



Community College Council of the California Federation of Teachers
American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO

Perspective



Dancing for unionism

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Taking the Lead

Carl Friedlander, CFT Community College Council President

Talking merger while still reeling from our "victory"

When we talk about community colleges faring relatively well in last month's dramatic budget agreement, let's not break out any champagne. A 10% loss of purchasing power over two years (2008-10), a deficit factor in apportionments of 1.2%, \$165 million in unfunded FTES across the state, a projected \$40 million property tax shortfall, risky intertwined initiatives underpinning the whole deal, the likelihood of a worsened financial picture at the time of the May revise.... If we're the "winners," how dreadful must conditions be for the losers in California's ongoing budgetary nightmare.

Still reeling from our budget "victory," I was pleased to spend the weekend of February 20-22 at a retreat with our CCC officers, our counterparts from CTA's Community College Association (CCA), top leaders and key staff of both CFT and CTA, and representatives (actu-

I've always believed that unifying the community college faculty unions would increase our power. But the unprecedented fiscal crisis made the beginning of serious discussion of unification especially welcome.



PHOTO COURTESY CCA

CFT/CCC and CTA/CCA community college leaders met to discuss a possible merger on the weekend of February 20-22.

ally facilitators) from national AFT and NEA. The topic of the retreat was the possible unification of the community college constituency groups in both the statewide education unions.

I welcomed this opportunity because, quite frankly, I'm scared. The economic realities out there are ugly and getting uglier. While there's some truth to the view that "everybody loves community colleges," if I can paraphrase Mae West, when fiscal push comes to political shove, "love's got nothing to with it." It's about power.

I've always believed that unifying the community college faculty unions would increase our power. But the unprecedented fiscal crisis made the beginning of serious discussion of unification especially welcome. I want to thank all the CCC and CFT folks who made the commitment of time and open-mindedness to engage in these discussions—particularly Marty Hittelman and Dennis Smith, whose schedules can least easily accommodate the extra demands of these talks. CTA leaders made similar commitments.

The best of both for something better

Unifying and strengthening the voice of community college employees—in local board elections, at the Board of Governors, in Sacramento, in Washington, D.C.—is a guiding principle of these discussions. But it is not the only purpose. We seek to create a structure that combines the best of both organizations to create something better than either. This is not about "us" joining "them" or "them" joining "us." It's about shaping something new.

That's nice-sounding talk, you may be thinking, but what would this look like from the perspective of my local union? How will the dues structure change? How autonomous will our local be? We hire our own local staff; will we still be able to do so? Will there be different services available? Twice as many meetings? Will all the CCA/CTA members become members of the AFL-CIO? Who will control political decisions and funds? There are many,

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Perspective

The California Federation of Teachers is an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO.

The CFT represents over 120,000 educational employees working at every level of education in California. The CFT is committed to raising the standards of the profession and to securing the conditions essential to provide the best service to California's students.

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MARK YOUR 2009 CALENDAR

March 20 - 22 CFT Convention, Sheraton Grand, Sacramento

May 2 CFT Committees, San Francisco City College campus, SF

May 15 Community College Council, Four Points Hotel, Los Angeles

May 16 CFT State Council, Four Points Hotel, Los Angeles

June 22-24 CFT Leadership Institute, UCSC, Santa Cruz



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Adjunct activist Phyllis Eckler

A dancer's passion for justice

For Phyllis Eckler, a dance instructor at two community college campuses in Southern California, it's self-evident that the problems of contingent faculty affect not only instructors themselves, but the quality of education available to students. At Los Angeles City College, where she's taught since the 1990s, the district doesn't offer dance courses that lead to performances on the campus, and hasn't implemented courses with a performance path for students who want to become career dancers.

"I've written the curriculum for three courses, and urged the district to adopt them," Eckler explains. "My department chair has gone to bat for me. But each time we get close to adoption, the college says they can't pay me for the work I've put in." Eckler says the LACCD administration and union have negotiated ancillary pay for such work, but across the district there are problems accessing it. "And I will not work for free."

As a result, LA City College doesn't offer an AA degree in dance. "It's frustrating, because as an adjunct it means I'm not able to participate fully in curriculum development," she says.

At Los Angeles, she teaches 10 hours a week of actual class time. That qualifies her for the district's portion of the payment for health care benefits that it offers to adjunct faculty—\$2160 per year. But the actual yearly cost of the premiums for family coverage with Blue Shield PPO (the most expensive option) is \$14,097, or \$1,177 a month. That's a full third of Eckler's salary. The district pays the whole premium for full-time instructors.

Disparity and inspiration

The disparity in the treatment of part-time faculty inspired Eckler to become the second vice-president of the Glendale College Guild, AFT Local 2276, at the other campus where she teaches, Glendale Community College. There she was mentored by CFT stalwart Mona Field not long after she came to work in 1988. "She encouraged me to sit in on meetings discussing part-time issues," the dance teacher remembers. "Then the previous occupant of that position had to step down. They asked me to run in a special election to fill the job. I was very interested, because it was a position specifically created by the local union for part-time faculty. And that gave me my start with the union."

Eckler's courses produce dancers who often go on to four-year institutions, particularly UCLA and Cal State Long Beach. Some become performers themselves in the highly commercialized environment of Southern California. One group of her alumni, the Fanatix, has performed all over Los Angeles.

Eckler grew up in Toronto, Canada, which she says gave her much higher expectations about labor rights and social progress. "Canada has always had the best conditions for adjuncts," she explains. "People there have a socialist, humanitarian outlook, supporting living wages and full social benefits for everyone." She attended York University, studying dance, and after graduation got an offer to join the Bat-Dar Dance Company. With Bat-Dar she toured Israel for a year. "It was a world-class company, with an international repertoire, and it was an honor for me to dance with them so early in my life."

After the year ended, she went back to graduate school, this time in Southern California, where she got her MFA at Cal Arts. Afterwards, she had to decide whether to pursue a career as a performer. "I wanted a family, and that's very hard if you're always touring on the road," she recalls. "And I always loved teaching. I tutored kids in high school, and taught throughout my college career. So it was a natural."

Life of the freeway flyer

For a dance instructor, however, finding a full-time, tenured position is extremely difficult. First she got a job in Glendale, and then another in Los Angeles, living the life of the freeway flyer. Between the two campuses she teaches 16 class hours a week, almost a full-time load. "But it often feels like we're marginalized, not on campus to

develop curriculum or participate in many ways that would be possible with a full-time permanent position. Plus, you get hired every semester, which gives you a great feeling of insecurity. In my case, I have to work very hard to make my classes a success, and fill each one."

Teaching as many classes as she can is important. Her husband Mark, a commercial photographer, and Eckler support two children in college. Their daughter, Allison, graduates this spring from Cornell, where she took a number of labor education courses. Jamie, a freshman at UCSB, worked for the Obama campaign in Nevada, and is hoping to get an internship at the LACCD's Dolores Huerta Institute over the summer.

Change is possible

Eckler's union involvement has given her the feeling that change is possible. She sits on the statewide part-timer committee of the California Federation of Teachers, and is co-chair of the part-time issues committee of the Los Angeles College Faculty Guild, AFT Local 1521.

"Our CFT part-time committee used to be part of the Community College Council, where it didn't have as much impact," she says. "But a few years ago it became a committee of the California Federation of Teachers itself. That meant we could introduce resolutions directly to the convention, instead of sending them through the CCC.



Phyllis Eckler speaking at a CFT state council meeting.

The resolution to change the part-time percentage from 60% to 67% was one of our first. After it passed the convention, our legislative representatives took it up in Sacramento, and it was passed. I felt the union was really there for us."

At Glendale, Eckler's courses produce dancers who often go on to four-year institutions, particularly UCLA and Cal State Long Beach. Some become performers themselves in the highly commercialized environment of Southern California. One group of her alumni, the Fanatix, has performed all over Los Angeles. At Los Angeles City College,

without a career path for her students, she focuses on the role of dance in increasing their self-esteem and health.

"I think moving is an important part of being healthy," she emphasizes. "People don't realize the need to integrate the arts in education, and support and money for it is decreasing. But arts education makes us out-of-the-box thinkers, which is one of the strengths of this country. We introduce new ideas to the world, and if we lose our creativity, we lose a very important part of ourselves." CCC

By David Bacon

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many more critical questions about structure and governance.

There will be other kinds of questions as well. Since CTA is overwhelmingly K-12 and opposed Proposition 92, will the voice of community colleges be stifled in a unified structure? What will be the process for deciding on merger, if and when a real structure is proposed?

I've barely scratched the surface of your questions here, and I'm not going to try to answer even the one or two of the easier sample questions where I might be able to shed some light.

Please think about what kind of structure would best serve your members, and come to the CFT Convention ready to talk. We will be discussing merger at a Friday afternoon workshop, at our Friday evening Council meeting, and at the bar whenever the Convention is not in session. We will also be planning a retreat focused on merger for the local presidents later this spring.

The challenges we face are unprecedented, and nobody's interested in a merger that won't advance our interests. But we should be very interested in a merger that will. CCC

The state budget

Our very own remake of a classic

This year's "low budget" remake of a classic old movie seems to rerun every year. A tornado of an economy has tossed businesses, credit markets, jobs, and houses into the air, and we have landed in the budgetary Land of Oz. The crops have been pulled out by the roots, resulting in a loss of revenue to the state; lollipop land has become pop landfill; and the state employee Munchkins are being kicked in the rear by Wizard Schwarzenegger.

Wizard Schwarzenegger is full of ego and bluster, but the only person standing between the Wizard's kick and the Munchkins is the Courageous Lion of a State Controller John Chiang. He has single handedly prevented Wizard Schwarzenegger from paying state employees at the minimum wage rate and fought to prevent him from unilaterally forcing Munchkin furloughs.

Mike Villines, the supreme evil witch of the "No Tax" Republicans, has his usual allies to block any budget progress, especially the heartless Republican Tin Men who wield the hatchet to cut state employees, unions, public education, and public service programs that are so critical for the social needs of our community. The Howard Jarvis flying monkeys doggedly fight against taxes like they are

the last banana on earth. The Scarecrow Democrats seem to have completely run out of ideas to solve the budget deficit. With a backbone made of straw, they cave in to the Republicans every year, even though they are the majority. Who is going to lead us out of this bad budget movie? Toto the guide dog? Dorothy, click your heels three times! Click...click...click. Damn, we're still in Oz.

The movie's not over

Now that the budget has passed I want to thank all of the CFT members who relentlessly lobbied the Governor and Legislature by making visits to your legislators and responding to our email action alerts. In this budget deficit climate, the results could have been much worse. However, this budget fight is not over.

It is only another dramatic scene in a long movie and we must fight even harder for our students.

For the current year budget year of 2008-09 we have lost our 0.68% COLA of nearly \$40 million, which makes us \$325 million short of funding the 5.6% statutory COLA. In addition, all of our districts will be forced to deal with deferred January-April apportionments of \$340 million until July in the next fiscal year, along with \$200 million in deferred June and July apportionments until October. All of the apportionment deferrals will now become a permanent change in funding. The financial burden for districts to annually manage over half a billion dollars in deferred payments will be extremely difficult and costly in these restricted credit market times.

For the 2009-10 budget year community colleges have again lost the 0.68% COLA of \$40 million proposed previously. Enrollment growth was funded at 3% for \$185.4 million, but this does not come close to funding the current enrollment growth in community colleges and makes the current situation of 100,000 unfunded students even worse.

Silver linings

While the community college cuts are significant and will not allow us to meet the educational needs of our students, it is important to point out that many budget threats made by the LAO and Department of Finance were defeated. For example: no student fees increases, no "flexibility" raid of categorical funds, and physical education classes protected from being funded at the noncredit rate. In addition, the competitive CalGrant Program is funded, and the Governor appears willing to work on the property tax backfill.

As the economy continues to slide downward, a new round of budget cuts will most likely occur at the May Revise, scheduled on May 25th. And if the Budget Initiatives do not pass the electorate on May 19th, legislators might look for additional cuts to education.

While the budget looks merely difficult for community colleges in the short term, it will be critical to evaluate what the Spending Cap measure will do to Proposition 98 and other social and



health services programs in the long term. Such a Cap may virtually guarantee that Prop 98 will never rise above its absolute formulaic minimum growth. At the same time, however, as state education funding in the Prop 98 formula continues to grow, the hard spending cap means there will be less in the budget for all of the other service programs in the state. This will be an impossible situation as long as we have the 2/3 voting requirement to pass the budget and raise necessary revenues.

Who knows where will be in five years? Only time will tell, but it will be a harrowing ride on the yellow brick road. CCC

By Dean Murakami,
Los Rios Community College
Federation, Local 2279

Our students need this law

Why we should care about the Employee Free Choice Act

Why should we care that pro-labor members of congress are poised to introduce the Employee Free Choice Act, and that employer groups are fighting it as if it signals "the demise of a civilization" (actual words of Home Depot co-founder Bernie Marcus)? What does reform of private sector labor law have to do with public sector community college faculty?



PHOTO COURTESY OF SALVADOR SANCHEZ

Salvador Sanchez, Political Science instructor at several Los Angeles area colleges, participated with his students in the County Federation of Labor-sponsored 10-mile march from its offices to the Federal Building in Westwood in support of the Employee Free Choice Act on February 5.

The Employee Free Choice Act would allow workers to replace outdated National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) election procedures stacked in favor of employers with a fair democratic process, and provide stiffer penalties for rampant employer lawbreaking. It would also bring in a neutral arbiter to impose a first contract if the employer stalls for a year. The Employee Free Choice Act would be the first major revision of national labor law in forty years, and the first pro-worker reforms since the NLRA was passed in 1935.

Congress passed the NLRA in a time of enormous, sometimes violent, struggles between labor

The Employee Free Choice Act would allow workers to form a union by the simple, expeditious and democratic method of "majority sign up"—if fifty per cent plus one sign cards, they have a union. And if they prefer, they can still ask for a secret ballot election. *But the employer can't.*

and capital, and thereby established rules of the game for workplace conflict resolution. It provided for a government board (the NLRB) to oversee democratic procedures through which workers could determine for themselves how their collective economic interests might be met. These provisions for forming a union, gaining recognition from the employer, and negotiating a contract allowed, but did not mandate, a secret ballot election to choose the union.

Times have changed. The NLRB-administered secret ballot election process has been compromised and corrupted by anti-worker court decisions and illegal but common employer

practices. The biggest problem boils down to this: the NLRA assumed workers had the right to determine for themselves whether they wanted a union. The courts have obliterated this assumption, giving the employer the right to massively interfere in the election process. The Employee Free Choice Act would restore the presumption that workers have the democratic right to form a union without interference.

Deceptive PR campaign

Employers view this prospect with alarm. The Chamber of Commerce, Madison Avenue firms, and the anti-union legal

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Life-size student sculptures tell of success in words and art

Ron Owens entered Sacramento City College in 1977 on scholastic probation. Twenty-eight years after graduation he is the Public Information Officer in the State Chancellor's office.

City College of San Francisco student Sherita Moeser never thought she could afford to go to college as a single parent of a one-year-old daughter, but Cal-Works paid for her books and daycare and she is now earning As.

Army veteran Troy Carter knew he couldn't just speed through college because of his sub-standard math skills and the limits of the GI Bill. He needed a school willing to retrain him and not impose overwhelming financial burdens. Now at American River College, he calls the California Community College system "a haven" for over 1600 veterans just like him.

These students and dozens more at community colleges around the state, threatened by looming budget cuts, are speaking out to Sacramento lawmakers in the form of life-size fabric sculptures embellished with their digitized faces, their words, and whimsical and colorful designs covering every inch of the heavy muslin cover. Each of these sculptures tell in text and audio how a community college has changed the student's life.

They are participating in the innovative "Student Success Stories Project," another creative idea from Associate Vice-Chancellor for Governmental Relations Leslie Smith of City College of San Francisco, mastermind of the successful "Missing Student" campaign in 2004, which featured life-size fiberglass sculptures of students soon to be "missing" from college because of threatened budget cuts. Unlike that previous undertaking, the current soft-sided mannequins project an aura of smiling upbeat optimism and success.

Directing the statewide effort from her office at CCSF, Smith and her hard-working staff, with the assistance of student aides and the CCSF art department, have created more than 60 dolls currently touring the state; but more sculptures are needed for the March 16 "March in March" protest in Sacramento where they will be displayed.

Reminder for Legislators

Smith's goal is to see that all Legislators have Success Story "dolls" in their offices—complete with MP3 audio files in their chests—to remind them that community college students are a great resource, a good investment, and should not suffer from an inadequate state budget.

The Community College League of California says that the proposed cuts could drive away 262,000 community college students. It is expected that the influx of former four-year college students to the community colleges will squeeze out students who are not as savvy about the intricacies of admissions, finances, and scheduling as more experienced CSU or UC students. This has many community college faculty and administrators worried.


"My real fear is that we will lose the most vulnerable of students—the part-time student who does not qualify for financial aid and has to work full-time, and the non-credit student displaced by the closed-out students from the four-year colleges," says Smith. "We knew we needed something that would not be one-time, but would continue to remind the Legislature of the positive stories of our students' success."

How the dolls are created

The 72 inch-high sculptures begin as off-white muslin forms that have been sewn by Judy Seto, Smith's assistant and a former professional seamstress. Then the student's smiling face is ironed in place, along with the text of the student's success story. Fred Kling of the CCSF Art Department has designed a brace of heavy lead pipe that is then inserted inside the doll for stability, and it is stuffed with fiberfill. After that, the statues are artfully painted from head to toe.

Students around the state can write their story and decorate their doll as they wish, but they also can get help from Smith, her staff, and the CCSF Art Department. Besides Seto, Sherita Moeser, Phil Trach, Bryan Green, Ryan Fritz and Jane Ng-Lara—students on Smith's staff—have helped create many statues for students at CCSF and at other colleges, along with Sachi Henrietta, president of the CCSF Student Art Club.

Leslie Smith has drawn upon her life-long love of art for inspiration for her ideas. In 2005 she viewed an exhibit by textile artist Kiki Smith, who had created soft-sculpture fiber figures at a San Francisco Museum of Modern Art exhibition. From that spark, Smith's imagination led to Student Success Stories. If all goes according to plan, soon a Success Stories "doll" will be a guest in each Legislator's office in the State Capitol.

For more information about the project, see a YouTube five-minute video about the project at www.youtube.com/watch?v=NpXuKBeuERU. You may also contact Leslie Smith at lsmith@ccsf.edu. 

By Patricia Arack,
AFT 2121, San Francisco



Top: CCSF student Gabriel Reeberg works on student sculpture project. **Middle:** More student sculptures. **Bottom:** From left, Staff Assistant Judy Seto, Leslie Smith, CCSF Associate Vice-Chancellor for Governmental Relations, and Work/Study student Philip Trach, with Student Success Story dolls.

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industry are behind an expensive, hyperbolic and deceptive public relations campaign against the Act. Their ads, op-eds and talking heads are deeply, deeply worried that if the Employee Free Choice becomes law, workers would lose "their right to vote on the job." Say, does that mean you are for workers voting on what products to produce, or what services to offer the public, or what time to come into work, or how big a raise to give the

CEO? Oh. Just kidding.

Setting aside the ludicrous idea that the Chamber of Commerce has ever cared about worker rights, their argument is also factually wrong. The Employee Free Choice Act would allow workers to form a union by the simple, expeditious and democratic method of "majority sign up"—if fifty per cent plus one sign cards, they have a union. And if they prefer, they can still ask for a secret ballot election.


But the employer can't.

Between twenty and thirty thousand workers are harassed, disciplined, or fired yearly for union-related activities that are legal under the NLRA. But the penalties for employer lawbreaking are so slight and take so long employers consider them part of the cost of doing business.

Two years ago one of my students, a musician who had a day job at a national camera supply chain store, was fired for talking

with a coworker about forming a union to deal with the employer about consistent undercounting of their hours worked. My student knew it was illegal to be fired for his conversation, but he needed to work, and didn't have time between work, school, and his music to go talk with a lawyer. He found a new job that paid less, but enough to get by.

Polls consistently show that the majority of non-union

workers would join a union if they were not afraid of losing their job in the process. The Employee Free Choice Act would fix the broken NLRA system, restore a measure of fairness to the American workplace, and give our students a greater likelihood their work in community college will convert to a decent living with dignity when they get a job. Its time has come. 

By Fred Glass



Working the Floor

Judith Michaels, CFT Legislative Director

Broken promises, challenges, and plans for action

California has passed a budget-balancing bill that the legislature wishes and hopes will essentially be an 18-month agreement. A group called the “Big Five”—the governor and Democratic and Republican legislative leaders—conducted what they called a debate, or negotiations, on the budget with almost no oversight by legislative committees or the legislature as a whole. While closed door meetings at this level have been part of California’s pattern to get a budget in place, given the state’s requirement for a super-majority, in the past those discussions dealt with only a few outstanding items.

This time legislative leaders allowed the Governor to throw representative democracy out the window. The Big Five carefully avoided leaks that would mobilize “special interests” and blow up a pending “deal.” The press quoted legislative leaders as saying that they expected no one to like what they come up with, but that that was, regrettably, unavoidable.

As a result, a new hard spending cap, different than what was slated to be on the ballot for voter approval, will be put before voters in still another Special Election, scheduled for May 19, 2009. The CFT will review and debate the various elements of

the special election at the upcoming CFT convention. However, any kind of spending cap during this national recession would lock in college funding at one of the lowest points in history. Voters will also be asked to ratify significant cuts and timing for some new revenues.

A drastic future

What lies ahead? The legislative analyst recommends consolidating eight categorical programs into two block grants focused on student success and faculty support. Created by legislation and mandated to make sure that districts followed state priorities, categoricals help ensure districts

We must affirm that education is the solution, not the problem, and rededicate ourselves to the fulfillment of the Master Plan vision of universal access to higher education.

address the needs of disadvantaged students and previously, in the nineties, of part-time faculty (for example, the set aside for part-time faculty salary parity).

Governor Schwarzenegger has proposed an even more drastic fix to “help” school districts and community colleges respond to a tight budget: he would give them the authority to permanently suspend most categorical program requirements. If this notion stands, districts would no longer need to adhere to virtually any of the state’s existing program or reporting requirements. In addition, districts would be able to transfer funds among categorical programs as well as from categorical programs to general-purpose accounts.

Substantially increased fees are probably part of the future picture. The Community College Council has traditionally opposed student fees because fees and tuition are really user taxes. The faulty assumption underlying high fees and tuition is that the individual student receives a tangible reward from education, and thus he or she should pay for the reward. On the contrary, the entire state of California receives enrichment each time a student matriculates, far in excess of any price the state pays for education. The return on investment comes in the form of increased tax revenue, increased attractiveness of California to employers, increased productivity, less reliance on other forms of state

support (including jails and prisons), and a higher cultural level.

Each time the state increases fees or tuition, California excludes another group of students from career technical education or academic opportunities. Our system of student aid does not begin to address the level of financial assistance required to help needy students matriculate in a timely manner. We must affirm that education is the solution, not the problem, and rededicate ourselves to the fulfillment of the Master Plan vision of universal access to higher education.

We are faced with mobilizing, protesting, and marching to have any hope of achieving the California dream of free public education for everyone who merits it—not a revolving door of failures and unrealistic attempts, but a promise that if you work hard academically, there will be a place for you. And, fortunately, we are up for the challenge ahead. Along with our allies, we’ll be marching, writing letters, speaking, and rallying. **ccc**

Hard work on November elections brings good news for CFT/CCC locals

Educators in the Coast Community College District are celebrating an historic victory. For the first time in 25 years, the Orange County district has a pro-faculty, pro-labor board majority.

Voters reelected Jerry Patterson and elected challenger Lorraine Prinksy. She ousted Armando Ruiz, long an antagonist, according to Dean Mancina, president of the Coast Federation of Educators. “This is a huge victory for all labor in Orange County,” exclaimed Tefere Gebre, executive director of the Orange County Central Labor Council.

The election’s impact was immediate. “The chancellor has been put on administrative leave, and the board is seeking to resolve three major issues that were costing the district and the union a lot of money,” according to Mancina.

Mancina stated that the roots of the electoral breakthrough lay

in a two-day workshop sponsored by the CFT political and training departments in 2004 that focused on candidate recruitment, fundraising, coalition building, and working with a consultant.

The local union partnered with the Orange County Labor Council and CFT to organize and support a full-fledged campaign that included mailers, slate cards, and grassroots activities. In a sign of how closely the local worked with the larger labor movement, the labor council recently honored Mancina as its labor leader of the year.

Victories elsewhere in the state

College faculty and classified members were also celebrating

the election of one of their colleagues to the State Assembly. Political Science instructor Paul Fong, a member of the San Jose Evergreen Faculty Association, AFT Local 6157, brings his classroom insights to the state capitol. His local and CFT helped Fong through a difficult primary.

Another new state legislator is Marty Block. He served as a trustee for the San Diego Community College District, as well as a professor and dean at San Diego State University. CFT and the San Diego Faculty Guild, led by president Jim Mahler, were instrumental in Block’s primary and general election victories in a district that had been represented by a Republican. The new assemblyman acknowledged that assistance when he addressed the Community College Council in

San Diego in January. Block is the second representative from San Diego higher education to serve in the state Capitol. Lori Saldaña, an adult educator, is in her third term.

AFT locals were also active in a number of other trustee races from San Francisco to Fresno to San Diego. The Cabrillo College Federation of Teachers, Local 4400, in Santa Cruz County helped elect trustee Susan True.

Voters passed facility bonds in two AFT-represented districts. Measure J authorized \$3.5 billion in new construction for the Los Angeles Community College District. In Sacramento, the Los Rios College Federation of Teachers passed Measure M, a \$475 million bond for the growing district.

In other developments, the Glendale and Los Angeles districts are among those that will

hold elections this spring. Victor Valley in San Bernardino County, on the other hand, has changed the date of its next election from 2009 to 2010. The alignment with statewide elections will save the district money.

Judy Chu, a member of the State Board of Equalization as well as a former legislator and member of AFT Local 1521, is running for the congressional seat left vacant by President Obama’s appointment of Hilda Solis to be the Secretary of Labor. The Los Angeles College Faculty Guild and the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor are backing Chu. According to Guild president Carl Friedlander, Chu is a good friend of community colleges. **ccc**

By Kenneth Burt,
CFT political director

The story behind the SLO

Precursors, politics, and resistance

The following article does not necessarily represent the official views of the CFT on Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs). The Perspective, as always, welcomes views from the members on issues important to community college faculty.—Editor

The general idea that each college course should have defined “student learning outcomes” (SLOs) does not appear unreasonable on its face, but in order to understand their negative implications for educators, some critical analysis is necessary.

The ultimate precursor: Scientific Management

In 1911, Fredrick W. Taylor published his famous *Principles of Scientific Management*. He proposed sending engineers into factories to make a time-and-motion study of each worker’s task, streamline and standardize the motions, establish time norms, and set up monetary rewards for faster production and punishments for slowness. Thus began the so-called age of efficiency, during which the principles of scientific management were applied to various aspects of American life, including education. James P. Moore’s influential *New Directions in Education* (also 1911), for example, called for education engineers who would reorganize the schools, faced with the problem of a large number of “repeaters,” using efficient methods of factory management.

Education politics in the Bush years

K-12: No Child Left Behind. By the closing decades of the twentieth century, American schools were facing a new crisis, evidenced by declining SAT scores.

The SLO approach was an attempt to apply the thinking behind “No Child Left Behind,” with its emphasis on quantified outcomes and accountability, to higher education.

A number of factors contributed to this negative trend, including family breakdown, television, a consumer culture, disruptions linked to school desegregation, low teacher salaries, inadequate funding, and heavy immigration after World War II.

When George W. Bush came to power in 2001, he secured passage of “No Child Left Behind,” a major element in the Republican response to the crisis, along with vouchers and charter schools. “No Child” mandated yearly standardized tests to measure student performance and a cut-off of federal funds for schools with poor results. The responsibility for low scores was assigned to teachers, without due regard for students’ abilities or work habits and external socio-economic and cultural factors.

Higher Education: Student Learning Outcomes. The SLO approach was an attempt to apply the thinking behind “No Child Left Behind,” with its emphasis on quantified outcomes and accountability, to higher education. The term “SLO,” as mandated by accreditation agencies, means that learning outcomes for

each course must be defined in demonstrable behavioral terms, so that at the end of the semester quantitative data based on the “effectiveness” of instructors will be generated. Institutions that fail to provide such data can be sanctioned and eventually denied accreditation, which means a loss of federal student aid funding (such as Pell grants).

Compatibility with the privatization agenda. Another motive behind the SLO mandate was the Bush privatization agenda in education. By defining the results of the learning process in simplified, immediate behavioral terms which private entrepreneurs can pretend to satisfy, SLOs prepare the way for a transfer of public funding learning to profit-based charter schools or distance learning corporations which promise “more effective” results.

Implementation and resistance

Accreditation. The SLO concept was imposed on institutions of higher learning from above, starting with Bush’s Education Secretary Margaret Spellings, who appointed the 12 members of NACIQI (National Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity). Its role is to supervise the work of the various accreditation agencies, including the Accreditation Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). It was through this accreditation process that institutions of higher learning were compelled to implement the SLO requirement which NACIQI mandated.

Educational values under assault. According to the critics, SLOs were imposed across-the-board on all disciplines, without due consideration for the different nature of course objectives in diverse areas like business, science and technology, language arts, fine arts, and the humanities and social sciences. Although in some disciplines the legitimate goal may clearly be to produce an immedi-



ate, correct response, in others it may not. Ironically, the more simplistic and less ambitious the definitions of learning objectives are, the higher the ratings of teacher “effectiveness” will be.

Education professionals fight back. When the SLO concept was introduced in 2002, many educators greeted it with skepticism. And in 2006, when Secretary Spellings’ nineteen-person Commission on the Future of Higher Education, which included corporate representatives from Boeing, Microsoft, and IBM and was chaired by Charles Miller, a Texas financier and charter school advocate, called in 2006 for standardized tests and a national data base to follow student progress and establish accountability, organizations like the American Council on Education, the Association of American Universities, and the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges objected.

Meanwhile, some institutions in California and elsewhere had implemented the SLO requirement half-heartedly, if at all, and had therefore failed to produce the kind of quantitative data mandated for accreditation reports measuring their effectiveness in accomplishing their mission. In the west, NACIQI eventually began to get tough, admonishing ACCJC in 2007 for failing to ensure that institutions it accredited produced such reports within a mandated time period. As a result of this new enforcement policy, ACCJC cited 11 California community colleges in January 2008 alone for not producing acceptable reports.

Resistance on a political level, in the meantime, including vigorous lobbying by educators, began to bear fruit. In the fall of 2008, President Bush was obliged to sign a new version of the Higher Education Act. It allowed Congress to appoint two-thirds of NACIQI’s 18 members and forbade the Department of Education from establishing any criteria to define the standards accreditors use to assess an institution’s success in terms of student achievement.

In California, these changes mean, according to President Hittelman, that SLOs cannot be required by the Department or used for faculty evaluation purposes unless consistent with the local collective bargaining agreement negotiated by the faculty bargaining agent under the Rodda Act. At present, however, ACCJC refuses to accept this interpretation; so the matter may eventually have to be settled in the courts. At the same time, however, ACCJC Chair Gaines has stated that “each institution [under its jurisdiction] can define SLOs for itself” and that SLOs are only “one possible component” of evaluation of the effectiveness of its academic staff. Individual colleges will discover whether these words represent a modification in ACCJC’s stance to conform with the 2008 Higher Education Act, or whether they are merely window dressing, when accreditation inspections resume in 2009. **ccc**

By Greg Davis,
AFT Local 1493, San Mateo

Of the six major accrediting organizations for community colleges in the United States, just one has demonstrated what might be considered an overzealous approach to sanctions, as revealed by the comparison chart below.

Accrediting Institution	Community Colleges served	Sanctions 2003-08
MSA/CHE	95	6
NEAS&C/CIHE	64	0
NCA/HLC	43	2
NWCCU	56	0
SACS/COC	298	7
WASC/ACCJC	174 (110 California CCs)	117 (41)

MSA = Middle States Assoc. of Colleges and Schools; NEAS&C = New England Assoc. of Schools and Colleges; NCA = North Central Assoc. of Colleges and Schools; NWCCU = Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities; SACS = Southern Assoc. of Colleges and Schools; WASC = Western Association of Schools and Colleges

Source: Comparison of Accreditation Sanctions across Commissions, 2003-2008

Local Action

Marin

Strike looms at College of Marin

College of Marin, where teachers have gone without a contract for two years, is probably a good example of the problems that arise when a district turns over negotiations to an attorney. Larry Frierson, attorney for the college district, is now its highest paid employee, having earned over \$700,000 in three years, according to Ira Lansing, president of United Professors of Marin, AFT Local 1610.

"The district used to have a chief negotiator on a monthly salary," he explains. "Frierson, however, charges by the hour both as a negotiator and a

litigator." In other words, if bargaining goes on forever, the hourly charges mount up. And if the district winds up in litigation as a result, along with mediation sessions, fact-finding possible board charges, the charges mount up even more.

That seems to be where things are headed in Marin. When negotiations started, the district sunshined 18 of the 26 articles in the union contract. When the district gave its proposal, and the union gave a counterproposal, the district never responded.

To try to break the logjam, the union even made a drastic proposal during mediation. "We said we'd agree to all their changes in contract language, and there were many, if they'd agree with all our proposals on salaries and economics. Their response was that

they had no authority to make an offer."

Fact-finding was then scheduled for February 23-26, and in all likelihood will extend much longer. The union is contemplating unfair labor practice charges. If nothing changes, the union is preparing to strike.

"From my perspective as UPM president it appears that these are the only two possible outcomes," Lansing told members, "acquiesce or strike. If the Board of Trustees and the administration were truly serious about producing a collective bargaining agreement that was acceptable to both parties, they would have responded in meaningful ways to all previous proposals. They have given no counter-proposals to most of their initial positions and have remained, in most instances, at their opening proposals."

Lansing anticipates that following fact-finding the district may choose to implement its final offer, presenting the faculty with a basic choice. "We as faculty can go on strike for the first time in the history of the College of

Marin or we can accept a contract that changes our wages, benefits and working conditions in extreme ways and wipes out many of the accomplishments achieved over the last 30 years of bargaining."

College of Marin is the 47th lowest-paid district in the state, in a county with higher living costs than almost any other. Across the street from the college campus is Kent Middle School, where a teacher with a masters degree and 15 years on the job gets \$17,000 a year more. The district has offered 0% over three years. "They believe we're paid too much," Lansing charges.

"Best wishes"

Meanwhile, as anger and resentment build, the district seems unconcerned, or even oblivious. One faculty member, Laurie Ordin, co-chair of the mathematics department, wrote a plea to college president Fran White, telling her morale hit rock bottom when teachers heard that the district wasn't willing to come to the table and negotiate.

"It is extremely important that we feel that the entire college community can put aside differences," Ordin said, "as President Obama has asked us to, to get the important work done. It is so much better to feel hope rather than despair in difficult times."

White's response: "Thank you for your note. The District is honoring the Fact Finding process. Happy New Year and best wishes for the new semester."

By David Bacon

San Diego

Locksmith the key to a real union at SDCC

Maintenance and operating unit employees are the new members of the AFT Guild – San Diego Community College, Local 1931. But they're not new to unions. In fact, their labor experience and their dogged pursuit of their rights is what brought them into the union representing the other faculty and employees at the San Diego Community College District.

On December 22, 90 members of the unit voted in favor of the AFT. Forty voted to continue with their previous representative, Service Employees Local 221, and two voted for no union representation.

Behind the vote was a long process in which the 198 members of the unit sought to convince their old union to represent them properly. Chris Rouch, a locksmith on the San Diego City College campus, was one of the two leaders of the

maintenance and operating employees, along with Gerald Vanderpot, a gardener-groundskeeper. "We just weren't getting proper service," Rouch explained. "We couldn't even get our phone calls returned."

Unreturned calls were the least of their concerns, however. Recently the district hired a consultant, Hay Management Corporation, to do a study of district wages. After making recommendations to the district for a "pay realignment," Rouch says, the district and the old union signed off on the new arrangement.

"Three quarters of our unit lost money, especially custodians," he says. "With the COLA [cost of living adjustment] that had been in our contract, their wages would have gone up \$100 a month. Instead, they went down by \$80. My own pay structure went down by \$650, and I was told my salary would no longer reflect any COLA increases. After the district and the old union approved the arrangement, they held a quick vote two days later at the union hall, in which most people didn't understand what was on the table."

That incident inspired Rouch and Vanderpot to begin questioning the relationship between the SEIU local and the district. They got in touch with the AFT, but were told the burden of changing unions would have to be theirs alone. So the two started visiting the other members of their unit. The district has three colleges, six continuing education sites, a district office and a service center. To speak to each worker, the pair had to make an extensive commitment of time and energy.

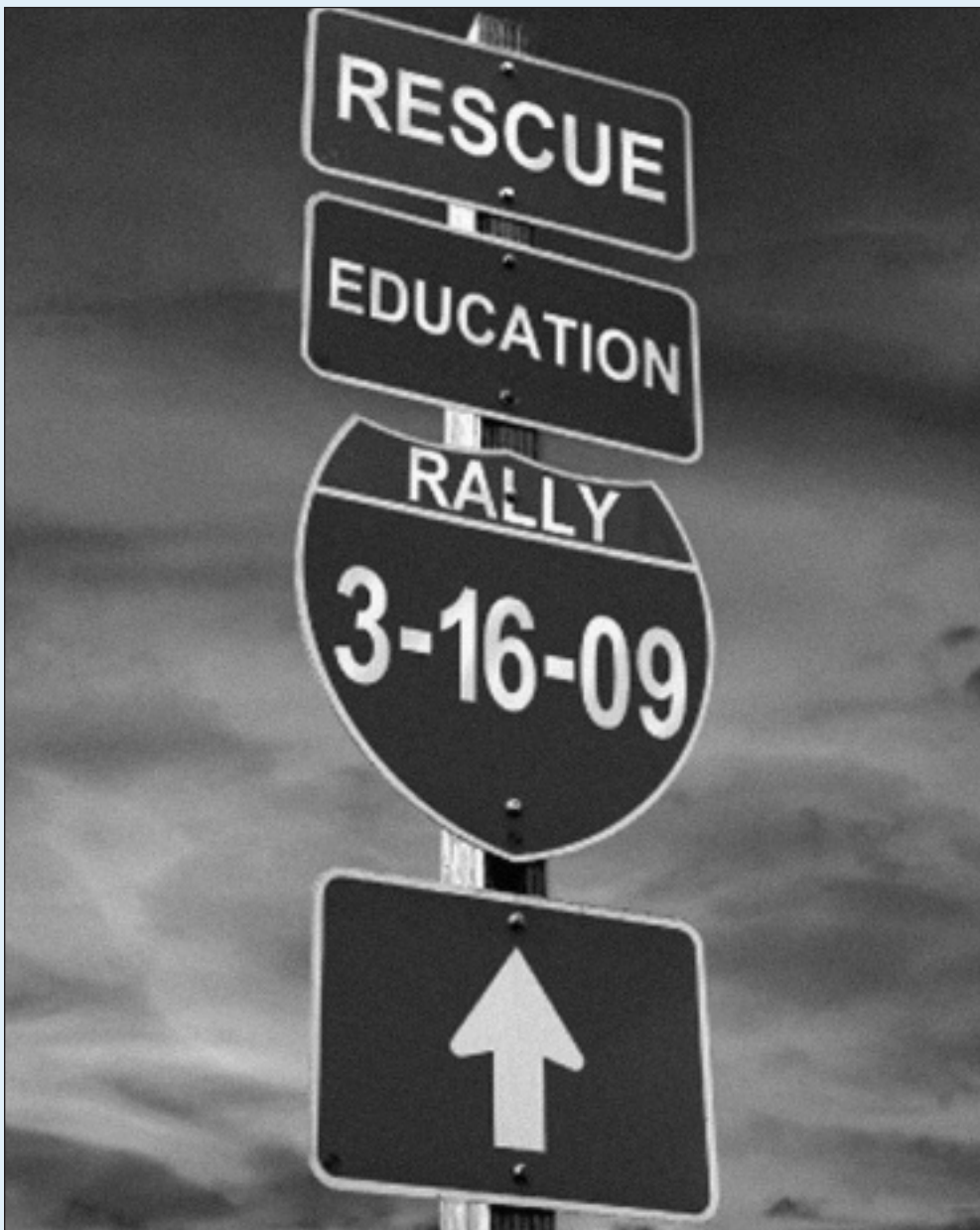
"Gerry and I went to every site and every shift," Rouch recalls. That's when the district tried to stop them. "The human relations manager wrote me a letter telling me we couldn't hold any meetings among unit employees. I said that if we did it at lunch, on our own time, in the parking lot, they couldn't keep us from meeting. But they continued to keep an eye on me. HR even wrote a note to supervisors, telling them to tell the workers they supervised not to attend."

To Rouch, the original wage reduction deal, and then the subsequent threats, were reason to question the relationship between the district and the SEIU local.

Jim Mahler, Local 1931 president, welcomed the workers into the AFT after they'd made their choice. "We represent everyone else in the district," he said. "It's logical they'd choose us – they just wanted representation."

Rouch says simply, "We wanted it, we got it, and now we're happy."

By David Bacon



CCSE MISSION CAMPUS, GRAPHICS DEPARTMENT

This post card was sent to thousands of students across the state to encourage participation in the March 16 Sacramento march and rally to protest cuts to education and social services in the state budget agreement signed by the governor in February.