a Board of five (as well as the new kids on the block!), with their leadership they managed to turn many things around. As a result of their hard work, the relations between the Board and the AFT have improved dramatically. Although we may not always agree, Pat and Karen have always been accessible and willing to talk to us and listen to our point of view.

During the past few years Tom Constantino has also been accessible to the Union, has voted affirmatively for all of our key negotiated packages and has been supportive of many of our issues. He is a good ally and a concerned trustee. We are very pleased with the relationship that we have been able to establish with Tom and are looking forward to continue working with him.

Pat, Karen and Tom are outstanding trust-

ees and deserve our support.

The other candidates to the Board are: John Hickey and Margaret Buckley Schmidt, two Libertarians whose only purpose in running for the Board is to acquire a visible platform to oppose the bond measure and who believe that our community colleges are over-funded (yes, you read it right, they think that too much money goes into education!) and full time faculty are not needed; Tullio Bertini, a former District trustee that we helped defeat four years ago; and, Robert Bentley, a retired middle school teacher who has not been active in the campaign.

I hope that you will all join me in supporting Patricia Miljanich, Karen Schwarz and Tom Constantino and that from now until November 7 we will all work very hard to make sure that they are reelected to the Board and that Measure A is passed. Please volunteer some of your time and money, it will be worth it!

Patricia Miljanich

Karen Schwarz

Tom Constantino

For the past four years I have been privileged to serve as one of your community representatives on the Board of Trustees. I have thoroughly enjoyed this "educational experience" and appreciate all who have taken the time to communicate with me on a variety of issues and concerns, and even to challenge my decisions and presumptions. While I consider my community college

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It doesn't seem possible that I am approaching the end of my first term as your elected Trustee. I am going to start off this article as I ended the last one 4 years ago by THANKING ALL OF YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT.

I truly have felt the support of faculty, students, and employees of this District the past 4 years and am grateful that you

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One word describes San Mateo County's three community colleges today: Exciting. Cañada College, and Skyline College, and the College of San Mateo are simply exciting places to be. Don't take my word for it.

Just months ago the Carnegie Foundation recognized our own Professor Cathleen Kennedy as one of the best teachers in

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Patricia Miljanich

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education far from complete, I look forward to using the knowledge I have acquired, thus far, to working with you, the Board, and the District Administration to confront the challenges that lie ahead in the next four years. Many are already on the horizon.

With the successful passage of our bond measure, we can anticipate exciting new remodeling and building projects on our campuses. Clearly our campus communities will experience inconvenience and disruption. We will need to address safety concerns and minimize the impact on our employees and students.

Our recent state budget brought great disappointment for community colleges. Efforts such as Partnership for Excellence were reduced rather than expanded. We must increase funding resources for development of new, and renewal of current, academic and support programs for our students. Our Board is committed

to taking a leadership role with our trustee colleagues and politicians state-wide to develop a stronger presence in Sacramento. We can no longer assume that our State decision makers appreciate the accomplishments and needs of our community colleges.

The news media has recently publicized predictions of a "Tidal Wave" of students that are expected to enter our State's educational systems in the next several decades. Accommodation of large numbers of students in our colleges will require extensive planning. Yet, as a representative of the larger community outside our District, I continue to be concerned about the unmet needs of those students who are not attending our colleges or frankly, even completing high school. Many are minorities. Their needs must not be forgotten, as we prepare for a potential flood of students. We must continue to work together and as partners with our high schools, and even elementary schools, to reach out to them, their

families, and communities.

Ultimately, the success of our students is most directly in your hands. Repeatedly, students have shared stories with me about the one professor who made a difference in their lives — who inspired them, gave them the skills and the knowledge, and ultimately, the confidence to believe in themselves. Our culturally diverse population of students comes to us with varied educational experiences, abilities, and goals. Your efforts to educate, encourage, and inspire them on a daily basis are critical to the successful fulfillment of our District's mission. We must continue to work together to enhance your professional environment and provide you with the resources to do your job well.

Thank you for this opportunity to communicate with you. I remain committed to being open-minded and accessible. I welcome your ideas, comments and questions.

Karen Schwarz

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have given me your support again for this re-election.

I appreciate the fact that you agreed that we could disagree, as long as we listened to each other.

I have had a lot of communication these past years from faculty that acknowledge that they have felt my support. That has really been the easiest part of my job.

I did review the last article I wrote, and am happy that the goal of open communication is being accomplished. It was apparent at our last Board meeting when the Board, administrators, and PUBLIC were discussing a report, much like a Family would do. It was great to see Dan Kaplan speak and remind us of the Online Education Conference that was approaching. All of the Board got out their calendars and committed to attending. Honestly, I might not have made the effort if Dan hadn't spoken, and I would have missed a wonderful opportunity to educate myself

on Online Education, and more importantly to support our Faculty for planning this first rate conference.

Time does seem to fly by and especially when we are creating and reacting to change. I don't need to remind you that the election of Pat Miljanich and I was a big change. The announcement of Chancellor Callahan's retirement and the search for a new Chancellor brought about another change. The search for a new Chancellor gave us the means to involve the campus community in the requirements of what to look for in a new Chancellor. Hiring Chancellor Joe Johnson was a big change. Of course, he brought about changes in the District with his experience and I predict there will be more. Then there was another election that brought about some more change, and I truly believe all the changes have opened the communication even more.

It was shocking to lose the 3 college presidents, but we have to be complimented that their experience was

recognized. I am committed to involving the campus community in filling those positions. We will use the same open process as in the Chancellor search and involve the campus communities in searching for our new presidents.

Probing into the reasons as to why the District's enrollment was declining has also brought a lot of communication. I supported the Needs Assessment done in 1996 by an outside consultant. At the time, I did question why we had to hire someone from the outside to tell us what was wrong inside, but since then I have realized that even though we have some excellent personnel it is sometimes better to go out for the expertise. We had some surprising results that told us simply that the community had forgotten about us. We have performed some changes that definitely have helped the District in terms of marketing, and mainly in being more visible. While working on the enrollment issue, we realized how our facilities were also deterring students. The long process that we all went through, be-

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Tom Constantino

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America. We've known that for years.

Don Carter, Toyota area executive, flatly states the Toyota Skyline Automotive Technology program is the best partnership in the country.

The San Mateo County Times recently reported that Redwood City's Cañada College's transfer rates to UC and CSU are in the top ten of California's 106 community colleges. For that matter the transfer rates at CSM and Skyline are much higher than the state averages. Not only do we have commendable transfer rates, but also recent studies have shown that after one year our transfer students have higher grade point averages than "native" students do.

A further example of excellence was last weekend's superb state-wide Conference on Online Education that was sponsored by the San Mateo Community College

Karen Schwarz

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fore deciding to place a bond measure on the ballot, has again opened up the lines of communication, and no matter what happens on November 2, I truly feel we are all in this together. I am pleased that we will have a prequalified bid list, for future projects, and I believe all the Board and staff are more educated to understanding the scope of projects at the beginning.

I want to be re-elected because of you the faculty, the students, and all other employees. I truly care what happens to you and am proud to be a voice and an ear. I pride myself on being accessible and always accept calls and now email, even if it is anonymous. I may be reached at 650-367-5037 and UKARE@aol.com. My vision is to keep going the direction we are going, and we will have beautifully maintained campuses bursting with students, and faculty and staff that feel they are included in the processes and solutions.

Federation of Teachers, AFT Local 1493. Featured speakers such as Professor Bill Scroggins of Chabot and Dr. David Noble, York University, Toronto, enjoy North America-wide reputations. Hats off to AFT Local Executive Secretary Dan Kaplan for his focused conference opening remarks and his year long planning effort.

Our own Paula Anderson is working with county officials on one of the important challenges of this decade, to improve the skill sets of those previously dependent on welfare. This is a real challenge in coastal California where \$21 an hour, and not \$11, is a livable wage.

And we proudly recognize that KCSM-TV ranks in the top 25 PBS viewerships in stations across the country. This is hard work and community involvement by faculty and staff.

I recently met with AFT Local 1493's leadership at lunch (they graciously paid) to discuss the November 2 board election and county Measure A, our \$148 million bond campaign. I quickly realized that none of my lunchmates would vote yes on the bond campaign. Their reasons were not political, but had everything to do with geography and the Bay Area's expensive housing market. All three reside outside San Mateo County.

Last Thursday I discovered that teachers have contributed less than \$500 to the bond campaign where public funds are prohibited. I suspect that this is less likely a reflection on generosity, but the reality of pay scales in a society where Bay Area longshoremans earn in excess of \$105,000 yearly. If budget limitations preclude your financial involvement, please send "Dear Friend" cards to your San Mateo County friends, and volunteer to staff telephone banks October 19-21 and October 26-28.

In my 13 years on the Board I have never discussed a fellow trustee or Board candidate personally. I must make an exception today. I admired, but did not agree with, Jack Hickey more than twenty years

ago when he authored a statewide voucher initiative. One had to recognize his leadership and willingness to discuss an important public policy issue. Unfortunately, he has grown older, more rigid, and less charitable in his thinking. Jack no longer admits he even resides in Redwood City where he moved some forty years ago. Jack prefers to say he lives in Emerald Hills. Although Trustee Miljanich and Constantino reside in the Emerald Hills section of Redwood City, Constantino actually resides in the county, they have always answered Redwood City as their home. And both have children and are involved in local public schools.

Hickey is not an advocate for students or public education. He feels students should pay the entire cost of their college education. No societal issues are involved with him. He blames teacher unions for problems in public education. Sadly his answer to violence in our society is for citizens to carry concealed weapons for protection. He must be joking.

If Jack resided in Boston two hundred plus years ago, he would be helping John Adams dump British taxed tea in the harbor. Hickey opposes taxes, especially increases in property taxes. That's fine. And if Jack runs for the legislature, he can tackle that issue.

Jack advocates "choice" in education, but simply fails to recognize that our community colleges live, and thank you, thrive on choice. If there are higher transfer rates at Foothill, our students can attend that Los Altos Hills institution. If a two-year nursing program exists better than CSM's, students can transfer there.

Jack criticizes the district for insufficient corporate support. Again, he simply doesn't know what he is talking about. Jack prides himself on understanding spreadsheets. His figures on the development, leased income, and lack of water on SMCCCD's Highway 1 property are without foundation. And if Jack had at-

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MEASURE 'A' IS CRITICAL TO REPAIR & UPGRADE AGING DISTRICT FACILITIES

**by Katharine Harer,
AFT 1493 Co-President**

As you are probably well aware, the District Board of Trustees has mounted a bond campaign for the November 2 ballot that, if passed, will provide funds to repair and upgrade facilities at the three college campuses. The AFT is in full support of Measure A, and we have been working alongside the campaign committee from the beginning to help plan and carry out this ambitious campaign.

Those of us who work in classrooms, labs

Tom Constantino

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tended one meeting last year he would have learned from polling and focus groups that county residents are requesting more information from the district—on our transfer mission, our vocational programs, and life long learning. I guess that I'd be ignorant too if I had attended only one community college meeting in 15 years. I would urge the public not to support Mr. Hickey's candidacy for the SMCCCD Board, or for the state legislature, where I suspect he is running next. There are six other candidates for three seats on your San Mateo County November 2 ballot, so there is choice.

With up to a million new students entering California higher education within ten years, access will be an important issue very shortly.

However, clearly the important issue facing county voters on November 2nd is the SMCCCD's bond campaign. I urge voters to invest in improved labs, renovated spaces and updated technology. The cost is an affordable \$6.85 per \$100,000 assessed evaluation, or one large pizza and root beer per household per year. Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

and offices at the three colleges, many of which are over thirty years old, have been living with the gritty details that mark the dilapidated state of many of our workplaces. We know what it's like to have asbestos dust sift down on our heads as we conference with a student or to work in labs with broken and unsafe equipment. The bond will provide \$148 million dollars to be used to upgrade computer and science labs; remove asbestos; carry out seismic upgrades; improve access for the disabled and improve general safety on our campuses.

About the Price of a Pizza

The bond measure will cost San Mateo County property owners only \$6.85 per \$100,000 of assessed (not market) value on their property per year. The average homeowner will pay less than \$18 per year — about the price of a large pizza. The money will be spent as equally as possible at each campus based on student population. And none of these funds can be used for administrative salaries!

The reality is that there are no other funds available to the district for facility upgrades of this scale and magnitude. That is why we support the bond measure and

why we urge all of you to help out with this campaign that will, in the long run, benefit all of us by improving our working conditions and providing safe environments in which we can do our jobs.

What Can You Do?

What can you do? First of all, if you live in the county you can vote for the bond in November and talk to your family, friends and neighbors about how important it is to vote yes on Measure A. If you have a little slice of time between now and the election, you can come in for an hour or so of phone banking. Additionally, the bond campaign is in desperate need of donations, and every check helps.

Think about all the broken, unsafe, antiquated and downright nasty rooms and equipment you've dealt with since you've taught in our district. This is an opportunity to inject some new life into our aging campuses. We urge you to help Measure A pass — in any way you can. For more information on the campaign, you can call the Chancellor's Office at 574-6560, your college president's office or campaign chair, Pat Miljanich at 650-796-6983.

Vote on Tuesday, November 2 AFT 1493 Recommends:



YES - Measure A: SMCCCD Facilities Bond



Tom Constantino - SMCCCD Governing Board



Patricia Miljanich - SMCCCD Governing Board



Karen Schwarz - SMCCCD Governing Board

Part-Time Tenured Faculty Finally Receive Pro-Rata Pay

by John Kirk,
AFT 1493 Chief Grievance Officer

The Quest is finally over. On September 28, 1999, AFT and the District signed an agreement granting nine part-time tenured instructors pro-rata pay. Under the agreement, each of the instructors will receive back pay retroactive to August 1998.

The negotiations, which led to this settlement, began immediately after AFT's April 28, 1999 presentation to the Board of Trustees on behalf of the nine long-time faculty members. The union had decided to take the issue directly to the Board of Trustees in a last ditch effort to avoid another lawsuit. (See *Advocate* v.22, No.6, May 1999). During the presentation, the union reviewed the twenty-

three year history of the case, some of the part-time instructors spoke to the Board, and union attorney, Robert J. Bezemek, cited the relevant court cases upon which our case was based.

The instructors were granted tenure as a result of a class-action lawsuit filed by the union in 1976. The case was in court for seven years before it was settled in 1983. The court mandated that the District give tenured status to about 27 part-timers (all hired before Nov. 8, 1967 based on the famous State Supreme Court decision in the Peralta case), but the court denied them pro-rata pay.

Subsequently, the State Court of Appeal ruled in the *Ferris* case that part-time tenured faculty must receive pro-rata pay.

Upon learning of the Ferris case in 1997, AFT formally requested that the District begin paying those remaining tenured part-timers pro-rata pay. The District refused.

For about one year letters went back and forth between the union attorney and the county counsel. The District's response through the County Counsel was as follows: "We stand by our position and are not currently interested in discussing a settlement of the matter." It was at that point that the union decided to take the issue directly to the Board of Trustees.

The settlement will result in combined back pay of approximately \$100,000 (for the period 8/98 to 10/99).

Faculty Online Education Conference Draws Over 250 to Hear Diverse Viewpoints

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Larry Toy, a leading proponent of online education in California community colleges and one of the primary organizers of the California Virtual University, pointed out two demographic elements that he believed could be addressed by increasing online course offerings: the "tidal wave 2" of future students for whom present college facilities are inadequate and the need of older adults for retraining as their years in the workforce are lengthened. He did concede, however, that online education was no cheaper than traditional classroom instruction.

David Noble, a historian from York University in Toronto and a nationally known critic of online education, ended the morning with a provocative commentary on online courses. He compared the growth of online courses to the correspondence courses that began at the end of the 19th century and noted that the same types of rationales used by those who argue for distance learning today were employed by the early correspondence school advocates. He warned that

online courses are being pushed by corporate interests who see higher education as a huge potential market. "The focus on technology confounds discussion," he insisted. "This is about the commodification of higher education."

In the afternoon, conference participants broke into issue areas for smaller group discussions on pedagogical, professional and institutional aspects of online education. The full conference reconvened for a final plenary session in which report backs were given from the breakout sessions and then the speakers made follow-up remarks and answered audience questions. Despite the speakers' divergent viewpoints on the pros and cons of online education, there appeared to be more acceptance of those differences than debating of them.

The conference planning committee—Eric Brenner (Skyline), Dan Kaplan (AFT 1493 staff), Kate Motoyama (CSM), Madeleine Murphy (until she left for the Fall semester in London), Kelli Smith (Cañada) and Jeff Westfall—have received quite a bit of positive feedback about the conference and about the con-

ference website. The conference website (www.smcccd.cc.ca.us/smcccd/faculty/confer) contains links to many relevant articles and websites as well as a discussion board for ongoing discussion of the conference issues. The audio of the conference will soon be available from the site. In addition, a videotape of the conference is available from Dan Kaplan at the AFT office, x6491.

We plan to have more in-depth coverage of the issues discussed at the conference in the next issue of the *Advocate*. We encourage anyone to contribute reactions to conference presentations or any thoughts related to online education issues.

RETIREES MEETING MONDAY, DEC. 6

The next meeting of the
**District Association of
Retired Teachers (DART)**
will be held on
Monday, December 6,
at 2:00 p.m. at the
CSM Faculty Center (18-176).