

UF/CCCI Accreditation-Reform Strategy Pays Off

The California Community College Board of Governors voted last week, in response to a recommendation by the Bureau of State Audits, to change their regulations and allow competition for the accreditation of community colleges in California. Accrediting agencies are selected for seven-year terms, so change may come slowly, but the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) will no longer have exclusive rights in California. If there is no reform, in other words, the State Chancellor now has the authority to select a different agency to accredit California colleges.

This change is the direct result of a strategy spearheaded by the California Community College Independents (CCCI), which pressed for the State audit of the ACCJC. For years, the UF has helped lead the call for accreditation reform whenever we met with statewide legislators or faculty leaders, and especially at our meetings with CCCI, the statewide conglomeration of independent faculty unions to which the UF belongs. We helped write a resolution adopted by CCCI and endorsed by the statewide Academic Senate expressing our lack of confidence in the ACCJC, and after that stirred the pot but didn't lead to major changes, we pressed CCCI to hire a lobbyist and get more aggressive in Sacramento (especially on the issue of accreditation).

Along with the faculty unions from Santa Monica and Foothill/DeAnza, the UF has been contributing a major portion of our Political Action Fund to funding the CCCI lobbyist whom we helped hire: David Balla Hawkins. Hawkins has worked closely with FACCC as well as CFT and CTA, but each group always lobbies a bit differently and has different priorities. The audit became the centerpiece of our strategy in 2012-13, and we were thrilled when we got bipartisan support from the Joint Legislative Audit Committee. Now that the audit recommendations have led to a change in regulations eliminating the ACCJC's monopoly in California, we know that our efforts have paid off. With CFT and the San Francisco City Attorney also winning battles in court, we may finally be bringing enough pressure to bear to see real reform in our burdensome, distracting, costly accreditation process.

UF Election Committee to Review Policies, Create Manual

Following some concerns raised in our most recent election, newly elected UF President Donna Wapner has called for the formation of a committee to review election protocols and procedures, recommend changes, if needed, to the UF Constitution, and to create a manual for future elections. Any member who would like to participate will be welcome. (We would particularly like some faculty who are not currently serving on our Executive Board to join in.) The schedule and time line will be determined once the committee has been formed. If you would like to participate, please email Donna at dwapner@sbcglobal.net.

FACCC Seeks Funding to Increase FT/PT Faculty Ratios

The Faculty Association of California Community Colleges has been pressing hard for money in the State budget aimed at improving the full-time to part-time faculty ratios at our colleges. For more on FACCC's legislative priorities this year, visit their website: www.faccc.org.

President's Message

Hello UF Members. I am glad to begin my term as UF President. It is my hope that this year we will make strides on a number of fronts. Salaries and workload inequities are high on my list to address. One issue that has not received enough attention in recent years concerns the way faculty get frozen for years at a time on our salary schedule without step increases. Senior full-time faculty often find themselves stuck at the top of the salary schedule and can go years and years without even a minor bump in pay. That is bad for morale, a bad model, and needs to change. (Management and some classified staff in our district have had longevity steps for years - even during the last terrible recession.) In fact, when we compare salaries around the State using the Santa Rosa Data (now available on the UF website), we see that we rank 5th out of 72 Districts in maximum salary for first-year new hires. That's pretty good! It may help us attract good faculty. But we rank 55th out of 72 in maximum salary at the top of the schedule. That's terrible, especially when one considers how expensive it is to live in the Bay Area. It is time we fix this. We need to add steps or longevity bonuses and also take a hard look at the salary schedule itself.

Part-time parity in our district is also too low. Our part-time salaries are much further from the top third of the Bay 10 than our full-time salaries, and we pay less than many nearby districts with whom we compete directly for the best faculty. Most districts have already agreed to long-term plans that have raised part-time pay and overload pay. It is time we did the same. Also, part-timers need to be compensated for office hours proportional to their teaching assignments. Students need equal access to all their instructors. And part-timers wind up spending lots of time outside of class with students for which they are not fairly paid.

We also want to address load issues. We have underpaid science labs, coaches who don't get enough release-time to coach their teams, and other long-standing inequities that finally need to be addressed. Program leads must be compensated, and department chairs' pay and release time need to increase - it has not kept up with work demands. SLO and Accreditation paperwork is excessive, and we need to keep pushing back so that we can concentrate on our primary responsibility: teaching students in our classrooms. We need to address parking shortfalls and make sure faculty aren't left out of the planning for new bond-financed building. We also have major hurdles coming to protect our benefits and deal with STRS and PERS contribution increases.

I invite you to communicate with the Union and let us know what's on your priority list. We will send out a survey soon; we need everyone to take the time to complete it. And if you don't hear your issue in our mix, don't stew. Send me an email and tell me what needs fixing. We are a diverse faculty of nearly 1500 educators, and there are many collective and individual situations that need attention. I look forward to working with the UF Executive Board and all of you as we strive to improve working conditions so that we can best serve our students.

United Faculty Executive Board Members

<u>Contra Costa College</u>	<u>Los Medanos College</u>
Vern Cromartie	Milton Clarke (Vice Pres.)
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Jeffrey Michels (Vice Pres.)	Luis Morales
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Doug Dildine (PT Faculty Advocate)	Bruce Koller
Katrina Keating	Donna Wapner
Marina Crouse (Vice President)	(President)

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Table Talk

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

January 28, 2015

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Negotiation Update: Compensation Talks Continue

UF/CCCCD negotiations for 2015/2016 will begin with an all-day session on February 20, and the UF is cautiously optimistic that new ongoing money in the Governor's proposed budget, including a Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) of 1.58% plus \$125 million in increased apportionment funding for such costs as retirement contributions and converting part-time faculty to full time, will allow for both salary increases and addressing other financial needs. Our list is long and includes longevity bonuses or additional steps at the top of the salary schedule; increased support for department chairs and program leads; funding to make load adjustments based on Load Task Force recommendations; progress in part-time parity and proportional office hours; and of course, protecting benefits. Soon, we will survey faculty to ask about priorities. But before we dive into the 2015/2016 budget and new negotiations, we still need to finish 2014/2015 and agree on the outcome of our salary formula.

The delay this year has been mainly due to the UF not wanting to accept less than the full statutory COLA amount over the two years of the Agreement, which was our bottom line from the start. But we have also been reticent to "reopen" compensation negotiations, as the Agreement would allow, because that would mean having to re-negotiate the 2% raise from 2013/2014, which could be at risk of sunseting and becoming only a one-time bonus. Of course, in terms of "total compensation," including benefits costs and increased retirement contributions, the District has already exceeded the COLA amounts; in fact, our health insurance premiums went up more in 2014/2015 than the entire State COLA our District received. But after five years of losing ground against the cost of living during the recession, we simply do not feel that faculty should continue to lose ground during the recovery. The District has deep reserves, and the financial outlook for the next few years seems strong. So if benefits costs are a drain, we

need to keep seeking ways to address that. But in the meantime, faculty salaries need to recover and improve. So we have kept talking in our compensation workgroup looking for a way to make the formula succeed and waiting to see if higher-than-expected State revenues might mean more funds for 2014/2015.

Our next workgroup meeting is scheduled for February 4, and both UF and CCCCD have expressed a strong interest in making that our final meeting and coming to resolution. At this point, we have shifted the conversation a bit to consider bridging the gap from our 2% raise in 2013/2014 to this spring's negotiations for 2015/2016 with an off-schedule, one-year-only salary increase (or bonus) for 2014/2015. From the UF's perspective, though this is not an ideal resolution, it would mean salaries would keep up with the cost of living (or a little better) for both 2013/2014 and 2014/2015, and then we could seek this spring to negotiate for 2015/2016 to make the increase permanent. Of course, there would be no guarantees, and off-schedule bonuses do not improve our pensions the way on-schedule raises do. But last year's 2% would become permanent, and a bonus for 2014/2015 would move us to 2015/2016 compensation talks without our having lost ground. There are still details to be worked out, but in principle, the District seems willing to tap into reserves this year for the plan described above.

In light of the Governor's proposed budget, 2015/2016 seems likely to be a better year for improving salaries, but we still face tough decisions as a bargaining unit. Our longstanding goal of paying salaries in the "top third of the Bay 10" may depend on how we handle benefits in the next couple of years. When one considers "total compensation" (meaning salary plus benefits), and when one filters out the "Basic Aid districts" that get money from local taxes rather than State apportionment, our district is near the top for full-time faculty (especially those with families on the Blue Cross EPO plan), because we pay a lower share of our health care premiums than faculty in some districts with higher salaries. But when one ignores benefits premiums and just looks at salary schedules, we rank a lot lower (in the middle of the Bay 10 and in the lower middle of the whole state too). In other words, some of the money our district could be paying in salaries, they are paying in benefits.

In 2018, the Federal Government is scheduled to impose a new "Cadillac Tax" on the most expensive plans, and we believe some or all of our plans may cross the line. So we may have extra incentives to consider increasing copays or deductibles to lower premiums and using the savings to increase salaries. This is not to say that the only way our district could increase salaries is to cut benefits. Obviously, we must continue to press for efficiencies in administration as well as better funding from the State. Taking money from one of our pockets (benefits) to give it us for our other pocket (salaries) is not a raise; it's just a shift. But it may be a shift we want to consider in the coming months and years. There are other factors too, of course: benefits are not taxed the way salaries are. Then again, money spent on benefits does not increase pensions as do higher salaries. Look for a survey and some Union meetings to discuss negotiation priorities and goals coming soon.

Donna Wapner Begins Term as United Faculty President

Donna Wapner began a two-year term as UF President on 1/1/2015. A former UF Vice President, she teaches Health Science at DVC. Her first steps have been to convene a contract-review training (which met last week for a reading of the contract), to call for a UF Elections Committee (see below), to appoint Vice Presidents as required by the UF Constitution, and to propose a collaboration with Faculty Senates to explore compressed calendar options.



Elections Begin to Confirm Appointed Vice Presidents



Marina Crouse
DVC



Jeffrey Michels
CCC

As prescribed by the UF Constitution, newly elected UF President Donna Wapner has appointed three vice presidents and a Part-Time Faculty Advocate for two-year terms. Each VP needs to be confirmed by a vote of the members on his or her campus. The PTFA must be confirmed by a vote of all members.

The confirmation votes will be conducted electronically beginning Monday, February 2, with votes due by noon on Wednesday, February 11. Members will receive a link to vote with instructions via campus email.

Wapner's appointments are Marina Crouse as VP for DVC and SRC; Milton Clarke as VP for LMC and Brentwood; Jeff Michels as VP for CCC; and Doug Dildine as Part-Time Faculty Advocate. Michels and Dildine have already served a term in the positions to which they are being reappointed. Crouse and Clarke are both veteran E-Board members, but will be first-time VPs. Crouse teaches Spanish at DVC and has taught at SRC. Clarke teaches Political Science at LMC.



Milton Clarke
LMC



Doug Dildine
Part-Time Faculty
Advocate

Tim Farley Elected to CCCCD Governing Board

Endorsed by both the UF and Local 1, Tim Farley won a seat on the CCCCD Governing Board by a wide margin, joining reelected trustees John Marquez (a former CCC part-time faculty member) and John Nejedly (5 terms as trustee, now Board President). Vicki Gordon (who served 15 years on the Martinez Unified School Board) and Greg Enholm (a math professor and library commissioner) round out the five-member



John Nejedly, John Marquez and Tim Farley being sworn in as District Trustees by former UF President and DVC Professor Bill Harlan.

Board. Mr. Farley chose his former DVC English Professor (also a former UF President) Bill Harlan to conduct his swearing in.

Compressed Calendar Talks to Begin This Spring

The District has informed the UF that they would like to begin talks this semester about moving to 16-week semesters (rather than our current 18 weeks). There is a good deal of recent data that suggests that students prefer and do better in the 16-week format, and condensing the calendar might have a number of positive effects on the District (allowing us, for example, to offer both winter and summer intersessions and perhaps drawing some students from neighboring districts that have not yet gone to shorter semesters). On the other hand, many faculty have concerns that fewer weeks mean less time for students to learn and would require significant revision of curriculum (a lot of extra work for faculty and not necessarily good for students). Working with our Academic Senates, the UF is planning to host some open meetings to discuss the compressed calendar, and we will be making a good deal of data as well as arguments for and against available on the UF website soon. Look for our announcements and likely a survey too as discussions get going later this semester.

Load Task Force Starts with Review of Science Courses

The Districtwide Load Task Force has begun the work of reviewing courses throughout our district, and local Task Force Groups have started meeting with departments to review load and class size for every class and seek any department recommendations for change. The Task Force has started with science courses, but will soon begin looking at other areas as well. Eventually, the plan is for Task Force Groups to meet with every department in the district. So far, the work is going well, and the meetings have been productive. Once the meetings with science faculty are complete, the Task Force will make recommendations to the negotiating teams. We hope to start seeing results soon.

District Begins Benefits-Eligibility Audit

As was agreed in last year's collective bargaining, the District has started a benefits audit using a private firm that has sent letters to all faculty who have family members on District benefits. They are asking for marriage certificates, birth certificates (for kids) and recent tax forms. The firm is one that other districts have used. They guarantee the confidentiality of all documents, and they only get paid if they save the District money (so there is no financial risk and should be some gain). Still, many faculty have found the audit intrusive and annoying. Tracking down the forms is often difficult, and some have been insulted by the suggestion that faculty have been doing something wrong. These issues certainly came up when we agreed to the audit, but the general consensus at the table was that the pain would be worth the gain.

These audits often find significant mistakes (even where employees are paying for family members they don't realize are still on their plans after a divorce or other change). With health care costs continuing to divert money from salaries, we want to be open to any solution that does not shift costs to employees or reduce access to high quality medical care. The audit may be trying our patience a little, but it is a one-time-only annoyance that we hope will save ongoing money (leaving more for salary and equity issues in negotiations next year).