

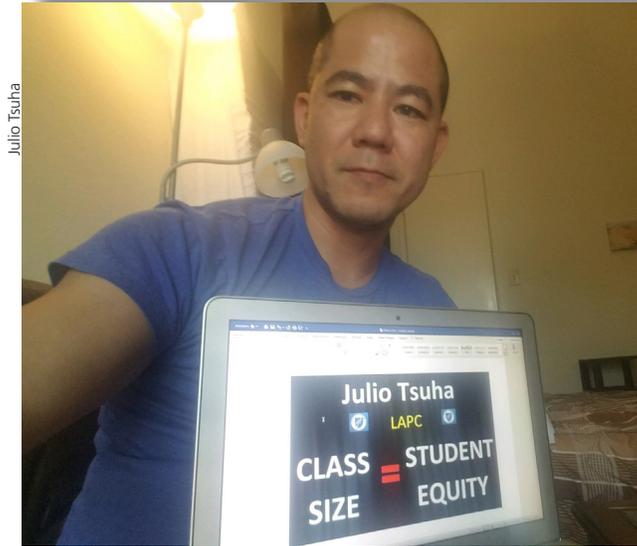


Local 1521 Raises the Bar With Digital Organizing

How do you keep a contract campaign moving when a global pandemic has communities in lockdown? That was the tough question facing members of the Los Angeles College Faculty Guild, Local 1521's Contract Action Team (CAT) last March.

Union activists across the district spent the last year building a CAT through intentional one-on-one conversations and small group meetings. CAT members are responsible for communicating with a group of up to ten colleagues. They share updates about negotiations and ensure their contacts are participating in contract campaign actions.

In January and Febru-



Julio Tsuha

CAT Lead and member organizer, Julio Tsuha, takes a selfie to share with the LACCD Board of Trustees.

ary, dozens of members attended contract campaign launches at all nine campuses. As district after district shut down in response to the pandemic, activists launched into

high gear to brainstorm creative ways to move organizing online. "We knew that in order to be able to succeed in digital organizing, we had to make it easy and fun," explains CAT

Lead for Pierce College Julio Tsuha.

Hundreds of members participated in three digital mobilizations. CAT members turned out supporters to these events using a combination of one-on-one phone calls, digital campus meetings and Hustle text messages. Negotiation team members set their Zoom backgrounds to pictures of members holding signs with campaign messaging like "Class Size = Student Success." Member activists observed negotiations via Zoom, and set their backgrounds or names to reflect the powerful messaging.

The June board of trustees' meeting marked

See **Local 1521**, page 4

ERFT Organizes to Win School Board Recall Election



Belinda Larrache

ERFT members and community use creative tactics including a recall car caravan.

voice on it. Even as the pandemic hit, the recall coalition remained strong and adjusted their tactics to maintain social distancing. All of the hard work ultimately paid off and the recall election was won by a landslide with 87% yes votes!

El Rancho Federation of Teachers, Local 3467 President Lilia Carreon stated, "ERFT, CSEA and the Pico Rivera community worked tirelessly to educate our community on the poor decisions and mistreatment by the two recall board members. Our community heard, and now we are on our way to healing our district and providing the best education for our ERUSD students."

-By CFT Project Organizer Charlotte Bowman

Part-Time Locals Benefit From Phone Banking

In light of the ongoing global pandemic, union organizing has shifted from the classroom to the computer. Faculty from two part-time unions: Adjunct Faculty United, Local 6106 (ADFAC) and AFT Part-Time Faculty United, Local 6286 have found success in building their union community and power as part-time faculty through mass phone banking.

Newly elected ADFAC President Lauren Mata hit the ground running during the pandemic by leading the phone bank initiative for the part-time local. They are building solidarity by calling all members to make sure they are safe and healthy during this time, they are informed on negotiations and most importantly, to know they have their union's support in a time of crisis. Mata explains how the phone banking has been instrumental in building their

union, "The ironic thing is that we are now self-isolated, but we're more connected than ever. The phone bank allows us to meet our members where they are, and members are able to share their victories and their concerns in this time. For me, it is a fantastic way to feel more connected with the 1,000+ part-time members I serve. We're here with you through your computer and phone, and that has been a positive outcome of this strange situation." The phone bank has led to an influx of 12 new members, and helped build toward a members' virtual town hall in this time of unprecedented crisis.

Although COVID-19 threatens organizing efforts and successes in the labor movement, Local 6286 has shown strength, unity and power in membership in spite of this pandemic. Union leaders

at Local 6286 have been building power through phone banking and general check-ins over Hustle to their members. Over 10 days of phone banking, they brought 15 new members into their union! Local 6286 Treasurer Josh Briggs expressed that "now more than ever our members are afraid and unsure about their future so knowing someone was looking over their collective interests [...] garnered overwhelmingly warm and welcome responses." In the midst of this trying time, Local 6286 also managed to win

big things for their new contract such as a "me-too clause." This has been a fight since the previous contract bargaining, and it ensures a more equitable pay scale for part-time faculty. This momentum is only beginning and part-time only locals like Local 6286 are showing us that organizing during isolation and social distancing is not only necessary, but absolutely possible and completely empowering.

-By CFT Project Organizers Laila Molina and Grant Stover



Santa Rosa Junior College Federation of Teachers, Local 1946 May general membership meeting and EDD workshop via Zoom.

Cabrillo Leaders Organize and Mobilize During COVID-19



CCFT members mobilize to the June board of trustees ZOOM meeting.

Leaders at Cabrillo College Federation of Teachers, Local 4400 (CCFT) organized a phone bank in early April to reach out to bargaining unit members about COVID-19 and the impact it would have on spring 2020 courses. As everyone hurried to transition their classes online, members of the executive board, site rep. council and member volunteers took to the phones to check in on over 400 colleagues and share the important work the union was doing to protect their rights during the global pandemic. Through the phone bank and by using Hustle, they were able to mobilize over 100 faculty to

attend general membership meetings in April and May. They also recommitted over 20 members, half of whom became new COPE contributors, and signed up over 10 new members. CCFT leaders continued to engage members by actively moving a member survey, supporting part time faculty in filing for unemployment benefits and mobilizing members to attend the June 8 board of trustees meeting. Organizing will continue into the summer and fall as union leaders continue to negotiate the impacts of COVID-19.

-By CFT Organizer Valarie Bachelor

Digital Organizing and Phone banking Builds Community and Power at UC-AFT

Like many other unions across the country, University Council AFT had to find quick ways of adapting to organizing during the pandemic. With an expired contract looming over their heads and little movement from management at the University of California, the escalation committee faced an urgent situation requiring creative tactics.

The escalation committee came up with the idea to do a series of 30 second actions that members can do to support negotiations. They set up a central website to share action instructions and results. Visibility and ease of use made the UC-AFT website an important activist hub for UC-AFT members. Visit <https://uc-aft30seconds.today/> for more information.

Another course of action that UC-AFT took involved

phone banking members and non-members alike. Each campus was responsible for setting up the phone banks and crafting a unified message around bargaining, but all contributed to the 30 second actions and some included a membership ask of non-members.

Highlights of the phone banking include UCLA where members made over 200 phone calls and were able to talk in depth with 65 members. UC Irvine started their phonebank in late May, and members have already conducted 30 conversations. Members of the executive board as well as the CFT staff made 243 calls to UC Berkeley lecturers resulting in 60 conversations. Through these phone calls, 43 people participated in the virtual picket and 105 people signed the petition

to encourage the UCs to keep on pre-six lecturers.

An activist member shares his perspective:

I'm Trevor Griffey, and I'm part of a new group of people who got involved with our union to increase the job security of new employees. When the COVID-19 stay-at-home order took place, this task became even more urgent, and our engagement with the union deepened. Many of us wondered whether we would have a job next year.

Our school's administration keeps its budget secret, and doesn't involve any faculty, tenured track or non-tenured track, in developing responses to budget cuts. They even resist having labor management meetings with us. So, we turned to phone banking to build community and to find out what our members were hear-

ing about layoffs in their departments.

We were able to make phone banking more fun by doing a real time video chat with each other with the audio off, so we could share stories and ask questions in chats. We could also take comfort in seeing others on the phone even while we were all in different locations.

Connecting with members was inspiring but also hard. We were able to connect members to upcoming general membership meetings and workshops on unemployment. But it was also difficult to hear stories from people who have lost their jobs without an explanation. Hearing those stories makes you want to fight harder to get a better contract for everyone, so schools don't continue to pass on the costs of economic down-

See **Digital**, page 4

PFT Supports and Organizes Members During COVID-19

Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, leaders at the Peralta Federation of Teachers, Local 1603 (PFT) have been



PFT President Jennifer Shanoski delivers groceries with her daughter during the outbreak of COVID-19.

this effort, 13 faculty signed up as new members! Although times are challenging, PFT unionists remind us that educators will always find a way to continue fighting for the schools our students deserve.

-By CFT Project Organizer Andrew Pagan

hard at work figuring out how to continue to educate students, care for members and organize for power, even with the reality of social distancing. Shortly after their district announced closures, PFT negotiated a memorandum of understanding with management that would provide stability and support for staff during this time of transition. Then, their executive board worked with a group of volunteers to create a plan to personally call their entire membership. During these calls, they told members about the new MOU and checked-in about the transition to distance teaching, but also asked about their basic needs, and coordinated support from the union to individuals who needed help acquiring groceries, medicine or other essentials during this crisis. After this first round of engagement, PFT leaders continued to modify their existing plans and strategies to achieve their goals while respecting shelter in place guidelines. Instead of cancelling their upcoming membership drive, they held their first ever "virtual membership drive," using phone calls, email and video call tools to connect with potential members. Due to

YCFT Mobilizes During Pandemic

Yuba College Federation of Teachers, Local 4952 (YCFT) mobilized in April to call together their bargaining unit and give updates about the current pandemic. The executive board, as well as the CFT staff, mobilized to make over 500 calls and have upwards of 80 conversations with members and non-members alike. These calls updated part-time faculty on the memorandum of understanding and the tentative agreement that had been negotiated with the district. We informed faculty that they would be receiving a retroactive cost of living increase for the past two years as well as a stipend for transitioning to online learning. All



YCFT members hear updates from their President Elaine Robinson.

members were also texted and emailed invitations to a membership meeting and unemployment clinic. Through this outreach, YCFT increased its membership by 20 people and mobilized 50 people to participate in the mem-

bership meeting. Yuba is continuing its organizing efforts as they begin to bargain over the impacts of COVID-19 for the summer and fall.

-By CFT Project Organizer Genean Wrisley

Digital continued from page 1

turns onto its worst-paid and most temporary staff.

There were certainly some challenges to the phone banking. A number of people didn't answer the phone because they didn't recognize my num-

ber, but they were able to look me up and email me using the address I left in their voice mail. Some of those connections ended up being the most positive. So even if all you're doing is leaving voice mail, know

that your work matters!

-By CFT Organizer Erin Conley, UC-AFT member Trevor Griffey and CFT Project Organizer Genean Wrisley

Local 1521 continued from page 1

the largest digital action. Tsuha explains how they did it, "We were able to mobilize 200 faculty to email our board of trustees selfies with the message 'Class Size = Student Success.' We emailed our members a draft message that they had to forward to our board. We also used large Zoom meetings to ask faculty to take and

email those selfies with easy instructions. And finally, we followed up with our members who had not done it with phone calls to make sure they understood the urgency of our action."

Over 200 Local 1521 members sent class size selfies to the board, and nearly 500 people observed 32 of their col-

leagues speak in favor of smaller class sizes at the June meeting. The action is expected to have a big impact on the bargaining table. Before the meeting ended, some members received email replies from trustees with one clear message: we have heard you, loud and clear.

-By CFT Organizer Erin Conley

The California Federation of Teachers is an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO. The CFT represents faculty and classified workers in public and private schools and colleges, from early childhood through higher education. 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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Get Organized! is produced by union workers in the CFT Field Representatives Union and the Office and Professional Employees International Union.

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