

UF President Jeff Michels Accepts FACCC Award



Chancellor Helen Benjamin, CCC President McKinley Williams, and Student Governing Board Trustee Christina Cannon were on hand, along with nine UF members to watch UF President Jeff Michels receive FACCC's "Full-Time Faculty Member of the Year Award." Michels was also recognized with proclamations from the State Legislature (held above by UF VP for DVC Glenn Appell) and from the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors for his advocacy on behalf of students and faculty. In this, Michels joins a proud list of UF activists, including Margaret Quan, Bill Harlan, Marge Lasky, and two-time FACCC award winner, Deborah Dahl-Shanks, to name just a few.

The award was presented at the FACCC Advocacy and Policy Conference, where nine E-Board members and three students attended training and met with legislators and aids to advocate for community college funding and the restoration of the categoricals.

UF Supports Student Advocacy, Plans for March in March



DVC students (pictured above) rallied on campus March 4 and heard speeches from, among many others, UF President Jeff Michels and VP for DVC Glenn Appell. Many then boarded a bus (sponsored by the UF PAC) and headed to San Francisco to join thousands of marchers at City Hall. On March 18, another student rally is planned at CCC, from 12noon-2pm, with Assembly Majority Speaker Alberto Turrigo and Assemblymember Nancy Skinner expected to speak. And on March 22, students and faculty from all over the State will be converging on Sacramento for the annual March in March. The UF PAC has sponsored one bus to help shuttle students, staff and faculty to the Capitol, and we expect student government to sponsor one or two more, so that busses should leave from all three campuses early on March 22. Look for an email soon with details, and come help advocate!

Benefits Tips: Better Mental Health Coverage; Pharmacy

by Stuart Lichter

Despite the dismal economy, the Federal Government is providing an important enhanced benefit this year for mental-health and substance-abuse disorders. Starting July 2010, all health insurers will be required to treat mental illnesses and substance-abuse disorders the same as other health problems in terms of length of treatment and cost. In other words, insurers can no longer limit these benefits to just a few sessions per year, nor can they limit by overall cost.

The law, called the Mental Health Parity Act, was actually passed by Congress in 1996, but has taken 14 years to be implemented. For CCCC employees, it will mean more covered visits for mental health professionals and substance abuse treatment. Look for information from your health care provider soon detailing these changes.

For you Health Net subscribers out there, here is a tip that can save you time and potentially quite a bit of money. It is called: Mail Order Pharmacy. You can find information about this benefit at the District's HR website: www.4cd.edu/hr/benefits under "Health Net."

By printing out the mail order form provided, you can send in your prescription and gain the convenience of having medicine sent directly to your home. You also often get a 3-month supply instead of the 30 day supply most pharmacies provide for the same co-pay. This saves as much as \$30 per RX! One downside is that the mail order company does not automatically send you refills after 90 days. However, they usually send you e-mail reminders.

President's Message

So California's budget process is broken, friends are losing their jobs, and even our leaders seem stunned and defeated. What can you do about it? Try these ideas: Support George Lakoff's **California Democracy Act**, a proposition that would make legislative actions on revenue and budget determined by a majority vote (rather than the current 2/3 super-majority). Go to www.californiademocracyact.com and download the petition. Or better yet, become a petition gatherer, like I did, and start collecting signatures. The Democratic Party has a proposition too, not quite as good, but worth supporting; it changes the 2/3 to a simple majority for budgeting. Download the petition kit at www.cadem.org.

Support the March in March; bring your whole family to Sacramento on March 22. Advocacy works. Educate your students in their civic responsibilities; remind them to vote and get involved. Write a letter to the paper about how crowded your classes are or the students you had to turn away. Help remind voters that public investment in education pays, but it takes tax dollars. Maybe it's time to raise corporate taxes in California. Your Union is working to protect you on the home front, but it's all hands on deck for the battle with the State.

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Table Talk

The Newsletter of the United Faculty of
Contra Costa Community College District

March 10, 2010

News at a Glance

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- Department Chair Agreement Implementation Update
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Funding Cuts Lead to Downsizing and Layoffs

After losing more than 13 million dollars in revenues last year (including cuts to apportionment, categorical funding and interest income), the District is projecting a 9-10 million dollar shortfall again this year, and there seems to be little relief in sight. The Governor's proposed 2010-11 budget includes funding for 2.2% community college growth statewide, but few in Sacramento expect this increase (\$126 million) to survive the budget process. Other more ominous aspects of the Governor's budget may have a better chance, such as a negative COLA of -0.38% and new cuts to categorical programs (EOPS and Part-Time Parity). At best, most analysts predict our funding will be flat this year and probably next year too. And this has put the District under pressure to complete cuts began last year (made less severe by spending one-time reserves) and find new cuts to afford increases in expenses this year (such as insurance and benefits).

Part-time faculty have been hit the hardest so far. With a 7.6% reduction in course sections district-wide since last year, many part-timers have been laid off, and many more have lost income and benefits due to teaching fewer classes. Full-time faculty have so far avoided layoffs; there were no March Notices sent to full-timers this year, which would have been required for any layoffs next year. But full-time positions are still being lost as colleges decide not to replace all retirees, and of course almost all faculty are working harder this year by overloading classes to unprecedented levels. Faculty productivity ratios are up nearly 10 percent district-wide this spring, and this voluntary faculty effort to serve more students is certainly helping to save sections and jobs (though many are becoming concerned about the pedagogical implications and the likelihood of burn-out).

Now classified staff and managers are bracing for layoffs, which seem inevitable despite the 18 District employees who took the recent retirement incentive. Three March Notices were approved for managers at last month's District Governing Board meeting. And classified staff,

who can be laid off without March Notices, are likely to see significant reductions before next fall.

This downsizing might seem less outrageous if it didn't come at a time of increased student demand. CCCCD saw a 15% increase in students (by headcount) seeking classes this year, and FTES this spring are up 3.6%. So cutting sections and staff makes no sense at all. According to the District's calculations, one third of first-time freshmen will not get into Math and English courses this year. More than 1000 students district-wide have been affected by cuts to tutoring and counseling because of categorical cuts to EOPS, DSPS and CalWORKS.

Unfortunately, the District's options are limited. The mandate to downsize was made at the State level. And while CCCCD still has some flexibility due to a 10% budgeted reserve, there is no sustainable way to serve more students than the State will fund. The UF has been pleased, overall, with the high degree of collaboration and transparency in the District's budgeting process. We have not always agreed with every decision, but we have had good and consistent access to data and to District personnel, who seem responsive to faculty suggestions and concerns.

Vice Chancellor Kindred Murillo came to a UF Executive Board meeting last December to answer questions about the budget and the District's new allocation model. Our Compensation Committee has resumed its search for best practices elsewhere that might suggest ways to cut spending away from the classroom. And we're beginning to work more closely with CFOs at the college level too. We hope that by working together to minimize staffing and section cuts and by spending down some of the District's reserves, we can continue to serve students well until the State Legislature and/or California's voters renew their investment in community colleges and restore our funding. But the situation seems poised to get worse before it gets better.

UF/CCCD Negotiations Begin March 26

Formal contract negotiations between the District and the UF begin March 26. Below is a brief roundup of open articles and issues we expect to discuss. The UF will email a general survey to faculty next Monday, looking for input on key issues. Please take the time to complete the survey when it comes! The more we hear from members, the better we can represent you at the table. So if you have questions, comments or suggestions about any of the issues listed below, or any other issues you think the UF should tackle, please contact an E-Board member or Email the UF at uf@uf4cd.org.

Salary

Unless something significant changes soon, we're not looking at a salary increase this year, but we may seek to agree on a revenue-based formula that would see us through the next two or three years.

Part-Time Pay Parity

Parity remains at the top of the UF's agenda this year, since cuts to categorical funding from the State translate to a pay-cut for part-time lecturers, who are already our most underpaid group. Our goal this year is to have the District backfill cuts for one-semester only using

one-time reserves, and then to negotiate a long-term approach to parity. One option would be simply to add a parity contribution to our ongoing salary formula so that a share of any new revenues would go towards closing the parity gap. This is the approach that many other Bay 10 districts have taken.

Intellectual Property Rights

We currently have no article in our contract that deals with intellectual property rights. Who owns the content of your course? If you write a book while on sabbatical or make a video of yourself while teaching at CCCCD, is it yours or does the District own a piece of it? What about your handouts? Do you own the copyright to them? These questions are not fully settled by law, so we need contract language to clarify and protect faculty rights. This is one big UF goal this semester. Since intellectual property rights tend also to lead into issues related to Distance Education, we may consider an article that covers both issues and wind up discussing Distance Ed policy too.

Benefits (Article 21)

Our current situation that has benefits costs rising 7-10 percent every year while revenues decline or stay flat is not sustainable. Our hope, however, is that before we would need to make any major adjustments in benefits, the revenue situation will turn around. Even then, we will likely find ourselves seeking to reduce the drain on resources that rising benefits costs represent. But for this year, we expect to mostly explore options in an Interest-Based conversation without terrible pressure to make changes.

We may look to add some new options, like a PPO from HealthNet in addition to the HMO and HealthNet Elect choices already offered by the District. We will certainly discuss some minor changes like the three-tier drug plan as opposed to the two-tier plan we have now. But these are discussions that began even before the budget crisis, and they have as much to do with improving our benefits as they do containing costs. More major changes, we hope, will be able to wait until we see another budget cycle or two, see what Congress does with health care, and begin to build consensus as a District about where our priorities lie if indeed we need to reconsider our benefits package.

The UF has prepared a Benefits Survey, in cooperation with the District-wide Benefits Committee, that will both give you more information about some of the options we have been discussing and ask you to weigh in about your priorities and preferences. Please take the survey when it comes via email.

Banked Load (and Article 7)

The District has for years expressed concern to the UF about their "Banked Load Liability." When faculty have banked load in the past, the District neglected to reserve or invest the funds, so no money has been set aside to cover costs when faculty use the load. Furthermore, some faculty have amassed quite a lot of banked load over the years, sometimes two, three or more years worth. When they use the load prior to retirement, this can mean years without a full-time replacement for departments. Lastly, there seems to be some concern on management's part about faculty on reduced load not being as available on campus. We're not sure what the District is seeking related

to these concerns, which have come up in negotiations before. And while we will enter into IBB discussions about banked load in good faith, faculty should know that we have always listed as key UF interests both protecting banked load as a benefit and making sure that any member who has banked load in the past can use it as the contract allows them to now.

As to UF goals in Article 7, we'll be asking to discuss again changes to the office hours restrictions; we would especially like for faculty to be able to hold at least one office hour on-line. And we may discuss A/C again in an effort to gain more flexibility for faculty who would prefer not to bank load in favor of being paid A/C.

Leaves (Article 12)

The UF has opened Article 12 to again press for expanded use of Family Leave and to discuss sick-leave donations for part-time faculty. We may also explore the concept of a Sick Leave Bank that some districts use to help faculty who exhaust other leave options.

Program Leads (Article 11 "Reassigned Time")

Continuing our work from last semester on Department Chairs, we'll be seeking to define duties in the contract for Certificated Program Leads and to begin compensating Leads, even if minimally at first.

Evaluation Proposals Near Ratification Vote

A last round of proofreading should end this week, and pending a final thumbs up from the UF E-Board and Chancellor's Cabinet, the revised evaluation forms and procedures (Appendix X, now 15 guidebooks) should be ready for a ratification vote in mid-March. Our plan is to put hard copies of the entire agreement, including all 15 guidebooks, at every division office, and to have electronic copies available on the UF web site. The Tentative Agreement will include an automatic reopener for next year, so we can fix any problems that arise, and we've added language too that would allow us to make minor edits by consensus as needed during the first year. If the faculty and Governing Board ratify the TA, we will set to work with the District throughout April and May to enhance the look of the forms and create usable electronic versions. We'll also begin offering training. Our hope is to implement and begin using the new forms next fall.

Overall, we expect that the revised forms and procedures may not feel like anything too new. The procedures, though clearer, are largely the same as before, except for minor improvements based on faculty input. But we think the forms, having been in the works now for nearly two years, are much improved. And we expect the new format to make evaluations easier to conduct and more meaningful. We will highlight the changes in the next *Table Talk* prior to ratification.

Department Chair Agreement Implemented

It took longer than expected, but the math connected to the Department Chair Agreement from last year has finally been done, and Chairs should soon receive retroactive stipends and the choice between increased release time (load) or a bigger stipend in the future. Since stipends are calculated at the average A/C rate for each college, we advise taking the load if you can. Call the UF if you have questions.