

Negotiations Over Equity Issues Remain Open

The TA ends with an unusually long list of articles and issues remaining open for 2016-2017. This is mainly because the negotiating teams spent considerable time working on all these issues but did not reach agreement in time to include them in this TA.

Having surveyed and heard from members over the past few years, the UF Executive Board understands that equity issues are as important to many faculty as salary increases. And some of the issues on the table this year, like defining and compensating "Program Leads" or better supporting coaches have been discussed in negotiations for years now without ever making significant progress. Adjusting science lab loads has seemed a particularly slow and frustrating process.

Last year, we were finally able to get new language into the contract to establish multiple types of lab assignments (including a level that loads the same as lectures). We established a "Load Task Force" to review loads throughout the District. And we started with hard science. (Our original plan was to review several disciplines in the first year, but the Task Force itself voted to start with just science as a kind of test-run.) Local task force groups (including college vice presidents and UF reps) met last year with every science department in the District, and we compiled a list of every science lab offered including notes on how much work was involved in teaching each section (and lots of other data, from class size to facilities limits). Finally, members of the Task Force met with the negotiating teams, and after much discussion, the teams seemed to agree that a one-size-fits-all solution made the most sense for hard-science labs, that we should change them all from "Lab 2" to "Lab 1" and thus load them the same as lecture.

But we had trouble agreeing on what that change would cost. And as we neared agreement, other issues were raised, such as class sizes in lectures linked to labs and possible cost offsets in other areas that we had not yet discussed. We pressed for agreement on even a pilot program, but the teams could not reach consensus.

We encountered similar roadblocks in seeking to fund certificated program leads. Some leads already get reassigned time for their work, while others do not. Some are department chairs as well. Programs also vary in size and structure. We agreed to create a work group to study the variations and recommend a funding formula, but we could not reach agreement to allocate funds without more discussion.

Even in negotiating a compressed calendar (which the District brought to the table), the UF worked hard to host forums, bring in faculty from other districts, provide balanced information, survey and meet with our members, yet the subject still got put on hold. So we agreed that all unresolved issues would remain on the table, and we would gather what agreements we had, as it were, and present them now.

One complicating factor this year was the deadline imposed by both the accreditation "recommendations" and our desire to raise pay before the next round of full-time hiring. Although both sides considered taking more time at the end, we agreed there was value in reaching agreement now, even if we still have work to complete on key issues.

President's Message

As I look back over the last decade of negotiated agreements (all available on the UF website), I see a lot of progress and some promises fulfilled, but I also see a lot of cans kicked down the road, some more than once. In 2009-2010, for example, the agreement promised a "long-term strategy for addressing [part-time pay] parity." And in 2010-2011, having failed again to include a parity plan, we set a "goal of reaching a long-term parity agreement by June 30, 2012." Five years after that promise, we still have no strategy and no agreement for incremental improvements to part-time parity, as most other districts have negotiated.

An even older promise that we would "raise total compensation to the top third of the Bay 10" still has not been fulfilled. This may be the first time in years where we will even make progress against other Bay 10 districts, although I suspect the other districts will also be making strides.

Certificated Program Leads have been coming to the UF for at least 10 years asking us to bargain for fair compensation for the extra work they do. At first it was a lower priority than salary restoration after pay cuts. Then, another economic downturn led to a funding crisis, and for a few years the UF needed to focus on protecting what we have in salaries, benefits and working conditions. Now finally, there is money again for faculty priorities, but I see the can getting kicked down the road again. We need more data (even though the UF has been collecting data for a decade). We need more time (even though we spent days on this in negotiations last spring). What we really need is action, not words.

Science lab load is too low. Everyone in the State knows it, but we took a whole year to prove it to ourselves. We basically met with every full-time science professor to compile data and review workload. But we are told we need more time. We need more pieces, as if we should not solve one problem until we can solve all problems.

Some of these issues are hard. Compressing the calendar involves more than just faculty. Changing how classes load or how coaches are compensated is complicated; other issues may need to be addressed; there might be unintended consequences. But this is work that needs to be done. One reason that cans get kicked down the road is that they are tripping hazards. A big issue on the table, like a can on the road, is often a threat. So it is understandable that we kick cans; it keeps us from falling down and getting stuck, and for a while, it can seem like we are doing something. But it's an easy dodge, and we must do better.

This year, we seemed to leave Interest-Based Bargaining a bit and negotiate more positionally. Some of this was due to the time pressure at the end, but it also reflected the UF's notion that not dealing with hard issues can be a "deal breaker." I am happy we're getting a fair raise this year and happy that the financial picture has improved. The TA is a step in the right direction, and our members should vote to ratify and feel good about it. But I want to see us press hard to resolve the remaining issues listed in the TA as still "open." Some of these cans have been kicked once too often.

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Table Talk

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

September 24, 2015

News at a Glance

- District and UF Reach Tentative Agreement for 2015-2016
- Ratification Vote Begins Thursday; Votes Due Tuesday, Oct. 6.
- Forums Scheduled to Discuss TA at CCC, DVC, LMC and SRC
- Point-by-Point Review and Analysis of the TA
- CCCCD to Add 21 New Full-Time Faculty Positions
- Negotiations Over Equity Issues Remain Open for 2016-2017
- President's Message: "It's Time to Stop Kicking Cans"

District and UF Reach Tentative Agreement for 2015-2016

United Faculty and CCCCD have reached a Tentative Agreement for 2015-2016 that raises salaries 5% overall (with some variations based on assignment type), adjusts faculty evaluation forms in response to accreditation recommendations, adds steps to the full-time salary schedule (in spring 2016, contingent on funding), and annualizes health-insurance premiums for part-time faculty.

Although the negotiating teams did not reach agreement on several key issues and UF priorities, including load equity for science labs, compensation for certificated program leads, release time for coaches, and more, those articles will remain open. Negotiations over these equity issues will continue this year. Talks will also continue over so-called compressed calendar options, a wellness program, and possible changes to medical benefits.

The UF Executive Board, though feeling more frustrated than usual with the negotiating pace and process this year, has voted to recommend the TA for ratification. We think it is crucial to raise salaries now, at the start of what promises to be one of the most competitive hiring years in California community college history (with every district having received state funds earmarked for new full-time hires).

Union Forums to Discuss Tentative Agreement

CCC:
9/28, 12-1pm,
AA-216

DVC:
9/29, 11:30am-12:30pm,
BFL Conference Room
and
9/30, 4-5pm,
LA 113

LMC:
9/30, 1-2pm
L-105

SRC:
9/28, 3-4pm
W-204

At CCCCD, we expect the District to add at least 21 new full-time positions in addition to replacing retirees.

Our ratification vote will begin on Thursday, September 24, with votes due by 6pm on Tuesday, October 6. All UF members should receive a voting link by email on Thursday from a “no-reply” address (as in our recent electronic votes). If you do not receive a voting link, or if you prefer to vote by phone or email, contact Terri in the UF Office at 925-680-1771 or uf@uf4cd.org. If UF members vote yes, the TA will then go to the District Governing Board for ratification at their October 7 meeting.

The full text of the Tentative Agreement is available for review on the UF Website: www.uf4cd.org. A summary with analysis of each provision is below.

Point-by-Point Analysis of the TA: Salary Increases

The Agreement covers two years: 2015/2016 with all increases retroactive to July 1, 2015; and 2016/2017 with a formula to determine any additional increase. Although we have had mixed success with formulas in the past, we think it likely that 2016/2017 will be another good year financially. In addition to new state allocations for COLA, growth, or base increases, our district has \$15.7 million designated as one-time money this year (going mostly towards the retiree-benefit liability) that seems likely to become ongoing next year (in part or whole, we are still not sure) since the allocation is based on the Proposition 98 guarantee that determines how much the State gives community colleges. There are new expenses coming next year too, particularly another increase in STRS contributions, and benefits costs continue to soar. But we still think counting on our slightly revised formula is a safe bet.

For Full-Time Faculty: retroactive to July 1, 2015, a 5% increase to the B-1 (A-load) salary schedule; a 5% increase to the total Department Chair allocation; a 3% increase to the B-2 (overload and summer) and B-3 (other academic services) salary schedules; and in 2016-2017, so long as the formula yields a number greater than zero (which we fully expect), an additional 2% increase at Step 27 (similar to a longevity bonus but on-schedule). Steps 23, 24, 25, 26, and 27 will be added, with no change in pay until the 2% increase at Step 27. Faculty who have been at Step 22 (the current ceiling) longer than one year, will move up immediately and be placed appropriately. About 60 senior faculty will already be at Step 27 and so will receive the additional 2% in 2016-2017.

Notably, the Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) this year, as calculated by the State, is only 1.02%, and next year it is projected to be 1.6%. After nearly 18% in lost COLAs during the economic slump of the last five years, we seem finally to be making up some ground at CCCCD.

For Part-Time Faculty: retroactive to July 1, 2015, the dollar-equivalent of a 5% salary increase will be distributed as follows: a 3% increase on all part-time salary schedules (B-2, B-3 and B-4), and a portion (the dollar-equivalent of 2%) added to the Load Adjustment Factors for Lecture and Composition assignments (to continue addressing pay-par-

ity inequities). With Load Adjustment Factors and Salary combined, the increases will vary by assignment type as follows: 7.5% for lecture and composition; 3% for all other part-time assignments.

Even with this distribution, our lecture and composition assignments pay substantially less than our target “parity percentages.” Years ago, the UF and District agreed that pay equity at CCCCD would be defined as part-time salaries at 75% of full-time salaries (since full-timers, in theory, receive 25% of base pay for professional responsibilities and office hours). But while part-time counseling, librarian, PE and lab assignments all pay close to or even a little above 75% of full-time pay (calculated as an hourly rate), lecture assignments, even with the raise, only pay 59% of full-time pay, and English Composition only 47%. Some parity percentages may change if we adjust full-time load (especially science lab load) following recommendations of the Load Task Force. But for now, the distribution of money this year makes sure all faculty receive a raise but seeks also to address (if only a little bit) these long-standing inequities in our pay system.

Point-by-Point Analysis of the TA: Benefits

Most of the changes we have been discussing for the last year related to benefits are not in the TA. We did substantial work on a wellness program that we still hope will be implemented next year (if we reach a second agreement this spring), with a cash incentive for participation during the first two years of a pilot program. We reviewed medical copays and looked for ways we might shift at least some dollars from benefits to salaries, especially in anticipation of the Cadillac Tax scheduled to take effect in 2018 as part of the Affordable Care Act. We discussed a plan to save money by requiring employees who wish to remain on District benefits after they retire and become Medicare-eligible to enter a Medicare-coordinated plan. And we discussed other ways the District might lower its retiree liability. But despite progress, we have not yet reached agreement on any of these options.

We did agree to form a Benefits Savings Committee to continue exploring cost-saving options this year (and to make sure we keep excellent health benefits, even if we must make changes in the future), with other employee groups if they elect to join us.

We also agreed to one small cost-saving plan for 2016-2017 (unless our salary formula fails to yield a number greater than zero, in which case this provision reopens along with others): the TA caps “cash-in-lieu of benefits” at current (2015-2016) Kaiser single rates. In past years, whenever Kaiser rates went up, those full-time faculty who take cash rather than participating in district benefits have essentially gotten a raise. We agreed to the cap because the incentive seems high enough to work (\$686 a month), and because we think new money would be better spent to afford other priorities (like the 2% raise at step 27).

For part-time faculty, we are moving to a tiered system that will annualize medical premiums and help stabilize contribution rates. Beginning fall of 2016, the District will contribute to medical premiums for eligible part-time faculty based on the member’s average load for the previous academic year (rather than on load in the current semester, as in the current system). Also, the District will contribute based on

three tiers as follows: 30% load and greater – District shall contribute 40% of the premium cost; 40% load and greater – District shall contribute 50% of the premium cost; 60% load and greater – District shall contribute 75% of the premium cost. Premiums, under this plan, will be divided into 10 equal payments over the course of the year.

Because the previous system calculated part-time premiums based on average costs (rather than individual plans, as this new system does), not every part-timer in district benefits will save money under the new plan. But we think the agreement will be a significant improvement overall. Most faculty will benefit from higher district contribution percentages, and all members will gain by having more stable, predictable premiums.

Point-by-Point Analysis of the TA: Evaluation Forms

In response to accreditation-team recommendations made to all three colleges, we agreed to minor changes to our evaluation forms in order to better document what faculty are doing related to “student learning outcomes.” This is a sensitive issue because the UF does not believe the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) has any business dictating evaluation procedures (which are, by law, a mandatory subject for collective bargaining). We also would reject any proposal to evaluate faculty based on student performance (since this would encourage grade inflation and erode standards). But the changes made in this TA simply align our vocabulary with the current norm to better reflect our practices (such as listing SLOs on syllabi and planning lessons designed to maximize student learning). By reaching agreement now, before the accreditation-team follow-up visits in November, we should also avoid any risk of sanctions, which can mean extra work for faculty.

Point-by-Point Analysis of the TA: Part-Time Equity Hour

The TA commits a portion of the categorical “student equity” funding for professional development and compensation to part-time faculty who engage in outreach and work outside the classroom with students. Beginning fall, 2016 (with training), up to 500 part-time faculty district-wide (with a minimum load of 35% to be eligible) may participate in a paid “Equity Hour Program” designed to help faculty recognize and support at-risk and underserved students. \$500,000 has been budgeted for this program in 2015-2016, with that number likely to rise in 2016-2017, depending on participation and available funds.

The details of our draft plan is attached to the TA. Work-groups will be established at each college, including faculty members appointed by local Equity Committees, who will have the chance to revise or reconfigure the plans, which may vary from college to college. A district-wide steering committee will be formed as well (with members appointed by the academic senates).

District to Add at Least 21 New Full-Time Faculty Positions

New full-time hires are not a negotiated item, but the UF and District did review the new State funding for adding full-time positions this year, and we were pleased by the District’s decision to add at least 21 new full-time positions, in addition to replacing retirees.