

FACULTY VOICE

CCFT NEWS

A UNION IS ONLY AS STRONG AS ITS MEMBERS ARE INFORMED AND ACTIVE

NOVEMBER 2009

CCFT President
Paul Harvell



President's Report: Negotiations Update

Paul Harvell, CCFT President

Negotiations are proceeding along winding paths.

First, the CCFT contract ends in June, 2010. The district and union discussed extending the contract one year but we could not come to mutual terms, so we're moving forward to negotiate the contract this coming spring semester. To prepare, we began the ground work of contract review last

spring, and we're continuing this semester, so CCFT should be ready.

However, the pending retirement of the Pegi Ard, the district's chief negotiator, poses an obstacle in the coming negotiations. Ideally, we'd like to wrap up negotiations prior to Pegi's April departure — a formidable task.

State funding is another obstacle of uncertainty. With

the decline in state funding and a large deficit looming in the district's budget for next year, reaching agreement with the district over items that have costs associated with them will be impossible. Even more, the district will probably be looking for concessions from the unions.

This brings us to the other path of negotiations: next

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Categorical Disaster

Debra Spencer, Learning Disabilities Specialist
Learning Skills Program



Federal and state categorical programs were created by the legislators to serve the special needs of students that are not covered by the general fund regular education programs. Examples of such programs at Cabrillo include Disabled Students Programs and Services (DSPS), Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS), Basic Skills, Financial Aid, and Matriculation, among others. As many are aware, these programs have been hit with severe cuts. Disabled Students Programs and Services (DSPS), for example, suffered a 45.5% cut this semester—nearly half our budget taken away. But with or without state funding, students with disabilities must be served. Not to do so



means Cabrillo risks action by the Office of Civil Rights (OCR). If DSPS or the Learning Skills Program (LSP) can't provide services, the burden and costs of determining eligibility, providing and arranging for test accommodations, and the provision of other services would shift to the college. DSPS at Cabrillo serves around 1300 students per semester. These students could appear in any class offered at Cabrillo, so the loss of any DSPS services could affect nearly every instructor. With limited access to crucial services such as assistive technology, diagnostic assessment, and specialized tutoring and counseling, students with disabilities would have lower success rates in their classes. This would affect

the college's overall student retention rate, success rate, and the meeting of Student Learner Outcomes. It could possibly lead to complaints filed with the OCR.

Unfortunately, these disastrous categorical cuts hurt those who need the most help. When EOPS gets hit, the educationally and economically disadvantaged suffer. When financial aid gets cut, the people who can't afford to go to college won't. For students with disabilities, passing the classes they need without the assistance of DSPS and LSP services may border on the impossible. Students with disabilities are guaranteed legal access to instruction, services, activities, and facilities, and without the mandated and crucial services, access for students with disabilities would be limited. In the land of opportunity, this is unacceptable.

We are all part of the same community, and the community is a better place when we

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ensure that students in our categorical programs, including those with disabilities, have an equal chance to succeed in school and in life. It's to everyone's advantage to have a smoothly running DSPS and Learning Disabilities program at Cabrillo that serves its students well. We benefit the whole community when we do that.



Remembering Sharon Peters: Social Justice Advocate, ESL Instructor and CCFT President

Allan Lönnberg

We lost a union sister in October. Sharon Peters passed away, unexpectedly, at the age of 69. Sharon was a long-standing English and ESL teacher at Cabrillo. But it is as a friend, mentor and union colleague that I remember her. She served a term as CCFT president in the late 1980s; council meetings under her gavel often gave an impression of mild distraction. She wasn't a stickler for Robert's Rules or adhering strictly to agendas, but, underneath Sharon's usually calm exterior lay a sense of justice and fair play that was firm and unshakable. And it always guided her—and us—to where we needed to go.

Before I say more, here are some remembrances

that Elissa Wagner sent to me:

"A distinct pattern emerges concerning Sharon: she was generous with both time and space, a rarity these days. She gave freely of her time, talking with people whenever they wanted, giving them her full attention, including mentoring various ESL and English instructors. Wherever her passion for social justice and social welfare led her, she committed to that cause, not just with words but with action: for example, serving as CCFT president, campaigning for Obama, working with the animals at the Watsonville Animal Shelter to get them adopted, volunteering for Meals on Wheels. In fact, at the time of her death she had been helping an elderly, ailing

aunt in Southern California. All of this she did without ego, without demand for attention or praise. She did these things because they needed doing and her heart and mind led her there."

At one point in the mid-90s, I found myself without an office, having been booted out of yet another provisional adjunct alcove onto the (figurative) street. Sharon immediately offered to share her office in the 500 building with me: she shoveled aside books to make shelf space, regularly provided home-made cookies or other goodies for snacks (with the stern proviso that I not leave crumbs on the desk!), and even reconfigured her computer and

phone to accommodate me. Her generosity exemplified an abiding concern with the plight of adjuncts, long before it became fashionable to do so.

She also had a great sense of humor. One morning, I showed up at the office and she asked me, in all seriousness, if I knew the Italian word for "colonoscopy". I, thinking that she was about to have the procedure performed by someone fresh off the boat, replied that I hadn't a clue. She said, "innuendo". It took a minute for the penny to drop...

Farewell, sister.



Morton Marcus: Teacher, Thinker, Poet and CCFT President

Julie Olsen Edwards

Mort Marcus, nationally acclaimed poet, film critic, long-time member of the Cabrillo English faculty lost his two year battle with cancer and died this month. Much was written and said about Mort's gifts as a writer, thinker, and a voracious reader, about his joy in living, eating, traveling, absorbing the world – and about how he treasured his friends and family. Missing in so many of the accounts, was Mort's activism, his deep convictions about justice, and his role as a faculty advocate and leader.

Mort was passionate about standing up to injustice. He had little use for detachment, for neutrality when those with power abused it, for people who focused only on their own issues. He deeply believed that one "spoke truth to power", and being Mort, did so with eloquence, conviction - and volume.

Mort loved being part of Cabrillo, was deeply proud of being a member of the English faculty. He served as English Department Chair, served on the Faculty Senate, and became President of CCFT during one of the most turbulent times in our history. As President he mobilized people who other wise would have stayed on the sidelines. He presided over the establishment of

"Board Buddies" where every Board member was matched with a Council member for a monthly chat (about issues and challenges – and about the wonderful, professional work being done). He insisted that Council meetings were a place for robust intellectual discussion (and to hell with Roberts Rules if they interfered with real exchange of ideas). He insisted that good food be served at meetings. He listened hard, and included everyone. He was bullish and fierce and fearless against decisions that hurt the work faculty did. His passion was contagious. He stood for all that was best about Cabrillo – and challenged every one he knew to do the same.

"He served as English Department Chair, served on the Faculty Senate, and became President of CCFT during one of the most turbulent times in our history."

Accountability? Been There, Done That

Jefferson Hancock, Editor



This semester found me with a large waiting list for my freshman comp class. Like many of you, I had to turn away several unhappy students who addressed me with bitter tones and harsh vernacular when I apologetically announced that the class was full and I had no more room for those who weren't on the waiting list. Now, more than halfway through the semester, I find a half-filled class the week after midterms, with low morale among many of those remaining. One can't help but question oneself and one's abilities when this happens, but one must also realize the myriad of reasons for such occurrences.

Students "bail" on classes for a variety of reasons, many of which have little or nothing to do with their instructor. We've all heard about the insidious and ubiquitous flu afoot. Perhaps these students have had illness. I'm teaching a night class, which may also account for the lack of retention. Many night students have day jobs and can't stand to sit for three hours after having worked all day; or many, with their work schedules, simply can't keep up. Perhaps, also, the students are unprepared, fresh out of high school and not ready for the self-discipline combined with academic rigor that college requires. Finally, I realize that during past semesters, I've taught either wintersession or summer courses and classes higher in the course sequence which attract more

experienced students. I confess that I've become used to these students so I was thrown for a loop.

So what's the problem? If the students don't do the work or meet the course expectations, they flunk the class or they drop it. Call me insecure, but I'm concerned that somewhere along the line, someone could conceivably use my drop rate or fail rate against me.

Of late, I've been hearing much about "accountability" in education. Apparently, some members of the public have concerns about the competency of teachers these days, especially those with tenure, who — unafraid of disciplinary action because they think they have a "guaranteed job" — abuse their office. I think here of a Math teacher I knew in junior high school who gave handouts to his students while he went into an adjacent room to smoke. Of course, the majority of us do a fine job and are quite dedicated to our craft, despite the low pay and — for us adjuncts at least — complete lack of job security (I speak here as someone with no chance of ever getting tenure); nonetheless, occasionally a few bad apples do turn up. It's these bad apples that draw the attention of the accountability movement.

What concerns me is that in the future, accountability measures will be created and impressed

"The primary purpose of the evaluation of academic personnel is the continued improvement of instruction at Cabrillo College. Other purposes include the maintenance of quality in programs and instruction, and the professional competence of the faculty."

—Article 17, Section 2

CCFT Contract

upon us by uninformed yahoos seeking political gain — folks with little practical experience teaching and the realities of the classroom. What might be the effects of such measures? Might we be asked to apply standardized tests to our students? Might we be asked to make our grades public to determine success? Might we be penalized for a high number of withdrawals or low grades? If so, I would have good reason to worry. All of these ideas are simplistic and fail to reveal the myriad of complexities involved in student success, particularly in the community college system.

Hopefully such measures will never be put into place, but given the wrong political climate, who knows what might happen? Thankfully, we already have an effective system of accountability in place. It's called faculty evaluation. A faculty member visits our class to see if we're doing our jobs. If we are, we receive a glowing evaluation. If we're not, we don't. In both cases we're told where we need to improve. In addition, our students complete evaluation forms as well. In the end, we receive input from our colleagues, from our students,

and from the administrator who has to sign off on the evaluation and review it with us. Thus, control measures do exist to ensure that faculty evaluations are fair and accurate. It's up to those of us who conduct evaluations to make sure that we aren't just rubber stamping them, and that we're pointing out problems and highlighting successes when we see them. If we don't adhere to the accountability as it stands in our contract, then we risk a failed process. If we risk a failed process, then we risk intrusion in our process by people who may or may not know what's best for us. According to Article 17, Section 2 of the contract, "The primary purpose of the evaluation of academic personnel is the continued improvement of instruction at Cabrillo College. Other purposes include the maintenance of quality in programs and instruction, and the professional competence of the faculty." Sounds like accountability to me. We should stick with it.

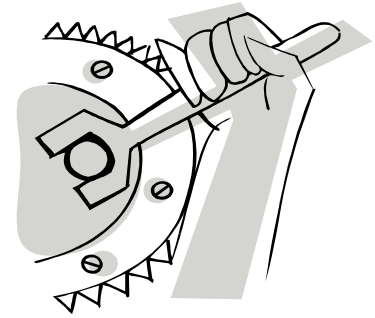


Your Union Council at Work

Update from the November 16 Meeting

Ending Balance

Council reviewed information on our Net Ending Balance (NEB) and passed a motion that the college draw down its NEB prior to CCFT agreeing to concessions.



Background

Net ending balance refers to the amount the college has left over at the end of each year. The NEB is composed of our general reserve (5%), carry-over funds, and one-time funds.

At the end of 2007-08, Cabrillo's NEB as a percentage of expenditures for the base budget (or unrestricted funds) was 18.5%, the 11th highest in the state (out of 72 districts). At the end of 2008-09, our NEB rose to 21.5%. The state average of all districts was 13.4%.

The NEB (base budget only) at the end of 2008-09 was \$12,831,611. A reduction to NEB to 10.2% (the amount it was in 2003-04), would be equivalent to \$6,295,062.

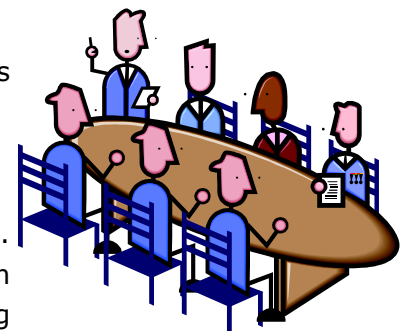
Teaching Units

Council agreed to oppose cuts to 2010-2011 teaching units (TUs) at this time. The decision was made after lively discussion. Arguments for opposing additional cuts include the following:

- ◆ The reason we are over cap is not because we have too many instructors and sections; it is because faculty members are taking too many students.
- ◆ Cutting TUs inflicts severe direct costs upon students. Given our high fill rates, every class we cut will result in students losing access to courses and prolonging students' education.
- ◆ We have already cut about 600 TUs. Over 70 adjunct faculty members have been affected by these cuts.
- ◆ Additional cutting of TUs means reducing the employment of adjuncts. Adjuncts have already taken significantly more cuts than any other group on campus, and because of their low pay, they are in a poorest position to deal with the cuts.
- ◆ Cutting TUs is one of the least effective ways to save money.
- ◆ Being over our funded cap provides a cushion for when there is less demand for courses.

Categorical Programs

Cuts to categorical programs have been extensive (more on p.1). Council approved a motion to "explore ways to preserve jobs in categorical programs that may be eliminated due to state funding cuts."



Treasurer's Report

Nancy Stucker, CCFT Treasurer

CCFT ended the 2008/09 fiscal year with an available cash balance of approximately \$25,000. Our 2009/10 budget is based on income and expenditures from last year, but as you know, the number of classes offered this year has changed from last year. It is not clear how the reduction in TUs at the College this year will affect (1) the income from dues paid by our members, and (2) the related affiliate dues that we pay out to AFT and CFT (our primary expense).

During the 2008/09 fiscal year we were able to move \$20,000 from available cash to our general and legal reserves, increasing this budget item from \$30,000 to \$50,000. (These reserves are set aside in case we need to pursue a legal issue on behalf of a unit member. Given the high cost of legal fees, our goal is to increase these reserves over time.) Current budget projections indicate that we may end the 2009/10 fiscal year with a surplus in available cash. We will continue to monitor this situation and review our dues structure, expenses, and income, with the goal of a maintaining a balanced budget.



New Council Members

CCFT extends its warmest welcome to the following newly approved Council Representatives.

Chris Dyer	(NAS)
Calais Ingel	(BELA)
Francisco Iñiguez	(BELA)
Ron Milhoan	(VAPA)
Peter Shaw	(NAS)
Mike Strunk	(VAPA)

Classified Corner

CCEU Report: Solidarity is Easy to Say

Janus Blumë, CCEU Vice President



When our enrollment is 15% to 16% over cap, we are doing work for which the college is not getting paid. Yet our Board of Governors is unwilling to take a stand on limiting enrollment to the funded level because of the value they place on student access.

We are all for student access, and yet to continue to stretch resources to the breaking point will not be sustainable. Don't we owe it to our future students to create a realistic and sustainable level of services?

But how? The interests of CCFT and CCEU are not always going to be identical. Still, it is imperative for us to meet, to talk, and to wrangle. Sometimes the group process can produce amazing results.

In fact, the leaders of our unions have been meeting, and although the solutions are not as easy as we might hope, it is still a very good thing that they're getting together. The last meeting took place on November 6.

I wish the leaders of CCEU and CCFT could solve the budget crisis. I want the perfect solution, one that would be in the best interest of the students and Cabrillo College as a whole. Then we could convince everyone of the rightness of our plan.

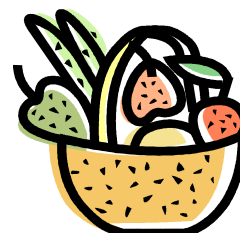
Solidarity forever.
Sigh. Couldn't it be that simple?



Community Supported Agriculture Comes to Cabrillo Buy a Share Today

Cabrillo's campus sustainability assessment team is starting a new workplace program make more sustainable food options available to Cabrillo College employees. Live Earth Farm – a local, organic farm – has agreed to participate in a workplace Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program, and will deliver farm shares once a week to Cabrillo's cafeteria. The cafeteria is run by Taher Food Service, a private company, and they've agreed to host our workplace CSA. (The cafeteria is getting a couple of shares too!)

Some of you may be interested in signing up for a winter farm share. By joining this Community Supported Agriculture program (CSA), you can receive a box of freshly harvested local delicacies every week during Live Earth Farm's season. A winter share costs \$280 for 8 weeks of delivery. That's 35 bucks a week for fresh organic produced delivered to your workplace. The shares will be delivered



based on both Cabrillo's and Taher's schedules, starting December 3rd, then pausing during winter break, and resuming after the break. This initial project will serve as a "testbed" for a larger workplace CSA that (hopefully) Cabrillo College will eventually take over (host), once it's been demonstrated that our smaller model works (e.g.- after 6 months). After Cabrillo takes over as host, the program would be expanded and the number of farm share subscriptions could increase significantly.

For more information about farm shares, visit Live Earth's website at

liveearthfarm.net



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<http://ccftcabrillo.org>

President's Report

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year's budget. CCFT will join with other college employee groups to discuss next year's budget and hopefully reach some agreement on what needs to be done. Groups work together, but then each group returns separately to the negotiating table to reach make the contractual agreement.

The idea is to see if consensus can be reached on the dollar amount that employee groups will have to contribute to budget solutions for next year. With the amount of uncertainty in funding, the only solution CCFT sees is some sort of complicated contingency language. That is, any contractual concessions would be made *only* after key conditions are met. CCFT is working hard exploring what those conditions may be.

Whatever happens, it will not happen fast. There's a lot of information to be gathered, examined, and interpreted. After that, we'll discuss and explore strategies with both the CCFT Council, which guides negotiations, and then the district, with whom who we actually negotiate. Getting it right is more important than getting it done quickly, but I also understand the time constraint the district faces. There are specific key dates, so discussions between CCFT and the district might continue during Winter Session.

Social Security Fairness Act

California Federation of Teachers

Good news for retirement, maybe. Legislators have drafted federal bills SR 484 (Feinstein) and HR 235 (Matsui), the Social Security Fairness Act, to eliminate the public servant penalties. In addition, California's Legislature passed AJR 10, urging Congress to repeal these penalties.

In 1977 and then in 1983 Congress passed the Government Pension Offset and the Windfall Eliminations Provision in an attempt to control the cost of Social Security.

For many individuals, making a career change from private sector employment to teaching in California results in a lifetime penalty of reduced benefits. This penalizes individuals who want to teach, along with the spouses of these individuals.

"California teachers cannot count on receiving a full Social Security benefit, either as a benefit from previous employment under Social Security, or from benefits earned by a spouse," said Dennis Smith,



Secretary Treasurer, California Federation of Teachers. "CFT has long advocated the repeal of two Social Security penalties that affect public education in 15 states and public employees in all 50 states." With a little luck and a lot of advocacy, this legislation will pass and president Obama will sign it. Then, we'll all get our fair share of Social Security.

Final Fall meetings . . . save the dates!

Council Meeting

December 7

Monday from 2:30-4:30

in room 225, SAC East

Executive Board

November 23

Monday from 2:30-4:30

in the Sesnon House, room 1824

Part-Time Committee

December 9

Wednesday from 12:30-2:00

at the Pino Alto, Sesnon

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- AFT members receive two months free the first year.

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Member Benefits

AFT has an expense reimbursement and/or endorsement arrangement for marketing this program. For more information, please contact AFT Financial Services at 800/238-1133, ext. 4493; send an e-mail to disclosureinfo@aft.org; or visit www.aftplus.org/disclosure.