

## UF Endorses Bill to Add FT Faculty and PT Office Hours

This week in Sacramento, the Senate and Assembly Higher Education Committees are holding hearings on two bills that could significantly affect community colleges. SB 1456 (Lowenthal) is the Chancellor's Office-sponsored "Student Success Act" implementing recommendations of the Student Success Task Force report. The bill would add new requirements for assessment, orientation and education planning, and penalize students who fail to make adequate progress, in some instances by limiting Board of Governors fee waivers for low-income students. CCCI and FACCC have taken an "oppose unless amended" position, arguing that the measure is "short on promise, long on punishment." On Wednesday, April 18, UF President Jeff Michels will testify on behalf of both faculty groups to urge the legislature not to impose new requirements unless they also provide new funding for infrastructure.

AB 1741 (Fong), named the "Student Success Infrastructure Act" is FACCC-sponsored legislation aimed at defining our infrastructure needs. The culmination in some ways of the faculty strategy to respond constructively to the Student Success Task Force report, this bill insists that improved student success requires progress in four key areas: improving FT/PT ratios; hiring more FT counselors; professionalizing PT faculty, starting with paid office hours; and restoring or expanding student services programs, like EOPS. The bill would not necessarily bring in new money, but by creating a fund (subject to the state budget) to guide the California Community Colleges Board of Governors (CCCBOG) in its implementation of student success, this bill would ensure that crucial system priorities are not left out as we move forward with other reform ideas. The UF E-Board has voted to endorse AB 1741, and UF President Michels will be testifying on Tuesday, April 17, in Sacramento to urge passage of the bill.

All faculty and students are welcome at these public hearings, and the UF will be coordinating car pools and covering travel expenses for any from CCCCD who want to attend. Tuesday's hearing is in State Capitol Room 437 at 1:30pm: the Assembly Committee for Higher Education (Block is Chair). Wednesday's hearing starts at 9am in the John L. Burton Hearing Room (4203): the Senate Committee for Higher Education (Lowenthal is Chair). We've been told that consideration of SB 1456 will begin around 9:30am, though the schedule may change.

Faculty can also weigh in by using FACCC's point-and-click advocacy tool to send emails to local legislators and/or committee members. There are a number of bills worthy of faculty attention at the moment, including especially AB 2591 (Furutani), which would express legislative intent for the need to guarantee an automatic backfill of student fee and property tax revenues. The absence of such a guarantee has led to the potential loss of \$149 million for community colleges in the 2011-12 budget. To review bills or contact legislators, go to [www.faccc.org/govrelations](http://www.faccc.org/govrelations). Even with pro-education legislators like Susan Bonilla and Paul Fong, without whom the FACCC infrastructure bill would not have been possible, sending emails can make a difference. Legislators need to see that when they take a stand to support education, our faculty and students respond.

## President's Message

During hard times (and these certainly qualify in California's public sector), rumors fly. Are we cancelling summer session, compressing the calendar, shortening the school day, planning to auction off parking spaces? Nope, though there are lots of ideas floating around. As we often remind one another, this is why we have collective bargaining and why we have worked as hard as we have to develop a collaborative environment of shared governance. Major changes are not secretly in the works. We're facing this uncertain and troubling financial mess together.

As frustrating as it can be, however, when people think there are sweeping changes pending that have barely been discussed, it can be equally troubling when nothing is being done in areas where change is needed and expected. For me, this has been most true in issues of equity.

We have several glaring inequities in our pay structure and our contract, and for the most part, we have not addressed these, at least in the six years I have been with the UF. Some have been high on our agenda, like part-time pay equity (where not only are part-timers not compensated fairly as compared to full-timers but there are also huge discrepancies by assignment-type because of our hourly pay scale). Some equity issues have been just below our agenda, waiting, as it were, for a moment when a little new money might make a solution easier to find. Lecture-lab equity falls into this area. Clearly, there is not a fair relationship between how hard one needs to work for a particular assignment and how much that assignment pays (or how much load it's worth).

Other equity issues are much harder to see (though equally hard to fix without money). I learned recently, for example, that unlike married couples, who can benefit from District health insurance without any extra tax burden, domestic partners who cover a partner (or a partner's children) through the District must pay federal income taxes on the premium amounts. This costs thousands of dollars a year for some of our faculty. The inequity here is in the tax code, of course, and not in the contract, but many local employers in California (including Bank of America and Google) make up the difference for employees, using their local policies to essentially undo the inequity in the federal law. We don't, and as far as I know, we have never even considered it.

Once inequities become institutionalized, change becomes doubly difficult, which is why some of us have been fighting so hard at the state level recently to prevent using BOG fee waivers as a stick to punish students who don't make sufficient academic progress. This is why so many faculty and students are passionately opposing Santa Monica's plan to offer two-tiers of classes (offering higher priced sections of popular classes to those who can afford them). In tight budget times, it is too easy to throw up one's hands and lament the fact that we can't afford to fix our inequities. I fear that we've done a little bit of that in the UF (albeit expecting finances to improve soon so we could face some of these challenges). Maybe it's time we push past our excuses and start addressing inequities as we find them.

### United Faculty Executive Board Members

<u>Contra Costa College</u> Vern Cromartie Rachel Dwiggin-Beeler (PT Rep) Stuart Lichter Jeffrey Michels (Pres.) Aminta Mickles (Vice Pres.) Rudy Zeller	<u>Los Medanos College</u> Milton Clarke Marco Godinez Luis Morales (PT Rep) Michael Zilber (Vice Pres.)
<u>Diablo Valley College</u>	
Glenn Appell (Vice Pres.) Deborah Dahl-Shanks (PTF Advocate) Doug Dildine (PT Rep) Katrina Keating (Treasurer) Marina Crouse	Jason Mayfield Steve Padover Mary Ulrich Bruce Koller Donna Wapner (Interim Vice Pres.)

### UNITED FACULTY OFFICE

Terri Adame, Office Administrator  
Rachel Dwiggin-Beeler, *Table Talk* Editor  
(925) 685-1230 x2502 or 680-1771 fax (925) 680-7283  
email: [uf@uf4cd.org](mailto:uf@uf4cd.org) website: [www.uf4cd.org](http://www.uf4cd.org)  
(Email Jeffrey Michels at [ufjeffmichels@gmail.com](mailto:ufjeffmichels@gmail.com))



# Table Talk

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

April 17, 2012

## News at a Glance

- Signature Drive this Week for Crucial Tax-Plan Initiative
- March in March Draws Thousands to Sacramento
- 2012-13 Negotiations to Start Slowly with Workgroups
- HealthNet Plan Changes for Retirees Only
- Blue Cross / HealthNet Bid Comparison in the Works
- Pilot UF Internship Program Off to Successful Start
- UF Endorses Bill to Add FT Faculty and PT Office Hours
- President's Message: Equity Issues in Times like These

## Signature Drive This Week for Crucial Tax Plan

Following an eleventh-hour compromise between the Governor and the California Federation of Teachers (CFT) merging their two competing tax initiatives, efforts are now underway statewide to collect the 807,615 signatures necessary to qualify the plan for the November 2012 ballot. The deadline to submit signatures is absurdly soon; local groups like the UF have been asked to turn in completed forms by the end of this week to meet a statewide April 27 deadline.

Signature drives are therefore underway at all our campuses and centers this week. **Friday, April 20, is our deadline!** Faculty who want to sign petitions or pick up forms to collect signatures may contact one of the UF Reps listed below. Note that signatures may *not* be collected in classrooms, nor can faculty use classrooms or campus email accounts to advocate for any political position. The UF will be working with student groups this week at informational and signature tables in open areas on campus, and we have scheduled one indoor meeting at LMC on Tuesday, April 17, at 5pm, in the Library's Community Room, where we are renting the facility.

Our lead faculty on this project at each campus are as follows:

CCC: Vern Cromartie (x4537); Rudy Zeller (x4405);

Aminta Mickles (x4415)

DVC: Donna Wapner (x2467); Katrina Keating (x2813);

or come by the UF Office and see Terri Adame (x2502)

LMC: Milton Clark (x3343); or come to our open meeting  
at 5pm on Tuesday, April 17, L-151

SRC: Marina Crouse (x5109)

BWC: Jill DeStefano (x6212)

The stakes for education in California could hardly be higher. Although the compromise plan does not specifically earmark new revenues for schools or colleges (as the CFT Millionaires Tax had done), the new initiative would increase state revenue by an estimated 6.8 to 9 billion dollars in 2012-13 and from \$5.4 to \$7.6 billion, on average, in the following five fiscal years (with less returned in 2018-19). The

Governor's January budget proposal suggested that new money be used in 2012-13 to pay down "deferrals" from previous budget years, with 4% increases in college funding coming in subsequent years, but system advocates are continuing to push for new money to go to our current budgets as soon as possible. The next step in the process will be the "May Revise," where the Governor will submit an updated budget proposal to the legislature.

Both the Governor and CFT have stopped collecting signatures for their original tax proposals, but there is one more tax initiative, backed by millionaire Molly Munger, that would increase state income tax on a sliding scale for almost everyone and direct the additional funding to K-12, preschools, and childcare. Munger's measure, unfortunately, leaves out the community colleges and the rest of higher education.

The Governor's new plan, which the UF Executive Board voted unanimously to endorse, makes temporary, seven-year income tax changes as follows: 1% increase on earnings between \$250,000 and \$300,000 per year; 2% for earnings from \$300,000 to \$500,000; and 3% on earnings over \$500,000. The proposal also includes a four-year 1/4 cent sales tax increase. For more information on the tax measures or any other ballot initiatives, faculty may consult the Secretary of State's website at [www.sos.ca.gov](http://www.sos.ca.gov). The Governor also has set up a website for his measure: [www.protectschoolsandpublicsafety.com](http://www.protectschoolsandpublicsafety.com). Faculty may download the petition form from the Governor's site (or contact the UF for petitions) and turn in completed forms to the UF by Friday.

### Thousands March in Sacramento to Support Higher Ed

Thousands of community college, CSU and UC students gathered in Sacramento on March 5 to advocate for higher education. The UF sent a team of faculty and students that participated at the rally as well as in FACCC's two-day Advocacy & Policy Conference. The UF group also met with legislators to discuss funding and other key student-success issues, such as full-time hires and part-time office hours.



UF PT Faculty Advocate Deborah Dahl-Shanks, Student Intern Melody Williams, Treasurer Katrina Keating, and E-Board Member Marina Crouse at the "March in March" Rally in Sacramento. Four busses of CCCC students also attended the March to support Higher Ed.

### 2012-2013 Negotiations Start Slowly with Workgroups

The negotiating front has been unusually quiet this spring, not, we hope, because it's calm before the storm but for other more benign reasons. This has been a semester of transition for senior management in CCCC, with two new college presidents expected to be hired any day now and a new District Chief Financial Officer, John Al-Amin, having just come on board. Plus both the UF and the District have agreed to move slowly after last year's cuts and concessions.

Many faculty, especially part-timers, are being hurt by another round of schedule reductions. But the UF is not expecting to be asked to make new concessions at the bargaining table 2012-13. The District's plan, as reflected in the recent budget road show, is to spend down college and district reserves, as needed, and to continue shrinking our whole organization somewhat, while waiting to address any ongoing structural deficit until after we learn the fate of the tax initiative. Even if the taxes pass, we may face some challenges in 2013-14, particularly related to spiraling health-care costs. But if the taxes fail, our situation will clearly be much more difficult.

For the most part, the UF has endorsed the Bridge-to-November-Elections approach, but there are some areas where we hope to make progress in negotiations before the year's end. Several articles remain open from last year, and we hope to come to some agreements in these areas: Evaluations; Part-Time Staffing Preference; Flex Reporting; Intellectual Property Rights. A key issue is Part-Time Parity, where we're hoping to finally negotiate an ongoing plan to increase equity without needing to bargain over parity every year.

We are starting with workgroup meetings at the end of April, and we plan for negotiating teams to meet at least a couple of times in May. According to our current contract, both sides have the right to open two articles this year in addition to compensation, but so far neither the UF nor the District has announced plans to open anything new (except perhaps Benefits; see the article on Blue Cross in this issue of *Table Talk*). It seems likely that any tentative agreement for 2012-13 will come next fall and be retroactive to July 1, 2012.

### HealthNet Plan Changes for Retirees Only

Current CCCC retirees are being informed that beginning July 1, 2012, HealthNet will no longer offer their "HealthNet Elect" plan to any retiree older than 65. The reasons are complex, but a short explanation is that the Elect plan does not coordinate with Medicare, and HealthNet is now required to offer only plans that can coordinate with Medicare to Medicare-eligible retirees. Retirees who currently use Elect will have until July 1 to choose between Kaiser and the HealthNet HMO or to select a new PPO option that the District has negotiated to replace Elect for retirees. Details of the PPO option are available from District HR (call Reed Rawlinson at x1294). The PPO offers greater flexibility than an HMO (or Elect); it may be particularly attractive to retirees who live or have dependents out of state. But in a PPO, the member pays a percentage of cost (10% in-network or 30% out-of-network up to an annual maximum), so out-of-pocket expenses may be higher. At present, there is no plan to offer the PPO to active employees, though that might be possible in the future.

### Blue Cross/HealthNet Bid Comparison in the Works

As reported in the Sept. 20, 2011 issue of *Table Talk* (available on the UF website at [www.uf4cd.org](http://www.uf4cd.org)), the District and employee groups have been evaluating a bid from Anthem Blue Cross to become CCCC's non-Kaiser provider. This is the first time in years that the District has received a competitive bid for health care. In the past, providers have declined to bid for our work (as did several this year). Because more than 50% of our employees choose Kaiser, providers generally worry that they will attract only the slice of our population that needs extra medical attention. The math may actually belie their fears, but there are industry cut-offs, and we have usually fallen short.

This year, however, Anthem has made a push for our business, but the potential risks and rewards are hard to balance. On the surface, they seem to be offering better health insurance for less money. But there are no guarantees that costs won't shoot up in year two, and there are significant risks to leaving a provider with whom we have a history going back decades. So we have decided in district-wide conversations as a next step to show everyone the Anthem Blue Cross bid alongside the HealthNet bid. This means that in late April or early May, if all goes according to plan, we will publish a comparison with opinions, pro and con, and also bring a road-show to all our campuses. Then we'll survey, ask for input, maybe host some forums for faculty discussion, and see where we are. Most likely, we will be evaluating the potential for a change starting Jan. 1, 2013. Even if we decide not to change providers at this time, we hope that our having given the Anthem bid a full and fair hearing may help convince them to bid for our work again some day. Look for more information coming soon.

### Pilot UF Student Internship Program Off to Successful Start

The UF is piloting a new paid student internship program in political advocacy this semester. Our two interns at CCC have been registering students to vote, meeting with legislators, working at events, etc. We hope to expand this program to all three colleges next year.



UF Student Intern Melody Williams joins DVC Student Leaders First Lastname and Alex Silva for strawberry milkshakes following a day of advocacy training at the FACCC Policy Conference. Intern Jessica Stilch (not pictured) also attended with the UF Team.