

Ratification Vote Begins for 2012-2013 UF Budget

As we do every year, we are delivering the UF's 2012/2013 budget to faculty mailboxes along with a ratification ballot. The UF Executive Board voted unanimously to adopt the budget and ask members to confirm by voting yes. Ballots are due in the UF office by noon on Thursday, November 29. To vote by phone, email or fax, please contact Terri in the UF office at 925-680-1771 or uf@uf4cd.org. You will need the number located on the green dot of your paper ballot.

If you have questions about the budget, contact UF Treasurer Katrina Keating at Ext. 2813 (email: kkeating@dvc.edu), or UF President Jeff Michels at 923-330-2125 (email: ufjeffmichels@gmail.com).

Again this year, we are mostly rolling over last year's budget, while reorganizing our resources a little to meet current needs. Revenues are projected based on the District's adopted budget (since our funds depend on the number of District faculty) and are expected to drop next year as a result of downsizing. Expenses will also drop overall as we realize some savings from investments made last year (like buying our previously leased copy machine and closing our off-campus storage facility). In expanding our leadership structure to include a paid "Executive Director" (a communications and negotiations post to be filled by outgoing UF President Jeffrey Michels), we have also eliminated the paid positions of our Contract Committee Chairs (previously filled by former UF President Brendan Brown and former Vice President from LCM Jill DeStefano). We will likely still hire Brown and DeStefano on an hourly basis to serve on our negotiating team as needed (recognizing that our wealth of experience and institutional memory is an ongoing strength of the UF that we wish to preserve).

Overall, the UF remains in solid financial shape, budgeting conservatively and continuing to slowly build reserves for maximum flexibility in the future.

UF Takes Grievance to Arbitration for 1st Time in 6 Years

According to the UF Contract, if a faculty member files a grievance that is not resolved at the college level, he or she may appeal to the Chancellor. If that fails, a grievance may, with the concurrence of the UF, go to "fact-finding" and binding arbitration. Over the past several years, we have seen several grievances filed, but the UF has always been able to negotiate a resolution that satisfied our Executive Board. Our general philosophy has been that we prefer to clarify contract language through bargaining rather than allow an arbitrator to dictate policy. Now, we have a case that we have been unable to resolve through bargaining, and we feel that the best interests of faculty will be served by appealing to an arbitrator. There are two main issues related to district investigations and disciplinary actions. First, we think the District needs to better inform faculty about the scope and nature of any performance evaluation related to disciplinary action. Second, we are challenging the District's right to include archived emails as evidence in a disciplinary case, since our contract clearly states: "no adverse action shall be initiated against a unit member based upon written material that is not contained within the official personnel file" (Art. 18.2). We will update members as the case proceeds.

President's Message

Although it appears that I will continue to organize and write for *Table Talk*, this will likely be my last time writing the "President's Message." It has been a tremendous honor to represent CCCCC faculty, and while I would never suggest that we have accomplished all that our members would have liked during my tenure, I have certainly tried in every forum to speak with integrity and passion for our faculty and to stand up for your interests. At the top of that agenda, as I see it, are several key issues: salary (we are still too far from the top third of the Bay 10, and even more importantly, we haven't kept up with the cost of living); full-time hires (students deserve full-time professors, and professors deserve full-time jobs); and professionalizing our part-time faculty (meaning better pay, full office-hours, and an expanded role in departments).

Other issues have also risen to the top for me: accreditation reform most particularly and the need for a new accountability model. It simply makes no sense to require all faculty to produce and verify reports as a major part of the job. Administrators should produce reports; faculty should teach. And then there are smaller, more local issues, which require attention. At the UF E-Board, we have been discussing (in no particular order): distance education policies and intellectual property rights; lecture-lab equity; flex rules and reporting; improving our PT staffing preference agreement; paying evaluators a little more for chairing a 7th-semester part-time committee; equitable access to support-staff for counselors and other faculty (and in general, a fair shake for our classified staff, too many of whom have seen their workloads increase but their paid weeks reduced over the last couple of years); compensating program leads; expanding professional development; making up for discriminatory federal laws that penalize domestic partners by taxing their benefits and not letting them use the flexible spending plan; improving counselor-to-student ratios; compensating speech-team coaches; increasing release-time for athletic coaches; creating an article of the contract for part-time faculty to make policies for part-timers easier to find.

As college schedules begin to recover, we want to continue to ensure that faculty take the lead in deciding which classes to add or cut as needed. We want to strengthen our participatory (shared) governance structures, support our academic senates and the work they do, and get back to manageable class sizes so that "productivity" does not come at the expense of quality. Our faculty have done extraordinary work in the past few years, but like California itself, we need an infusion of good news and reinvestment to keep going. It's time to make progress on our big-ticket items like pay and full-time hires and on some smaller issues too.

With the funding belt finally starting to loosen, we should have the chance to make some positive changes soon, but we need to hear from you. In my new role next semester, I'll be looking to increase our surveys. But you can contact your UF reps any time and share your priorities. Our job is to protect and improve your working conditions. Let us know what you need. Send me (ufjeffmichels@gmail.com) or Glenn (gappell@sbc-global.net) an email. What's on your list that isn't on ours?

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Table Talk

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

November 15, 2012

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Big Election Wins Bode Well for Community Colleges

Educators throughout California are rightly celebrating after the November 6 election. Passage of Proposition 30 allowed schools and colleges to avoid another round of massive funding cuts, and the resounding defeat of Proposition 32 left our education lobby in place and sent a warning to conservative billionaires that dumping money into anti-union initiatives in California doesn't pay off. But the biggest win of all may have been the least anticipated. For the first time in more than 100 years, Democrats appear to have won a "supermajority" (more than 2/3 of the seats) in both the CA Assembly and Senate. This bodes well for the future of college funding and may lead to significant changes in the State's taxation system and the initiative process, which could help education as well.

Proposition 30 itself promises some recovery for community colleges. The Governor has spoken of 4% funding increases for each of the next three years. But the instability of California's budget and persistent State deficits make such promises hard to bank on. A Democratic supermajority will have the ability, theoretically at least (if the Democrats can agree amongst themselves), to protect or expand funding for education even by raising fees or taxes, without being blocked, as has happened repeatedly in recent years, by Republican legislators who have signed a "no tax" pledge. As long as the Democrats have 2/3 of the seats in both the Assembly and Senate, they no longer need Republican votes to raise taxes or put initiatives before the voters.

The early talk from Democratic leaders has been modest and cautious, but one idea that already seems to be gathering steam is to reduce the threshold for local parcel taxes from the current 2/3 margin to 55%. (This would require voters to approve a change to the State constitution, but Democrats now have the power to place such an amendment before the voters.) As of this writing, our local Measure A, an \$11 parcel tax to raise nearly \$4 million annually for Contra Costa Community College District, has won about 65% of the vote, just short of the 67% necessary to pass. There are still votes being counted, and officially,

the race is still “too close to call,” but it seems fairly likely that our parcel tax has been defeated. 67% for any measure is a high threshold. It isn’t impossible to achieve (City College of San Francisco passed a parcel tax this year with 72%), but county-wide parcel taxes are often particularly difficult to pass (in addition to CCCCD’s apparent defeat this year, Chabot-Las Positas lost a similar bid for local support with 62% of the vote). If the threshold were dropped to 55%, however, both Contra Costa and Chabot would have passed their parcel taxes this year by a wide margin.

The new supermajority will likely not solve all our funding problems, but along with the passage of Prop. 30 and defeat of Prop. 32, it does mean good news (and the first in a long while) for California schools and colleges. Our own district may not be ready to announce that we are “out of the woods” yet, but the thinning trees should clearly make finding the path to recovery easier.

UF PAC Steps Up in 2012 Election



We started last year, collecting signatures for Measure 30 and registering students to vote. Working with the office of Assemblywoman Susan Bonilla, we collected more signatures than any other assembly district in

the State. We held rallies at our three main campuses (attended by more than 1100 students districtwide); we registered more than 350 students to vote; and we became a model and a resource for college districts throughout the State. (We even mailed 200 Yes-on-30 signs to Bakersfield.) We contributed money to Yes-on-30 and No-on-32 through CCCI (the CA Community College Independents), and we were a major contributor to the Yes-on-Measure A campaign. We sent out our own direct-mail piece, and our student interns passed out hundreds of Prop. 30 and Measure A fliers and cards. We owe a huge thanks to ASU student leaders, to Local 1 (and especially classified staff on all three campuses who supported our events), and to the Faculty Association (FACCC), which contributed \$1000 to our rallies and sent staff to help. Culinary Arts students and faculty at DVC and CCC also deserve a shout out, as do DVC and LMC music students. Statewide, we know that new voter registration and the “youth” vote made a huge difference, and we were clearly part of that success.



Faculty Retirement / Pension Reform Workshop Nov. 30

UF Retirement Workshop for Full-Time and Part-Time Faculty
with
STRS Deputy CEO Ed Derman
and FACCC Retirement Committee Rep. Deborah Dahl-Shanks

Friday, November 30, 10am-1pm
Diablo Valley College
BFL Conference Room

Learn more about AB340,
the Public Employee Pension Reform Act (PEPRA),
which takes effect on January 1, 2013.

If you are trying to make decisions about your retirement
or better understand your rights,
then you will want to come to this workshop.

The United Faculty will supply a continental brunch.

RSVP to Deborah at ddahlshanks@dvc.edu.

How PEPRA Will Affect Faculty

PEPRA is the “Public Employees Pension Reform Act” of 2013, passed as AB340 by the CA Legislature, and signed by the Governor on the last day of this last legislative session. PEPRA takes effect on January 1, 2013 for all public employees. The legislation came out of a bipartisan committee as a result of the public outcry over what some saw as excessive pensions in the public sector and their impact on the State budget crisis.

For current STRS and PERS employees, PEPRA makes only a few changes. The main points of which you need to aware are:

1. The ability to purchase “non-qualified air time” ends on December 31, 2012. This means that if you get your form into STRS by Dec. 31, 2012 (received, not post-marked), you will still be able to purchase air time during the next year or make a payment plan with STRS. After January 1, 2013, however, you will no longer be able to invest in STRS by purchasing additional service credit. You will still be able to re-deposit previous credit that you may have taken out of the system or purchase “qualified air time” (credit from work outside of CA or from previous creditable work in CA).
2. If you retire after January 1, 2013, you will have a 180 day (6 month) sit-out or a \$0 earnings limitation. That means that if you retire and choose to come back and teach one class, the earnings from that one class will be totally off-set against your STRS pension benefit for that semester. It does not mean you “cannot work”, only that you will not benefit by the income. (But unless you want to teach for free, in practical terms, it’s a six-month break in service after retirement.)

3. The earnings limitation goes UP with this law. So, once you return to part-time work after retiring you can earn up to \$40,000 per year before it counts against your pension benefit.

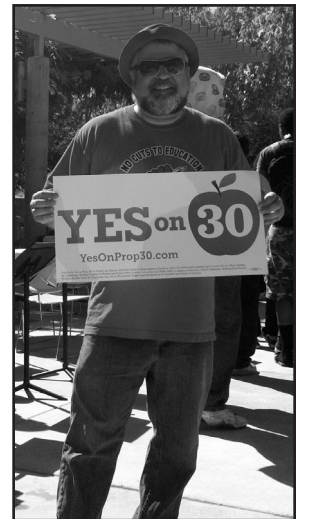
4. The new Felony Rule means that if you commit a felony while on the job, the pension benefits earned (service credit, etc.) after the conviction of the felony will not count toward the earned benefit.

As to new employees (any person hired for the first time to do creditable service after January 1, 2013), the main change affecting them will be an earnings limitation for total final compensation that can be used toward a pension and also the raising of the age factor for retirement with maximum benefits from 63 to 65. For part-time faculty, if you have been working for a district before 2013 and contributing to Social Security, Cash Balance or other retirement plan and later change to STRS Defined Benefit, you would still be considered under the old rules since that work was STRS creditable service.

If you want more information on PEPRA and STRS, the unfunded STRS liability, the possibility of an increase in contribution rates in the near future, and other related information, then come to the UF Retirement Workshop on Friday, November 30 at DVC in the BFL Conference Room at 10am (see the announcement in this issue of *TT*).

Michels to Become UF Executive Director in 2013

Beginning January 1, 2013, when DVC Music Professor Glenn Appell takes over as President of the United Faculty, CCC English Professor Jeff Michels will begin a new role as UF Executive Director (E.D.). While the President will remain the Chief Executive and Administrative Officer of the Union, in charge of day-to-day operations and grievances, the Executive Director will manage communications, including *Table Talk* and the UF web site, and lead the UF negotiating team. Like many unions that have a president and an E.D. (or business manager), this broader leadership structure should help make the President’s job more manageable, while improving local services.



Over the past several years, the UF has experimented with a variety of communications positions, but except for updating the web page and creating a part-time faculty handbook, many key goals have gone unrealized. For example, the E-Board has often discussed the need for a department-chair handbook and guide to creating bylaws. We need an on-line training tool for faculty evaluations. A UF Facebook page might be a good way to share information quickly, and a database of off-campus email addresses for members would help us with political advocacy. As E.D., Michels hopes to make progress in these areas while leaving Appell free to focus on improving in-person outreach, such as faculty meetings and work with senate and college leadership. We are also clarifying and in some cases expanding the duties of UF Vice Presidents and our Treasurer. UF leadership will continue to serve statewide as well: with FACCC, CCCI, CPFA and other groups. This work is time consuming, but it pays off when our UF leaders are well known and influential in statewide policy discussions.