

# Perspective



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

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FRED GLASS PHOTO



## CFT activist leads FACCC

A long-time faculty union activist is now the president of another faculty organization. How will his history help him in his new job?

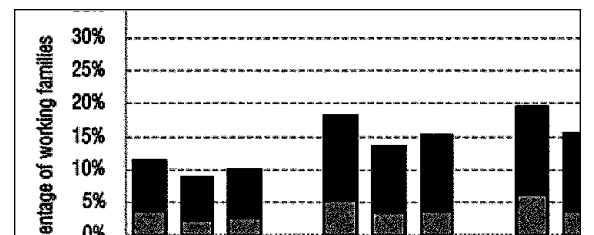
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## Convention sets education defense policy

The CFT convention combined action with policy, crafting a response to the governor's attacks on public education.

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## Rising income inequality

As the economy changes, the new balance of winners and losers will affect community colleges.

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## Taking the Lead

Marty Hittelman, CFT Community College Council President

# The community college scene

There have been many efforts made in the last few months to address real and perceived problems facing California and its community colleges. Governor Schwarzenegger has, as we are all aware, stated clearly that the problems stem from us—the unionized public employees and the public educational systems that we seek to protect. According to the governor, we are responsible for everything from the State's budget problems to the erosion of educational quality. He calls us "Special Interests" even though he takes millions of dollars from insurance companies, drug companies, oil companies, and others that prey on working families.

In contrast, our "special" efforts are directed at improving the living and learning conditions of our students—in short, protection of the California dream to provide quality education to all Californians for as long as they can benefit from that education. Arnold seeks to cut education funding, eliminate predictable pension programs, diminish the role of unions in politics, and redraw electoral boundaries so as to increase the number of elected Republicans in California.

We have seen efforts in the legislature to increase funding for nursing programs even though there is no lack of qualified nurses. California has more qualified nurses, not working as nurses, than it has working nurses. The shortage of nurses is caused by poor working conditions including high patient to nursing ratios. There is no legislation being proposed to address the real cause of the nursing shortage.

There is also no shortage of qualified teachers either at the college or K-12 level. There are thousands of community college faculty members serving in

temporary positions who are striving to become full-time employees. At the K-12 level, there are more credentialed teachers not teaching than there are teaching. The reasons why nearly half of K-12 teachers leave teaching before their fifth year are overcrowded schools and classes, relatively low wages, and the lawlessness that comes from poverty and the accompanying lack of hope.

We have also seen attempts to increase pre-school attendance although pre-school teaching jobs do not currently provide a living wage. It seems clear to me that we need to solve the systemic problems causing shortages of trained people in a variety of fields, not just the educational challenges. There is no legislation being proposed that addresses these core problems.

We have seen legislation that would reduce the minimum qualifications for vocational and technical educators (bypassing the role of the Academic Senate and Community College Board of Governors), allow such educators to be hired full-time

**He calls us "Special Interests" even though he takes millions of dollars from insurance companies, drug companies, oil companies, and others that prey on working families.**

without the tenure protection that other full-time faculty enjoy, and to make possible the hiring of more part-time vocational and technical educators without regard to the 75/25 full-time/part-time requirements. This legislation is not about quality, it is about saving money on the backs of the vocational and technical educators.

We have seen attempts to pass legislation that would limit academic freedom in the classroom

in the name of educational diversity (see article on page 5). The goal of this legislation is to intimidate faculty into not taking sides on important issues in their disciplines. The effort (part of a national conservative attack on "liberal" faculty in our colleges and universities) is to attack the academic authority of scholars and require the presentation of a variety of views that have no standing in the academic community. It is a "my view is as good as your view" philosophy even when one view is based on scholarship and the other on beliefs.

On perhaps the positive side, the Board of Governors is engaged in a Strategic Plan effort. The main goal will be to develop a plan to promote the interests of the community colleges—improved funding, increased visibility, promotion of quality education, improving the functioning of the System's Office, and providing direction for the System's Office. Hearings are being held throughout the state. I would hope that the effort will, among other things, help increase public and legislative recognition of the need to fully fund part-time faculty office hours, benefits, and equity pay funds as well as to revitalize the role of faculty, staff, and students in the shared decision making process on campus and at the State level. For more information go to [www.ccc-systemstrategicplan.org](http://www.ccc-systemstrategicplan.org).

Persevere!

## 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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Front page: Katharine Harer and Dan Kaplan of the San Mateo Community College Federation of Teachers join three thousand other protesters outside the Ritz Carlton in San Francisco on April 5, while Governor Schwarzenegger feasts inside the hotel with his corporate donors. Fred Glass photo.

## MARK YOUR 2004 CALENDAR

May 25	Action Day for a Better California Sacramento and Los Angeles, and local actions (see page 8)
June 30 – July 5	AFT ULI West, Asilomar Conference Center, Pacific Grove
July 7 – 10	AFT QuEST Conference, Hilton, Washington, DC
July 25 – 28	AFL-CIO Quadrennial Convention, Chicago Navy Pier, Chicago, IL
September 23	CFT Community College Council, Hilton, Oakland Airport
September 24	CFT State Council, Hilton, Oakland Airport

## Dennis Smith elected FACCC president

# Working for the same things for the same people

Dennis Smith, a working-class kid, dreamed as a teenager of being an accountant. He not only became a successful one, but also wound up teaching the young people who followed him into the profession. This year the teacher-activist won his colleagues' recognition, when they elected him to head the state Faculty Association of California Community Colleges (FACCC).

Smith always knew he wanted to be a teacher as well as an accountant. "I actually majored in accounting in college," he recalls, "because I knew that way I could get a job teaching." Partly, he was following the example of his father-in-law, who was a business professor at Sacramento City College. "Every day I step over the plaque that bears his name, on the campus walkway that honors our past faculty. He was a real inspiration to me."

Another inspiration was one other professor at Sac City—Mark Fielding—who taught business math. "He was a great

teacher," Smith says. "He was the kind of guy who would take the time to encourage a student from a poor family." Smith was one of seven children, whose father worked in oil fields, or cooking in restaurants. The family split, and Smith's mother, a waitress, eventually married a career serviceman. "She made a dollar an hour, plus tips, when we lived in the south, so I know how hard it is to live in a low-wage family."

Smith is the only one of his siblings to go to college, and when he did, he went to Sac City too, and then to Sac State. Finally he went into the Navy, where he was stationed off the coast of Vietnam in the late 1960s, at the height of the war.

### Practical problems

Smith is a man of the world. Twenty-five years ago he started an accounting business, which he still runs today. While now he only has a handful of clients, at its height his office employed other accountants, and he was an enrolled agent of the Internal Revenue Service, allowing him to represent his clients in tax audits.

He became the chief financial officer for an investment partnership, and continues to help small businesses set up their computer systems and books. "It really helps me when I go into the classroom," he explains, "since I'm still familiar with the practical problems someone has running a business."

The experience helped him as well when he became a union activist. "On my first day as a teacher at Consumnes River College," he remembers, "Michael Crowley [then president of the Los Rios College Federation of Teachers—ed.] walked into my office. My perspective had been



Dennis Smith continues to teach his accounting classes in the Los Rios Community College District, although his responsibilities with the union and FACCC amount to more than a full-time job.

shaded by my business background, so I wasn't sure about the union. But he didn't let that stop him."

Smith started as chair of the budget committee of Consumnes River College, but when the secretary-treasurer of the faculty union couldn't continue, Crowley asked Smith if he could "just write a few checks a month." That was the beginning of a long career as one of the backbone

union activists in the district.

"The first thing I did was bring the local's books and accounting system into the computer age," Smith says. But one thing led to another. "I got interested in bargaining, and joined the negotiations team. In the next round, I wound up leading our effort." Getting elected president of the faculty union, AFT Local 2279, followed. Then his colleagues chose

him as the secretary-treasurer of the Community College Council of the California Federation of Teachers.

"Because of my family, it all came kind of naturally," he says. "I remember my first day at a national AFT convention, when we marched to support shipyard and hotel workers in New Orleans. I thought to myself, if my own parents had had a union,

Smith continued on page 6

In the relationship between unions, the academic senate and the faculty association, "no one can take sole credit for the work that gets done," Smith urges, "since we're often working together." Particularly in the current climate "we all have the same goal in Sacramento—defending ourselves against the governor, and eventually replacing him."

## Widener is new chair of Cal-STRS Board

Can you think of someone better to represent your interests in retirement than a former teacher union grievance rep and chapter chair? The voice of community college faculty in the State Teachers' Retirement System (CalSTRS) has just grown stronger with the election of Carolyn Widener as Chair of the CalSTRS Board of Trustees for the 2005 year.

AFT Local 1521 president Carl Friedlander has worked with Widener for years in the Los Angeles Community College District. He says, "She has already made a big difference on the STRS board, really pushing improvements in service to members, moving forward the work of the task force that's been grappling with the complicated issues of how best to serve part-time members. And she's been a great supporter of the involvement of CalSTRS in the area of corporate governance."

Widener was elected at the Board's April 7 meeting in Sacramento to the one-year term.

An English instructor at West

Los Angeles College, Widener has been employed in the Los Angeles Community College District since 1970. She is currently a union officer as well, the executive vice-president of AFT Local 1521, the Los Angeles Faculty Guild, specializing on the union negotiations team in retirement and health care matters.

"I became active in retirement issues in the mid-nineties," she recalls, "when we were trying to change the academic calendar in the district. Faculty kept saying we can't do that, it will mess up our STRS. So I started going to meetings in Sacramento, monitoring STRS and its actions."

Widener is looking forward to playing her new role, but remains mindful of the problems ahead. "We're in a difficult year," she notes, "with this attack on defined benefit systems. One challenge is to make sure we've done everything possible to educate the members about the outstanding system that they have, and about what the alternatives would look like."

She sees two other tasks before her. "We have this unfunded



Carolyn Widener is the new Chair of the STRS Board of Trustees.

actuarial obligation, we're at 82%. The board has to look at how to handle that." And that hurdle is higher now, she says, since Governor Schwarzenegger fired his four appointees to the board when they voted against his proposal to transform teacher retirements from defined benefit to defined contribution plans earlier this year. "So now in this challenging year we're going to have to rebuild the board, too."

CalSTRS has a portfolio of \$127 billion, and is the nation's third largest public pension fund. It serves more than 755,000 members and benefit recipients.

# CFT Convention: Delegates act against governor's attacks



LUKKIA SMITH PHOTO

**Ben Rust Award recipient Lance Widman, prize in hand, accepts the congratulations of the El Camino College Federation of Teachers president, Angela Simon.**

## Excerpt from Lance Widman's Ben Rust Award acceptance speech

Along with the craft and the passion, an enduring sense of humor is essential when confronting the forces of evil and darkness known as management. Keeping in mind, for example, just what is the difference between a cat and an administrator? One is an arrogant creature who will ignore you and treat you with contempt unless it can get something out of you. The other is a household pet. And that lipstick is the only difference between a female administrator and a pit bull. And that nothing will really happen if you try to cross a pig and an administrator for the simple reason that there are some things even a pig won't do. That's a Mark Twain quote.

This mixture of craft, passion and humor would mean nothing without a sense of collective purpose. "United we bargain, divided we beg!"

We must fight mightily the absurd notion that bubbling answers with a #2 pencil can define the success of our craft and our passion. Competence in teaching and learning depends on much more than the results of standardized test scores. And also the insulting notion that student learning is some sort of an objective measure of my "merit" as a teacher. Should the "merit" of police officers depend on the crime rate going down? I think not. But we as a union must do more than protect the status quo. We must advocate a sense of vision to the parents and students we serve that we hear their concerns and that we are part of the solution. We simply cannot abdicate the reformist impulse of our collective purpose to the neo-con demagogues in Washington or the steroid-naysayers in Sacramento.

Beneath the shadow of Governor Schwarzenegger's attacks on public education and public workers, four hundred delegates to the statewide CFT convention debated and crafted their responses during the weekend of March 18-20, 2005 in Manhattan Beach. In one weekend highlight, chanting delegates left the convention to march to a nearby shopping mall, where they leafleted shoppers and passing drivers, asking them not to sign the Governor's reactionary ballot petitions.

### Discussion and Action

That combination of discussion and action marked the entire three-day meeting. After keynote speaker Kent Wong, Director of the Center for Labor Research and Education at UCLA, finished speaking, the delegates picked up signs and walked out of the hotel.

Accompanied by reporters, the members walked down the sidewalk of Rosecrans Avenue, drawing appreciative honks from passing motorists responding to signs like "Fund schools today or prisons tomorrow" and "Don't grope my pension." They handed flyers to shoppers explaining that the governor's proposals to privatize their pensions would have a detrimental effect on retention of good teachers, and garnered "thumbs-up" signs and supportive comments from lots of mall crawlers.

In a surprise, unscheduled appearance, state Treasurer Phil Angelides brought a loud cheer from the crowd with his stark comparison of the governor's promises and actual record: "He promised to protect education, but he cut funding at a time when California ranks 43rd in the country in per pupil spending. ... He won't ask the most fortunate to pay one dime more or close corporate tax loopholes, but he told 25,000 students, who had done all their work and made all the grades, that



FRED GLASS PHOTO

**Mona Field of the Glendale College Guild, Local 2276, argues her point at the Community College Council meeting during the CFT convention.**

there was no room for them at our state colleges and universities."

### Ben Rust to Widman

The CFT's highest honor, the Ben Rust Award, was bestowed on Lance Widman of El Camino College. Several colleagues reminisced affectionately about Widman's tireless service on behalf of the membership. One drew a roar of laughter when, recounting how Widman had coaxed

him into running for president of the local, he recalled asking Widman, "How much time will it take to be president? To which Widman disingenuously replied, "About two hours a week." Widman's humor and sharp tongue were displayed both in his colleagues' remarks and in his own (see box on this page), during which he reeled off

**Convention continued on page 7**

**"He promised to protect education, but he cut funding at a time when California ranks 43rd in the country in per pupil spending. ... He won't ask the most fortunate to pay one dime more or close corporate tax loopholes, but he told 25,000 students, who had done all their work and made all the grades, that there was no room for them at our state colleges and universities."**

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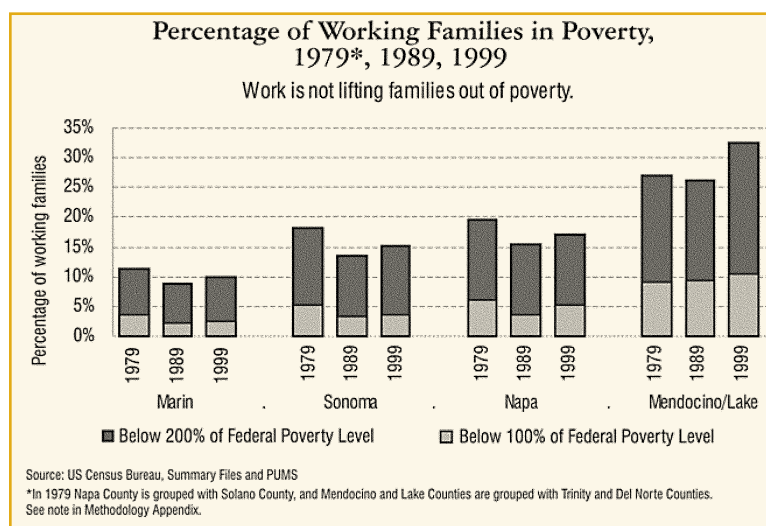
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# The North Bay economy: Rising tides and sinking boats

Dark clouds are gathering on the horizon as the North Bay moves unevenly into the economic recovery. The collapse of Telecom Valley and the slashing of 4,500 hi-tech jobs have cooled the robust economic growth of the late 1990s, a period when regional job growth outpaced the state and national rates. Now a sober assessment of the boom years reveals the dramatic growth of income inequality and working-class poverty in the North Bay of the Greater Bay Area.



These developments bode poorly for community colleges. Emerging economic structures potentially affect the ability of working students to attend school and may well negatively impact the budgets of those institutions.

New Economy, Working Solutions (NEWS), a nonprofit research and education organization, released a report in March titled, "The Limits of Prosperity: Growth, Inequality and Poverty in the North Bay," by UC

researchers Nari Rhee and Dan Acland. The report examines the transformation of the regional economy over the last two decades and calls for new public policy to address the crisis of low-wage employment and the polarization of wealth and income in Marin, Napa, Sonoma, and Mendocino counties. The spreading economic insecurity and the structural weaknesses of the regional economy could undermine renewed prosperity. The emergence of an "hour

glass economy," with job growth concentrated at the top and the bottom of the labor market while middle-income jobs are shrinking, the report argues, is what drives the current economic insecurity. Income inequality grew at "staggering rates" in the 1990s compared to the 1980s. In Sonoma and Napa counties during the 1990s, the income of the top one-fifth of working families grew six times as fast as the bottom one-fifth. In Sonoma during the decade income for the upper one-fifth ballooned by 24%, from \$144,476 to \$179,615 in inflation adjusted-dollars. For the bottom one-fifth family income was stagnant and grew by only 4%, from \$23,001 to \$23,991

The hourglass economy spurs the rapid growth of the working poor, families for whom wages and incomes are not sufficient to pay for basic necessities such as food, housing, transportation, childcare, and health care. The report documents how incomes at the bottom have failed to keep pace with spiraling housing, medical, and other costs of living, fueling the growth of working poverty in the region

More than 30% of the workers in the North Bay do not earn wages sufficient to enable two parents working full-time to support two children. Adjusting for the cost of living in each county, the self-sufficiency or living wage for two parents

working full-time to support two children is: \$9.75 in Mendocino, \$11.48 in Napa, \$12.46 in Sonoma, and \$15.05 in Marin

Most alarmingly, 2001-2008 job growth projections for the North Bay indicate that the base of the hourglass is continuing to widen. Service sector jobs such as janitors, childcare and home-care workers, security guards and retail sales will account for much of the fifty-two percent of the projected new jobs paying no more than an entry level wage of \$10 an hour or less and the 62% of new jobs paying an entry wage of less than \$12 an hour

Latinos, clustered in industries that offer the least pay, training, and job security, are twice as likely to be poor as whites. More than 43% of the Latino working family population in Sonoma and 60% in Mendocino do not earn a living wage. The Califor-



**Marty Bennett, history instructor at Santa Rosa JC, is the board chair of New Economy, Working Solutions, which produced "The Limits of Prosperity" report.**

**Ultimately, the report suggests that shared prosperity, which enables all income brackets to grow together, is the basis for a healthy and sustainable regional economy.**

nia Budget Project suggests that Latinos will constitute over 43% of the state's population by 2020 and low levels of educational achievement for Latinos will limit upward mobility and could choke off future economic growth.

The NEWS report warns of dangerous consequences if the hourglass economy persists: 1) a mismatch between jobs and housing will mean longer commutes for low and middle-income workers who cannot

**Economy continued on page 7**

## NEW VIDEO FROM THE CFT

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## "Intellectual diversity:" Slogan for the new McCarthyism

From San Diego to Sacramento, a specter haunts California higher education. The ghost of McCarthyism has risen in the form of an intrusive piece of legislation, SB 5, misnamed the "student bill of rights." The bill calls for "balancing" classroom discussion when controversial material is introduced with opposing viewpoints, and protecting students from arbitrary actions by their professors. But it takes the power to make decisions about what constitutes "controversy" and "balance" out of the hands of faculty and places it in the hands of politicians.

For Harry Steinmetz, a communications instructor at Mesa College in San Diego, the resem-

blance of the so-called "Student Bill of Rights" to the political witch hunts of half a century ago isn't just an academic question. His father, a professor at San Diego State, was a co-founder of the NAACP in San Diego, and a national vice-president of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT). Recalls the younger Steinmetz, "He was intellectually fearless, and his classroom reflected that."

That's also what got him into trouble. "The FBI used to sit in Dad's classes in their pork pie hats and take notes," Steinmetz told *The Perspective*. "By the third or fourth week Dad would ask them if they had any questions, and if they were learning anything."

But Professor Steinmetz's sense of humor failed to protect him in

what followed. He was fired in 1954 because he refused to tell the House Un-American Activities Committee and the state college board whether he was a Communist. And for long afterward he received anonymous threats—including death threats—due to the publicity surrounding his case

"SB 5 is trying to chill discussion and inquiry on the community college campuses," says Steinmetz. "It's very vague about who decides what's acceptable discourse, and how they decide, and by what right they decide in someone else's classroom."

### Undermining progressive ideas

A staple rhetorical device of the political right over the past

**McCarthyism continued on page 7**



## Working the Floor

Judith Michaels, CFT Legislative Director

# Meeting fiscal challenges

California can no longer borrow or shift accounts to give education the money it needs. In 1988 voters passed Proposition 98—a constitutional amendment—to guarantee funding for schools and community colleges. Though the Proposition 98 split between community colleges and K-12 has varied, the constitutional amendment has proven to be a stable source of funds for our colleges.

But now both systems need additional funds to properly educate students. California ranks fifth from bottom in K-12 per student spending among the states, and, though student fees have spiked, Community Colleges continue to rank very low in state support, with no provision for raising money locally. Last year, Governor Schwarzenegger's budget put us further behind, and he has reneged on his promise to give schools and community colleges the Proposition 98 share of revenues this year.

Increased revenue could help fund many system needs: for example, categorical items to help achieve faculty equity. Though we've been able to maintain designated funding for community college part-timers through this budget, community colleges need additional state budget dollars to help equalize pay and benefits and to provide

office hours for faculty who work part-time. Historical neglect that cannot be corrected in a single year means that simply maintaining these line items is not sufficient. Once the study mandated by AB 420 was complete, the Board of Governors recommended \$80 million to fund clearly documented additional local needs. In January 2001, Governor Davis proposed \$62 million in new funding for part-time faculty compensation, along with an additional \$7.9 million for paid office hours. Although short of the Board's \$80 million recommendation, it was clearly a step in the right direction. However, in recent years the state's fiscal crisis further reduced the allocations, which now stand at \$50.8 million for part-time compensation and \$7.2 million for office hours. We'll need increased revenue to increase these amounts.

Since the recall election,

legislators have been reluctant to talk about tax increases for fear of public backlash against them. But fair tax policies are the financial foundation of a modern society, and we support recent legislative efforts both to raise the revenue we need and to close tax loopholes. Legislators have introduced bills to raise taxes, raise fees, give tax credits or remove them, and close or create loopholes. And, while property taxes have been the most reliable revenue sources for public services, Proposition 13 created inequalities between commercial and residential taxes, and within the residential tax structures. Additionally, this constitutional amendment required

that bills to raise taxes must pass by a 2/3 majority, and that stumbling block has proven to be a real barrier to amending our tax codes. Meanwhile, Federal tax breaks for the rich have meant cuts in federally funded education programs, which are being starved by the massive and growing national deficit.

As the legislature struggles to balance the budget, the following bills will become part of the dialog that will help create the revenue we need and make it easier for local voters to address local needs.

AB6 (Chan): Increases the income tax to 10% (from 9.3%) for incomes more than \$100,000 and 11% for incomes more than \$200,000.

AB9 (Coto): Imposes the sales tax upon the following services: club memberships; telephone information services; marina services; custom computer services; chartering of limousines or aircraft; accounting and bookkeeping; legal services; security and detective services; non-residential telephone services; engineering and architectural services; surveying services; management, scientific and technical consulting services.

SB 17 (Escutia): Requires a person or entity that obtains a controlling or majority ownership interest in a legal entity to file a change in ownership statement with the Board of Equalization within 60 days of the transactions

ACA7 (Nation): Amends the California Constitution to allow a 55% vote requirement to increase city, local, and special district taxes

SCA 8 (Simitian): Amends the California Constitution to allow 55% majority on parcel tax vote.

April 29, 2005

Since the recall election, legislators have been reluctant to talk about tax increases for fear of public backlash against them. But fair tax policies are the financial foundation of a modern society, and we support recent legislative efforts both to raise the revenue we need and to close tax loopholes.

### Smith continued from page 3

our family would have been much better off for it. That really increased my commitment."

### Representing working people

Smith understands becoming the new statewide president of FACCC as one more step in representing not just the interests of teachers, but of working people. In terms of the relationship he sees with the union, "we're working for the same things for the same people," he emphasizes.

During his early years at Los Rios, union supporters in the statewide FACCC tried twice to affiliate to unions, once to the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, and once to the state teachers' federation. Both efforts were unsuccessful. But in the Los Rios district, the local FACCC chapter, in coalition with United Faculty of Los Rios, voted to unite full-time district instructors with the Part-time Instructors Association of Sacramento, and the Los Rios

College Federation of Teachers was born. "The LRCFT owes its existence to the local chapter of FACCC," Smith notes.

Today, Smith calls the statewide FACCC one leg of a "triangle of power" that also includes the system wide Academic Senate and the unions within the system. "Every community college should belong to FACCC," he says. "Everyone working on the campus should belong to the union of their choice. And the Academic Senate is the statutory forum for dealing with our professional issues."

Today, FACCC's activity is divided into three parts. The association itself is primarily responsible for legislative advocacy. The Faculty Association Educational Institute engages in policy research on issues like professional development. Just recently, for instance, it issued a report on votes of no confidence, which inspired Senator Alan Lowenthal to introduce SB 55,

outlining how a college board of trustees should respond to one. The FACCC PAC is a distinct organization, which supports candidates based on their record on education issues. "We're probably more bipartisan than the union," Smith explains, "and wind up working with more conservative legislators, trying to find common ground on our issues."

### Working together

In the relationship between unions, the academic senate and the faculty association, "no one can take sole credit for the work that gets done," Smith urges, "since we're often working together." Particularly in the current climate "we all have the same goal in Sacramento—defending ourselves against the governor, and eventually replacing him."

A recent capitol meeting brought FACCC president Smith together with CFT senior vice-president (and CCC President) Marty

Hittelman, representatives of the CTA-affiliated Community College Association, and the association for non-affiliated faculty unions, the CCCI. They worked out a common program, calling for faculty primacy in professional matters, the protection of tenure, equal pay for equal work by part time faculty, more funding for professional development, and increasing the percentage of community college funding that goes for instruction from 50% to 60%.

"We're on the same page," Smith says, emphasizing that FACCC will work on protecting the teachers' retirement system, Proposition 98 funding, and the statutory split of statewide education funds received by community colleges.

"I'm especially proud of the CFT for the resolution we passed supporting the split," he says. "We're the only union that's done it, and the Federation is always accused of putting the interests of the K-12 system first. Passing that resolution

showed that this wasn't true."

Smith calls past disagreements between the CFT and FACCC a product of "working crosswise because of poor communications," and of "personalities, egos, and arguing over who should get the credit for things we all work on. My foremost goal is going to be building bridges, and fostering collaboration." He adds, "As part of that approach, we just passed a policy statement saying that FACCC would take a position of neutrality and non-intervention in any dispute between faculty unions."

In addition to his FACCC position, Smith continues to negotiate the union contract for the Los Rios Federation, although he's stepped down as local president. Smith also gave up his position as department chair, but nevertheless says his responsibilities are "getting to be a 110% job."

By David Bacon

**Convention continued from page 4**

half a dozen of the best anti-administrator jokes the crowd had ever heard.

**Resolutions**

The delegates, after some debate, approved a resolution bumping the per-capita payments up three dollars per member to CFT so that the statewide organization could mount an effective political response to the governor's attacks. Another resolution generating heat called for local support actions to accompany the May 25 demonstrations in Sacramento and Los Angeles. An amendment to that resolution added the words, "including job actions," and, after eloquent and passionate argument, it passed.

At the CCC meeting, the delegates elected a new slate of Community College Council officers: Marty Hittelman, president; Donna Nacey of Los Rios, secretary; Jim Mahler, from San Diego, Southern vice president; and Northern vice president, Dean Murakami of Los Rios. The new part-timer representatives are John Govsky (Cabrillo), Julie Ivey (Palomar), Kathy Holland (LACCD), and Mehri Hager (Ventura).

"I went to four workshops and they provided me with what they were meant to provide, as billed," said Michael Mills, president of the Peralta Federation of Teachers. "I came away knowing that we're going to be mobilized against the governor's attack on education in California."

For amended convention resolutions, and a longer version of this article, go to [http://www.cft.org/home\\_news/cftconv05rpt.html](http://www.cft.org/home_news/cftconv05rpt.html)

**Economy continued from page 5**

find affordable housing in the North Bay; 2) the increased demand from low-wage workers for health and human services generated by low wage jobs will erode the public sector; and 3) the rapid turnover and diminished levels of training and skills among low-wage workers will lead to declining productivity.

The continued growth of the hourglass economy should be of direct concern to community college faculty. High school graduation rates, and the likelihood that students will attend college, are higher for students whose families earn self-sufficiency incomes compared to those who do not.

The authors of the NEWS report conclude with a set of recommendations to address the deepening income inequality. They advocate for a higher state minimum wage indexed to inflation, more protections for workers seeking to form unions, increased access to affordable housing and health care, and ensuring that good jobs with benefits are created when public funds are provided for new commercial development. Ultimately, the report suggests that shared prosperity, which enables all income brackets to grow together, is the basis for a healthy and sustainable regional economy.

*Martin Bennett teaches American history at Santa Rosa Junior College and is a member of AFT Local 1946. He serves as the board chair of New Economy, Working Solutions. The report can be downloaded at: <http://www.neweconomynorthbay.org>.*

**McCarthyism continued from page 5**

decade has been its oft-stated accusation that higher education is rife with "political correctness," a nasty phrase meant to undermine progressive ideas by asserting that they are identical with intolerance and authoritarian rule over academic life.

One of the most vociferous proponents of this viewpoint, conservative activist David Horowitz, drafted a model "academic bill of rights" as well as a "student bill of rights" so that the presumed victims of left-wing academia might fight back. These documents, draped in democratic-sounding verbiage, propose that "intellectual diversity" would best result when the government legislates what can and can't be said in a classroom.

But Horowitz, the founder of a well-funded far-right think tank called the Center for the Study of Popular Culture, didn't rest after drafting models. He has been actively promoting these ideas among Republican state and national office-holders, and has found takers in Congress and a number of states, including California.

On April 20, SB 5, the "Student Bill of Rights" received a hearing by the state senate education committee. Fortunately, the arguments of its proponents did not impress the majority, and it went down to defeat. The legislators who voted against SB 5 said adequate mechanisms, such as student grievance procedures, already exist in most colleges and universities to address the bill's ostensible concerns.

The author of SB 5, Oceanside Republican Bill Morrow, protests that jump-starting a new McCarthyism is the last thing on his mind. Rather, he asserts, "Because you have inadequate rules to protect students, you have liberal professors harassing and haranguing them." And while the evidence contradicts him, some students agree.

**The Santa Rosa Ten**

Late in the evening of February 24, someone posted flyers, each adorned with a bright red star, on the office doors of ten faculty members at Santa Rosa Junior College. The flyer cited Education Code section 51530, which prohibits "the advocacy or teaching of communism with the intent of indoctrinating or inculcating a preference in the mind of any pupil for such doctrine."

The individuals responsible remained anonymous until a few days later, when a student club, the SRJC College Republicans,



claimed credit. A press release from the organization said, "We did this because we believe certain instructors at SRJC are in violation of California state law."

That day, the president of the club, Molly McPherson, posted to a College Republican blog that "this is just in time for one of our

community. He was one of the movers behind a recent study of income inequality in the North Bay (see article on page 5).

Adds Bennett, "These actions show a kind of recklessness, an utter lack of civility and respect for civil rights and academic freedom. They don't care about a

**"Isn't it interesting that not one student filed a grievance using the established college procedures? If there was a problem with any of these teachers, the students could have used this avenue, but they didn't."**

senators introducing the academic bill of rights in April."

The campus student newspaper, the *Oak Leaf*, followed up with a story in which McPherson, backpedaling, maintains that she didn't have "specific complaints, no threats or specific accusations" about the targeted instructors. The College Republicans, she said, just wanted to open up "dialogue." But the story quickly moved on to right wing websites and radio programs, where baseless charges of student intimidation by bullying leftwing professors flew thick. In an article appearing in the online journal *Inside Higher Ed* (March 7) McPherson reiterated her plans to build support for SB 5.

Marty Bennett, who teaches social science at SRJC, received one of the flyers on his office door. He posed a question: "Isn't it interesting that not one student filed a grievance using the established college procedures? If there was a problem with any of these teachers, the students could have used this avenue, but they didn't." So far as he knows, no student involved with the Republican club attends any of the red star instructors' classes.

Bennett supposes he was honored with a star because he is a well-known labor activist in the

'dialogue.' They want publicity. I don't think SB 5 has a chance in the California legislature, but it's worrisome nonetheless."

Over the next few weeks, the SRJC Academic Senate, the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, and the Sonoma State University Academic Senate passed resolutions either supporting the red-starred faculty, condemning the student actions, opposing SB 5, or involving some combination of the three.

These California-based resolutions join others. Last year, in response to the threats to academic freedom posed by Horowitz's deceitful campaign, the national AFT and the American Association of University Professors weighed in with similar positions.

For Harry Steinmetz the issue remains as relevant today as it was fifty years ago. "My father cared deeply about freedom of discussion, freedom of speech, freedom of association. He didn't care what your ideas were or who you were so long as you could back up your assertions. He believed passionately that ignorance breeds fear. And he was right."

*by Fred Glass*

**CFT organizing early childhood educators**

The Early Childhood Education Organizing Project, a collaboration between AFT and CFT, is up and running and ready to reach out and organize the largest group of unorganized educational workers in the country. Project Director Sandra Weese and newly hired Organizing Staff Anupa Iyer and Therese Valdez are working with CFT Early Childhood Education Committee members and local leaders to coordinate and plan a successful campaign. The ECE Organizing Project hosted a table at the CFT Convention, March 18-20 to educate participants on the Preschool for All Campaign, meet members and introduce the ECE Project and collect contact information.

An essential element to all successful organizing campaigns is an active, informed and inspired membership. The project team asks CFT members to assist with this important work by reaching out to early childhood educators and bringing them into the AFT. It's time these educators receive the recognition they deserve for the important work they do and that membership in AFT can provide. Members who know of non-affiliated ECE teachers or centers should contact Anupa Iyer, Southern California Organizer at (818) 843-8226 or Therese Valdez, Northern California Organizer at (510) 832-8812.

# Local Action

## Ventura County

### Ventura District Manufactures Budget Crisis

In the Ventura County Community College District, hardball bargaining has been turned into an anti-faculty, anti-union campaign. As negotiations with the Ventura Community College Federation of Teachers, AFT Local 1828, ground toward impasse, on March 8 District Chancellor James Meznek announced that two full-time faculty members, and 130 part-timers, would be laid off.

"It was called a layoff, but to me, they were terminated," says Harry Korn, local president. "Using a euphemism to disguise the impact this will have on people makes their action even more immoral."

The district Board of Trustees voted to cut a number of programs: the entire ceramics program at Ventura College, the ESL program at Moorpark College, and the journalism programs at both Ventura and Oxnard (which also meant shutting down the two schools' student newspapers.)

Korn points out that since part-time instructors are hired on a semester-by-semester basis anyway, it was not necessary to formally lay them off. "I think the intent was clearly to intimidate us during negotiations," he charges angrily. "The message to the rest of the 1400 faculty here is that 'we did it to them, and we can do it to you too.'"

With four major concessions on the table, the district has a reason to want to intimidate teachers. District negotiators are demanding a cap on employer contributions for medical benefits, for current and retired teachers. (Retirees have had fully paid medical benefits for fifty years.) The district is also demanding that the COLA formula be taken out of the salary provisions of the contract, elimination of part-timer assignment rights, and that a dean determine which grievances filed under the contract shall be allowed to go forward.

"With the terminations, they're trying to build a case for a huge budget deficit," Korn explains. "But it's really a question of priorities." Last December, the district signed new 2-year contracts with all its managers, effectively insulating them from salary reductions or job elimination, despite a promise to the union

two years ago that they wouldn't do this. "This is a manufactured budget crisis."

The union has formed a Strike Action Committee to organize faculty resistance to this assault.

## Cuesta College

### No-Confidence Vote at Cuesta College Brings Fair Negotiations

Last August, teachers at Cuesta College used a method for resolving their problems with district administration that is becoming more common, as unions face a harsher bargaining environment: they took a vote of no-confidence.

"We were facing a chief negotiator who essentially refused to negotiate," explains Marilyn Rossa, president of the Cuesta College Federation of Teachers, AFT Local 4909. "For several years straight, we went to impasse and fact-finding. And last year, when the fact-finder favored our position, the district just sat on it. We faced nothing but disrespect and mismanagement."

In the ultimate sign of that dysfunctionality, the district didn't reveal to the fact-finder the existence of \$500,000 in funds for new growth.

The union wrote a resolution of no-confidence in both the Board of Trustees and the college President Marie Rosenwasser, and submitted it to its members. Despite a campaign by one member on Rosenwasser's behalf, the proposal passed by 175 to 62.

"It created a huge change," Rossa says. "We got rid of the chief negotiator, and a new one was hired who understood the process. We were also preparing to go to a special election to remove the worst board member, and the resolution showed the district that we were willing to do whatever it took."

Renewed negotiations concluded in an agreement that gave teachers a 3% salary increase. The district is more open about providing information. "And the president," says Rossa, "no longer campaigns against us in public."

## Peralta

### PFT Joins USLAW

The Peralta Federation of Teachers this spring became another of the many locals of the CFT that have chosen to affiliate with US Labor Against the War. USLAW is a national group of international unions, regional and state bodies, and locals, which have come together to oppose the US war in Iraq.

The resolution proposing affiliation was controversial. Proposed by Laney College labor studies instructor Michael Eisenscher, who is also a national organizer for USLAW, the motion was debated first by the union's executive board. The PFT leadership then asked Eisenscher to write articles for the union's newsletter, giving the arguments for making the move. In local membership meetings, the debate grew heated.

"I thought this was an important step," says Michael Mills, PFT president, "because the war is siphoning off huge amounts of money and resources we need for healthcare, education and other public services. It also diverts people who need to be in the educational system, instead sending them off to war. And the purpose of the war, presented in one way, was then changed dramatically, and has been unclear ever since."



FRED GLASS PHOTO

**Holding the union banner at a demonstration in San Francisco on April 5, protesting Governor Schwarzenegger's gold-plated fundraiser at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel are members of the San Francisco Community College Federation of Teachers, AFT 2121: from left, Lu Marla Dea, Ed Murray, and Carmen Roman-Murray.**

The executive board decided to present the proposal to the membership, without a recommendation, to allow members to make the decision. It won by a large majority, but not without opposition. "Some said it was a policy created by the President, and we had no right to oppose it," explains Mills. "Others felt it was a sign that we didn't support our troops, or that union money should only go for matters of direct faculty interest. But the cost of the war is so high, it does really affect us, and its consequences are greatly damaging."

USLAW is organizing a tour of Iraqi trade

unionists to the United States in June, so that union members here, as well as the public in general, can hear Iraqis themselves describe the devastating consequences of the war and occupation. All Iraqi union federations call for the occupation to end, and US troops to leave. One reason is that the US administration, and the Iraqi government which it appointed, continue to enforce a Saddam Hussein-era law banning unions and collective bargaining in the public sector, including for teachers.

by David Bacon

*Send a Message to the Governor...*

**His Special Interests  
are not California's Interests**

**ACTION DAY**  
FOR A BETTER CALIFORNIA

**Wednesday, May 25th**

**Sacramento – State Capitol**

**Entertainment starts 3:30 p.m. / Program starts 4:30 – 4:45 p.m.**

**Los Angeles – Pershing Square**

**Entertainment starts 3:00 p.m. / Program starts 5 p.m.**

*For more information about transportation, program,  
and how to get involved, call (916) 446-2788.*

**ALLIANCE**  
FOR A BETTER CALIFORNIA