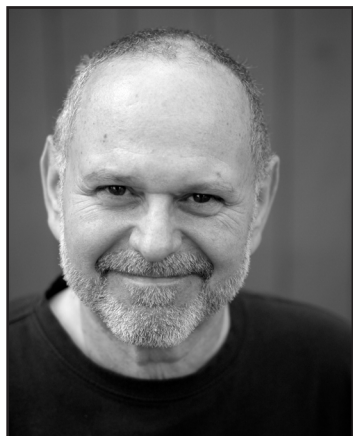


Two UF Leaders Run for FACCC Board of Governors



UF Part-Time Faculty Advocate Douglas Dildine is running to be Part-Time Faculty Officer on the FACCC Board

Elections for the Faculty Association of California Community Colleges' Board of Governors are now underway and will continue through April 30, 2015. Since the UF is now a contract member of FACCC, all UF members may vote in the FACCC election and should have received a link electronically from FACCC. If you have not received a voting link, you may contact FACCC directly or call Terri in the UF Office at 925-680-1771.

Former UF President Glenn Appell is stepping down from the FACCC Board this year, but current President Donna Wapner has agreed to fill his seat as Governor for Region A, and she is running unopposed.

Also running for a seat on the FACCC Board as Part-Time Faculty Officer is UF Part-Time Faculty Advocate Douglas Dildine. Doug was named FACCC's Part-Time Faculty Member of the Year in 2013, and in 2015, he won the State Academic Senate of California Community College's Hayward Award for Excellence in Education. He is running against two other part-time faculty leaders.

All the candidates have statements available on the FACCC voting page. Doug says he is running to "end the downward-spiraling system of overworked full-time faculty and the exploitation of part-time faculty." He notes that Congressman George Miller has called our two-tier system a "fraud" perpetrated upon our students. All students deserve full-service faculty, so Doug advocates increasing funding for full-time hires and reaching parity and employment rights for part-timers. Doug has been a contingent Theatre Arts professor for fifteen years at CCC, DVC and LMC, serving as the Drama Department coordinator at CCC in 2013-2014. For nine years, he was the Faculty Senate Part-Time Representative at DVC.

Assembly Member Susan Bonilla in Run-Off for CA Senate



Former teacher and CA Assembly Member Susan Bonilla will face Orinda Mayor Steve Glazer in a special runoff election on May 19 to fill Marc DeSaulnier's seat in the State Assembly representing District 7 (most of East and Central Contra Costa County and the Tri-Valley region of Alameda County). Both FACCC and the UF have endorsed Bonilla

for her pro-labor and pro-education record, noting that Bonilla has been a key ally in faculty efforts to influence the budget, as well as legislation that affects community colleges. "Bonilla has been the UF's best friend in the legislature," says UF Executive Director Jeff Michels. "She cares about education, and she thinks like a teacher. Plus she and her staff always seem willing to talk strategy: how to turn ideas into concrete plans." Glazer, on the other hand, has angered labor groups by supporting a cap on pension benefits and banning BART strikes.

President's Message

Every month, as President of our United Faculty, I give a speech to the District Governing Board that lasts five minutes. It's called a "constituency report," and I usually follow the Faculty Senate Coordinating Council and District Governing Council. The Classified Senate and Local 1, the Classified Union, give reports as well. Although Governing Board meetings are open to the public, and there is time set aside at the beginning of every meeting for anyone to make a "public comment" of up to two minutes, our District also reserves time for each constituency group to speak. In this, we are in the minority. Most districts do not set aside time specifically for their faculty union to give a report.

My report this month was typical of UF reports over the years. I started out on a positive note, thanking the Board for a tenure reception I had attended before the meeting where the Trustees and College Presidents congratulated newly tenured full-time faculty. There were photos and speeches and food. So I noted that those moments where we celebrate one another are good for our district. Then I pointed out that our new hires face huge challenges. In the Bay Area today (with SF being the fourth least affordable housing market in the world), one needs an income of over \$140,000 to afford a median home. No faculty member makes anywhere near that much. Most new hires, I pointed out, begin their careers deep in debt. Earning a Master's Degree or Ph.D. these days usually means lots of borrowing -- for many, over \$100,000. And many faculty are surprised to learn, once they finally land the full-time job that seems so hard to win these days, that the salary doesn't allow one to pay off old debts and establish a middle-class life with a house and family. It takes overload and a spouse with a good job too, and even then, it's a lot harder than it should be. Those who have recently been offered full-time positions have not always accepted them due to salary and cost of living concerns. For part-time faculty, the picture is even bleaker, without job security or a living wage. Even now, when we finally seem to have some full-time openings, most part-timers who apply for full-time jobs won't even get interviews. The competition is fierce, and the prospects, unfortunately, remain discouraging.

Thus my report to the Board turned towards an earnest plea: that we find ways to increase compensation and make faculty feel valued again; that we take risks as an organization to create full-time jobs; that we not turn away from these challenges to admire the new buildings our bonds are funding. My message to the Board is as mixed as the messages we get back, from our managers and from the Legislature. They tell us how important we are and how important is student success to the future of our state and nation.

But they underfund classrooms and emphasize paperwork over good teaching. They celebrate "innovation" and fund special projects, but the system they administer barely allows faculty time to prepare for classes or respond to student work. The UF will continue to fight for working conditions and pay that allow faculty to be teachers first, adding release time for administrative duties and hiring more full-timers to share in that work. The outlook remains...mixed.

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Vern Cromartie	Milton Clarke (Vice Pres.)
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Table Talk

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

April 9, 2015

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Compressed Calendar Videos Posted; Survey Coming Next

The United Faculty has not yet taken any position on the so-called "compressed calendar," a plan that would move CCCCD to 16-week semesters in fall and spring (beginning, at the earliest, in fall of 2016). But when the District informed the UF earlier this year that they were interested in moving to shorter semesters (motivated, they said, by mounting evidence that 16-week semesters are better for students), we agreed to help organize a district-wide discussion.

In March, we invited several faculty leaders from colleges that have already moved to 16-week semesters to come speak with our members. We videotaped these meetings, and all three videos are now available for review on the UF website: www.uf4cd.org. These include a meeting at CCC with Ken Wagman, Math Professor and Chair of the Natural Sciences Department at Gavilan College in Gilroy. Professor Wagman, who has served as both Academic Senate President and Union President at Gavilan College, was also the Chair of their Calendar Task Force when Gavilan was considering moving to a 16-week calendar. At DVC and LMC, we had Mitra Moassessi, Math Professor at Santa Monica College and President of the SMC Faculty Association; Fran Chandler, Business Professor at SMC, who was Faculty Association President during the transition to 16-week semesters and is SMC's current Academic Senate President-Elect; and Donald Brown, a Librarian at El Camino College. He was Chief Negotiator during their transition to a compressed calendar.

The CCC and LMC meetings (which coincided with Academic Senate meetings) were better attended, and those videos turned out better (the DVC video is in six parts), but we posted all three on the website. We also have posted a good deal of printed material to help inform faculty of the pros and cons of compressing the calendar.

Those who support moving to 16-week semesters point to a number of factors. For students, supporters note that some research shows that shorter semesters can improve retention and outcomes (or at least

do not have a negative impact) and can better prepare students for universities where semesters are usually 16 weeks. Some also think the shorter semester would give CCCCD a competitive edge over other Bay Area districts, as students might opt for two more weeks of summer work or vacation, have similar schedules to their children (if they are parents) and not need to find extra daycare, and thus, pick CCCCD over districts that start earlier – as well as provide time for creative possibilities like “bootcamps” in developmental education or counseling arenas during a winter intersession. For most full-time faculty, the change would mean four more weeks to prepare for classes and more time to recharge our batteries while not affecting our salary. For part-timers, an expanded summer session and the possibility of adding a winter session might mean more job opportunities.

Those opposed to shorter semesters look with skepticism at any data that suggests students are more successful with fewer weeks in class. Since fewer weeks means fewer experiments in science labs, fewer revisions in writing classes, less practice time in math classes and so on, opponents suggest that as teachers, we should reject proposals for less school and more vacation for students. They note that faculty are overworked as it is, and two fewer weeks each semester to cover the same material and complete the same administrative tasks (like Program Review and SLO paperwork) will just make matters worse.

Both sides have valid arguments, and clearly there are important pedagogical and professional considerations as well as workplace and job-quality issues at stake. So the UF has asked our three Academic Senates for advisories. DVC’s Academic Senate voted last week to support the Compressed Calendar concept. At LMC and CCC, the senates have not yet completed votes.

The UF is also planning a district-wide survey, to begin next week, asking our faculty not just whether or not they support moving to a 16-week semester, but also a number of more detailed questions about choices and issues we may face in collective bargaining, should we wind up moving forward on the compressed calendar. These include schedules for non-instructional faculty and possible stipends for faculty to revise courses and syllabi to fit shorter semesters.

One of the most frustrating aspects of the whole discussion has been the difficulty in asking and answering specific questions about how classes might be affected. How many minutes, faculty want to know, would be added to each class in a 16-week semester? How would the block schedule be affected? Since the schedule itself, unlike the academic calendar, is not negotiated but rather is handled at each college, and since there are a variety of options available in the 16-week format (based on attendance accounting rules that sometimes allow for round-ups and other complicating factors), we have not yet been able to produce a reliable schedule proposal for faculty to review.

Once the survey is complete, and once the Senates have all advised us, the UF will work in collective bargaining to come up with a calendar plan that meets faculty interests. Any substantial change would be part of a Tentative Agreement that UF members would need to ratify in a vote. In the meantime, we are continuing to seek opinions, data and details (especially a sample schedule) to help inform our faculty.

Negotiating Teams Talk Benefits: Cadillac Tax and Wellness

The UF and CCCCD have begun discussing benefit options in negotiations, looking for both short-term and long-term ideas that might help us curb costs without sacrificing quality.

Changes in health benefits must usually be negotiated well in advance. This is mainly a function of the calendar: the UF and CCCCD negotiate every spring, and because of the State Budget Process (including the “May Revise,” which leads to the final budget in June), we tend to finalize agreements after the summer break in August or September. But our benefit plans renew on July 1. So if we were to negotiate any changes in benefits this year, as part of our 2015/2016 Agreement, they would almost certainly be for 2016/2017 at the soonest.

In 2018, the Affordable Care Act (ACA -- often called ObamaCare) mandates a new federal tax on so-called “Cadillac Plans” -- those with high premiums. Based on our current rates, several of our Blue Cross plans (HMO family and EPO single and family) are significantly over the expected threshold.

Since the tax is high (40%), we need to be thinking ahead, but we also want to avoid making changes too quickly just to avoid the tax, especially considering the substantial opposition to the ACA in Congress. By 2018, it is possible the tax will change or be repealed, depending in part on the 2016 presidential elections. So we want the Cadillac Tax to be part of our thinking but not let it drive negotiations this year.

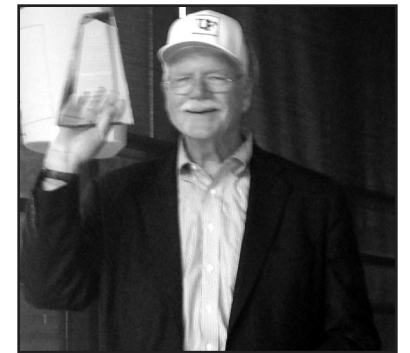
We are also on the lookout for benefit changes that might allow us to afford bigger raises by shifting some compensation dollars from benefits to salaries. At the same time, we want to maintain great health benefits and avoid simply shifting the burden of future increases to our employees (a trade that other districts have made and now regret).

Mostly, decreasing health insurance premiums does require increasing costs for use (copays for drugs or office visits, or adding deductibles for hospitalization and medical procedures). But there are other ways we might save money on health care. One loophole of sorts in our contract involves retiree benefits (a big expense) and whether or not one must enter a Medicare-coordinated plan to participate in district benefits. We have tried to address this in collective bargaining before, but our previous agreements have not fixed the problem. At present, there are about 60 retirees who have chosen to take district benefits but have not gone into a Medicare-coordinated plan. This costs the District about \$10,000 extra for each member, so that’s \$600,000 a year so that these retirees can keep what amounts to double insurance. If we closed this loophole going forward for future retirees, it might generate savings without really degrading our health benefits.

One other option that we have discussed before is wellness. Many recent studies suggest that wellness plans are the best antidote to rising health care usage costs. An incentive-based wellness plan that would offer faculty compensation for participating (maybe using some reserve dollars) might lower costs without affecting quality. These plans take a couple of years to show results, so we would need to start soon. We will provide more details if ideas gain traction in negotiations.

UF/FACCC Benefits and Retirement Conference a Hit

More than 140 faculty participated in our annual UF/FACCC Benefits and Retirement Conference on March 20 at DVC, and were treated to rousing speeches by California Community College Independents (CCCI) lobbyist David Balla-Hawkins and retired US Congressman George Miller, as well as seminars on a wide range of benefits and retirement issues. Following up, Hawkins provided the UF with some interesting documents, including one on “Pension Myths and Facts” and one on “Unethical Corporations” (both subjects that came up during his talk). These have been posted on the UF website: www.uf4cd.org.



Retired Congressman George Miller (in a UF cap) accepts a Lifetime Achievement Award from the UF and Faculty Association

2014-2015 Tentative Agreement Ratified by UF Members

UF members ratified our 2014-2015 Tentative Agreement regarding compensation by a vote of 293 YES and 23 NO. The District Governing Board is expected to ratify the TA at its meeting on April 22. Thanks to everyone who participated in our ratification vote.

2015-2016 Negotiations Update and Timeline

The UF and CCCCD negotiating teams have been meeting regularly on Fridays and will continue, on and off, throughout April and May, but we do not anticipate reaching an agreement for 2015-2016 until early in the fall 2015 semester. This is mainly because so many of the issues we are considering this year involve money, and the State budget will not be settled until June. The District has expressed a desire to negotiate changes to the faculty evaluation forms and procedures in order to address recommendations made by the Accrediting Commission earlier this year. These changes need to be negotiated before October, when follow-up accreditation visits are scheduled. The UF has agreed to consider appropriate changes so long as we do so as part of an overall agreement this year and not as a separate piece. So we anticipate that both sides will be motivated to reach an agreement by the end of September.

So far, discussions in negotiations have covered salary and benefits (including across-the-board raises, longevity bonuses or additional steps for senior faculty, options for saving money in health benefits, wellness programs, annualizing premiums for part-time faculty, and adding a less expensive benefits option [a so-called bronze plan]); department-chair and program-lead compensation; load-task-force recommendations related to science labs; part-time office hours; and the academic calendar. Still ahead, we expect to discuss coaching assignments, faculty evaluations, intellectual property rights and distance education. We have been moving slowly but steadily, laying the groundwork, we hope, for straw designs once the financial picture becomes clearer and once both sides have had time to review the preliminary ideas we have discussed at the table.