



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

Perspective



"The union is a community"

Zoe Kaye worked as a classified library assistant and freeway flyer before becoming a librarian and president of her AFT local at Glendale Community College. She admits that when she was elected president she had no idea what she was getting into.

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BOG sets up working groups to reform accreditation

The California Community College Board of Governors has created two working groups to move the accreditation reform process forward. Meanwhile the faculty at CCSF are simultaneously preparing an unfair labor practice strike and supporting a proposal for free tuition for their students.

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Prop 30 extension on track to qualify

CFT is helping to qualify a ballot measure to extend Prop 30. After signatures are turned in, it will be time to talk with everyone you know about the good that Prop 30 has accomplished, and renew the income tax on the rich—without the sales tax—in November.

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City College of San Francisco faculty hits the bricks for a historic one-day strike

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President's Column

Jim Mahler

Spring bodes well for the union movement

This spring semester has been full of pleasant surprises for the union movement. The first, and perhaps most far-reaching, was the unexpected timely demise of conservative and anti-union Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia. The significance of his death left the Supreme Court without a conservative majority, and hence the case we were all fearing, *Friedrichs vs. CTA, et al.*, was recently decided on a 4-4 vote, which means the status quo of *Abood* prevails (i.e., bargaining unit members receiving benefits from the union can be compelled to pay for them).

No free lunch

The significance of this outcome to the union movement is huge on several fronts. First off, it means that “there is no free lunch.” Had the conservatives been able to pass *Friedrichs* on a 5-4 vote, the most likely outcome would have been that workers could enjoy all of the benefits of union membership without having to pay for them, simply by “opting out.”

ensure we elect a Democrat to the White House in November as *Friedrichs* was merely the first of a continuum of legal assaults against which we will have to fight back.

Another major legal victory for the union movement, the education sector in particular, was the unanimous decision of the California Court of Appeals overturning the wrongheaded trial court decision in *Vergara vs.*

The stakes could not be higher to ensure we elect a Democrat to the White House in November as *Friedrichs* was merely the first of a continuum of legal assaults against which we will have to fight back.

That’s like telling your local gas and electric company that you would still like them to continue to provide energy to your home, but you would be able to choose not to pay for it. I know that sounds ridiculous, but that’s exactly what the *Friedrichs* case was about.

The second significant ramification of Scalia’s death was that it threw a serious wrench into the conservative strategy of attacking unions via the judicial process. The *Friedrichs* case was carefully planned to be fast-tracked to the Supreme Court because conservatives knew they had five votes to pass it. And *Friedrichs* is not the only case that exemplifies this strategy. At last count there were several dozen anti-union measures working their way through the judicial process. With confirmation of Scalia’s replacement likely being blocked by Senate Republicans until after the new President is sworn in this coming January, the stakes could not be higher to

CTA, et al. Vergara attempted to assert that it was unconstitutional to provide teachers with tenure, claiming the tenure system was to blame for poor student performance in parts of the state where students are less advantaged. The appellate court wisely ruled that there is no constitutional link between tenure and student performance.

Fight for Fifteen

In the realm of legislation, California stepped out front of the nation when legislators presented to Governor Brown the most advanced minimum wage bill the country has yet seen following prior successes in cities and other local jurisdictions, led by unions, but requiring mass action by workers themselves to demonstrate the seriousness of the need and firmness of their resolve. This bill, SB 3, will move the state to \$15 an hour over the next several years, providing six million workers with a boost in purchasing power.

AFT is turning 100 in May

The national American Federation of Teachers is one century old next month. There will be more AFT history this year coming your way, but to get you started, you may find readings and videos of interest at aft.org/100years.

Fair accreditation

Lastly, and certainly not least importantly, at its March meeting the Board of Governors (BOG) of the California Community Colleges unanimously adopted Resolution No. 2016-03 with the goal of fundamentally changing how our community colleges are accredited. The resolution approved a two-step approach: 1) reform the ACCJC while 2) simultaneously pursue a new model for accreditation that includes all higher education institutions in our Western region. This followed a nearly unanimous vote of all community college district CEOs (Presidents/Superintendents/Chancellors) supporting this process and creating two new workgroups to make it happen. (See article on ACCJC on page 4 for the specific tasks of these workgroups.)

It should be duly noted that

when CFT launched its ACCJC fight back campaign almost nine years ago, when ACCJC began its reign of terror, first by dis-accrediting Compton College, then by continuous interference with collective bargaining by mandating SLOs, evaluation standards, etc., and then escalating with the near dis-accreditation of City College of San Francisco, CFT was alone in this fight. It wasn’t until this current academic year that a majority of the CC system stakeholders finally engaged in this struggle. This fight is far from over, and we expect to hear more positive news within the next two months, but our tireless, successful, multi-faceted campaign clearly demonstrates the power of the union movement, and why conservatives want to emasculate it. ☐

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

May 23	Last day to register to vote in June 7 statewide primary election
May 31	Last day to request vote-by-mail ballot for June 7 primary election
June 7	California State Primary Election
June 11	CCFT Executive Council Meeting Oakland CFT Office
June 20-24	CFT Union Summer School Kellogg Center, Pomona

Cover: CCSF faculty and supporters from other CFT locals and the local labor movement commit civil disobedience on behalf of the education that San Franciscans deserve during the CFT convention in March. FRED GLASS PHOTO

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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Zoe Kaye

“The union is a community”

Zoe Kaye, president of the Glendale College Guild, AFT Local 2276, belongs to a new generation of educators and union leaders who had to travel a long road to tenure. Today Kaye teaches information competency at Glendale Community College, and works as a tenured librarian. But getting there wasn't easy.

She actually came to Glendale first as a student in 1993, set on studying accounting. She likes numbers, and thought becoming a CPA was the route to a good job. Then a teacher began talking with her about becoming a librarian, and that sounded even better.

“I got an assistant job in 1994, and a full-time job as a classified a year later, working on the desk,” she remembers. “I had that job for the next ten years.” While working she kept going to school, and got a BA from Cal State LA in anthropology because they didn't offer

Passionate about teaching

That was Kaye's situation too, until she got her degree, gave up her classified job and became a freeway flyer. For five years she taught classes at Glendale, and also at campuses of the Los Angeles community college system—East L.A., Trade Tech, Southgate and Mission. “That's common too. People who have the commitment to get a masters degree are usually passionate about teaching, and will make sacrifices to do it. I did it for the same reason, and because I wanted to build up my resume.”

“When you look at history, we are doing what unions have been doing all along. We wear the same color t-shirts, we hold up signs—we're growing stronger together.”

a librarianship degree. Then she went on to UCLA where she got a Masters in Library and Information Science.

“Lots of librarians with masters degrees are working as classifieds,” Kaye explains. “It's a full-time job, usually with benefits. People will take whatever job is available because they need the stable paycheck and healthcare.”

It was a hard experience. “I spent a lot of time driving, and had to schedule at least an hour between campuses to be sure of arriving on time. Traffic and parking were a constant hassle. And I never knew if I'd have a job the next semester.”

The collective bargaining agreement for the Los Angeles district does offer a measure of seniority to adjuncts, one of the

few that does. “But they don't guarantee that the class they offer you is at a time you can make it,” she cautions. “If you have a conflict, too bad. And if you refuse an assignment, you lose your rights.”

That happened to Kaye, when she became pregnant with her twins and stopped teaching for six months. But here her luck turned. As she began looking again, and needed a job with healthcare for her new family, a full-time job opened up at Glendale. “I was super-lucky,” she sighs.

A year after going full-time, the then-president of the Glendale College Guild, Gordon Alexander, convinced her to become the union secretary. She held that position for a few years, was a local grievance officer, and then first vice-president. When the past president had to step down, she agreed to take on the position. “I had no idea what I was getting into,” she laughs, “but my commitment is to be there, and to support the union.”

Union is a family

For Kaye, the union is a family. It sometimes makes her remember the family life she experienced as a child in Armenia, where she was born. “There were a lot of celebrations and get-togethers. Armenia has a rich culture and old traditions that have persevered through the years.”

In the Guild, she says, she makes up for losing that



PHOTO COURTESY OF AFT LOCAL 2276

Zoe Kaye believes that the union provides a home for activists.

tradition. “We work so closely together we say we have work wives and work husbands,” Kaye says. “We're creating our own culture. When you look at history, we are doing what unions have been doing all along. We wear the same color t-shirts, we hold up signs—we're growing stronger together.”

The union is going to need that kind of strength. Last December the local negotiated an interim agreement with the district for wage raises, while still trying to reach agreement on a contract. Full-time faculty received a 4.5% raise and part timers 5.5% for the 2015-16 school year, retroactive to last July. However, 2.75% of the increase is set to expire July 1.

“Our members weren't happy,” she recalls. “In our ratification vote, 30% voted against it, which for us is unprecedented. And it was ratified because most members trust the leadership of the union. We told them, and told the Board of Trustees, that we were going to work to make it permanent—that this agreement was only a first step.”

Instead of keeping faith with the union, however, in April the district informed the union that it would not make the increase permanent, and further, proposed no raise at all for 2016-17 and 2017-18.

Union mobilization

The Glendale district is getting \$13 million in Proposition 30 funds, and the proposition doesn't sunset until 2018. Nevertheless, the Board says the district enrollment is not growing, and insists on putting all that money in reserves. “They say they can't afford a permanent raise, but as usual, they're overestimating expenses and underestimating income,” Kaye says.

Kaye and the union are responding by increasing the membership and mobilizing members. Their goal is to reach 87% membership. “We need to mobilize 200 faculty to the next Board of Trustees meeting, to make clear that their proposal is not going to work for us. In effect, they're proposing a salary cut,” she charges. “The union is all about members, and every person will matter.”

So far the local's plans are on track. It is implementing the CFT's Building Power campaign, and got 35 members to volunteer to phone bank for the coming board meeting. “My goal is like the CFT's,” Kaye says. “We need member engagement, for our members to become active, and to become leaders themselves. Instead of just relying on the Guild officers, we all have to form a community.” CCC

by David Bacon



Nearing solution?

Board of Governors creates working groups to reform accreditation system

On March 21 California moved another step closer to fixing the broken accreditation system for California's community colleges. On that day the California Community College Board of Governors (BOG) voted to restructure the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges while exploring a switch to a different accreditor that better meets California's needs. These actions are unprecedented anywhere in the country, and would mean a renewal of opportunity for California's community college students, faculty and staff.

The BOG action follows on the heels of a 96% vote the previous week by community college presidents and chancellors from across the state affirming the same ideas, included creating conditions to safely maintain the ACCJC as an interim accreditor until a new one can be identified and brought online. The two actions struck decisive blows to ACCJC's fading hopes of maintaining the unacceptable status quo.

Many CFT leaders and faculty from AFT-represented community college locals turned out to the BOG meeting to support Board Resolution 2016-03, which noted that "ACCJC is at risk of losing recognition by the U.S. Department of Education."

"While a number of individual college presidents had already gone on record regarding the need to move to a new accreditor, this vote shows that a remarkable, unprecedented consensus has now emerged," said

California Federation of Teachers president Joshua Pechthalt. "The presidents' vote confirms what the Chancellor's Accreditation Task Force revealed last year: the ACCJC is no longer widely accepted in its community, and does not meet the needs of California public higher education."

Workgroups formed

The BOG resolution specified creation of two workgroups to move the process forward.

The first one, *Workgroup for Improving ACCJC Structure, Function, and Relations*, chaired by Chancellor Helen Benjamin of the Contra Costa CCD, will focus on working with ACCJC to make immediate improvements in such areas as financial transparency, reformed governance and leadership, better communication with member institutions, more effective training, and member evaluation of

the commission.

The second workgroup, *Western Region Higher Education Accrediting Model Workgroup*, chaired by Chancellor Cindy Miles of Grossmont-Cuyamaca

Task Force. She said, "In my three decades working in the California Community College system I've rarely witnessed the kind of consensus and unification around an issue that we have seen

appear reasonable and capable of dialog with its constituents. After three sessions, during which the commissioners who attended endured withering criticism and practically no words of support, the tour came to an abrupt end.)

Earlier in March, shortly before the community college presidents and BOG took their actions, delegates to the annual CFT convention voted overwhelmingly for a special dues assessment, affirming CFT will have the resources for continuing to organize and to fight for public education and workplace rights in the courtroom as needed. The ongoing legal assaults by billionaire education "reformers" in such cases as Vergara v. California and Friedrichs v. CTA spurred the convention vote. But the delegates were also explicitly mindful of the need to support the legal battle being waged mostly outside public view as ACCJC lawyers maneuver to block CFT and AFT 2121's longstanding suit against the commission.

Move if needed

The faucet of taxpayer dollars that the ACCJC has needlessly kept gushing in this fight is the reason why CFT sponsored AB 1385 in the state legislature; it would require the agency to win a vote of its member colleges before assessing the group to spend money on legal fees. And AB 1397, the fair accreditation bill, is now serving as backup for the BOG's *Workgroup for Improving ACCJC Structure, Function, and Relations* in its mission to impose greater transparency and accountability on the ACCJC. Assemblymember Phil Ting is carrying both two-year legislative bills, but will only move them further if they are needed.

Said CFT Community College Council president Jim Mahler, "We are very hopeful that recent developments mean that our accreditation problems are nearing a solution. If the Board of Governors and other community college leaders succeed in their current efforts, faculty will be able to turn their full attention back to teaching and learning for the first time in years." ☐

"If the Board of Governors and other community college leaders succeed in their current efforts, faculty will be able to turn their full attention back to teaching and learning for the first time in years."

CCD, will focus on facilitating discussions among representatives from ACCJC and WASC Senior College and University Commission, along with CEOs from the community colleges of California, Hawaii, and the Pacific islands currently accredited by ACCJC, to pursue a long-term model for regional accreditation that aligns all segments of higher education in the Western region.

Joanne Waddell, president of the Los Angeles Community College Faculty Guild, AFT Local 1521, served as CFT's representative on the Chancellor's

in this effort to bring fair accreditation to California's Community Colleges."

Virtually no one but CFT

This unity in perspective and action did not arise overnight. The CFT has been fighting for a fair and appropriate accreditation system—in the courts, at the US Department of Education, in the legislature, the media and in the streets—ever since the ACCJC unfairly and unlawfully sanctioned City College of San Francisco in 2012. At the time of that action virtually no one

outside of CFT questioned the actions of a supposedly neutral accrediting body.

As AFT 2121 president Tim Killikelly noted during the short-lived ACCJC "listening tour" earlier this year, "In 2012 after the ACCJC's move to close the college, everyone was saying, 'What's the matter with City College of San Francisco? Now they are saying, 'What's the matter with ACCJC?'"

(The listening tour was a last-ditch effort by the agency to

May is Labor History Month

Signed into law as AB 2269 (Swanson) in 2012 by Governor Brown, the purpose of Labor History Month is to encourage schools "to commemorate this month with appropriate educational exercises that make pupils aware of the role the labor movement has played in shaping California and the United States." For ideas about how to bring the labor movement alive in your classroom, go to cft.org, click on "committees" and then "labor in the schools committee". For a sneak preview of *From Mission to Microchip: A History of the California Labor Movement* by Fred Glass, coming from UC Press in June, go to the California Labor Federation website, calaborfed.org, and to the "Labor's Edge" blog.



Newspaper printers were the first to form a union in Gold Rush California, in 1850, as depicted in this New Deal sponsored mural by Anton Refregier.

Unfair Labor Practices strike

City College faculty strike for “the college San Francisco deserves”

“When City College is under attack, what do we do? Stand up fight back!”

At campuses across San Francisco, hundreds of faculty walked picket lines on April 27, 2016 to protest their administration’s unfair labor practices in contract negotiations. They were joined by students and

administration’s stated plan to “realign” the college by reducing course offerings over the next few years by 26%.

Chancellor Susan Lamb decided in advance of the one-day strike to close all CCSF

Civic Center campus to dry out with a spirited noon rally. There, nearly 600 demonstrators called for the administration to come to the table and negotiate in good faith.

Addressing the crowd were Lita Blanc, president of the K-12 United Educators of San Francisco, who pointed out that her students go to City College; elected officials; City College and San Francisco State students; the head of the San Francisco Labor Council, Tim Paulson; and AFT Local 2121 leaders and members.

Free City College

“Our students cannot thrive with plans to cut our college by 26%. These cuts stand in the way of students trying to enroll in classes and pursue their education and career goals,”

“Our managers seem to be the only people left in California that don’t understand that this lawbreaking accrediting agency is on the way out. The administration should be paying attention to the educational needs of San Francisco, not the bureaucratic demands of the discredited ACCJC.”

community supporters on behalf of a broad, accessible college, a vision competing with the

buildings. The picket lines, soaked by a brief but heavy morning rain, moved to the



FRED GLASS PHOTO

Six hundred strikers and friends jam into the plaza in front of the CCSF Civic Center campus at noon on April 27, taking a break from the day’s picket lines at sites across San Francisco.

said faculty union President Tim Killikelly. “We have worked to rebuild the college after the accreditation crisis. We want bold new initiatives to increase educational opportunities for all San Franciscans.”

The previous week AFT Local 2121 leaders participated in a press conference announcing City Supervisor Jane Kim’s plan to make City College free for its students. This forward-looking action stands in stark contrast to the college administration’s idea for the future, as it hoards more than 25% of the district’s funds in reserves and plans to downsize the college.

Kate Gougoutas spoke from the picket line at John Adams campus, where she is site coordinator for Transitional Studies. “The high school program, which started in the mid-1980s, has already been cut. We offer a full high school curriculum, but we’re down to one section offered per class. If we’re cut any more, we won’t have a program.” City College’s non-credit program, serving 30,000 students, is as vital as its credit-bearing courses. She added, “There’s a lack of understanding in the administration as to the

Continued on page 7

Plenty of community college action at CFT Convention

From the march, rally and civil disobedience at noon on the first day of the convention on behalf of a fair contract for City College of San Francisco faculty, to the appearance of Assemblymember Phil Ting at the CCC meeting that evening, to the many workshops and resolutions relating to community college issues, there was no lack of community college activities to choose from at the 74th annual California Federation of Teachers convention in San Francisco the weekend of March 11-13.

Better than half the 700 delegates and invited guests rolled out of the hotel into a light rain at the foot of Market Street for a brief rally before setting out on a six block march to demonstrate in front of the law offices of the San Francisco Community College District’s hired negotiator. The CCSF faculty union is attempting to gain their first salary increase since the Great Recession, and to stand off the administration’s penny-wise, pound-foolish downsizing of the college at the instigation of the ACCJC.

Joined by a couple hundred sisters and brothers from other unions in the local labor movement, the marchers set up a massive picket line for an

hour, chanting, singing, and roaring their support for thirty volunteers—most, but not all, CFT members—who sat down and blocked the front entrance to the building. One by one, police gingerly lifted them up and steered them through the doors of the building to a waiting paddy wagon. They were cited and released shortly afterwards, drawing sympathetic media coverage.

CCC meeting

The CCC meeting featured reports from council president Jim Mahler and the locals, a screening of a new video on the latest news in the fight for accreditation reform, and Assemblymember Phil Ting of

San Francisco, who, along with Assemblymember Rob Bonta across the Bay, has steadfastly carried legislation to reform ACCJC and led the fight in the legislature to clip the wings of the rogue agency.

Ting was gracious in thanking the CCC locals and CFT for their focus on fixing accreditation in the state, and credited organized labor for holding the line against the privatization of public education.

Resolutions

Among the sixteen resolutions passed by delegates, several dealt with higher education.

Resolution 11, to “Restore the promise of free, quality public higher education for all,” noted the deterioration of California’s commitment to full access to higher education since passage of the Master Plan for Higher Education in 1960, and the shocking fact that student debt is now greater than credit card debt in the United States.



RUSS CURTIS PHOTO

The Community College Council meeting at the CFT convention featured an appearance by Assemblymember Phil Ting (D-SF), who has championed accreditation reform legislation.

It called for CFT to “take active steps to analyze current proposals, nationally and locally, that seek to restore the promise of higher education,” and to “formulate its own concrete legislative proposals.” Resolutions also supported the California State University faculty in their contract fight with CSU

administration, and addressed faculty load preservation.

Malaika Finkelstein, a delegate from AFT 2121 and one of the volunteer arrestees, said, “I feel energized by the convention. I’m proud to be part of a union that cares so deeply about social justice.” CCC

by Fred Glass



Legislative Update

Jill Rice, CFT Legislative Advocate

News from Sacramento

Things are heating up in Sacramento! The Legislature is in full swing and bills are moving!

By the end of April, bills have to have been heard by the policy committees in their house of origin. This means April is busy. Our community college bills are looking good and I am optimistic about all that is happening.

AB 1690

As reported in the last issue of *The Perspective*, CFT is sponsoring Assembly Bill 1690, authored by Assemblymember Medina. This bill will require those community college districts without a collective bargaining agreement with part-time, temporary faculty to commence negotiations to establish standards for the treatment of part-time, temporary faculty including, among other issues, workload distribution, due process rights, and seniority rights.

Specifically, AB 1690 will require those community college districts that have not entered into a collective bargaining agreement as of January 1, 2017 to engage in negotiations with their part-time faculty for the purpose of retaining qualified

part-time faculty and establishing a seniority list that will govern the offering of new assignments or a reduction in assignments. Those districts that already have such an agreement in place are exempted from the requirements of this bill.

AB 1690 passed out of the Assembly Higher Education Committee on a 10-2 vote, even garnering the support of a Republican member! This was in no small part due to the compelling testimony offered by our own Cabrillo College instructor John Govsky—great job John! This bill is now pending in Assembly Appropriations Committee and will be heard by that committee in May.

SB 1460

CFT is also working to restore some of the funding for City College of San Francisco. In 2013, the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) moved to disaccredit City College, threatening to close the school effective July 2014. This drastic act and the bad publicity

that followed caused enrollment to plummet by nearly 35%. Senate Bill 1460, authored by Senator Mark Leno, requires the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges to provide the San Francisco Community College District with an adjustment for restoration of apportionment revenue for the next three fiscal years. These revenue adjustments are not subject to the growth cap, thereby allowing for growth up to the pre-accreditation crisis levels.

SB 1460 is in the Senate Appropriations Committee after having passed out of its first policy committee (Senate Education Committee) on March 30. Again, thanks to our amazing member Tim Killikelly, president of AFT Local 2121, who testified in committee and persuaded eight of the nine members to support this bill! This bill will be heard by the Senate Appropriations Committee on April 18—keep your fingers crossed!

Other ACCJC-related bills

The damage done by the ACCJC was not limited to City College of San Francisco. The CFT sponsored two

accreditation-related bills last year, Assembly Bill 1385 and Assembly Bill 1397, both authored by Assemblymember Ting. AB 1385 prohibits the accrediting agency from imposing a special assessment on community colleges to pay for the accrediting agency's legal fees for any lawsuit without a vote of member institutions. AB 1397 creates community college accreditation reform, including greater transparency in governance and policy for the notoriously secretive agency. Both bills remain on the Senate Floor and will be activated if the need arises, but they are on hold for now as the Board of Governors moves forward to select a new accreditor.

On March 21, the California Community Colleges approved plans to better align the system's 113 colleges with other segments of higher education through changes to the current accreditation structure. The board unanimously approved a resolution that supports immediate changes to the ACCJC that include enhanced financial transparency, reformed governance and leadership, better communication with colleges, and better training. The Board of Governors also directed the

state Chancellor's Office to participate in the college-led planning required to implement the changes and to advocate for resources to ensure a smooth transition to an accreditor that aligns all of higher education in the Western region, which also includes Hawaii and the Pacific Islands.

State budget

Finally, the budget process is also moving forward. We are working with other stakeholders to petition the legislature and governor to address some shortcomings in the proposal. While funding for the community colleges is better than in years past, we are continuing to advocate for an increase in COLA; additional dollars to support the hiring of more full-time faculty; movement toward pay equity, office hours, and health benefits for part-time faculty; and an increase in ongoing funds to support the critical work of the Academic Senate.

That's it for now. As always, please contact me if I can be of any assistance to you (916-446-2788; jrice@cft.org). I look forward to continuing to work on your behalf here in the state capitol. ☺

San Mateo conference continued from page 8

more proud of the mix of people that came than any other aspect of it," Harer enthuses. The conference targeted families, and offered childcare to encourage participation. Teachers came from the three unions, as did people who care about community education.

Harer, who taught English for 37 years at Skyline and is co-vice president of the San Mateo Community College Federation of Teachers, AFT Local 1493, says the conference was in many ways the product of the CFT Strategic Campaign Initiative grant program, which began several years ago. AFT 1493 already had one, and the Jefferson Elementary local got

one as conference planning began. "The grants give us time for member outreach and growth, as well as for community outreach, so the conference fit this agenda well," she says.

The role of unions in education

The state federation also had a stake in its success. CFT President Josh Pechthalt was a featured speaker, explaining that the union needs to work more effectively with community members. "With the threat of Freidrichs," Harer emphasizes, "we need to get community members more aware of the importance, not just of public education in general, but of the

unions in education as well." The American Federation of Teachers supported the conference too; several national staff members anchored workshops or gave presentations.

Participants were welcomed by Melinda Dart and Dr. Regina Stanback Stroud, President of Skyline College. Opening remarks were given by former Assemblymember Tom Ammiano, who now teaches a course at Skyline College. Jeff Duncan-Andrade, a high school teacher, SFSU Ethnic Studies professor, author and social justice activist delivered a keynote. Duncan-Andrade has lectured around the world about the elements of effective teaching in

schools serving poor and working class children. Pechthalt keynoted the end of the conference with Mary Cathryn Ricker, AFT Executive Vice President.

"We're more proud of the mix of people that came than any other aspect of the conference."

Sixteen workshops covered the housing crisis, immigration reform, behavior management, resourcing schools, "keeping the community in community college," and other topics. A Town Hall Meeting included a dialogue between San Mateo School Superintendent Anne

Campbell, State Senator Jerry Hill, Senior Program Associate for the WestEd E3 Institute George C. Philipp, and County

Supervisor David Pine. A special story telling session for children featured Maya Christina Gonzalez, author of "Call Me Tree," listed as one of the "Best Picture Books of 2014 That Celebrate Diversity" by Kirkus Reviews. ☺

by David Bacon

Tax the wealthy, fund schools

Extend Prop 30 to protect public education

CFT members and a broad coalition of like-minded folks are circulating petitions and gathering signatures to place a measure on November's statewide general election ballot that would extend Proposition 30. Prop 30 has been a game changer for public education in California.

A temporary tax passed by California's voters in 2012 by a 55 - 45 margin, Prop 30 saved the state's public sector by pumping seven to eight billion dollars per year into state coffers from two sources. About a billion dollars comes in from a .25 percent increase in the sales tax, and the other six billion or so dollars originates in three tiers of 1, 2, and 3 percent bumps on taxpayers making \$250,000, \$300,000 and \$500,000 per year. Thus it

it is extended.

Most of the community college districts in California have been receiving 10 to 15% of their funding for the past few years from Prop 30 revenues.

Fully progressive

The extension only seeks to renew the top bracket income taxes, making the extension measure fully progressive—asking the wealthiest Californians to continue to pay a bit more

from pre-school through university. The measure, called the "The Children's Education and Health Care Protection Act of 2016," will extend the tax on the wealthy for twelve years.

"We cannot afford to let Prop 30 expire," says California Federation of Teachers president Joshua Pechthalt, who says the campaign to extend the measure is a central priority of the organization this year. "Thanks to Prop 30, we have only just begun to restore the programs and positions lost to the Great Recession. Without this tax, which asks millionaires to pay a little more in taxes so that all of us can benefit, public education will return to the devastating years of budget cuts, layoffs, and skyrocketing class sizes and tuition increases." CFT is partnering with the California Teachers Association, Service Employees International Union, and other unions to pass the extension, along with a wide coalition of community organizations.

"It was very easy"

The San Mateo Community College Federation of Teachers, AFT Local 1493, was the first CFT Community College Council local to bring a resolution of support before its district Board of Trustees. "It was very easy," said Dan Kaplan, AFT Local 1493's Executive Director. "The president of the board understood that it would be a

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is a mostly progressive tax, with the regressive portion—the sales tax—expiring at the end of this year. The final year of the tax on the wealthy will be 2018, unless

so everyone may benefit. The revenue will help ensure that California continues to move forward toward adequately funding education for all students



PHOTO COURTESY OF ELAINE FRANCISCO

CFT members, including Elaine Francisco, have been among the signature gatherers volunteering their time across California for the Prop 30 extension ballot qualifying effort.

disaster for all the community colleges in the state if Prop 30 were not extended." Other community college boards that have passed similar resolutions include Glendale and Coast.

"The active participation by our members is going to be critical for this campaign," says CFT Community College Council president Jim Mahler. "The best argument for extending Prop 30 is for educators to tell everyone they know about its positive impact. We are the best messengers for that information. Voters need to know how Prop 30 has helped students to regain access to classes lost during the Great Recession, and prevented student fees from skyrocketing throughout public higher education. Without that knowledge, voters will be vulnerable to the anti-tax forces who will be flooding the airwaves in October with misinformation."

Petitions will be turned in by the campaign during the first week in May. But after that there is plenty more to do: make presentations to community groups, get resolutions of support passed by your school, college board, or other groups, and simply pass information on to family, friends and neighbors. A six minute video focusing on the enormous difference for K-12 schools and community colleges, comparing their situations before and after passage of Prop 30, is available on the CFT website for viewing and sharing. As the campaign moves into higher gear later this year watch for more information coming your way. ☐

by Fred Glass

More information on the CFT website: www.cft.org.

AFT 1521 leader Sharon Hendricks honored

Sharon Hendricks, who teaches communications studies at Los Angeles City College and serves as State Teachers Retirement System (CalSTRS) vice chair, was given the "John Vasconcellos Advocate of the Year" award by the Faculty Association of California Community Colleges (FACCC) in Sacramento on February 28. Sharon is also president of the LACC chapter of AFT Local 1521 and active in the CFT Community College Council. Congratulations Sharon! ☐



PHOTO COURTESY OF SHARON HENDRICKS

CCSF strike continued from page 5

history and purpose of CCSF noncredit."

Fighting for wages and rights

One student on the picket lines at the main City College campus came out early to support the strike. Now taking courses toward university transfer to be an engineer, Jose Franco had been active with Local 261, the construction

and general laborers' union. Speaking above the din of bullhorns and cars honking in support he said, "I know what it's like to fight for your wages and workers' rights. Teachers should have a fair contract. They are the mentors that we need to help us reach our academic goals."

Faculty are currently paid 3.5% below 2007 wages. The administration's latest proposal

offers primarily bonuses that would expire in mid-2017, leaving faculty only 1.5% above salaries from a decade ago. District spending on instructors, counselors, and librarians has declined 9% over a four-year period, while the budget for administrators has risen 29%.

"What kind of priorities are these?" asked ESL instructor Jessica Buchsbaum while picketing with her students.

"Faculty in San Francisco are simply asking for a fair wage. In one of the most expensive cities in the country, the administration needs to get real and stop doing the bidding of the ACCJC. Our managers seem to be the only people left in California that don't understand that this lawbreaking accrediting agency is on the way out. The administration should be paying attention to

the educational needs of San Francisco, not the bureaucratic demands of the discredited ACCJC."

The one-day faculty job action was the first in the eight-decade history of City College of San Francisco, and only the fourth ever held on a California community college campus. ☐

by Fred Glass and Li Lovett

Local Action

Los Angeles

AFT Local 1521 is making organizing a way of life

Sometime in between the Supreme Court's *Harris v. Quinn* decision, and the fast-tracking of the Friedrichs case, the Los Angeles College Faculty Guild, AFT Local 1521 became aware of the large number of fee-payers in the bargaining unit covered by its contract.

"Gerard Friesz [AFT Western Regional Director—ed.] kept trying to make an appointment with me to talk about it," recalls Joanne Waddell, Guild President. "Finally he pulled an organizer's trick and said he was just in the neighborhood. When he sat down, he knew more than I did. He had a database of 800 fee payers in my own union." The Guild—largest community college local in the CFT—represents nearly 5,000 certificated bargaining unit members.

That was just the first database, and in the end, it proved to be a significant underestimate.

list of fee-payers they'd put together.

"We timed our visit to the end of a person's class," she explains. "And to our surprise, the response was overwhelmingly favorable. Many fee payers, seeing the deduction on their pay stub in the name of Local 1521, thought they were already members. They were amazed that we were taking the time to talk personally and answer their questions, and signed up easily."

Teamwork

From April to October 2015 the campaign signed up 600 new members, and then another hundred in January. The local has a goal of reaching 300 more in April and May. The database now includes 1500 fee payers, and the union is trying sign up at least 1000 as members. "We now have a team, and we work very well," Waddell says. "And I've learned that there's no better database than a shoebox filled with signed membership cards."

Most fee payers, and new members, are adjuncts. With that in mind, the Guild has

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And finding out whom the fee payers were and their numbers was only the first organizing obstacle that the union faced.

Threat of Friedrichs

With the threat of the Friedrichs decision hanging over them, the union adopted an organizing plan, helped by other AFT and CFT reps and organizers. "At first we concentrated just on building a better database, but then we decided not to wait and actually start the work of signing people up," Waddell says.

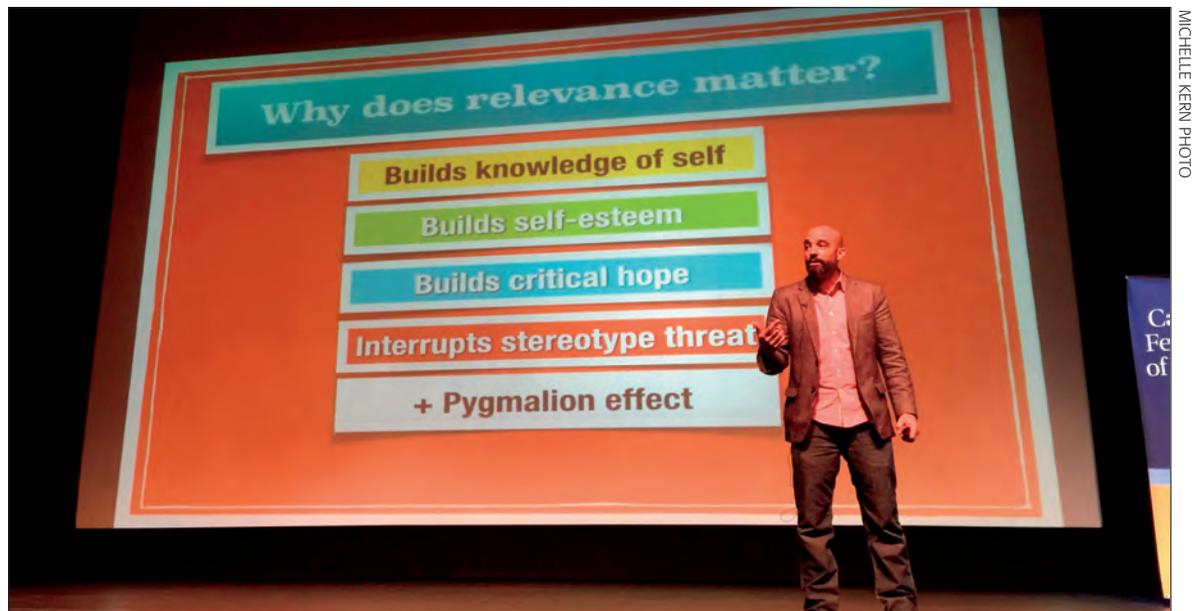
The union's approach was one-on-one contact. Waddell and the local leaders she was helping to train first practiced their recruitment pitch, or rap. Then they got a schedule of classes and matched it to the

planned several workshops. Member organizers phone-banked for one about contract rights, and 200 new members showed up. The union published an *Adjunct Survival Guide* to help them understand the contract. Another about adjunct retirement drew 100 participants.

Holding conversations key

"The key to this is holding conversations, not just sending people email messages," Waddell explains. "Adjuncts were telling us that their main concerns were office space and job security, and we needed to let them know these are subjects covered by our contract, although sometimes there's a gap in implementation."

In the Los Angeles College



Jeff Duncan-Andrade was among the keynote presenters at the "Schools Our Children Deserve" conference co-sponsored by the San Mateo Community College Federation of Teachers, Jefferson Elementary Federation, and Jefferson High School Federation.

Faculty Guild adjuncts have always had the right to vote and run for office. The new members are taking that seriously, and in the coming local election all four district-wide seats are being contested.

"We're committed to maintaining a level of member service," Waddell concludes, "which we don't see in opposition to developing our organizing model. This is not a one-shot campaign. In our union, it's a way of life." ☐

by David Bacon

Orange County

Solidarity gets a contract in the Coast CCD

After three and a half years, faculty at the three campuses of the Coast Community College District have a contract. Rob Schneiderman, President of the Coast Federation of Educators, AFT Local 1911, calls that a victory by itself. The settlement turned back a concerted administration effort to take away hard-won benefits, and achieved economic advances that seemed impossible just a year ago.

Highlights include a raise for instructors with lab classes. "They deserve the full amount paid to others," he says, "but at least this time we went from 75% to 83% of pro-rata, and that's a step on the way to full equality."

When negotiations began over three years ago, the district demanded a 20% cut in health benefits. In the final agreement, two of the three medical plans are unchanged, and the last had minor adjustments.

The difference Prop 30 makes

Overall, faculty got a 7% raise over three years, after many years with no raise at

all. "The economy turned," Schneiderman explains, "but what really made the difference was the Prop 30 money. We now have a revenue stream that's reliable."

Part-timers won pay for office hours for the first time, from a fund the district agreed to create. Faculty have better scheduling language, and faculty requests will henceforth be honored. Staff also got two flex—or staff development—days, fully paid.

Less than a year ago, the district called for state mediation and threatened that it would impose a contract with drastic cuts. The district chancellor even demanded that faculty work 17 additional days per year, with no compensating pay increase for it. Administrators sought to cap benefits, and force faculty to pay the cost of any future increase.

"We went from all of that to a good settlement. It's remarkable," Schneiderman says.

District intransigence

What made the difference was solidarity. The local communicated regularly with members, and put news of negotiations in faculty boxes. Union activists went to faculty meetings to let people understand the problem of the district's intransigence.

Finally Schneiderman and local leaders approached their sister union at Newport-Mesa Unified School District. The union there made a commitment to put flyers in the boxes of all faculty, explaining the threat to impose the contract at Coast College. "High schools in that district are feeders for Coast College," Schneiderman explains. "We told our trustees that we would go into those high schools, and after hearing about the conflict at Coast, students wouldn't want to go there."

The tense situation at Coast changed completely. "One day

we had a meeting with the trustees," he says, "and the next I got a call from the chancellor saying that we had to get busy to get the contract settled. It's been a long protracted battle, but we have come out as a stronger union." ☐

by David Bacon

San Mateo

The "Schools Our Children Deserve" conference

"We had two goals for our conference," explains Katharine Harer, describing the origin of the "Schools Our Children Deserve" conference, held at Skyline College on March 19. "Our internal goal was developing greater collaboration between our unions in north San Mateo County. And our public goal was bringing the diverse communities of north county together to build support, not just for public education, but also for education unions."

The conference came at the initiative of Melinda Dart, president of Jefferson Elementary Federation of Teachers, AFT Local 3267, who approached the unions at San Mateo Community College and Jefferson High School. The three unions collaborated over eight months to bring off the event, and the five-person planning team also included Elaine Francisco, Michelle Kern and Sergio Robledo-Maderazo.

Over 300 educators and community members participated in an extensive program of speakers and workshops. "We're

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