

AFT and District begin negotiations on this year's pay and benefits plus part-timers' office hours

The AFT negotiating team has begun meeting with District negotiators to bargain on our 2005-06 contract re-openers. These include pay and benefits and one other contract item to be selected by the AFT.

Remember that the retroactive pay we received late last spring, was for the last academic year ('04-'05) and the health benefits increase was for the 2005 calendar year. The 2005-06 state budget includes a 4.23 percent COLA, so there should be a reasonable amount of funds to bargain over in our current negotiations.

The following are AFT 1493's initial proposals to the District:

Article 8 Pay and Allowances

Increase all salary schedules (Regular Faculty, Adjunct Faculty, Faculty Overload and Post-Retirement salary schedules) by 7.5% for the 2005-06 academic year.

Article 9 Health and Welfare

9.1.1 Increase the medical cap as follows effective January 1, 2006:

Employee only: \$650/month

Employee + one: \$780/month

Employee + 2 or more: \$1012/mo.

Article 19 Part-time Employment

Provide compensation to part-timers for office hours at the rate of one hour at the lecture rate for every three hours of teaching. Part-time faculty office hour pay will be listed on the salary warrant as a separate line item.

The members of AFT 1493's negotiating team are Joaquin Rivera and Katharine Harer, AFT co-Presidents, and Victoria Clinton, part-timer representative. The District's negotiators are Harry Joel, Vice-

Chancellor, Human Resources and Employee Relations, and Bruce Heid, from the Industrial Employers and Distributors Associates (IEDA), a consulting group with whom the District has contracted for carrying out its labor negotiations.

At the first negotiations session, on October 21st, there was a discussion of the District's budget. The teams will be meeting again on December 5th to begin actual negotiations.

More Negotiators Wanted

AFT would like to expand the number of faculty members on our negotiating team. We would like to include more faculty from more divisions to provide the team with more specific expertise when dealing with issues of import to different disciplines. For example, during the last round of negotiations it

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District Facilities Bond Passes, Construction Continues



As construction on Skyline's new student center (above) and many other college buildings progress, Measure A, the College District's second facilities bond measure, was approved by voters in the November special election. This second bond will ensure the completion of remaining projects that address the District's vision of modern, state-of-the-art higher education facilities at all three colleges.

Incumbents re-elected to College Board

Congratulations to **Richard Hober** and **Helen Hausman**. The two AFT 1493-endorsed incumbents, won re-election to our College District Board of Trustees in the November election.

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AFT members needed to fill new Division, Department and Building Rep positions

Over the last semester AFT 1493 has been going through an internal review of our past practices. This review has led to the creation of a new AFT workplan for the next two years. One of the most important things to come out of this discussion is a renewed focus on improving our communication with all faculty in the District in a variety of ways.

In particular, AFT wants to create what we are calling Division or Department Reps in all of the different divisions at each of the three colleges. Whenever a division or department meeting takes place, we would like the Division or Department Rep to share news from the AFT and to provide an opportunity for faculty to communicate with the AFT leadership via their Rep.

The Division or Department Reps could obtain information to be shared by attending the monthly AFT Executive Committee/General Membership meetings that take place on a rotating basis on all three of the campuses in the District. Alternatively, a Division or Department Rep

could have regular conversations with a member of the AFT Executive Committee.

AFT is also interested in creating a network for communication among faculty members whose offices are in the same building. We would like to put together a group of what we are calling Building Captains in each of the faculty office buildings at each college. These Building Captains would work closely with the Chapter Co-Chairs on each of the campuses. They would help to distribute information in a timely manner to faculty on issues of concern: negotiation updates, issues being discussed in the California legislature, CFT and AFT current events, etc. The Building Captain would also be a person with whom faculty could share concerns and offer feedback to the AFT.

The creation of both Division/Department and Building Reps is intended to be a medium for two-way communication between AFT and the faculty that it represents. As mentioned in the negotiations update article (see page 1), the AFT would also like to expand the number of members on our negotiating committee.

Please give serious consideration to stepping forward to become a new AFT Division or Department Rep or Building Captain. If you decide not to serve or to simply sit back and wait for someone else to volunteer, then it just might happen that your Division or Department or Building will end up with no representation at all! And that does not serve the best interests of either faculty or the AFT.

To discuss your participation in any of the above activities, please call the AFT office (574-6491) or send us an email (kaplan@smccd.net). Don't delay. Do it today! □

Join the AFT negotiating team

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proved invaluable to bring in members of the Counseling Division when we were dealing with issues related to Counseling in particular. When the difficult issue of load comes up again, it will be important to have as many disciplines as possible represented at the negotiating table.

If you are interested in getting involved in the negotiations process, either to work on a specific issue or on an ongoing basis, please call the AFT office (574-6491) or send us an email (kaplan@smccd.net). The CFT offers excellent workshops designed to help new negotiators acquire skills and Local 1493 would pay the costs required for you to take this training. □



Increased funding needed for sabbaticals and long-term professional development

by Linda Vogel, Skyline Professional Development Committee Member

A sabbatical is a period of time (usually one semester) when a faculty member is not teaching, but concentrating on his/her own education or research. The assumption is that a professor is renewed and reenergized after having the time to work on a project, and students, in the end, will benefit. How valid is this assumption?

Having had a sabbatical last semester, when I went to Mexico and Costa Rica to study deforestation and to research the lives of Karen Mogensen and Nils Wessberg who started the park system in Costa Rica, I have to say the sabbatical was all I hoped for. I had time to research, to read many books which enabled me to develop a new theme on environmentalism for my English classes as well as to take a screen writing class. While the payoff is not exactly quantifiable in negotiation language, the benefits were real and immediate for my students and myself. It is imperative that we continue to give professors an opportunity to take sabbaticals to continue research.

Inadequate funding for worthy proposals

But now, as I sit on the Professional Development Committee, I see firsthand the financial problems we are facing as we look at the applications for short-term and long-term professional development and sabbaticals. The source of funding for sabbaticals is too limited for the number of worthy applications being submitted.

Contract language for funding of professional development states that: "The level of funding will be 1 % of the District budget for regular academic and third-and fourth-year

tenure track academic employees of the unit plus \$50,000 from a combination of Partnership for Excellence and Faculty Development funds, to the extent those funds are available, for extended leaves." For a couple of years, there was enough carryover so that the committees could fund sabbaticals and other leaves at a relatively reasonable level. Now there is no carryover. Additionally, all costs for funding—study, travel, room and board—have increased since 2001.

Our District's sabbatical funding is less than most other districts

Most other districts fund sabbaticals at a higher level than our district. For example, City College of San Francisco funds sabbatical leaves so that

four percent (4%) of their total full-time faculty will be on sabbatical leave each semester, while College of Marin provides sabbatical funding for five percent (5%) of their full-time faculty per year.

It's one thing to say you have sabbaticals, but quite another to actually fund them.

Sabbatical proposals due on February 1, 2006

On February 1st, 2006, applications for sabbatical proposals will be due. Applications are available on the AFT website (aft1493.org). We on the Professional Development Committee encourage all who are interested to apply. We also hope that the District will contribute funding that is adequate to meet faculty needs. □

A poet's sabbatical



Skyline English professor Katharine Harer spent the month of October pursuing her sabbatical project, a poet's pilgrimage to Neruda's Chile. In the photo above, Katharine is standing on the path in front of La Chascona, Chilean poet Pablo Neruda's house in Santiago, Chile.

All the live long day: A modest proposal for a reduced course load

By Teeka James, CSM Chapter Co-Chair

The fight is never about grapes or lettuce. It is always about people.

~Cesar Chavez

The situation: Up a creek

Confession: I can't get my work done. I don't have enough hours in the day. I know you don't either, but maybe you handle it better than I do. Maybe I'm a complainer. Maybe I'm incompetent, lazy, jaded. Maybe I have a poor work ethic. Maybe I'm selfish.

Maybe. But maybe not.

Here's the beginning: I walk into a learning skills lab on my campus a few weeks ago. Sitting there are two of my colleagues, working on our department's position request. They look at me and say: "City College is hiring; we're applying. They pay for committee work." I walked across campus to my office, and then back to ask if they had been serious; were they really going to jump ship? I was almost in tears. These two could be considered the heart of my department, the shakers of the movers. How could they leave?

Well, as the world turns, they weren't all that serious, but they were all that frustrated. "No worries, Teeka," they said. "We're not leaving (at least not yet). But, morale is low and sinking."

The usual slogan is that we're overworked and underpaid, and while the two are inextricably linked, we seem to always focus on the pay part. What about the overworked part? Somewhere ahead, or perhaps underfoot, is a line we won't be able to cross, a threshold over which we will not be able to jump, crawl, or carry ourselves. We will have become saturated with work, and no amount of money will be incentive enough for even the youngest of us to take on more.

Our days are fragmented and our energy diluted by duties of teaching, grading, conferring with students, committee work, tenure and peer evaluation, SLOs, position requests, equipment requests, course outline updates, program review, telephone trainings, commuting. It's no wonder we've no energy. I am overwhelmed, and most colleagues I ask say they are too. I don't want to not pull my weight, but who gets the short end of the stick? First me, second my students, third my family. All the people who this job is really all about are the "items" that



Teeka James and son, Marco

get shoved to the end of the list as I carve out time to do book orders for next semester, bang my head on the desk trying to understand the course outline form, read five and delete ten email messages about the incessant beeping of the fire alarm and the tenth truck to roll in with concrete, and take yet another Advil to sooth yet another tension headache. There is no remedy on the horizon. Money for rejuvenating conferences is so limited that for most of us if the conference requires a plane trip or a hotel stay, we can't attend it.

The pattern is we get tenure¹ and then work like hell—"balls out" as one colleague vividly describes it—till we burn out. We stop participating in the process, let younger/newer faculty take on the burden of department, division, and college business, and lo and behold, our inaction creates more work for colleagues. If we don't burn out, it's because we've figured out individually how to craft a manageable load: we bank units and take time off, we do special projects that provide release time, or we go on reduced loads, stop participating, and coast. These strategies work for a few—and it's fabulous that we have these short-term, load-reducing options—but they place undo burden on others who then have to pick up the slack.

The first step: Community

Here's the middle: So, long story short, I'm in a state, as my grandmother would have said. My dear friends and workmates have lightheartedly threatened to bail, and the special election is a week away. I've spent six hours in meetings unrelated to my students over the previous ten days, I've been getting ten if not seventy-five urgent email pleas a day to save California from the Gubernator, and I have papers up the wazoo to grade with only one unscheduled hour in sight for over a week.² So, I drag myself to Cañada College for another non-teaching obligation, an AFT 1493 General Membership meeting. I walk in late, just in time for campus reports. (I couldn't understand the maze that is construction there. I parked spitting distance from the building I needed to go to, but then walked for fifteen minutes [fifteen minutes = one paper graded] around thirty leagues of chain link fencing to actually reach the building. My bad, but geez!) It's my turn. I'm in a state, remember. Out spills everything: the commute, the election, the calls from colleagues who don't want to pay more for union protection, my papers. "I can't do this anymore," I tell them.

I'm ashamed to say that what followed surprised me. I saw my fellow unionists looking at me, and then heard

¹ And worse, most of us are contingent workers. I should be lucky to have my problems.

² Yeah, yeah, work at night. Most nights I fall asleep putting my five-year-old son to bed. Weekends? I'm a mom before anything, 24/2.

them say, “Oh, sweetheart. How can we help you?” And I got support: my colleagues said they were feeling it too; they too were feeling overwhelmed, exhausted, without compass in the face of the machinations of teaching and not teaching. They too were scared about the election, sick about the war, late with their students’ work. I had felt that the meeting with my teachers union would send me over the edge that day, but instead, it enabled me to step back from the edge. I inadvertently asked for help and found twelve hands outstretched. And it wasn’t just empathy, though that’s always helpful, too. It was real help, colleagues offering not only words but deeds, saying, “I can distribute those flyers” and “Refer those calls to me,” friends sharing my burden, redistributing the load.

Last month, Studs Terkel, the Pulitzer Prize-winning oral historian, writer, and activist, contributed a piece to National Public Radio’s somewhat hokey weekly feature, “This I Believe,” a series that asks contributors to write an essay crystallizing a belief that focuses their lives and energy. The 1930s was Terkel’s defining decade. In his essay he describes witnessing the traumatic eviction of a family from their home: “on the sidewalks pots and pans and bedsteads and mattresses.... an individual



Studs Terkel

cry of despair, multiplied by millions.” At the end of the day, before night fell, however, community members arrived, held out their hands, helped the family back into the apartment, and turned on the gas, water, and electricity. The neighborhood rallied, confronting the inequities of poverty with activism. “Einstein once observed,” Terkel reflects, “that Westerners have a feeling the individual loses his freedom if he joins, say, a union or any group. Precisely the opposite’s the case. The individual discovers his strength as an individual because he has, along the way, discovered others share his feelings—he is not alone, and thus a community is formed.” We are fortunate; we have community, a resource largely untapped and dormant.

The second step: Community in action

Studs Terkel ends his essay thus: “And that happens to be my belief, and I’ll put it into three words: community in action.” We have at least two vehicles for action, our faculty union and our academic senate. But what action can we actually take? The no-brainer we’re already doing—increase compensation—and doing well thanks to our strong AFT negotiating team. But how can we reduce load but not pay?

Here’s my fantasy: we teach **twelve units**, attend and participate in department, division, and college meetings, serve on one college- or district-level committee for two out of every three years. Share the load of shared governance with all divisions represented as appropriate on all commit-

tees. Sound deadly? Maybe you could opt out in exchange for extra teaching duties. Think about it, though: departments would have time to meet regularly, and faculty would have energy to take on projects that go beyond the required. Students would experience faculty who had slept eight hours the previous night, who had time, energy, and *ganas* to create courses that were fresh, and who had time to learn how to use our new “smart” classrooms, to answer our new phones. We could actually have time to prepare, to research, to write, to conduct experiments. We could stay current. We have won the right to our own intellectual property; now if we only had a chance to actually create some intellectual property to own.

Yeah, I know. It will never happen. But it should. Look around. How many of us skip through the halls, ready to tackle a new project? How many times do you stop yourself from ordering a new text for next term because you know you don’t have time to recreate your whole course? How many times have you administered a multiple-choice exam with Scantron sheets instead of an exam requiring written responses to meaningful questions because you know you don’t have time to read them all. Composition instructors, when was the last time you felt “caught up” with your work? Oh yeah, week three of the term, before the papers actually got turned in.

Here’s the end

I have a greeting card at home with the following image on it: a black dog, angular and short, stands on a stair step with its face pressed against the towering riser of the next one. From the dog’s position, it can’t see that all it needs to do is lift its head; then it will be able to see its path forward. The text reads, “Face to face with the second step.” The staircase of our load seems impossibly steep from our vantage point, but if we work “balls out” together, if we become a “community in action,” we may find that it’s not as hard to move forward as it seems. The default setting may not have to be fifteen units.

I understand that I’m really talking about money, that in the language of program review, I’m talking about lowering productivity. But maybe it’s time to pull a Nancy Reagan and “just say no” to quantity and to promote quality. As I’m sure you’ve noticed, the corporate model has barged into our midst. Our students are customers, our classes transformed into products. We’re productive if we churn out students at as low a cost as possible, which means high load and lots of part-time faculty. Why not advocate for less work so that the work we do is more meaningful? Because this is our job, and jobs are supposed to be hard work? I vote for a college that allows me to give my students my undivided attention. I say less is more.

Works Cited

Terkel, Studs. “Community in Action.” *Morning Edition*. NPR. KQED, San Francisco. 24 Oct. 2005.

Voters reject Governor's corporate agenda

The results of the November 8 California special election, in which every one of Governor Schwarzenegger's measures was voted down, showed that Californians would not buy the governor's attempt to blame teachers and other public workers for the state's problems. It was a heartening outcome for the CFT and many other unions, as well as community and consumer organizations and many other groups and individuals who put in much hard work, time and money to oppose the Governor's corporate agenda.

We're reprinting below a statement on the election from the Foundation for Taxpayer & Consumer Rights, a California non-partisan consumer watchdog group, which we feel presents an excellent analysis of the significance of the special election results.

"Californians rejected Governor Schwarzenegger's measures, his unnecessary election and the governor himself when they defeated every one of the measures on the November 8 ballot. The election was a denunciation of the concept of governor as celebrity marketer. It was the repudiation of corporate campaign cash and a dramatic rejection of corporations' and politicians' attempts to steal the initia-

tive process from the people.

"Schwarzenegger needs to apologize to Californians. Not just for wasting \$50 million of the taxpayers' money, but also for claiming he did not need anyone else's money and then collecting \$70 million in corporate contributions. He needs to apologize

Californians didn't buy the Governor's attacks against public servants.

for accepting cash from interest groups who had business on his desk and for flying around the country to fundraise when he should have been governing. He has to apologize for turning into the politician he encouraged Californians to throw out two years ago.

"Governor Schwarzenegger rose and fell based on the power of populism. The nurses, cops, teachers, and firefighters beat Arnold by displaying their humanity. Californians didn't buy the Governor's attacks against public servants. Instead Californians said these public servants are the true action heroes who protect the public. Voters weren't willing to relinquish power to a celebrity governor with a grudge and 70 million dollars in corporate cash.

"In turning back Schwarzenegger's

initiatives, Californians also denied the corporate and ideological conservatives an opportunity to claim popular allegiance to their agenda. Both the Chamber of Commerce and national right wing activists hoped to use this election as a galvanizing tool for initiatives throughout the country and further rollbacks of citizen, consumer and worker rights. With a resounding 'no,' big industry was told that even a hundred million dollars can't sell their out-of-the-mainstream agenda.

"Now, a real reform agenda must be embraced. And the Governor as well as Democrats and Republicans in the statehouse, must address the issues that Californians actually care about, but the politicians are afraid to talk about: the need for getting money out of politics and publicly financing elections; the high cost of healthcare and the lack of universal health coverage; gas prices; the real problems with public education and our broken energy system.

"If Governor Schwarzenegger walks away from the election to more world record fundraising and cash register politics, then it will be clear he does not understand what the voters said in the 2003 recall and reiterated on November 8." □

AFT 1493 membership approves dues restructuring proposal

As announced in an AFT email to all faculty, the AFT 1493 membership voted between October 14 and October 28 to approve AFT 1493 leadership's "proposal for a sustainable and equitable restructuring of our dues." 73% of the AFT membership that voted supported the proposal.

The vote was the culmination of efforts to place the union on a more stable financial footing. Over the last year AFT published a couple of articles in *The Advocate* on the need to restructure the Local's dues. The AFT also published a brochure that provided a detailed analysis of the Local's financial situation, how it came about and

the proposal for how to solve the problem. Finally, AFT held campus forums at all three colleges to answer any questions that members might have.

As a result of the AFT membership's positive response to the dues restructuring proposal, effective at the start of the Spring 2006 semester there will be a uniform rate for all faculty who are AFT members, with both full-time and part-time faculty paying 1.2% of their gross income for union dues. All agency fee payers will also pay 1.2% of their gross income in agency fees, with the option of requesting a rebate of the non-chargeable portion of their agency fees.

This means that the cap at \$50,000 on full-time faculty member dues has been eliminated. It also means that the "dues creep" that was caused by the annual pass-through assessment previously used in the determination of full-time dues has also been eliminated.

Further clarification of the new AFT dues structure may be found on the AFT website (aft1493.org) by clicking on "Dues Restructuring Proposal."

AFT would like to again thank the membership for their continuing support and vote of confidence. We pledge to continue to work diligently to represent the interests of all faculty in the District. □