

New General UF Survey in Advance of Negotiations

As we have done most years recently, the UF will be conducting a general member survey in advance of negotiations this year, to ask faculty not only about their priorities and opinions on key issues, but also about the state of their working conditions. The more we understand how things are going and where there are problems that need solving, the better we can represent you. So when the survey comes to your email in-box in mid-February, please take the time to complete it. And if we don't ask about something you think is important, please let us know!

This year, we will also be asking everyone to provide us with a non-district email address. We had difficulty last year organizing political action because we can't use District email for political purposes. As both a labor organization and a group that engages in political advocacy, we need to be able to reach our members off the District server once in while. We will *not* send you regular emails and fill up your in-box. But we would like to have your address on file. We are going to start a Facebook page soon for general dialog and announcements. And of course, our website will continue to be our main repository of data and resources.

Early Spring Break Raises Calendar Issues

The UF has been fielding a number of complaints about the placement of spring break this year, and since we often also hear from those unhappy about when we start and end each year, we thought we should review a few facts about the calendar.

The Academic Calendar is a negotiated item . . . to a degree. We don't ratify it in an Agreement, but by contract, the UF and District exchange proposals, and if we can't agree by the deadline, we are supposed to "roll-over" last year's calendar. In recent years, we have always reached agreement, but usually, there are few options. Because of holidays and the required number of instructional days, most of the decisions are made for us by the limits imposed by the state and the calendar itself (too many Monday holidays often cause us to start or end on odd days, for example). For the past several years, we have always had E-Board members voice dissatisfaction over the previous year's calendar, and we have always put those people in charge of the next year's calendar. The results have invariably been the same; they end by announcing that the darn thing can't be fixed.

The only truly optional piece is usually spring break. In the past, we have always selected the week for spring break by calling the local high school districts, learning what their spring breaks will be, and choosing ours to correspond to whatever week the majority of public schools are taking. They usually link theirs to Easter, either the week before or the week after. But we had heard from a number of faculty who had complained that spring break was too late and that they didn't see why it needed to be tied to Easter. So we took a stab at putting our break closer to the middle of the semester. We had surveyed faculty a few years ago, and there was no consensus on this subject. But now we will survey again, and if anyone would like to be on our calendar committee this year, email Glenn at gappell@sbcglobal.net.

President's Message



Greetings colleagues, and welcome back for our spring 2013 semester. This is my first semester as UF President, and I am honored to have the opportunity to work with you all in this essential role. While I know many of you from my 24 years in the district (10 years part-time at CCC and 14 years full-time at DVC), I thought it would be fun to introduce myself.

I am a popular-music historian and full-time faculty member teaching Jazz and Popular Music Studies at DVC. I also continue to work as a performing musician, playing trumpet, flugelhorn, har-

monica, and Plains-Indian flute. In addition, I co-authored the recently published text, *American Popular Music: A Multicultural History* (Cengage 2006). I currently serve on the FACCC Board of Governors for Region A and also have served as the UF VP for DVC the past four years. My experience as a part-timer for 14 years followed by another 14 years teaching full-time gives me a clear perspective on the issues faced by many of you. So that's me; now let's jump into the important stuff.

This fall, our union leadership initiated some basic structural changes that we are excited about. Our former president, Jeffrey Michels, will remain active in the UF serving in the newly created position of executive director as well as VP for CCC. His job will include serving as chief negotiator, *Table Talk* editor and web master, in addition to his ongoing advocacy work at the state and local levels. Deborah Dahl-Shanks has become our Benefits Director (taking advantage of her substantial knowledge and experience with STRS), and Doug Dildine is taking over as Part-Time Faculty Advocate. Katrina Keating, our treasurer, has also become a grievance officer and is a key member of our leadership team. It is important to note that these changes were made with some creative redistribution of our current budget and will not substantially change our cost of doing business.

This spring we will also be conducting workshops with members of the UF Executive Board on best practices in dispute resolution. We intend to use more of a team approach towards helping solve problems for our membership. This decentralized model will ensure that our Union leadership expands and that the best strategies for dealing with grievances are understood by more of our colleagues.

On a more political note, the economic wellbeing of our state and hence our district seems to be moving in a positive direction. We are feeling cautiously optimistic as we head into negotiations this spring. Our district seems to be moving towards a state of strong financial health, and this can only be good for all of us. If you have any questions or concerns, contact me at gappell@sbcglobal.net or contact our talented office administrator Terri Adame at uf@uf4cd.org.

United Faculty Executive Board Members

Contra Costa College	
Vern Cromartie	
Rachel Dwigigs-Beeler (PT Rep)	
Stuart Lichter	Los Medanos College
Jeffrey Michels (Vice Pres.)	Milton Clarke
Aminta Mickles	Michael Zilber (Vice Pres.)
	Luis Morales
Diablo Valley College	
Glenn Appell (President)	Jason Mayfield
Deborah Dahl-Shanks (PT Rep)	Lisa Orta
Doug Dildine (PT Faculty Advocate)	Bruce Koller
Katrina Keating (Treasurer)	Donna Wapner
Marina Crouse	(Vice Pres.)

UNITED FACULTY OFFICE

Terri Adame, Office Administrator
Glenn Appell, President; Jeff Michels, Executive Director
(925) 685-1230 x2502 or 680-1771 fax (925) 680-7283
email: uf@uf4cd.org web site: www.uf4cd.org
(Email Glenn Appell at gappell@sbcglobal.net)



Table Talk

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

February 6, 2013

News at a Glance

- Recovery Starts Now: Outlook Improving for First Time in Years
- Road Show to Discuss Wellness Plan and Blue Cross Bid
- 3rd Annual UF Benefits and Retirement Conference April 12
- California Part-Time Faculty Association to Meet at DVC
- Changes in UF Leadership: VP Ratification Vote Begins
- New General UF Survey in Advance of 2013/2014 Negotiations
- Spring Break Comes Early and Raises Calendar Questions
- President's Message: Decentralizing UF Leadership

Recovery Starts Now!

Negotiations for 2013/2014 should begin soon, and despite a long list of challenges, the atmosphere, we expect, will be substantially improved over the last few years. Instead of talking cuts, we seem finally to have turned the page to recovery; our task ahead is to discuss priorities, to capture new dollars (which may come with new and unusual strings attached), and to begin restoring and improving our district. The Governor's budget, while only a first proposal that leaves many details yet to be worked out, contains nearly \$200 million in increased apportionment funding for community colleges, plus millions more for "energy efficiency," on-line education, and adult education. We don't know yet how new money will be allocated (as COLA or growth or restoration); we don't know if categorical funding will be restored. (The Governor's budget makes no mention of categoricals, but some will fight to see them included in the "May Revise.") There are also policy proposals in the budget that have faculty and students concerned: a 90-unit cap and a fairly confusing "revenue-neutral" 5-year plan to base funding on student course completion rather than initial enrollment. There is a lot of politics ahead, and we don't yet know what our district will receive exactly or what changes, if any, we'll be asked to implement. But one thing is clear: the public has voted to increase investment in education, and the money is coming. Our colleges are already adding sections and restoring some programs. We should be able to restore some jobs. And the UF will seek this year to address equity issues and deficiencies in our working conditions (such as salaries that are not keeping up with the cost of living). We may not be able to restore or improve everything at once. But thanks to the voters of California, we can finally stop dismantling our colleges and get back to the work of improving them.

**"Community college
funding will grow
significantly over the
next several years."**

CA Governor Jerry Brown

Road Show to Discuss Wellness Plan and Blue Cross Bid

As negotiations for 2013/2014 get underway this month, one likely first step may be a “road show” to familiarize everyone with two key elements we’ve been discussing in workgroups: a bid from Anthem Blue Cross to replace HeathNet as our non-Kaiser provider, and a “wellness plan” managed by a company called Engagement Health, which would seek to lower health insurance costs in the long run by incentivizing behaviors that improve employee health. Look for details coming soon, and see below for a discussion of what a wellness program would entail (and one opinion about its potential worth).



EDITORIAL Why Wellness?

by Jeffrey Michels

The wellness program we are considering is one of the most comprehensive in the industry, but it’s also pretty simple. Participation is incentivized (it may save or earn you \$600/year to participate). Participants are asked to choose one category from a list that includes:

exercise; nutrition; tobacco cessation; diabetes prevention; cholesterol; blood pressure; stress management; and fitness (for those who regularly exercise already). In each program, participants are asked to monitor their health and report-in weekly (by computer or at a kiosk). Also, four times a year, one must speak to a nurse by phone. One need not actually lose weight or exercise more to earn the incentive and “succeed.” It is mostly about consciousness raising, based on the theory that the more people learn and think about their health, the healthier their choices will become. Because insurance rates are partly based on how much medical care our employees need, if we become a healthier group on average, we can “bend trend,” as they say in the industry, and thus negotiate lower rates (or lower increases).

Yes, there are details to discuss and some problems with the approach. Even though privacy is protected (your employer won’t ever have access to your reports), it does seem a bit like the health-police keeping tabs on us, and weekly check-ins, however easy, are likely to be annoying. But I am convinced for several reasons that this is the best approach to rising health-care costs and that we should not only agree to try it but start soon. First, all the data I’ve seen suggests not only that wellness plans work but that they are the only thing that works in lowering health-care costs. Study after study shows that wellness plans bend trends and can save big money. We have listed links to some studies on the UF website (www.uf4cd.org), and we’ll share more in *Table Talk* too. Second, of all the things we could do to lower health-care costs, this is the only option that doesn’t shift costs to employees or lower the quality of coverage. While some Bay-10 districts have been negotiating caps (where employees become responsible for increases) or joining consortiums with plans that offer less and cost employees more, we have been looking at cutting-edge options that offer more and cost less (including the Blue Cross “EPO” and the Engagement wellness program). If we endorse these plans in the next few months, we’ll have achieved a rare win-win in health care; we’ll have improved coverage, lowered costs, addressed the long-term problem, and we may get healthier in the bargain too.

UF Benefits/Retirement Conference April 12

The third annual UF Benefits and Retirement Conference will be held this year at Diablo Valley College on Friday, April 12 from 9:30am to 3:30pm in the Diablo Room (cafeteria). This year, the conference will focus on health care, as the interest in health-care exchanges, wellness plans, and evolving issues of health-care reform are hot topics of conversation. The conference will again be co-sponsored by the Faculty Association of California Community Colleges (FACCC) and will have numerous health-care representatives and investment vendors in attendance, a keynote speaker (to be announced), and many breakout sessions and workshops. Topics will include retirement planning, CalSTRS, CalPERS, CalSTRS Pension2, Social Security, “Understanding Benefits in the Contract” (leaves; banked load; our Employee Assistance Program), and other topics to plan for your future. As always, the event will be free and open to family members as well as 4CD staff and managers, so save the date! Registration details will come soon.

California Part-Time Faculty Association to Meet at DVC

The California Part-time Faculty Association (CPFA) will be holding its annual conference at Diablo Valley College on Saturday, April 20 from 9:30am to 4:30pm in the Trophy Room. Although the CPFA conference is part-time-faculty specific, all faculty are welcome. The opening speaker will be FACCC Executive Director Jonathan Lightman, who will share with us the “pulse of Sacramento” about the state of the State budget, categorical funds, and the Governor’s proposals for community-college reform. There will be a presentation on Health Care Exchanges and how part-time faculty can participate and benefit from the new law that will take effect on January 1, 2014. The keynote speaker will be Sharon Hendrickson, our community-college representative on the CalSTRS Advisory Board, who will report on the STRS unfunded liability and plans for solutions. There will be an update on the state of legislation that affects the CCC system and movements to improve the professionalization of part-time faculty. There will also be an open social hour and dinner following the conference at 5pm. More specifics on registering for the conference will come soon (and be posted on the UF website: www.uf4cd.org).

Changes in UF Leadership Require Ratification

The election of a new United Faculty President means changes in other leadership posts as well. For the Vice Presidents and Part-Time Faculty Advocate, these appointments require ratification by our members. A ballot to confirm UF President Appell’s appointments is being delivered along with this issue of *Table Talk*. Ballots in this yes-or-no vote are due back in the UF office by February 21 at 12noon. Members may vote by paper ballot, or by phone, email or fax. For details, see your ballot or call Terri Adame at 925-680-1771. The new leadership appointments are as follows:

- Vice President for DVC: Donna Wapner
- Vice President for LMC: Michael Zilber
- Vice President for CCC: Jeffrey Michels
- Part-Time Faculty Advocate: Douglas Dildine

These are the only leadership posts that require ratification according

to the UF constitution. Other positions are often available, and we sometimes have vacancies on the E-Board (elected positions) as well. To find out more about how to get involved in UF leadership, contact Glenn Appell at gappell@sbcglobal.net.

Not Leaving, Just Changing

by Deborah Dahl Shanks

It is with both sadness and joy that I leave my UF job as the Part-Time Faculty Advocate and hand it over to Doug Dildine. Doug has served for many years as one of the part-time faculty representatives on the DVC Faculty Senate Council (a position I held for 8 years prior to my UF position) and the last couple years as the DVC PT Representative on the UF E-Board. I have served the UF for 10 years, first as the DVC PT Representative and then as the Part-Time Faculty Advocate. As in all things, sometimes it is best to hand over the reins to new people and give a fresh perspective to the job. That said, I am not leaving the UF, just changing roles. I will be taking over as the DVC PT Representative and adding the role of UF Benefits Director. Part-timers and full-timers should feel free to contact me in regards to issues dealing with STRS retirement, leaves of absence, health/dental/vision plans, and other benefits issues. You can look to Doug for issues regarding part-time-faculty rights, evaluations, contract issues, staffing preference, and even academic and professional issues. I will continue to serve the needs of the UF in any capacity that helps us be more effective and builds a stronger and more united college community. You may contact me via email at deborahadahl@aol.com or on the Part-Time listserv (contact me if you would like to join).



Just Changing, Not Leaving

By Douglas Dildine



Change is inevitable – yet, it is challenging to those of us who enjoy stability and the comfort of familiar surroundings. In addition, being a student (and teacher) of the performing arts, I know that it is worrisome to follow a great performer onto the stage. One wishes for a nicely timed intermission so that the joyous memories of what has just wowed the audience might fade before a stark comparison can be made. I first met Deborah Dahl-Shanks 12 years ago when she helped me take my first steps as an adjunct at DVC. Since then she has been a constant mentor, colleague and friend to me, as she has to the entire part-time faculty in our district. Now, we will both be expanding our roles, and as we work together to serve the needs of the UF, we hope that more part-time faculty will begin to expand their participation: helping serve their colleagues, college, district and ultimately the students who benefit when we make changes for the better. I look forward to taking on the role of Part-Time Faculty Advocate, serving the faculty of all three colleges on issues regarding part-time faculty rights and working conditions. You may contact me via email at douglas@astound.net or via the PT listserv.