

FACULTY VOICE

CCFT NEWS

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

FEBRUARY 2011

CCFT President Paul Harvell



President's Report: Welcome Back. Let's Get to Work

As the budget crisis continues and as the uncertainty about the future continues, one thing is clear: failure to put the tax bills to a vote in June and failure to pass those propositions will, with almost certainty, require lay-offs of Cabrillo employees.

The longer story: part of Governor Brown's proposed budget for next year includes extending the current tax rates. That is, Governor Brown has proposed that we postpone the scheduled cut in taxes that is about to occur. If the state postpones the tax cut, state budget cuts still need to occur, and current planning stands at Cabrillo losing about \$3 million in revenue next year. Cabrillo will run a surplus this year, and using reserves, can bridge next year without significant cuts.

The phrase "budget cut" is tricky. Cabrillo can trim the budget without any real impact because our current budget includes items that are not being expended as a result of spending freezes and managed hiring. An example is a "ghost position". A "ghost position" could be cut, but no one is laid off because the position isn't currently filled. In this article, when I talk about cuts, I'm **not** referring to "ghost" cuts. I'm talking about real people losing their job.

If the Brown plan is followed, Cabrillo will **not** need to implement large cuts at the start of next year (this coming July). What if the tax cuts are not postponed? Here uncertainty enters. No one can say what exactly will happen, but Cabrillo will probably need to implement about \$2 million in cuts quickly (over the next

several months). It is possible that \$2 million in cuts could rise to \$5 million under a very bad scenario. It's also possible that some of the \$2 million in cuts will be offset through much higher student fees (going from \$26 per unit to \$66). Our reaction to this would require careful analysis and planning and very careful attention to the budget that is eventually passed by the state.

There are two important points in planning. The first comes in early March, currently thought to be March 10th, when the legislature must authorize a June election. If the legislature fails to act, Cabrillo will begin the final preparation to implement large cuts to the college.

The second point is the June election itself. If the tax cut postponement propositions fail, Cabrillo again will be forced to implement large cuts.

Above, I used the phrase, "with almost certainty." I do so because the state government can always change directions. For example, the legislature could postpone the tax cuts themselves. That wasn't part of Brown's campaign; but it could happen. There is much to be played out yet in this crisis and in this year.

CCFT's first priority this semester is the June special election.

Faculty can't stand on the sideline. We need to be informed about the propositions and what it means if they fail. We need to participate in educating the public of what is at stake.

Important Election for Adjuncts: State Disability Insurance

In late February comes an important election for adjunct faculty, who will decide whether or not to adopt State Disability Insurance (SDI). Such insurance provides up to 52 weeks of benefits for employees unable to work because of illness, injury, or disability. It also provides up to six weeks of benefits for paid family leave. Adjunct faculty would pay for SDI with a payroll deduction of 1.2 percent of gross income. In return, the state would replace lost wages amounting to roughly 55 percent of income. Presently, full-time faculty members have long-term disability insurance as part of their benefits package paid for by the District, but adjunct faculty do not.

CCFT will hold elections – for adjunct faculty only – towards the end of February. Ballots will be sent to mailboxes in the faculty mailroom or to division mailboxes; an e-mail notification will be provided once ballots have been distributed. Be on the lookout for your ballot and vote in this important election.

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Adjunct Faculty: Canceled Class? Keep Your Benefits

If you lose your class, you may not lose your benefits. If your class is canceled, you may be eligible to keep your medical benefits; however, **YOU must notify Human Resources** that your class has been cancelled.

Flex Luncheon

Alisa Messer, Italian Food, and Tax Extensions on the Plate

Jefferson Hancock, Editor



Thanks to Maya Bendotoff for putting together another splendid meal, this time featuring Zoccoli's delicious lasagna, salad, and garlic bread. The featured speaker this year was City College of San Francisco faculty member and former Cabrillo Adjunct Alisa Messer.

As colleagues chatted over their Italian lunch, CCFT president Paul Harvell updated members on some important union items. First, he noted that the college has more than 2 million dollars surplus in its budget. However, the situation may change as the budget in Sacramento becomes clearer. Much of the state's budget hinges around some proposed tax extensions which may be placed on the June ballot. If there is no June election on these taxes or if the tax extension fails in election, Cabrillo's budget will have to be modified accordingly. Meanwhile, CCFT is presently negotiating some contract changes in interdisciplinary studies and Faculty Service Areas (FSAs). In regards to interdisciplinary studies, teams aim to clarify language and to provide uniformity of workload and expectations. As for FSAs, there will be some language

changes in light up updates in discipline names as well as a couple other possible changes. For details of proposed changes, see the February "Negotiations Update" (online or in the faculty mailroom). Finally, a grievance filed on behalf of several adjunct faculty who lost reemployment preference after filing for STRS is now going to arbitration with the district.

After Harvell finished his updates, Anthropology Instructor Alan Lonnberg introduced Messer, who spoke about how CCSF has chosen to prioritize cuts in overload units and save jobs during the budget crisis. She also criticized the proposed community college fee increases, calling them taxes on students. Finally, Messer urged immediate political action in support of Governor Brown's proposal to extend temporary taxes via a June election. According to her, doing so will help balance the state budget and preserve important public services. Messer asked the diners to imagine taking away UCs, CSUs, and Community Colleges, all K-12 education, prisons, road maintenance, and state parks. "Even with the complete elimination of these,"

she said, "we'd still have a budget shortfall."

Here is a breakdown of items in the 2010-2011 state budget, courtesy of Paul Harvell, which explains how much some of the most important public services cost in California each year. Keep in mind that our state budget is out of whack by roughly 28 billion dollars.

UC:	3 billion
CSU:	2.8 billion
CCC:	4.5 billion
Corrections:	9 billion
CHP:	1.9 billion
DMV:	1 billion
Courts:	3.7 billion
Parks:	.5 billion
CalTrans:	6.4 billion
Fish and Game:	.3 billion
Forestry and Fire:	.8 billion
Environment:	1.5 billion
Justice:	.6 billion
Total:	36 billion

Sobering numbers indeed. With the elimination of all these programs, the state winds up 7.7 billion dollars ahead, so even if the prisons stay open, California won't break even. Not a pretty picture.

That said, Messer urged members to contact state legislators Monning, Blakesely, and Simitian so the election makes

the June ballot, and, if it does, to work to ensure the measure's passage by the 2/3 it requires. The Legislative Analyst's Office recently released a scenario of recommended cuts amounting to 585 million dollars if tax extensions aren't passed, with the following suggestions for where that money should come from:

- 90-unit cap on each student's taxpayer-subsidized credits (\$250 million)
- Increase in community college fees from \$26/unit to \$66/unit (\$170 million)
- Elimination of state subsidy for intercollegiate athletics (\$55 million)

Again, sobering numbers indeed. So, moving on Messer's theme and armed with the knowledge of what could happen without the tax extension, after lunch, the CCFT Council met in small groups to discuss ways in to increase CCFT's COPE donations and ways to alert membership about the importance of the proposed election.

Part Timers Breakfast

Adjuncts Welcome Governing Board Members

Jefferson Hancock, Editor

Especially noticeable at this year's part-timers breakfast, enjoying scrambled eggs, bagels, and whole grain bread, were four members of the Cabrillo College Board of Trustees -- Rachel Spencer, Rebecca

Garcia, Susan True, and Donna Ziel -- who listened attentively as adjunct faculty addressed their morning assignment: "name one thing you would like the Governing Board to know." Members spoke about

everything from tenuousness of part-time employment and its effect on morale in the classroom, to appreciate for the new VAPA buildings to the desire for participation in shared governance and profes-

sional development. The morning ended with a brief discussion of how to support continued professional growth and academic excellence. Some participants wondered how this was possible at a time when budgets are being cut, and part-timers are losing classes. In the end, the board members

seemed to understand the message many of the adjunct faculty were trying to convey: that they view themselves not as part-time employees, but as full-time professional educators. It was comforting to see members of Cabrillo's most important governing body making the effort to hear from Cabrillo adjuncts.

CCFT Faculty Interview: Sadie Reynolds, Sociologist



This issue's interview features Sociology Faculty Member and CCFT membership chair Sadie Reynolds, Ph.D. (above) who tells us how she got where she is today.

FV: How did you get where you are now?

For most of my youth I never imagined I would go to college. Neither of my parents had. I was surrounded by substance abuse and violence at home. By the time I was thirteen I was embroiled in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems and had dropped out of junior high school. In the ensuing years I followed my parents' grim path of self-destruction. I sometimes marvel that I survived my teens and young adulthood.

At age twenty-one I underwent a profound inner transformation. I decided that I needed to try to change my life, though I had little hope that it was possible. I earned a GED and began attending Santa Monica City College. Learning and growing satisfied a deep hunger inside me and I felt alive for

the first time in my life. I dedicated myself thoroughly to my studies. When a peer mentioned she was taking general education classes so she could transfer to UC, it occurred to me I could do the same.

FV: What prompted you to get a Ph.D. and what's your area of expertise?

While academia felt alienating to me as a non-traditional student, my intellectual work was valued and rewarded here. Scholarship engaged me so fully that at each milestone I was compelled to continue. In 2008 I earned a Ph.D. in Sociology with a notation in Feminist Studies from UCSC. My areas of expertise are criminology, social inequalities, and research methodologies.

FV: Why did you choose that field?

Sociology and feminist studies gave me conceptual framework for understanding my life and the world around that made sense. Understanding the ways historical forces impinge upon human lives and shape society and culture revolutionized my thinking and led me to a palpable awareness of social injustices along the lines of race, gender, class, sexuality, and nation. I was gripped by a sense of historical agency that has compelled me to participate in efforts for social change.

FV: What do you like best about teaching?

Community college was a life raft for me—carrying me safely to a life of pur-

pose and helping to instill in me a sense of global citizenship and a lifelong love of teaching and learning. Facilitating the growth of others through education—particularly at the community college, where I got my start—is truly rewarding work. I find working with students from social groups that have been historically marginalized and systematically excluded from higher education particularly energizing. I tell them my story of finding freedom through education. I share knowledge and tools and hope. I witness them transform from within. In this process I am transformed, as I strive continuously to increase my efficacy as a teacher and mentor. I simply cannot imagine more meaningful or engaging work.

FV: How and why did you become active in CCFT?

Unions are the best way to curb the excesses of capitalism against workers. Organized together we have the power to bargain for better pay and working conditions. The last several decades have brought a weakening of unions concomitant with a decline in real wages and a rise in neoliberal economic policies. These truths draw me to union work. The issue of contingent labor in academia is of particular interest as it represents a concentrated kind of injustice to teachers as workers. I became involved in CCFT's Part-Time Committee the first semester I taught at

Cabrillo and offered to be a HASS Division Representative soon thereafter. I was thrilled to be nominated and then voted in as Membership Chair last year.

FV: What would you like to accomplish as a union officer?

I would like to help create a more active and galvanized membership, particularly among part-timers, who represent a majority of our members but whose participation in CCFT is currently minimal. We need to be strong as a bargaining unit to resist the constant pressure of cuts and contract erosion and to successfully advocate for ourselves. With a more visible presence, CCFT will be in a position to call on members to flex their political muscle when the need arises.

FV: What would you like to see CCFT focus on in the coming years?

I have been struck by the degree to which our Council is committed to Part-Time issues. It is wonderful to be part of a union that believes in and strives for inclusion and unity. It would be gratifying to see CCFT focus on organizing and political education to promote that vision of unity and solidarity across our entire membership. I would also like to see CCFT more active at the state level. Our council is made up of caring and insightful people whose critical voices need to be heard and incorporated into a more just educational policy.

Health Benefits Dilemmas

Debora Bone, COPE Co-chair



Most of us would rather not think about medical care until suddenly we get sick, or have an accident, or watch a loved one suffer from illness or injury. We rely on experts to know what we need and to “fix” what ails us, no matter how complicated.

As workers and union members, we rely on our jobs to provide us with health benefits. In recent years, we have watched as health care costs have escalated and the District has taken steps to contain those costs. First we agreed to higher co-pays and co-insurance costs, taking on a greater part of our own health costs. Then we agreed to switch from Blue Cross and Health Net plans to Blue Shield plans, offered at lower cost to the District.

Each of these measures has made our individual health costs go up and for some of us, has affected the kind of care we can access with our insurance. How many of us have heard stories of a colleague who had to fight to get coverage for a diagnostic test, or a brand name drug, or a complicated treatment plan? How many of us have used the health plan to find that the “out of pocket” expenses far exceeded our expectations?

The inequities of part time versus full time work become glaring when access to benefits is in the mix. Among our colleagues on the classified side, the reduction of full time to part time and partial year (eg 9-month) contracts has left many workers paying a high monthly percentage of their health benefits “out of pocket.”

The concept behind group health care is to share the “risk” of ill health and accidents

across a large group of people.

Everyone contributes some to make sure that all are cared for. As costs rise, we begin to question how much we should in fact be responsible for each other when known habits such as cigarette smoking or high intensity sports makes some more at risk than others for needing the insurance. A similar question arises when we consider who and how should spouse and family coverage be paid. Single and healthy is a different profile from a family or someone suffering from any of a wide range of health conditions.



Our commitment to each other’s well-being is tested.

This year, CCFT will again be asked to negotiate with the district regarding health benefits for next year. Every year about in April, the insurance companies give the college quotes for the cost of the various health policies for the next cycle that begins each October. In order to bargain effectively on behalf of faculty, the union will likely want to survey those who use the insurance plans late in the spring. The timing is always terrible, coming just before the end of the academic year.

Issues that may be on the table could include whether to modify the plans by again accepting higher co-pays and coinsurance. Another interest of the district could be to negotiate to have employees pay for a share of the cost- increases for benefits. The district is also interested in making it so that retirees who are eligible for health benefits would receive the same stipend as active employees. Currently, the contract states that the district pays for retirees to have whatever plan they are on at the time of retirement. Some faculty have switched

to higher cost plans prior to retirement to take advantage of this generous benefit. As costs have spiraled upwards, is this still an appropriate benefit?

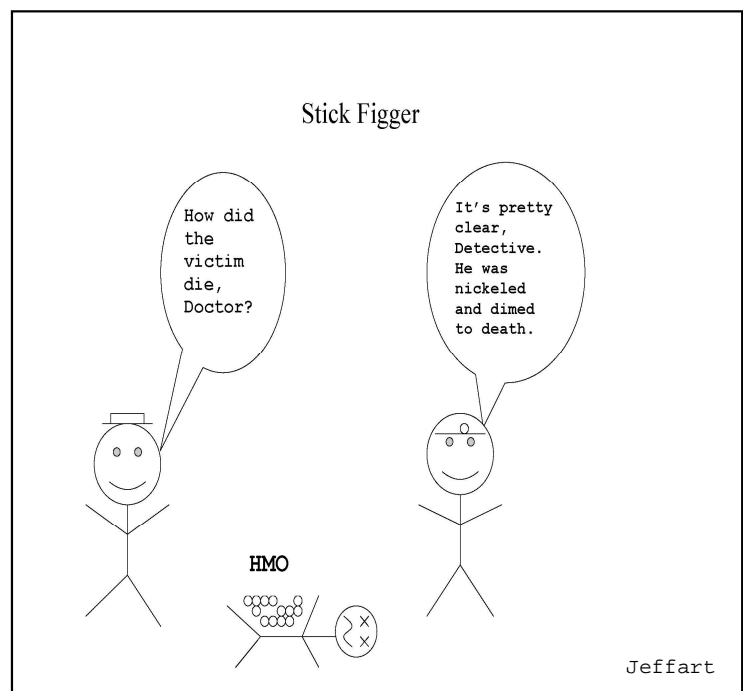
Regardless of how the next round of benefits negotiations goes, one thing is sure. Health costs will continue to rise, and all of us will continue to want and need these benefits. From a union perspective, these benefits are part of the total compensation package. It is in the interest of the district to keep us healthy so we can do our work. We will be advocating together locally and at the state level for adequate funds to keep these benefits available.

In the meantime, if you do use your benefits, expect to be your own advocate to get the coverage that you should. If the insurance doesn’t want to pay for your care, take the time to call and ask to speak to a supervisor. Many times they will reverse decisions about payment if you are persistent. If you owe money to the hospital or clinic, ask for an itemized bill and make sure that the charges



are accurate. Ask to see the nurse or doctor notes that document use of procedures, equipment or supplies. Negotiate for lower payment if there are questionable charges.

Unfortunately, insurance and hospitals often assume that patients won’t question the bill. Like the travel industry, health care prices are not the same for everyone, so it can pay to get someone to review your costs carefully. There is also a review process that the SISC group can do on your behalf if there is a dispute over coverage. None of this inspires confidence, but it does reflect the disarray of the health care industry as we lurch toward an unknown future that may include reform, but will surely continue to cost more and more. The best approach, of course, is to stay healthy!



Editorial: Gettin' Down with Jerry Brown

Jefferson Hancock, Editor



I met Jerry Brown once, at a fundraiser back in the '80s in my parents' living room. He was a nice guy. Back then, much of the world saw him as a California kook—"Governor Moonbeam" as Chicago columnist Mike Royko put it. Brown got his reputation because he exhibited non-traditional politician behavior. He dated Linda Ronstadt. Parties were held at his home, with Hollywood types attending and cocaine rumored to have been found there. He turned down the governor's mansion and drove around in a Plymouth rather than a limo. He dabbled in Zen Buddhism. Some critics viewed his minimalist lifestyle as phony liberalism. After all, turning down privilege by driving a Plymouth isn't really much of a sacrifice when you come from one of California's leading families and your dad ran the state for eight years. This feeling is captured in "California Uber Alles" by the Dead Kennedys, which gives us a sarcastic and less-than-flattering picture of a governor who tells us to "jog for the master race and always wear the happy face" while he establishes his fascist presidency.

But a look back reveals that Brown really wasn't a flake or a bad governor or a fascist at all. Before proposition 13, he ran a "frugal government" as his campaign slogans advertised at the time and built up a 5 billion dollar surplus. After proposition 13, he used up that surplus to pay the state's bills and keep public services ade-



quately and fully funded. A November, 2009 article by Jesse Walker in *The American Conservative* reveals, "Governor Brown was much more of a fiscal conservative than Governor Reagan.... Reagan had raised taxes several times and boosted spending by an average of 12.2 percent a year. [Brown] was thriftier than his predecessor, accumulating one of the biggest budget surpluses in California history." The same article notes Brown's ability to work both sides of the aisle: "Widely remembered as a flamboyant liberal, he in fact mixed ideas from Left and Right, attracting support from Californians who ordinarily despised Democrats."

Brown was also a friend to labor, enacting some of the most important legislation of our time, as Dina Martin and Dave Earl Carpenter remind us in the October 10, 2010 issue of *CTA Magazine*:

Educators and other working people can also thank Brown for establishing the Public Employment Relations Board, signing laws to give teachers and school employees the right to bargain collectively, extending collective bargaining rights to state employees, and signing laws to prohibit the use of professional strikebreakers in labor disputes. He's always been on the side of California working families and their children.

Nonetheless, when his candidacy for governor was announced this time around, many folks viewed him suspiciously: the

lesser of two evils, a career politician beholden to the public employee unions who would do little to solve the harsh realities of the state's budget. I must admit, I approached Brown's election with some degree of cynicism, having witnessed his subpar performance in managing Oakland, ordering cops to shoot painful non-lethal weapons at protesters resisting the Iraq war and urging the establishment of military schools to confront crime, drugs, and failed schools.

One also can't help but be cynical in looking at the past eight years of financial imbalance in Sacramento. Our then new Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger promised referendum after referendum and promised fiscal responsibility. Yet he could not get legislators to overcome their partisan bickering and agree on a sound budget. Instead, we got late budgets year after year that postponed the problem and relied on accounting gimmicks that fooled no one.

Will Jerry Brown give us anything different? Certainly his present proposals smack of what we've seen in the past. Again we're promised an election to decide whether or not we want to continue taxes and properly fund public services. We're also told that we must "live within our means," whatever that means. The essence of this is that half of the 28 billion dollar deficit will be made up of cuts to services and the other half with taxes. This is not unlike what



was proposed last year or the year before (who can remember?) under the leadership of Democrats Karen Bass and Darrell Steinberg. Of course, the plan went down to defeat because of the Republican "no tax" pledge. Thus, one wonders if Brown's plan is more of the same: putting off the problem by presenting us with an election doomed for failure, stalling with the vote, and kicking the can down the road again.

But Brown has assured us that he doesn't want to kick the can down the road. Perhaps past history will dictate whether he can or not. He certainly has experience. He ran the state before and he did it well, so why not give him the benefit of the doubt? With term limits and new people in and out of office all the time, it will be nice to have a seasoned veteran running the show. He knows the community college system, having served as one of the first trustees for the Los Angeles Community College District. He's good with money. In his last go-round, he favored a balanced budget amendment and worked the state through Proposition 13. Finally, he's a skilled politician who has successfully established rapport with both democrats and republicans. Can he pull it off again? Time will tell.

But in the mean time, what will "living within our means" mean? Brown has hinted that it might mean "pension



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Governor Brown

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reform." He's also vowed cut cell phone and care use among state employees in half, he's instituted a hiring freeze, and he's promised an end to S.W.A.G. or "stuff we all get," including flashlights, ashtrays or other unnecessary items that end up in landfills." Source: State Spent Millions on "Swag": Gov. Brown | NBC San Diego.

For now, living within our means doesn't mean cutting K-12, and could mean higher fees for students. The governor's intention here seems to be to pass on the monetary pain to those who can afford it the most, folks who attend U.C. and C.S.U.s and can afford to pay higher tuition. The presumption for Community Colleges here, again, is that low income students would continue to receive financial aid so only those with higher incomes would be affected by increases. The truth remains to be seen.

In the end, Brown may have been the lesser of two evils in the last election, but his historical record should provide some comfort. Had his opponent, Whitman, been elected, we might have been faced with what public workers in Wisconsin are dealing with now: the potential end of collective bargaining for benefits and pension. Since, as critics say, Brown is beholden to public employee unions, one hopes that he'll negotiate collegially with those same public employees rather than unilaterally slashing their pay and benefits, as Schwarzenegger has tried and as Wisconsin's Scott Walker is attempting to do now.

If worse comes to worst, we can take comfort in song if the budget ax falls. The *Interesting News Items* blog from January 18 of this year tells us that

Brown has, "unleashed his very own blast-from-the-past, appointing former flame Linda Ronstadt to fill a newly created cabinet position. As California's Secretary of Song, Ronstadt, the former Queen of Rock, is now responsible for encouraging the use of singing in the workplace, the home, and at the opening of wind farms." One wonders if this position comes with a salary paid from the general fund. Welcome back, Governor Moonbeam, and Linda, too. 🎵



Not Jerry Brown



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CCFT Spring 2011 Meetings

Save the Dates

CCFT Council

February 28

March 21 (changed from 14)

April 18

May 16

Meetings are Mondays from 2:30-4:30 in room 1804 of the Sesnon House

Part-time Committee

March 30

April 27

May 18

Meetings are Wednesdays from 11-12 at the Farm, 6790 Soquel Dr., Aptos

All faculty are welcome to attend

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