

# Anatomy of a Budget Crisis: The Many Causes & What We Can Do About It

## I. The state budget crisis and its impact on the community college system and SMCCCD

Because of what is now estimated to be a \$35 billion budget deficit in California, the Governor on January 10 proposed a budget for the 2003-04 fiscal year that would slash spending on higher education in the state. But the California Community College system would be hit the hardest of the three levels of higher education in California if this budget were to become law in its present form.

The proposed cuts to the state

community college budget would result in a net spending decrease of



around 10.5%—around \$530 million in cuts. And this is, of course, in

addition to the mid-year cuts that the Governor has demanded and that are now being debated in the Legislature. At the same time, in the proposed '03-'04 budget the K-12 system would get a net spending increase of 1.6%, the California State University system would receive a net spending increase of 2.5%, and the University of California system would see a net spending increase of 2.6%.

None of the component parts of the higher education system in the state are being funded adequately in the next budget, but clearly the community college system is the most underfunded. *continued on page 8*

## AFT & District Negotiate Some Improved Retirement Incentives

AFT and district negotiators met on February 19th, and worked out a tentative agreement on a Retirement Incentive proposal. The original proposal prepared by the district was modified and improved by input from the faculty which had been sent to AFT negotiators.

The incentive payment of \$25,000 for those who retire at the end of this year or for those who take a one year unpaid leave and then retire remains the same. AFT proposed that the district pay the full STRS contributions of those who select the Phase-in Retirement option for a 50% load for three years. That proposal was accepted by the district. AFT proposed and the district agreed that those who accept the \$25,000 be given the option to buy service credit from STRS. This adds a year or two of service credit without having the IRS remove \$7-8,000 from the total in taxes. The addi-

tional service credit increases the size of one's retirement pension. The union requested that the district delete from its proposal the statement that "this memorandum of understanding does not imply a guarantee of a post-retirement contract." The district agreed to drop that language. AFT proposed and the district agreed to extend the deadline for faculty to commit to a retirement option to April 7. AFT proposed to add language to the agreement insuring that "the district will arrange for workshops with STRS counselors and District personnel

familiar with the options contained herein. Faculty members are strongly urged to consult with their financial advisor prior to selecting any of the options noted above." The district agreed to the proposal.

The negotiated retirement incentive package will be voted on by the AFT Executive Committee and by the Board of Trustees on Feb. 26th. A letter will be sent to the faculty on the following day explaining the details of the agreement. Workshops will be held in March.

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**PRESIDENTS' PERSPECTIVES**

# Negotiating Incentives, Rallying Against Budget Cuts & Seeking Data

by Katharine Harer and Joaquin Rivera,  
AFT 1493 Co-Presidents



This has been a tough semester, with budget reductions looming and concern about layoffs, program cancellations and severe cutbacks creating anxiety for everyone. Most of you have read the AFT's letter to faculty of February 10 (available at: [aft1493.org](http://aft1493.org)), so we won't repeat any of that information here, but we will give you an update in a couple of areas.

## Retirement Incentives

First of all, we want to clarify the union's response to the District's offer of retirement incentives to help solve the budget shortfall. The AFT has been happy to negotiate retirement incentive packages with the District in the past. We think that they can be very helpful in reducing District costs, and that faculty who intend to retire may want to take advantage of a good package. However, there are two points that must be understood: 1) Retirement incentives must be negotiated with the AFT before they are approved by the Board of Trustees and officially offered to faculty; 2) Incentives must be reasonably worthwhile; they must not lead to the loss of significant STRS credits or of ongoing retirement benefits.

For these reasons, the AFT has arranged a negotiating session with the District for the week of February 18th where we hope to make some suggestions to improve the District's

retirement package, creating a better deal and a stronger response from faculty than the original package may engender. If the District decides to improve the retirement incentives, it could be a win-win situation; with more people taking an improved package, the savings will be greater in the long run. On the other hand, if the District stays with their original offer, it could very well be that fewer faculty will accept it and the necessary savings won't come about. In an effort to get your input, we put out an email request just before the four-day weekend, asking for your proposals on retirement incentives. Several hours after the email went out, we had already heard from a number of faculty members, and we assume that we will hear from many more and that we will be able to use some of these ideas in our negotiation.

## Rally Against Budget Cuts March 17 in Sacramento

The second area that we want to tell you about is the exciting grassroots response to the protest against community college cuts on March 17th in Sacramento, initially organized by FACCC and now endorsed by a long list of organizations and community college unions, including the State Academic Senate, CALSACC (the statewide Associated Student organization), CCLC, the Board of Governors, CSEA, the AFT locals at CCSF, Cabrillo, El Camino, Los Rios, many Southern California community college unions and our own AFT local 1493. On a district level, plans for teach-ins on each of the three campuses are taking shape. The Skyline Associated Student group has designed a postcard that can be used for an all-district postcard campaign. Speakers from the

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## Part Timers Finally Get Equal Monthly Paychecks

Part-time faculty may be somewhat confused when they look at their paychecks this semester. That is because the District has just implemented equal monthly paychecks for part-timers. Part-time faculty members have been asking for equal payments for almost twenty years as expressed in many part-time faculty surveys that the union has conducted over the years, and the AFT negotiating team was finally able to win this concession in the last contract settlement. However, the District claimed that they had some accounting and clerical problems to resolve before they could implement equal payments. With a little urging from the union, three semesters after we signed the contract, we were able to make equal payments a reality. We've received a few inquiries from part-timers about this new distribution of salary. Some have asked about how it works and a few have asked why we made this change.

First of all, equal payments help faculty members to achieve more

financial balance from month to month. Since hourly pay varies depending on holidays and vacations, part-timers' checks used to, in turn, vary by as much as hundreds of dollars depending on the month. August, December and January checks, for example, were always smaller than other months, and for many part-timers this discrepancy caused difficulties in budgeting and paying for larger monthly expenses, such as housing and car payments. With this new system, faculty can count on a certain amount each month with little variation.

The most important thing to note is that there is no loss of salary but, rather, an equalized distribution of the total over a five month period. The system works as follows: part-time faculty with semester-long assignments have their payroll distributed each semester in four (4) equal payments over five (5) months. The first and last distribution equal one-half of one full payment. One full payment equals one quarter of your total pay for the semester. On the first month of

the semester (August or January) you are paid half of one quarter, or 1/8 of your total pay for the semester. The District insisted on this arrangement as a safeguard against faculty members owing the District money for classes that were cancelled at the start of the semester. The next three months you are paid 1/4 of your total pay for the semester and the last month (December or May) you receive the other half of the full payment still owed to you, or 1/8 of your total pay for the semester. The distribution looks like this:

**1st month: 1/8 of the total you earn that semester**

**2nd, 3rd & 4th month: 1/4 each mo.**

**5th month: 1/8**

Remember, too, that part-time checks look a little different this semester because they show the salary increases negotiated by the union during the last contract settlement. The part-time equity funding the district received from the state should help to plump up those paychecks!

### Presidents' Perspectives

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California Budget Project and local legislators are being contacted and invited to speak at the different campuses. Fact sheets with clear information on how the budget cuts will affect students and faculty are being produced. And plans to rent a number of buses to carry our students, faculty and staff up to Sacramento on March 17th are in the works.

It is absolutely essential that we get active and work with our students to fight these inequitable cuts. The strong response to March 17th is a sign that faculty and students around the state are sick and tired of being at the bottom of the funding food-chain. Find out what is happening on your campus and get involved!

### Show Us the Numbers

Finally, union and senate representatives must be let into the loop as far as the exact state of our district budget is concerned so that we can provide real input in this budgetary crisis. Precisely speaking, the faculty representatives on the District Budget Committee have asked many times to see a line-item, detailed budget that would make it possible to know exactly where money is being spent in our district. Finally, on February 18 the district made these budgets available. Now that we will be able to make an informed analysis of where the district money is being spent, perhaps real "shared governance" will be possible. At least we now will be able to ask pertinent questions about district expenditures and will be able to make useful recommendations.

### Part-Timers Lose First

And on a final, final note: the AFT is concerned about the number of part-time faculty who are losing positions in our district as well as those whose loads are being significantly cut. Part-timers are the first to go, the most expendable, and the least secure of all faculty members in our district. We would like to gather some data on the situation of our part-timers during this period. We'd like all part-timers who either lost all of their classes or had their regular load reduced this semester to provide this information to Dan Kaplan, AFT 1493 Executive Secretary, at: kaplan@smccd.net. We want to understand exactly what it means when the district says that over 300 sections have been cut from the spring semester offerings. How many part-timers lost their jobs this semester?



# Re-evaluating Teaching Load: A Unified Approach Is Needed to Address Long-time Inequities in Many Disciplines

By Teeka James, CSM Chapter Co-Chair

Clearly our current budget crisis is foremost in our minds these days, and so an article that proposes reductions in teaching loads may seem wrong-headed. However, while we listen to the State's last dollars drain through the bottom of the last unprotected wetlands, and in anticipation of us all being faced with the prospect of being asked to do more for less (or worse, invited to not do at all), let us consider that for years faculty across diverse disciplines—full time and part time alike—have argued that their teaching loads are heavy and their compensation light.

## The Discrepancy Between Lecture and Laboratory FLCs

The most common concern faculty have about teaching load is that lab courses earn instructors fewer FLCs per hour than do lecture courses.<sup>1</sup> The implied rationale for this discrepancy is that lab and lecture teaching are not comparable: lecture teaching demands expertise, preparation, and evaluation of student achievement and progress while lab teaching does not. As those of us who teach in lab settings know, however, the premises are not universally sound. All lab assignments require expertise, some necessitate instructor preparation, and some create assessment work for instructors. For example, science labs generally involve as much if not more preparation than goes into any lecture-classroom activity: intellectually, the experiments must be pedagogically sound and relevant; practically, the experiments have to be designed and then set up, with instruments, specimens, or chemicals ready to go. Once students arrive, the instructor has to explain the experiment and then assist the students throughout the lab hours, answering questions, clarifying murky points. The lab itself often is comprised of expensive equipment and potentially dangerous substances—

remember all those jokes about blowing things up in chemistry lab? —and so requires supervision with an eye to safety. Finally, each science lab session produces a nice pile of lab notebooks to be graded. Clearly the science labs fit the criteria for lecture teaching: expertise, preparation, and evaluation of student achievement and progress. So in some cases, as in the sciences, we can rightly argue that

lab assignments should earn affected faculty one FLC per hour, as their corresponding lecture courses do.

The discrepancy between lecture and lab FLCs has another impact on faculty with lab assignments: when a teaching load is heavy with lab assignments carrying those fractional FLCs, faculty become overextended. For example, besides coaching teams, physical education faculty spend hours and hours teaching PE lab classes at a .75 FLC per hour rate. And, lab classes—aerobics or yoga for example—can have as many as 40-50 students per section, plus countless "fitness academy" students who attend classes on a drop-in basis. The problem is that faculty become fragmented, forced to teach six or seven courses per semester to fulfill the 15-unit FLC load. One problem with this load model for PE instructors (besides exhaustion) is that it is extremely difficult to take on responsibilities that carry reassigned time or to bank units. Faculty in many other disciplines experience similar frustration and hardship with their lab/lecture rates.

## The Librarians: Hours More Than Their Colleagues

As *The Advocate* reported in April 1997, our district librarians work more hours than librarians at any other "Bay Ten" community college, and also more than

SMCCCD counselors, whose roles librarians feel are similar to theirs. Our librarians work at a .40 FLC per hour rate, which translates to 37.5 hours per week, while counselors carry a caseload of 33 students per FLC and are required to be on campus and available to students 30 hours per week. It's useful to note that while the counselor caseload is a significant factor, the counselors' and librarians' "duties and responsibilities"<sup>2</sup> are extremely similar. Both librarians and counselors are required to serve students, maintain records, create college reports, develop discipline-specific curriculum, participate in committee work,

hiring, and so on. In addition, for their .40 FLC per hour load, librarians are paid at the "special" hourly rate, the lowest of the three hourly pay rates.<sup>3</sup> Although librarians hold master's degrees and perform teaching and other professional duties, their hourly rate is \$15 per hour less than the lab rate for all other instructors. This one should be a no-brainer.



How heavy is your load?

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## Re-evaluating Teaching Load

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### English Composition: The Mythology Behind “Comp Load”

English composition instructors have a unique arrangement on load in our district contract that most faculty in the field find troubling. Because transfer agreements dictating how much writing each composition student produces<sup>4</sup> create an overwhelming paper grading load, an instructor concurrently teaching four classes designated as composition courses, each with 26 students, earns a “comp load”—a 1.25 FLC per hour rate. In short, a three-unit class gets loaded as 3.75 FLCs, meaning that it only takes four courses to make up a 15-unit load. How-



*How do we equalize everyone's load?*

ever, the moment you step outside of that comp load arrangement, you lose the 1.25 FLC per hour rate on all your courses for that semester. This fact proves to be a strong disincentive for faculty to teach literature courses, serve students in the writing lab, and take on innovative assignments such as research grants or special programs that are recorded as reassigned time. So, for example, you could teach four sections of ENGL 100 and have your comp load, or you could take on a project with three units of release time and teach four sections of ENGL 100 and have your 15 FLCs. Huh? It boggles the mind. Additionally, part-time instructors never benefit from this special load arrangement because they are barred from teaching the requisite number of courses to earn comp load. Chalk up yet another way in which part-time faculty are paid less for teaching the same courses full-time faculty teach.

The saddest part of the comp-load quagmire is its illogical nature: each composition section is equally difficult and time consuming for the instructor, no matter how many other composition courses you are teaching; nothing about that changes if you are teaching one section or four. So what's the solution? A consistent calculation of load: let

the composition classes carry their extra .75 regardless of how many sections one teaches for both full-time and part-time faculty.

### Thinking Ahead

One day our state and District will again have money to spare, ready to be wrested from the grip of corporate-minded politicians by faculty with serving students at heart. In preparation of that day, I propose we begin formal discussions among faculty to outline how the above concerns—and the other load issues plaguing other disciplines—might be addressed. Interestingly, the December 2002 edition of *Union Action*, City College of San Francisco's AFT publication, reports that they have presented to their chancellor and vice-chancellors the issue of “increasing the load factor for lecture-lab and non-credit classes”. One place to have this discussion will be at campus AFT chapter meetings, which are being planned for this spring term, but the best place to start is in our department meetings, workrooms, and offices.

Allocating limited funds is always difficult—all corners are needy, most worthy. Some of us will have the perspective that there's just one pie, and we each have to grab as big a piece as we can, the rest in line be damned. I hope we can suspend bickering of the I-work-harder-than-you-do nature and simply advocate for better conditions for all of us, even if it's just a bit at a time.

### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> You can examine the “Non-lecture Assignment Schedule” in the contract, Appendices p. 11-12. In overview, lab rates range from .55-.80 FLC per hour, and reassigned time earns one .40 FLC per hour.

<sup>2</sup> You can find these in our contract, Appendices page 7-9.

<sup>3</sup> The other pay rates are “lecture” and “laboratory”. You can view the schedule in the contract, Appendices page 4.

<sup>4</sup> For the curious, each student in a transfer-level composition class is required to write 8,000-10,000 words per semester.



*Send us your ideas on load issues.*

## How Do We Define Full-Time/Part-Time Parity?

by Chris Storer, Legislative Analyst,  
California Part-time Faculty Association

The Board of Governors for California Community Colleges has established a policy of comparable pay for comparable work, and the state has provided initial funding of \$57 million per year to begin closing the gap between full-time and part-time faculty compensation. To gain additional funding for the board's policy, the 71 local districts must each negotiate "definitions of parity." With the Board's policy that comparable work should be compensated comparably, the parity discussions are to resolve "What work is being compared?" or "Which professional expectations of full-time faculty are equally expected of part-time faculty." To begin to engage academic senate faculty with their union colleagues on these issues, a conference on "Defining the Professional Expectations of Full-time and Part-time Faculty" was organized by the California Part-time Faculty Association (CPFA) and took place at De Anza College on November 16, 2002.

The Conference was a great success measured by the number and strength of positive comments we have received. Jane Buck, President of the American Association of University Professors, argued that the work we were doing was at the core of protecting the profession from the ongoing assault on tenure, the unbundling of the profession, and the general corporate takeover of higher education during the past 30 years. A draft of President Buck's talk is available at the CPFA website at: [cpfa.org](http://cpfa.org). Linda Collins, Past President of the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, built on Jane's analysis with more detail of the particular situation in the CCCs, with references to the Senate paper, "Part-time Faculty: A Principled Perspective" (available on the Academic Senate website: [www.academicssenate.cc.ca.us](http://www.academicssenate.cc.ca.us)). Alisa Messer, Vice President of the Community College Council of the California Federation of Teachers, then began to actively engage the attendees, exploring the current state of negotiations at the various districts represented. Various examples were discussed in the context of the issues and ideals represented in the earlier presentations.

I believe that by the end of the day everyone had come to deeply understand that the task, set to us by the Board of Governors, is not just about getting more compensation for part-time faculty. Rather, it is truly about the faculty's having a real opportunity to undo some of the damage to our profession, our institutions, and our students, damage that has occurred over the past 30 years as faculty work has

been unbundled and degraded by the increasing corporatization of higher education under the guise of cost cutting forced by underfunding.

It was clear that many districts are trying to define the professional expectations of part-time faculty as only 75% of those of full-time faculty, or even less. It was also clear that none of the districts have presented any justification for this. They are merely thinking of how they might be able to use some of the PT Compensation Fund money for other purposes than PT faculty salaries. Administrative positions regarding professional expectations have no relationship to what is good for students or to the quality of the institutions in general.

The conference was aided considerably by the presence of union and academic senate participation from San Francisco City College where there is strong faculty commitment

***The task is not just about getting more compensation for part-time faculty. Rather, it is truly about the faculty's having a real opportunity to undo some of the damage to our profession, our institutions, and our students as faculty work has been degraded.***

to the basic principles that faculty professionalism should not be unbundled, and that the professional expectations of part-time faculty should be a load-based 100% pro-rata percentage of the professional expectations of comparable full-time faculty members. The SFCCD senate and union have been in joint deliberations

much of this term, working out the details of how to make this happen without breaking up the work of faculty into bits and pieces that can be checked off on a timed punch card. They recognize that the work of faculty professionals is a constantly shifting response to the changing needs of their students, their departments and divisions, their institutions, and their disciplines. They also recognize that the circumstances of part-time contingent employment place different demands on faculty members and that while, for example, the concept of a 40% full-service faculty member may not lend itself to academic senate service, it may lend itself better to pedagogical research or curriculum maintenance or community service and outreach or program review or other areas.

So where do we go from here? Most agreed that it is very important that we all begin joint deliberations among senate and union leadership as soon as possible. It is also clear that administrations have not informed or educated their boards of trustees about these matters and it is very important that local senates develop their legally mandated advice to boards on the relevant academic and professional matters involved in definition of the professional expectations of faculty. To this end, it seems that the ideal next step might be to plan district or college senate meetings as soon as possible, with at least an hour or two devoted to a discussion of these issues. It might be wise and useful to invite local union executive councils to such meetings.



# **Cañada Undermines Academic Standards by Operating Library Without a Librarian**

By Eric Brenner, Skyline, Advocate Editor

As the administration begins to cut classes and consolidate or eliminate programs or services due to tight budgets, it is critical that faculty and staff play a strong role in assuring that basic academic standards be maintained at our colleges. A current case in point is the staffing of Cañada College Library.

At the beginning of the Spring semester, Cañada administration eliminated all 38 hours of adjunct librarian hours that were scheduled in the Fall '02 semester and left the Library with no (0) adjunct librarians scheduled for this semester. These cuts came after Cañada Library had already been operating without a Library Coordinator, since the previous coordinator retired during the summer and the administration has not hired a temporary replacement or taken any steps to hire a new coordinator. This has left Cañada with a single full-time certificated (faculty) librarian trying to do all the professional duties required to run the library, as well as many management tasks—including planning a new library building (!)—that no one else can do since there is no Library Coordinator. This is an impossible task, and although the full-time librarian has volunteered to work four days a week from 8:30 am until 7 pm, Cañada Library is now open Fridays (8 am – noon, reduced from 8 am – 3 pm last semester), without any certificated librarian on site. There are also no adjunct librarians available to staff the library when the full-time librarian has required off-desk duties or is not available due to lunch breaks, meetings or any other reasons.

## **Like a Class Without an Instructor**

Operating a community college library without a certificated librarian is the equivalent of offering a class without a certificated instructor and it is a violation of the California Education Code Section 78103, which states: *Libraries open to serve students during evening and Saturday hours shall be under the supervision of certificated personnel or those employed pursuant to minimum standards adopted by the board of governors.* (Although the Code does not explicitly state that libraries must be under the supervision of certificated personnel during weekday times, it is assumed that the requirement for these times would be at least equal to that of evenings and Saturdays.)

Furthermore, AFT 1493 believes that this inadequate library staffing is a threat to the accreditation of the college and a possible violation of the district's agreement with San Francisco State University. No other community college library in the Bay 10 districts and no other library in the Peninsula Library System is open at any time without a librarian sched-

uled. The agreement between Cañada College and San Francisco State University to offer SFSU degree programs at Cañada could be affected by the inadequate staffing as well as maintaining the library without a Coordinator. Deborah Masters, San Francisco State University Librarian, has expressed concerns about the level of library service being offered to SFSU students at Cañada Library and is planning to further investigate the situation.

On January 22, John Kirk, AFT 1493 Chief Grievance Officer, sent a letter to Cañada President Rosa Perez outlining the library staffing issues and urging her to reconsider the decision and to appropriately staff the library with certificated librarians at all times that the library is open.

## **When a Library Is Not a Library**

President Perez responded on January 31 with the following message:

I would like to clarify that we are keeping our Library open as a study space on Friday. No services that require the skills and presence of the reference librarian are being delivered. I will discuss your other expressed concerns with our Academic Senate leadership and have already consulted with SF State.

President Perez has an interesting way of solving the problem of inadequate library staffing: she has simply proclaimed that on Fridays the library is not a library so apparently no rules apply. What does this say about the value Cañada College—with its new 4-year degree programs—places on its library services?

A little over a week after her pronouncement that the library is not a library on Fridays, President Perez specifically talked about the Cañada Library in a Feb. 10 Contra Costa Times article in which she discussed the benefits of community colleges offering upper division courses. The main point President Perez made about the library was that a van delivers books between S.F. State and Cañada. There is, in fact, no such book exchange between S.F. State and Cañada.

We hope that President Perez will take a closer look at the operation of the college library and that she will realize the need to maintain minimum academic standards by staffing the library with certificated librarians at all times the library is open.

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college system, in particular, is facing a major assault. If the new proposed budget becomes law, the community college system would have to significantly reduce spending on many aspects of the colleges' day-to-day operations, including cutting funds that are used to provide classes and student services, maintain equipment, and pay faculty and staff.

All of these proposed cuts must be understood in context. The community college system has been severely under-funded for many years. The state spends approximately \$4,700 per year for each full-time community college student compared to \$7,000 for each K-12 student, \$8,600 per full-time CSU student, and \$19,000 for every full-time UC student. It is clear that the community colleges cannot survive and function as they have with these numbers.

## Over 200,000 Would Be Denied Access to Community College

According to an analysis of the proposed budget cuts done by the Community College League of California, Davis wants "to cut \$1 billion in staffing and course offerings (over a period of 18 months—ed.) at the 108 California community colleges..." He also wants to raise student fees from \$11 to \$24 a unit. The League thinks that this would mean that more than 206,000 Californians would be denied access to a community college. The League estimates that half the cuts would come from faculty and staff layoffs or separations and half from students dropping out due to the higher cost of enrollment.

But it is not just in California where the state faces a budget crisis. In fact, across the nation state budgets are facing the worst crisis since the Second World War. Massive budget deficits now threaten both public employees

and the quality government services that they provide—like education and health care. This year alone state budget deficits are expected to reach a nationwide total of some \$76 billion or more. California's deficit alone is almost half of this nationwide total! Yet those in power in Washington, D.C. (euphemistically known as the Bush Administration) have decided in their most recent federal budget proposal not to propose any significant fiscal relief for the states. This same group of decision-makers has quite obviously

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decided that they can find and spend over \$200 billion for a senseless war in Iraq! Money can be found for war, but not for education and other vitally necessary social services. What kind of a message does this send to the students that we teach in our classrooms?

## Galatolo Says District Needs to Cut \$15 Million Over 18 Months

How do these state numbers play out at the District level? At college forums, Chancellor Ron Galatolo said that the District was facing "a \$10-16 million problem." For example, the District would receive only \$2.5 million in Partnership for Excellence monies next year, as opposed to the \$5 million received for this year. He said that over a period of 18 months the District would have to achieve \$15 million in reductions. Ron said that this would require that between 150 and 200 District employees would have to leave the District in one way or another.

It was announced that around 200

employees in the District have been identified who could retire now with lifetime health benefits. It was estimated that maybe between 40 to 70 employees might be interested. To that end, Ron said that the District was interested in negotiating with the unions in the District an incentive program for voluntary retirement or voluntary separation.

## II: The need for true shared governance

Ron also said, in answer to a question from the Academic Senate President at CSM, that given the fiscal crisis facing the District he understood the need "to meet more often in shared governance groups." The AFT agrees with this approach. Unfortunately, for a very long time in this District shared governance hasn't really been fully shared. The agenda

has been largely set by administration, with faculty and classified staff having to react to administrative proposals. It has not been a democratic decision-making process, where all players share equally.

## District Must Provide Full Information on a Regular Basis

Faculty have requested information quite frequently that the district has never provided. Without this information, it is impossible to participate meaningfully in decision-making. For example, we would very much like to see the current District Office organization chart. These requests are not made to be "divisive" or "polarizing". Rather, if meaningful discussion of budgetary issues is to be possible, then this information must be made available on a regular basis to those who are supposed to be participants in the shared governance process.

In an attempt to make shared governance in the District more collaborative at a time of very real finan-

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## ***Anatomy of a Budget Crisis***

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cial crisis, AFT wants to express its strong endorsement of a resolution that was recently passed by the CSM and Skyline Academic Senates. This resolution calls for the formation of a "cross-constituency work group to address matters pertaining to the district budget." The charge of the work group is "to work collaboratively with the chancellor on all district budget matters..." This resolution is another indication of the frustration that faculty representatives have been feeling about the lack of real "shared governance" in the District.

One example of the types of concerns the AFT would like to examine in the District budget is the ratio of administrators to faculty. In terms of "Administration as % of Faculty FTE", Foothill-DeAnza is 5.1%, San Francisco is 3.7%, while San Mateo is 8.5%. Statewide the number is 6.1%.<sup>1</sup> When looking for reductions in spending in this District, then, it does appear to make sense to consider cutting administrative positions.

A second example of budgetary concern that the union would like to look into is the fact that our District has often grossly miscalculated its final ending balance. In 1999-2000, for example, the San Mateo District had the highest percentage of error in the state, miscalculating by 16,028%!<sup>2</sup> Is the District still having this problem today? What is the significance of this problem on the District's future budget planning decisions regarding impending budget cuts?

### **III: Where did this budget crisis come from, and how can we fix it?**

Although the collapse of the stock market boom led to a dramatic decline in state income in the form of taxes paid on capital gains, there are also other more structural causes of the current budget crisis that need to be understood: namely the tax systems in California and at the federal level

significantly under-tax affluent property owners and corporations.

### ***Commercial Property Vastly Under-Assessed***

As the California Tax Reform Association has explained so clearly, part of the problem in California is that our system for assessing and taxing commercial and industrial properties is so riddled with loopholes that it could be said to be more loophole than tax. The system allows billions of dollars of valuable business property to be vastly under-assessed, creates great differences in taxes paid among property owners, and is entirely inadequate to finance the needs of local governments, schools, and infrastructure projects.

Commercial property owners pay tax on 50% of the value of their property—and some pay far less—because they can manipulate change of ownership rules to avoid reassessment forever. This costs state and local governments billions of dollars. Studies estimate that reassessing commercial properties that have changed hands but avoided reassessment in the past would raise more than \$3 billion a year statewide.

The tax burden has shifted from business to homeowners throughout the state. For example, since 1975, commercial property has gone from 47% of the tax role in Los Angeles County to 33%, while single family homes went from 40% to 55%.

### ***Two Steps Towards California Tax Reform***

So two ways to begin to fix the system in California emerge. One change would tighten reassessment to require reassessment if at least 50% of a corporation's stock or ownership shares change hands. The second reform would change Proposition 13 to state that "nonresidential property shall be assessed at market value every year." This would require that a state ballot measure be passed.

The federal tax system has also fundamentally shifted the tax burden away from corporations. "If corporations paid taxes in the 1990's at the same rate they did in the 1950's, nearly two thirds of the federal deficit would disappear overnight."<sup>3</sup> The U.S. and California tax codes were supposed to spread the cost of government fairly to all its citizens. Instead, they have turned into "a gold mine of loopholes and giveaways manipulated by the influential and wealthy for their own benefit."<sup>4</sup>

### **Conclusion: What do we do now?**

We need to work on many levels—including letter writing, lobbying and demonstrating—to push our state legislators and governor to fund community colleges equitably in relation to other segments of higher education and to help create the necessary revenue by reforming the tax code. We also need to pressure Congress to provide fiscal assistance to the states and to reform the federal tax system. At our own district level, we need to ensure that faculty, staff and students have full access to information and an equitable voice in decision-making. The success of our efforts on all these levels will play a large part in determining the future of quality community college education in our District.

### **Footnotes**

<sup>1</sup> data published by the California Part-time Faculty Association, 2002.

<sup>2</sup> report by Ann Clark of CCSF entitled "The Money Bottom Line: Public Accountability and Money Management in California's Community Colleges", presented to the Board of Governors on March 13, 2001.

<sup>3</sup> Donald Barlett and James Steele, *America: Who Really Pays The Taxes?*, 1994.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*

# Teach-Ins on Budget Crisis Planned for March 5 on All 3 Colleges; Buses to Sacramento Rally Also Set

Teach-ins on the budget crisis and how it will affect the community colleges have been scheduled for Wednesday, March 5 at CSM, Cañada and Skyline Colleges.

At **Cañada College**, a teach-in has been tentatively scheduled for **Wednesday, March 5**, in the **Cafeteria from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m.** The Associated Students at Cañada also plan to lobby local legislators in their district offices on Friday, March 7. Cañada students are now making plans to reserve buses to take Cañada students to the March 17 Sacramento rally.

At **CSM**, Associated Students have also tentatively planned a teach-in on the budget crisis for

**Wednesday, March 5 from 10 am to 2 pm** in the main Cafeteria. The students at CSM are attempting to get local legislators and the press to attend their teach-in. Plans are also being made to rent buses to take CSM students to the March 17 rally in Sacramento.

At **Skyline College**, a teach-in is being planned by the Associated Students for **March 5 from noon to 2 p.m.** and buses are also being set up to take Skyline students to the March 17 rally.

Contact the Associated Students at each college for more information about the teach-ins or buses to Sacramento. Interested faculty should contact AFT at x6491.

## KEEP THE DOORS OPEN!



# Rally in Sacramento for community colleges



**Don't slam the doors on 200,000 students!**

*Monday, March 17  
11 am - 2 pm  
State Capitol  
Sacramento*

*Supported or Endorsed by:*

- Academic Senate for California Community Colleges
- American Federation of Teachers 1493 (San Mateo)
- American Federation of Teachers 2121 (San Francisco)
- American Federation of Teachers 4400 (Cabrillo)
- Association of Community and Continuing Education
- California Part-time Faculty Association
- California Student Association of Community Colleges
- Community College League of California
- Communication Workers of America Local 9414
- Faculty Association of California Community Colleges
- Service Employees International Union

*partial list*