

Political Report

UF Endorses Judy Walters; Propositions 15 and 16

For the past decade, the UF has mostly stayed neutral in District Governing Board elections. After all, if we back a candidate who loses, we risk alienating the winner, and we need to work with whomever wins. District trustees do not negotiate directly with faculty, but they do guide district policy. We often hear 4CD negotiators tell us “the Board won’t go for that” or “I only have authorization from the Board for this.” 15 years ago, when labor relations were bad, the UF successfully campaigned to unseat district trustees, but in times of relative labor peace, faculty unions like ours try to stay out of district politics. UF leaders work hard to cultivate relationships with all Board members, to help educate them on our issues, and we attend and give a report at every monthly Board meeting. Some trustees are more responsive than others, but generally our Board has respected faculty and supported our agreements.

Recently, however, UF leaders have become increasingly frustrated by Board decisions and dysfunction. Several times, we sought Board support for issues outside regular bargaining, such as reforming our process for hiring managers to attract more diverse candidates, or considering a parcel-tax that might increase 4CD revenues and make us less dependent on unstable state budgets, or changing the anti-labor law firm our district uses to conduct investigations when employees are accused of misconduct. Trustees voiced support privately for our ideas, but some seemed to change their tune in public. Then came some serious ethics violations. Most disturbingly, as described in documents released by the District in response to a Public Records Act Request by our classified union, Local 1, Ward 2 Trustee Vicki Gordon was described as having sought to influence a Management-Council-bargained MOU on benefits “for her own personal gain.” The investigation also described a pattern of Trustee Gordon calling Board members to “threaten, and /or harass them.”

The straw that broke the camel’s back, for the UF, came at the last Board meeting, but it started when Chancellor Wood retired. Trustee Gordon was pushing for an outside candidate to serve as interim chancellor, but the UF thought that either of the vice-chancellors, Gene Huff or Mojdeh Mehdizadeh, could fill in competently. We had just negotiated a three-year agreement with the District team, after all, with many complicated pieces connected to part-time load adjustments and funding formulas. We didn’t think an interim outsider would help us. This turned into an ugly fight between trustees. We had also spoken several times at Board meetings about their strange decision last year to offer all the vice chancellors 1-year contracts, where 2-year contracts are mostly the norm. We have one of the brightest, most respected chief financial officers in California, we told the Board; and he’s responsive to us and transparent with the budget. We should lock him up and not let some other district steal him from us. Then, last week, in a 3-2 vote, the Board voted publicly not to renew the contracts of our CFO or our Chief Human Resource Officer. Without even consulting constituency leaders, the Board had essentially told our vice chancellors to start looking for work.

It may seem strange for the UF to be seeking better contracts for managers, but our motives are entirely self-serving. We do not believe that losing our CFO with a financial crisis looming will serve students or faculty. We do not believe that destabilizing and failing to support a senior management team that has earned the respect of both labor groups as well as college managers will serve students or faculty. And we cannot support trustees that ignore faculty input and seem embroiled in self-serving, politically motivated personal battles. So our UF E-Board voted last meeting to endorse Judy Walters to replace Vicki Gordon as trustee for Ward 2. Judy has the experience and integrity to be an excellent trustee. Also, Prop. 15 would dramatically improve our funding; and Prop. 16 will restore reasonable affirmative action. The E-Board voted to endorse both. Please see the enclosed flier.

President’s Message

A Call to Action: UF/4CD Board Relations

We are picking our battles during these troubling times, but that does not mean we are not choosing to fight on many fronts. Maybe the strangest, for the UF, has been the fight described in our political report, where we find ourselves advocating for senior district managers. Our district has lots of problems, after all, and in many cases these very managers can be slow to respond or have made bad decisions ignoring our input. What’s more, this is a time of upheaval. Maybe the path to more diversity, inclusion, and equity will only open if we replace those in power and bring in new faces with fresh perspectives.

UF certainly stands with our communities of color in calling for structural changes to fight systemic racism. And diversifying management seems as important as diversifying faculty. We need equitable hiring practices, which is one of the reasons the UF has endorsed Proposition 16, which would bring back affirmative action and allow us to address race, ethnicity and gender more honestly and progressively in hiring.

In recent Governing Board meetings, several faculty members and community leaders have spoken about the urgent need for more Latinx and African American managers and faculty. We share this goal. At the last Board meeting, UF Executive Director Jeff Michels suggested delaying the Chancellor search mainly because we think starting a chancellor in the midst of a pandemic and remote environment could make it more difficult for the new chancellor to get to know and trust faculty leadership. We have also heard concerns that the current board may not select the next chancellor with integrity, putting their personal politics above the best interests of the district. If voters add Judy Walters to the Board, some on the UF will have more confidence that they will make a good choice. Picking a new chancellor is an important responsibility; we have seen the impact when it goes wrong. Some of us still remember when UF-District relations were strained to the breaking point.

For the chancellor search, we must put our faith in the integrity of the process. The vice chancellors’ contract renewal process, however, was inappropriately politicized, and we can’t be silent. Take our CFO - he had excellent evaluations. His track record with the District is impressive. We are healthier financially today than we have ever been. Yes, our funding allocation model could be more equitable (he did not invent it). Yes, he has made mistakes (and I don’t always agree with him). But he is transparent, honest, open to faculty ideas, and willing to negotiate. With a financial storm on the horizon, this is not the time for change at the top in finance! Half the districts out there are looking for CFOs, and the Board’s “no renewal” decision was like a push out the door.

We attend every Board meeting and speak on issues related to faculty, because we believe it’s the UF’s role to represent faculty to the Board. If they doubt or ignore our voice, we lose influence overall. I am asking faculty to join UF leadership and attend the next Board meeting via zoom. We will send details. Tune in, and speak during public comment. Tell the Board: UF speaks for me. Tell them to invest in good labor relations.

United Faculty Executive Board Members	
Contra Costa College	Los Medanos College
Manu Ampim	Joshua Bearden
Vern Cromartie	Milton Clarke (Vice Pres.)
Mary Johnson (PT Rep)	Marco Godinez
Katie Krolikowski	Reggie Lemay (PT Rep)
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Table Talk

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

August 17, 2020

~ Special Home Edition ~

- **Lead Story:** *UF Fights to Support and Protect Faculty during Crisis*
- **Hot Topics:** *Executive Board Staying Connected Online; UF Seeks Faculty to Join Workgroups on Key Issues*
- **Political Report:** *UF Endorses Walters for Board, Props 15 & 16*
- **President’s Message:** *Call to Action: UF-4CD Board Relations*

UF Fights to Support/Protect Faculty during Time of Crisis

In an open letter to the 4CD Governing Board sent last week, the UF pointed out that our district is facing multiple crises as we head into fall, besides the obvious public-health crisis that has so dramatically altered working conditions not only in our district or state but worldwide. We face an enrollment crisis, with FTES down dramatically at CCC (19% lower compared to the same time last year, with 33% fewer new students) and LMC (11% down with 22% fewer new students). DVC is about even, with only SRC down 13%, but overall District enrollment is almost 7% lower for the fall so far. Unpredictable enrollment patterns have led to class cancellations creating an unstable environment for students, which has also led to a human-resources crisis, with many part-time faculty losing assignments and much-needed income. We face an educational crisis as well, as many hundreds of faculty and thousands of students plan for all-online classes for the first time. And of course, an economic crisis is looming. While we narrowly averted draconian funding cuts for this year, the budget projections for next year are downright alarming, and we need to be planning for the worst. A social-justice crisis demands our attention as well, as calls to confront institutional and systemic racism highlight longstanding inequities and lack of progress.

In responding to all these crises, the UF has fought hard for collaborative, transparent, and sometimes creative approaches in partnership with management and with our classified professionals, represented by Local 1. Last spring and over the summer, we signed “side letter agreements” on a long list of issues: remote teaching and student services; compensation for training and for summer work by department chairs and others; evaluations; sabbaticals; flex credit... and most recently we agreed on \$1000 stipends for every faculty member (full-time and part-time) to help compensate for extra work converting classes to online. We agreed on a plan to protect part-time faculty who buy health insurance through the District (so that losing income if a class is canceled will not be compounded by big increases in insurance premiums) and also a plan to support full-timers who are forced to go “under-load.” We have been advocating for more late-start classes this year and new “supplemental instructor and counselor” assignments that might help us better serve students while replacing lost income for some faculty. And of course, we have spent much of the summer focused on issues of workplace

Call to Action

Read the
“President’s Message”
and then
Join UF Leaders
via Zoom at the
District Board Meeting
August 26.

safety, anticipating an eventual return to face-to-face interactions on campus.

We entered into this strange pandemic period, as faculty will recall, on the heels of a substantial three-year collective-bargaining agreement (CBA). We added new contract articles protecting academic freedom and establishing new policies and evaluation procedures for distance education, and we agreed to an aggressive plan to raise salaries for all faculty while finally addressing entrenched inequities in how part-timers are paid. United Faculty and the 4CD Board of Governors voted to ratify the CBA in December of 2019, and since that time, full-time salaries have gone up 8% overall (9% for steps 1, 2 and 3). For part-timers, raises depended on assignment type, as we sought to adjust salaries using the “load adjustment factor” to make up for differences in workload (preparation and grading) that our district’s hourly pay had unfairly ignored. Although raising pay at different rates for different assignment types might look unfair in isolation, we knew it was necessary for a couple of years in order to make 4CD salaries more competitive with other districts (all of which already pay by load), and our agreement called for an evening out in year three (2021 / 2022) when we would get rid of hourly pay and load adjustments for part-timers and just move to a pay-per load system, with most faculty working from the same salary schedule.

So since 2019, pay for part-time lecture and lab 1 assignments is up 10%; lab 2 assignments are up 13%; English Composition is up 20.5%; and counselors, librarians and disability specialists are up 5%. Summer assignments for both full-time and part-time faculty are up 9% (except English Comp, which is up 14%). Department Chair funding went up 8% plus \$50,000.

When the pandemic hit, it appeared at first that these raises might be in jeopardy. The Governor’s May Revise proposed 10% funding cuts to all of higher education, and as July approached (when the 2nd-year raises of our 3-year agreement were scheduled to take effect), UF leaders spent substantial time advocating to the legislature (to mitigate the cuts) and to District management (to go ahead with raises come what may). Fortunately, we found receptive audiences in both areas. The legislature’s version of the budget reflected many faculty priorities. (The Assembly version even called for cutting Calbright, the online startup, and shifting its funds to better support part-time faculty, a plan that unfortunately did not survive the final compromise.) In the end, most of the cuts became “deferrals.” And District management remained committed to our Agreement throughout particularly transparent and creative budget discussions. We talked about contingencies and reserves and options for moving money, and we found that our district was able to afford our agreement. Now, as we head towards the third year of the CBA, where raises and our plan to shift part-timers to the more fair pay-per-load system will be based on a revenue-and-spending formula, we will need to rely more than ever on transparency in budgeting and creative leadership. A budget crisis in California might delay us, or maybe we’ll manage to keep making progress despite economic uncertainty.

One thing at least seems clear: there has never been a more important time to be connected as a union. We have big local issues still to tackle: new ones, like return-to-work safety and working conditions online; and old ones like diversity in hiring and a better process for district investigations of alleged misconduct. Our statewide and local advocacy continues to be crucial in seeking better funding and pay, in protecting our breadth of course offerings, and in protecting workplace safety and job security. And our services are key too, as we help faculty understand their rights and negotiate the sometimes confusing world of leaves and benefits. Our UF team is experienced and dedicated (our E-Board met several times this summer to review policies together), but we rely on faculty to share their concerns, suggestions, and experiences with us. If you are facing something difficult, especially, remember: you are represented! Call or email the UF: 925-680-1771, uf@uf4cd.org.

UF Executive Board Preparing for 2020/2021

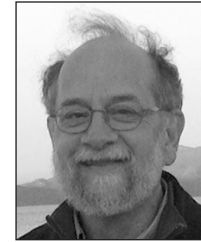
The UF Executive Board has shifted to synchronous zoom meetings for the fall semester. We meet Thursdays from 2:45-5:30pm: 9/3; 9/17; 10/1; 10/15; 11/5; 11/19; and 12/3. Every meeting begins with time reserved for public comment. E-Board members are elected for two-year terms. If you are interested in serving, contact the UF office at 925-680-1771 or email uf@uf4cd.org.



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PT Faculty Advocate



Donna Wapner
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Vern Cromartie
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Jeff Michels
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Mary Johnson
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Katie Krolkowski
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John Freytag
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Jason Mayfield
Vice President &
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Katrina Keating
FT Rep



Ray Faulkenberry
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Eric Moss
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Marina Crouse
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Matthew Powell
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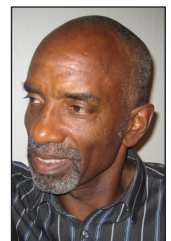
Los Medanos College



Reggie Lemay
PT Rep



Joshua Bearden
FT Rep



Milton Clarke
Vice President



Marco Godinez
FT Rep



Luis Morales
FT Rep

2020 Workgroups Recruiting Faculty to Serve

As we prepare for the next round of collective bargaining and face the challenges of the coming year, we seek faculty to participate in workgroups that will meet remotely throughout the fall semester and beyond. If you don’t see an issue listed that you think needs attention, please let us know. This list reflects our current plans for the fall.

Academic Calendar Workgroup

UF Vice President for DVC Jason Mayfield will lead this discussion of all things calendar-related, including a UF proposal for 2021 / 2022, due October 15, 2020. Other topics may include Flex; winter intersession; finals week; and revisiting the 16-week calendar. To join, email Jason at jdmfield@gmail.com.

Equity in Evaluations Workgroup

UF Executive Director Jeffrey Michels will convene a group to review our faculty evaluation process through an equity lens. How could we improve our forms and procedures to better support diversity and inclusion in our teaching and student services? Our aim will be to make recommendations to the bargaining teams before the next round of negotiations in 2021 / 2022. This group will meet monthly during the 2020 / 2021 Academic Year. To join, email Jeff at ujeffmichels@gmail.com.

Workgroup on Evaluating Partially Online (Hybrid) Classes

Our last collective bargaining agreement included new forms and procedures for evaluating faculty teaching online but did not fully address partially online or hybrid classes. We now seek experienced online instructors to help us create this last needed guidebook. Our aim will be to make recommendations to the bargaining teams before the next round of negotiations in 2021 / 2022. This group will meet monthly during the 2020 / 2021 Academic Year. To join, email Jeff at ujeffmichels@gmail.com.

Part-Time Faculty Staffing and Scheduling Workgroup

UF Part-Time Faculty Advocate Doug Dildine will lead this workgroup to develop recommendations to the bargaining teams before 2021 / 2022 negotiations for improving Article 25 (Part-Time Faculty Staffing Preference). How can we improve job security as well as equity and transparency in staffing and scheduling? To join the monthly meetings, email Doug at douglas.unit-edfaculty@gmail.com.

Hiring Workgroup

This group will review hiring procedures for faculty and managers and seek to make recommendations to the bargaining teams. We will consider options for improving diversity in hiring as well as other issues related to equity and transparency. To join the monthly meetings, email Jeff at ujeffmichels@gmail.com.

Political Action Team

Led by UF Vice President for LMC Milton Clarke, this group will primarily be active for the next few months leading up to the November elections. UF has endorsed Judy Walters for 4CD Governing Board in Ward 2 (Lamorinda, Walnut Creek, Rodeo, Hercules, and Crockett), and since we are opposing an incumbent trustee, we need to rally support for Walters every way we can. UF has also endorsed Proposition 15 (“The California Schools and Local Communities Funding Act of 2020”), which would generate as much as \$12.5 billion in revenue per year with much of that funding going to schools and community colleges, and Proposition 16 to repeal Proposition 209, which banned affirmative action in California. Our team will campaign using social media and other tools. To join the effort, email Milton at mclarke@lmc.edu. **We are also seeking STUDENTS for paid political intern positions!** Tell any interested students to contact Professor Aminta Mickles, our UF intern coordinator, at amickles@contracosta.edu.