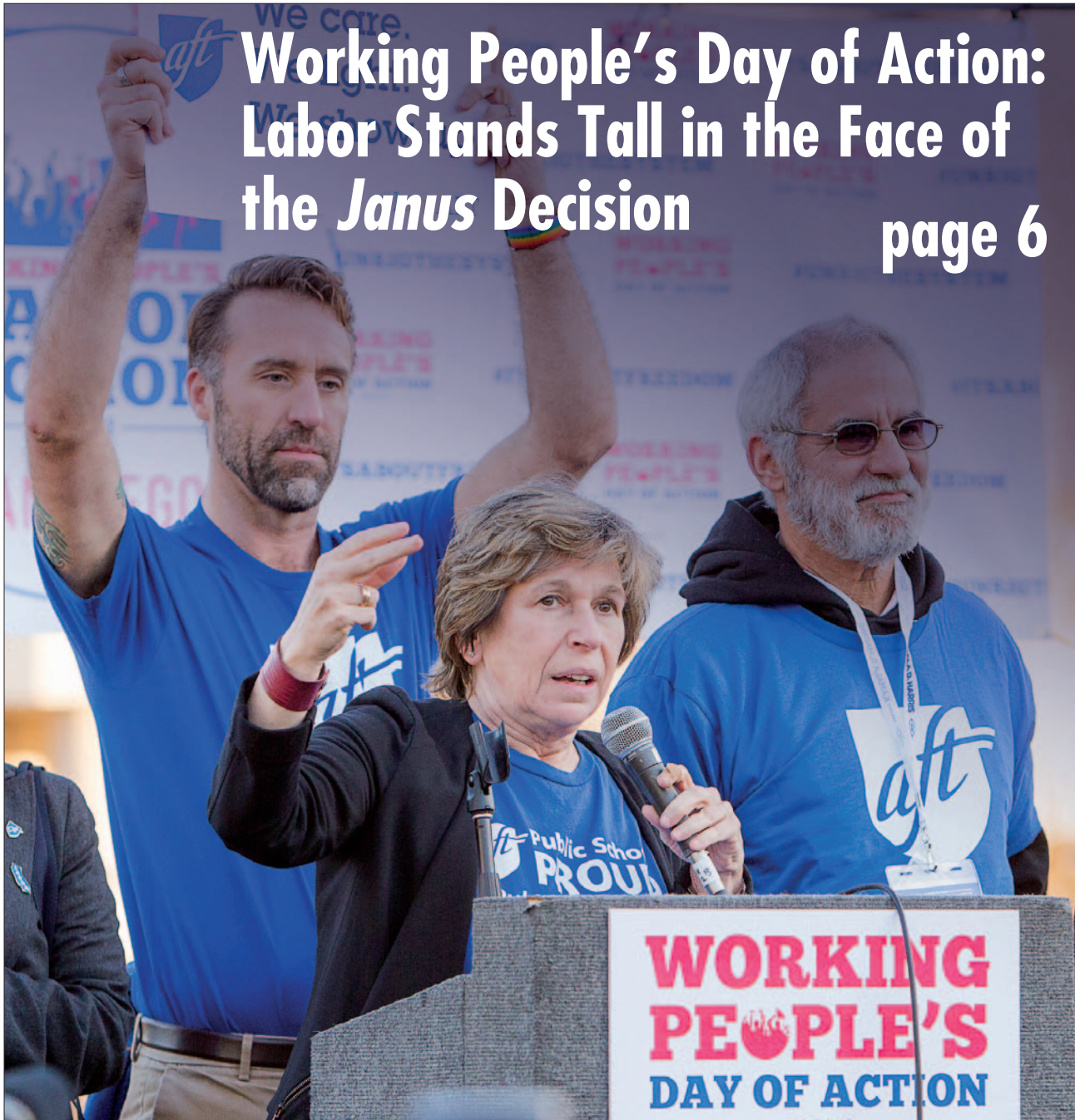




Community College Council of the California Federation of Teachers
American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO

Perspective



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**The Koch Network's War on Unions is
a War on Education and Democracy:**

**The Only Answer
is Solidarity**

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President's Column

Jim Mahler, president, CFT Community College Council

The Koch Network's War on Unions is a War on Education and Democracy: The Only Answer is Solidarity

The Koch network got together in Indian Wells recently to sip cocktails and discuss how they could invest \$400 million to promote their politics and policies in the upcoming election cycle. That alone is very bad news for those of us hoping that a Democratic wave might sweep the Republican majority out of the House of Representatives, but the aim of this incredibly powerful group of billionaires is not just to win one election but to win the long war.

There is a reason why the Koch network hates labor—unions stand in their way and serve as an alternative model of collective, bottom-up power rather than the rule of the oligarchs. Unions are the only vehicle American working people have ever had to contest the power of the moneyed elite.

As historian Nancy MacLean has documented, the historical origins of the radical right's plans to "save capitalism from democracy—permanently" all started with an effort to undermine public schools in the South in the aftermath of the Brown versus Board of Education Supreme Court decision. Of course, along with their deep disdain for public education, the intellectual movement out of which the Koch network was born was also bent on attacking civil rights, unions, environmentalists, and any other form of what they saw as "collective gangsterism" aiming to tax the rich or regulate corporations for any reason.

This winter in Indian Wells, the mood on the right was buoyant with Charles Koch himself crowing that his dream of a rightwing, corporatist utopia seemed so close to fruition that he could almost taste it. As the *Washington Post* reported, Koch and his allies were there not just to raise millions to dump into the upcoming elections. The Koch network also sees an opportunity to dismantle American public education and

eliminate teachers' unions.

Thus it is clear that the enemies of popular democracy in America are thinking strategically. The *Post* piece notes that the "right are increasingly focused on melding the minds of the next generation by making massive, targeted investments in both K-12 and higher education."

More specifically, the Koch network wants to shape the minds of the next generation by using a "three-prong strategy" designed to "reform, supplement, innovate." The point of the spear is, not surprisingly, a radical school "choice" agenda that will disrupt and, ultimately destabilize American public education.

To do this, the Koch network knows that it has to defeat the Democrats, but, even more importantly, they need to destroy public sector unions. They are aided in this pursuit by the fact that the new Supreme Court majority that Trump's victory brought is, as of this writing, about to rule against public sector unions in the upcoming *Janus vs AFSCME*

case which will dramatically curtail our ability to collect dues.


Hence, the exuberance in Indian Wells. As the *Washington Post* piece relates, America's most zealous activist billionaire joyously proclaimed that: "We've made more progress in the last five years than I had in the last 50," Koch told donors during a cocktail reception. "The capabilities we have now can take us to a whole new level. ... We want to increase the effectiveness of the network ... by an order of magnitude. If we do that, we can change the trajectory of the country."

If you believe in American democracy, that should send a chill down your spine.

It should also serve as a cautionary note for those who discount the significance of the labor movement historically and/or at present. There is a reason why the Koch network hates labor—unions stand in

their way and serve as an alternative model of collective, bottom-up power rather than the rule of the oligarchs. Unions are the only vehicle American working people have ever had to contest the power of the moneyed elite.

The attempt to disrupt public education and kill unions is the cornerstone of the right's assault on American democracy. Let's not let them win.

We can stand around and wait for someone to save us or we can do what good unionists have always done when the deck is stacked against them—organize, survive the assault, and fight back. As the victory in the West Virginia teachers strike in a deep red, right-to-work state shows us, even when the deck is stacked against us and our backs are against the wall, solidarity wins. 

The Perspective will be transitioning to a web-based publication. This is the last print edition. If you wish to continue receiving this publication in its new digital incarnation you will need to sign up. Watch cft.org for instructions.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

May 5	Community College Council Meeting	El Camino College, Torrance
May 5	State Council Meeting	El Camino College, Torrance
June 5	Statewide Primary Election	
June 18-21	Union Summer School	UCLA
July 13-16	AFT National Convention	Pittsburgh, PA

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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Telling Labor's Untold Stories

Union Activist, Author, Teacher and Solidarity Organizer

On the dedication page of Justin Akers Chacon's new book, *Radicals in the Barrio: Magonistas, Socialists, Wobblies, and Communists in the Mexican American Working Class* (Haymarket Books), is a photograph of his great grandmother, Guadalupe Chacón Mena y Magaña. She's wearing the apron of a packinghouse worker, the picture taken some time during the 50 years she worked at the Satcoy Lemon Association just east of Ventura.

Akers Chacon's great grandmother established the family in the Tortilla Flats barrio on Ventura's west side, after coming to the U.S. in the wake of the Mexican Revolution. "The family joke is that they wound up there because they took a wrong turn on the way to Los Angeles," Akers Chacon laughs. "Ventura was segregated then, and the barrio was at the town's far west end."

"While her work was valued by the company, she was never

Luis Obispo, getting a job at a union supermarket, and enrolling at the local community college. Later, he decided to attend San Diego State University, eventually getting a Bachelor's and a Master's in Latin American studies. At the same time, he became increasingly politically active. "I got involved in the Clinton campaign in 1992 because he promised universal healthcare," he remembers. "Because of my mom's poverty, we didn't always have health

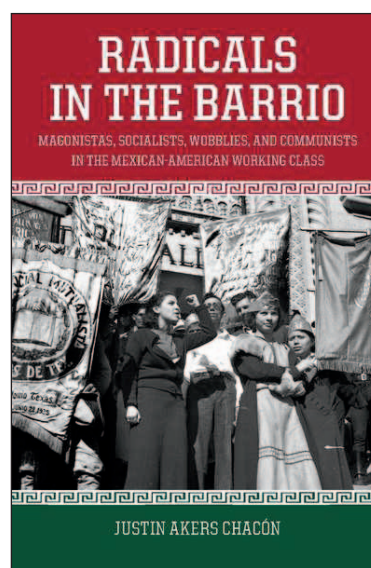
says. "I was the first in my family to even go to college, and we had low expectations. Not only did I realize I could teach college, but I found I loved it. This was it."

At San Diego City College the union reached out to him, and he signed up. "There's a strong union culture here, and I was happy to be part of it," he recalls. A year later, in 2006, he got a full-time job in the Chicano Studies department, together with a friend and political coworker, Enrique Davalos. Both got involved in the union from the beginning.

Then, a group of SDCC faculty had begun efforts to organize a conference on border issues, and the pair got involved. "Originally the idea was to study the regional economy," Akers Chacon says. "We helped give the project an orientation towards transborder solidarity in an activist framework. The conference invited both Mexican and U.S. academics and activists to participate. Its success led to a series, and this year SDCC will host the seventh Conference on Transborder Issues. Some sessions have taken place at institutions on the other side of the border -- the College of the Northern Border, and the University of Baja California. *The Journal of Transborder Studies* also came out of the conference and is now about to publish its fourth edition."

"San Diego and Tijuana are very segregated from each other," Akers Chacon explains. "A militarized border forcibly divides us, and there's a great deal of ignorance on the U.S. side about what happens in Mexico, and even more important, what Mexican academics and activists are thinking. Our intention is to create an intellectual exchange. There is a richness of analysis in Mexico about how this system operates, which we want to make accessible as part of integrating transnational solidarity. By its nature this is an act of defiance against the physical and political barriers. The border itself is a barrier to intellectual exchange -- we have to do some presentations by Skype because not everyone can even cross the border to participate."

Together with urban scholar Mike Davis, Akers Chacon



AFT 1931 Member Justin Akers Chacon

"I'm very proud of what our union has done," he declares. "The forces that are attacking unions in general are also those that are the most hostile to immigrants. We can't build a strong labor movement without understanding the importance of standing against xenophobia."

promoted," he says. "In the formal photos of the packinghouse's workers in those years you see the Mexican laborers all in their aprons, and then the managers and office workers, who were all white. That made a big impression on me."

With other kids of barrio families, he went to elementary and middle school at the San Buenaventura Mission. Half of Akers Chacon's family had Catholic Mexican roots and the other half, on his father's side, came out of Oklahoma at the end of the Dust Bowl era, giving him roots in the Steinbeckian part of California's working-class history.

As a teenager he was curious about that history. His great grandmother told him about going on strike with the CIO's United Cannery, Agricultural and Packinghouse Workers of America, a radical union of the 1940s that figures large in the working-class experience of Mexicans in the southwest.

Akers Chacon became a worker himself out of high school, moving north to San

care, so I knew how important that was. But after the failure to pass it, and in the era of the 'Contract with America' and the 'Republican Revolution,' I got very disillusioned."

Nevertheless, when Proposition 209 was put on the ballot in 1996 to reverse affirmative action, and then Proposition 227 to reverse bilingual education, he got involved in the fights against them. When the Teamsters went on strike at UPS in 1997, he found people on campus who were going out to the picket lines. "Something clicked for me," he says. "I could see that working-class power could have a real impact."

Through his years at the university he kept working in grocery stores, and, after getting his M.A., thought he might find work teaching high school. Unfortunately, budget cuts to San Diego city schools got in the way.

When he saw an ad for adjunct teaching at San Diego City College, he applied and got hired. "It was an epiphany," he

authored *No One is Illegal, Fighting Racism and State Violence on the U.S.-Mexico Border*, which exposes the racism of anti-immigration vigilantes and puts a human face on immigrants who risk their lives to cross the border to work in the United States.

Akers Chacon's *Radicals in the Barrio* is the product of five years of research and writing -- a thorough, detailed, and well-told history that includes miners fighting a U.S. boss and starting the Mexican Revolution, taking on the Rockefellers in Colorado's coal wars, providing the backbone for Communist- and Socialist-led strikes in California fields, and organizing the unemployed and homeless to build a base for the historic pecan strike in San Antonio.

Akers Chacon pays close attention to the radical ideology that drove the social struggles of Mexican people in the U.S., not just to their actions and tactics. He profiles activists who developed that ideology, from Texas Communist strike leader Emma Tenayuca to Bert Corona, father of the modern immigrant rights movement, and Luisa Moreno who led the CIO in California in its most radical years. He shows that linking working-class struggles in the U.S. and Mexico isn't just a product of NAFTA, or the recent decades of deportations, and describes in detail the importance Mexican workers gave to leftwing politics and organizing.

"I'm interested in an internationalist, working-class approach to immigration," he explains. "There is a right to migrate, and an historical movement against

the oppression of people crossing borders. It didn't just start yesterday. And if we look at the history of workers on both sides of the border we can see that labor movements and radical movements have a common origin. The unions that have broken through and transformed society are those with radical roots that try to unite all of our class.

"We can unite workers across the border, and in fact, the high points of the strength of our labor movement are correlated with internationalism. That's what resonates today when some of our unions recognize the importance of organizing immigrant workers."

For Akers Chacon, serving this goal goes beyond writing and conferences. His union, AFT Local 1931, has an immigrant rights committee, which helps find legal resources for people threatened with deportation and participates in a rapid response network to immigration raids and enforcement actions. The local has passed resolutions supporting DACA students in both its districts, as has City College's Academic Senate as well as the SDCCD Board of Trustees.

"I'm very proud of what our union has done," he declares. "The forces that are attacking unions in general are also those that are the most hostile to immigrants. We can't build a strong labor movement without understanding the importance of standing against xenophobia." CC

By David Bacon

Scientific Management in the Classroom?

Academic Taylorism: Factory-Style Teaching for 2018

The terrible ideas just keep coming: a new fully online college, performance-based funding, Guided Pathways, the persistent push for old and new forms of student learning outcomes, and a host of other top-down solutions all intended to make our instruction and our students' academic experience more efficient in one way or another. Of course, these ideas are all united by the fact that they are rooted in the notion that education can be improved by following the business model.

With revenues dwindling and calls for accountability on the rise, more of the same timeworn business model "innovations" are being offered up to us as if they are the cutting edge of pedagogical thinking. As education scholar Frank Donoghue notes:

[T]he business model for higher education devised by the for-profits has tremendous appeal to administrators and lawmakers in an era of steadily declining public funding and tuition raises that are quickly becoming prohibitive . . . As university presidents behave more and more like CEOs (already a cliché), provosts and deans become the primary managers and supervisors, and professors become the managed service workers, interacting on the front line with students/customers (also already a cliché). University chief financial officers will become more powerful, conducting rigorous audits and influencing policies to control overhead and cut costs, just as they do in corporations.

Donoghue calls this "the hostile takeover of the professor's job" and points out some of the language emanating from the for-profits is a harbinger of things to come as professors there are referred to as "practitioner-faculty" or "information delivery personnel." His seminal book, *The Last Professors: The*

America has largely viewed higher education as a constricting labor problem. The dismantling of the American professorate is part and parcel of the casualization of labor in general, a phenomenon that began in earnest in the 1980s and has accelerated since."

Ironically, the Cold War offered higher education a bit of a respite, Donoghue observes, as the United States found it useful to hold up support for arts and sciences disciplines as evidence of our superiority to the soulless Soviet Union. Before that period, however, the hostility amongst the corporate world toward higher education was unabashed with "Unregulated monopolistic capitalists such as Carnegie and Crane" seeing much of higher education as "literally worthless."

More specifically, Donoghue notes that, "America's early twentieth century capitalists were motivated by an ethically based anti-intellectualism that transcended interest in the financial bottom line. Their distrust of the ideal of intellectual inquiry for its own sake led them to insist that if universities were to be preserved at all, they must operate on a different set of principles from those governing the liberal arts." For this prin-

The terrible ideas just keep coming: a new fully online college, performance-based funding, Guided Pathways, the persistent push for old and new forms of student learning outcomes, and a host of other top-down solutions all intended to make our instruction and our students' academic experience more efficient in one way or another. Of course, these ideas are all united by the fact that they are rooted in the notion that education can be improved by following the business model.

Corporate University and the Fate of the Humanities, shows that this development is nothing new. Contrary to those who speak of the state of higher education as "in crisis," Donoghue argues that, "Since the beginning of the Reagan era . . . corporate

principle they looked to Fredrick Winslow Taylor, whose ideas in *Principles of Scientific Management* became the core of the corporate world's gospel of efficiency and launched a nationwide campaign to systematize labor at the turn of the 20th century.



EDER ESCAMILLA

Taylor's entry into American higher education came in 1909 when MIT president, Henry S. Pritchett wrote to him and asked how he could do an "economic study" of education. In response, Taylor personally recommended Morris Llewellyn Cooke, whose *Academic and Industrial Inefficiency* provided the blue print for academic Taylorism. As Donoghue notes: *Cooke's recommendations are very farsighted. They accurately anticipate the business model for today's for profit universities . . .*

. . . Not surprisingly, Cooke calls for the abolition of tenure, since tenure, the ultimate worker autonomy, has no place in Taylor's system. Two of his other findings are far more subtle: Cooke recommends that to maximize efficiency and organizational control, (1) textbooks and lecture notes for all of a university's 'elementary and medium branches' of instruction should be standardized and (2), that those materials plus every professor's lectures and 'pedagogical mechanisms' should be the property of the university.

Cooke's recommended policies would eventually form the lines of battle between faculty who wish to preserve their professional individuality and university administrators eager to control the growing costs of multifaceted institutions of higher learning. Donoghue observes that the power of this kind of academic Taylorism comes from Americans' readiness to accept "an ethic of productivity for its own sake as the irrefutable measure of success of any kind." For corporate America, this has been

Standards-Based Reform as a Reincarnation of Scientific Management

Taylor's obsession with productivity, efficiency, standardized work processes based on scientific study, tying compensation to production based on predetermined worker output, training workers in the best methods, and direction of work by supervisors who know best are clearly manifested in the principles that guide standards-based reform. These principles are operationalized through reliance on whole-school reform models that utilize scripted teacher-proof curricula, teacher training focused on scientifically-determined best practices, teacher and administrator evaluation systems designed to focus on observing effective and efficient standards of behavior by trained supervisors, teacher pay-for-performance and sanctions against teachers, administrators, schools, and students for failure to achieve predetermined standards of performance. . . [Current corporate education reform] strategies as were those proposed and implemented by Taylor, frame the achievement of standards as directly related to the motivation of teachers, students, and administrators and impose threats of sanctions as stimuli to increase the motivation necessary to achieve higher levels of student achievement. In addition, the language comprising the discourse surrounding these accountability measures is derived from the application of business models to schools.

— from "The Impact of Bureaucratic Structure, Scientific Management, and Institutionalism on Standards-Based Educational Reform" by Edward L. Bouie, Jr., Ed.D. in the *Mercer Journal of Educational Leadership*, Vol.1, No. 1, Spring 2012

Taylorism as Worldview

Taylor's book, *The Principles of Scientific Management*, published in 1911, contains the first explicit and formal outline of the assumptions of the thought-world of Technopoly. These include the beliefs that the primary, if not the only, goal of human labor and thought is efficiency; that technical calculation is in all respects superior to human judgement; that in fact human judgement cannot be trusted, because it is plagued by laxity, ambiguity, and unnecessary complexity; that subjectivity is an obstacle to clear thinking; that what cannot be measured either does not exist or is of no value; and that the affairs of citizens is best guided and conducted by experts. In fairness to Taylor (who did not invent the term "scientific management" and used it reluctantly) it should be noted that his system was originally designed to apply only to industrial production. His intention was to make a science of the industrial workplace, which would not only increase profits but also result in higher wages, shorter hours, and better working conditions for laborers. In his system, which included "time and motion studies," the judgement of the individual workers was replaced by laws, rules, and principles of the "science" of their job. This did mean, of course, that workers would have to abandon any traditional rules of thumb they were accustomed to using; in fact, workers were relieved of any responsibility to think at all. The system would do their thinking for them.

— Neil Postman, *Technopoly*

a useful tool in their efforts to externalize the cost of worker training to the state, which it can then chastise regularly for failing to produce workers ready to compete in the marketplace. Hence the battle has been going on for a century.

But as Molly Worthen suggests in a recent *New York Times* piece, "The Misguided Drive to Measure 'Learning Outcomes,'" the impetus to discipline higher education really accelerated during the Reagan '80s as a cover for neoliberal austerity measures:

The push to quantify undergraduate learning is about a century old, but the movement really took off in the 1980s. The assessment boom coincided — not, I think, by accident — with the decision of state legislatures all over the country to reduce spending on public

universities and other social services. That divestment continued, moving more of the cost of higher education onto students. (These students are often graduates of underfunded high schools that can't prepare them for college in the first place.) It was politically convenient to hold universities accountable for all this, rather than to scrutinize neoliberal austerity measures.

Today, Donoghue suggests that those who favor a view of education not totally dominated by a purely instrumental business model are losing badly. He makes a starkly convincing case that professors and other academic workers are being deskilled, outsourced, and systematically devalued. In his estimation, "the corporate reorientation" of American higher

education is nearly complete and in the very near future "it will be the rule, not the exception, to think of a university as a company rather than a social institution."

The liberal arts model of education will not die but live on in a diminished form at a hundred or so prestigious institutions devoted to "educating the children of the elite and privileged for positions of leadership in law, science, medicine, the corporate sector, and, of course, their own exclusive branch of higher education." For the rest of us? "The two-year college, often run for profit, will become the new standard post-secondary education vehicle" without the need for anything other than "credentials directly related to [the customer's] future

occupation." Thus, "The gulf between these elite universities and the institutions that educate everyone else will widen in ways that will complicate our efforts to define both the idea of higher education and the concept of access to higher education."

Worthen echoes some of Donoghue's concerns and observes that the very efficiency model being pushed in the form of "outcomes" to serve college students is actually doing them a great disservice:

If we describe college courses as mainly delivery mechanisms for skills to please a future employer, if we imply that history, literature and linguistics are more or less interchangeable "content" that convey the same mental tools, we oversimplify the intellectual com-

the source of meaning.

For those of us who got jobs in community colleges because we believed that it was a noble calling to bring the assets of "elite" education to the most democratic, diverse, working class institutions in America this is not pleasant news. But, if we hope to be able to stop the most onerous forms of the business model from eviscerating our colleges, we need to do a better job of understanding what we are up against and challenge the economically myopic and sometimes factually inaccurate assertions of it. Put succinctly, we have to be able to name the system and call out snake oil salesmen when we see them.

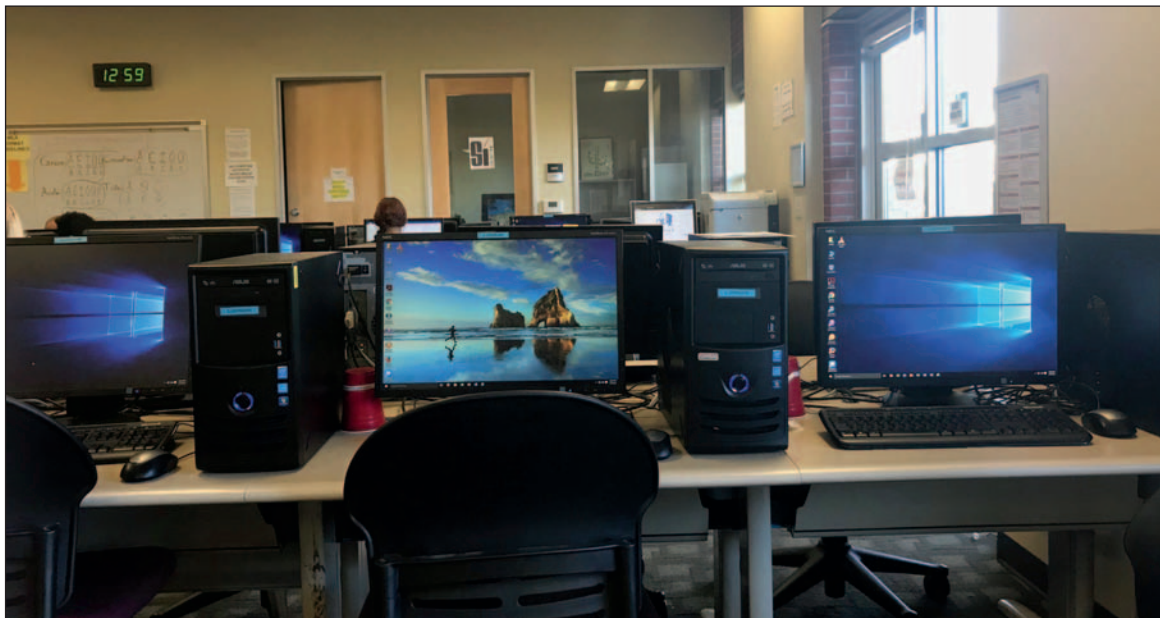
I would also add the more idealistic notion that we need to

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plexity that makes a university education worthwhile in the first place. We end up using the language of the capitalist marketplace and speak to our students as customers rather than fellow thinkers. They deserve better . . . Producing thoughtful, talented graduates is not a matter of focusing on market-ready skills. It's about giving students an opportunity that most of them will never have again in their lives: the chance for serious exploration of complicated intellectual problems, the gift of time in an institution where curiosity and discovery are

hold true to some of the traditional definitions of a liberal arts education and assert that it is not "serving students" to treat them like customers at Walmart. It is not elitist to hold to pedagogical standards, but it is cynically elitist to evoke democracy and devotion to students while gutting the core mission of our colleges in the service of a vast and vulgar instrumentalism that knows the cost of everything and the value of nothing. [CC](#)

By Jim Miller



JIM MILLER

Scientific Management

Scientific management was the first big management idea to reach a mass audience. It swept through corporate America in the early years of the 20th century, and much management thinking since has been either a reaction to it or a development of it.

— from "Scientific Management" in *The Economist* online Feb. 9, 2009



Legislative Report

Bryan Ha, CFT Legislative Advocate

More on Online College, the 2018 Version of the Bullet Train...

“Show me your badges”

By now you know about the \$100 million (one-time) and \$20 million (ongoing) earmarked to establish a fully online community college that would be run by the State Chancellor’s Office. The proposed college would offer “badges.” Badges are digital credentials for completing a designated sequence of courses. These badges would be in lieu of degrees or certificates. The college would be accredited, and students would be eligible to receive financial aid.

There are several concerns associated with this proposal. For example, students can only receive federal financial aid while enrolled in a degree or certificate program. Additionally, accrediting bodies are not designed to accredit a college that offers only badges. The Governor’s proposal requires the online community college to be accredited by an accreditation body recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. Without accreditation, students will be cautious when it comes to enrolling in the college as they face concerns for transferring units and obtaining federal financial aid. The

proposal has no specific deadline for attaining accreditation. It merely calls for an accreditation plan by July 1, 2020.

“Severely lacking demonstrated need”

The proposal states that two million workers lack access to training. However, many community colleges are experiencing declining enrollments and devoting tremendous energy to identify unmet needs. If there was need at the scale that is assumed in the online college proposal, local colleges would be aggressively trying to serve these workers in need of upskilling. That said, the proposal would lead to competition with existing colleges. The new 115th college would compete with colleges already offering similar programs in their local service areas. The new online college could significantly drain resources from the 114 colleges. It is more than likely that many current community college students might simply take classes at the new online college, thereby shifting the student population without reversing declining enrollments.

“Online Education Initiative”

California launched the

Online Education Initiative (OEI) in 2013 to enhance online instruction. OEI makes a common course management system available to all community colleges. The course management system allows faculty to post information about a course (including its syllabus), instructional content (such as video presentations and text-based lectures), assignments, and other material. Students use the system to perform functions such as submitting their assignments, taking tests, and participating in online discussions with classmates. OEI also provides training and resources for faculty interested in developing online courses and online tutoring for students. In addition, OEI runs a course exchange, which creates a more streamlined process for students at participating colleges to take online classes from other participating colleges. Currently six colleges participate in the course exchange. Lastly, OEI provides online education to students currently in the workforce that are targeted by the expensive private online schools.

Instead of spending \$120 million on a duplicative program, the governor and the legislature

should focus instead on investing in proven programs and/or improving OEI. According to the Legislative Analyst Office’s 2018-19 Higher Education Analysis, enrolling in online courses outside of one’s home district is difficult. The LAO report also cautions that campuses are reluctant to participate in Course Exchange and that OEI lacks system-wide coordination of course offerings.

“Viability of instructional delivery”

It is an established fact that most students prefer on-ground/in-person instruction. Hence, assuming online courses are the best mode of instruction for working people and low-income households is questionable. Very few students enroll exclusively in online courses. Most students require far more than access to courses to succeed. There are several factors such as tutoring, counseling, library resources, support services, and connection to the workforce to be able to apply the skills they need to demonstrate competence.

“Show me the money”

In closing, the argument in the online college proposal is

suspect regarding the financial benefits for students. It indicates that people with an Associate’s degree earn more. But the new online college is not offering degrees or certificates, only badges. While many colleges are interested in offering badges to complement degrees/certificates/industry recognized credentials, there is no evidence that badges alone result in higher earnings for students. Therefore, there is no evidence supporting the online college’s ability to meet the stated need. On the other hand, there IS evidence in support of existing community colleges having this benefit.

There is also ample documented evidence that hiring more full-time faculty and classified staff would increase both the retention and success rates of our students. Solutions such as expanding OEI and dedicating resources to hiring more full-time staff would make an immediate impact without waiting years to develop a whole new type of college that does not appear to be capable of delivering the intended outcomes. ☐

Working People’s Day of Action

Labor Stands Tall in the Face of the *Janus* Decision

On Saturday, February 24th, hundreds of workers, along with their families, friends, and allies in the community, gathered in San Diego outside the California Democratic Party’s state convention to stand up for the rights of working Americans in advance of the *Janus* vs AFSCME decision by the Supreme Court, which aims to further rig the system against us.

San Diego City College student, veteran, and AFT Local 1931 intern Nick Robbins struck a similar note about why he thought it was important to be at the Day of Action: “I went to the rally to take a stand against the open aggression towards America’s working class. Standing united with working class friends, neighbors, and co-workers is powerful both symbolically and practically. Rallies like this one remind those in power that we, American students and workers, are united and actively involved in the political process.”

In the face of this assault, workers from both the private and public sector rallied to insist on our right to form strong unions, raise our collective voice, and fight for equitable pay, affordable health care, civil rights, strong communities, and quality public education for all.

The rally was one of ten similar events held across the country in order to send a message that despite *Janus*, American working people and the union movement were not going away. Tina Solarzano Fletcher, an organizer from AFT Local 1931 in San Diego, explained why she showed up to be counted, “I went to stand together with my union sisters and brothers as we continue to fight for working people across the nation.”

As AFT national President Randi Weingarten, who spoke



AFT 1931’s Geoff Johnson Speaks at Rally

at the rally, put it in a message to members nationwide:

This case isn’t about petitioner Mark Janus, it’s about defunding unions. It’s about who will have power in our country—working people or big corporate interests. That’s why it’s being funded by the Koch brothers, the DeVos family, and other wealthy and corporate interests. First, they pledged \$80 million to “defund and defang” unions. Then, the Kochs, after getting the Trump tax cut, upped the ante with

\$400 million to undermine public education and “break” the teachers unions. And now, with the Janus case, they are pushing to prevent workers from having a union at all. Why? Because unions are our vehicle to fight for and win a better life for people, and corporate interests see that as a threat to their power . . . This is a “which side are you on?” moment. Our country must not revert to a time when workers were

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FREE COLLEGE FOR ALL

Let's Tax Billionaires to Help California's College Students!

San Francisco's Proposition W Inspires a College for All Initiative

When Bernie Sanders came to California last fall, one of the candidates he'd endorsed as part of his Our Revolution movement, San Francisco Supervisor Jane Kim, invited him out to San Francisco Community College. Kim and the union at City College, AFT Local 2121, had been critical in putting Proposition W, the free city college initiative, on the citywide ballot in 2016. "Kim reminded Bernie that free tuition was part of his program," recalls Tim Killikelly, Local 2121 president, "and here was a college and a city that had done it."

Proposition W proposed to put a transfer tax on the sale of buildings over \$5 million, which was thought to bring the city about \$5.4 million a year. Although legally barred from

freedom from tuition for their community college education. "Sanders' visit was very exciting," Killikelly recalls. "Afterwards we met with a group who proposed a ballot

a year in revenue, which would go directly to fund free public college for the 2.6 million students at California's public community colleges and universities.

Since 1992, the cost of college has gone up over 300 percent in California. In 2012, tuition surpassed the state's contribution toward core operating funds at the University of California, with students paying nearly \$3 billion in tuition and fees while the state contributed \$2.38 billion. In other words, costs are shifting from the public sector to students.

Funds would come from the reinstatement of the state's estate tax, paid solely by the state's multimillionaires and billionaires. The funding mechanism, California's estate tax, was phased out in 2005 when changes to the federal tax code passed by Congress eliminated the state's ability to piggyback on the federal estate-tax law. Other states took action to restore their state estate taxes in the wake of the federal action. Washington State, for example, kept its estate tax and linked the revenue to an Education Legacy Trust Fund that invests in both public higher education and K-12.

California lost an estimated \$16 billion over the last dozen



Alisa Messer and Jane Kim with Bernie Sanders at CCSF

years as a result of their failure to act in 2005 to retain their state inheritance tax. The College for All act would restore the state estate tax on individuals with assets over \$3.5 million, or \$7 million for couples. The graduated rates would range from 12 percent on estates between \$3.5 million and \$4 million to 22 percent on estates over \$5.49 million.

Only the richest 0.2 percent of Californians, about 4,000 multimillionaires and billionaires, will pay the tax, while 2.6 million students will benefit.

In the Federal tax bill passed in December, wealth exempted by the federal estate tax was doubled until 2026, from \$11 million for a couple to over \$22 million.

Nationally, over 44 million borrowers are holding student debt totaling over \$1.4 trillion, surpassing credit-card debt and auto loans. Average student debt for 2016's graduating class exceeded \$37,000. **CCC**

By David Bacon

"Only the richest 0.2 percent of Californians, about 4,000 multimillionaires and billionaires, will pay the tax, while 2.6 million students will benefit."

earmarking that money, Kim and the local convinced a 10-1 majority on the board to pass a motion of legislative intent, saying that the money should be used to pay for the tuition of all SFCC students. Full time, low-income students would also receive \$500 for books and supplies, and part-timers would get \$200.

Proposition W passed with a 63% majority, making San Francisco one of the first municipalities to guarantee students

initiative that would go even further. Our political director and former president, Alisa Messer, now coordinates our union's participation in collecting signatures to get it on the ballot, and hopefully campaign for it in the November 2018 election."

The formidable task begins with collecting over 585,407 signatures from registered voters to put the College for All Act on the ballot. The act would generate an estimated \$4 billion

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systematically denied even the most fundamental rights—a voice and a better life.

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As we deal with the aftermath of *Janus*, it is important to remember that fifty years ago,

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. went to Memphis to support striking city sanitation workers. By the time of his assassination, King had come to see that it was impossible to fight for civil rights without including economic rights.

King knew that the labor movement was the single most important force that working people had to contest economic injustice. That's why he went to Memphis and why he gave his life struggling for justice for the sanitation workers.

As CFT Community College Council President Jim Mahler noted at the rally, "Historically, unions have been the only significant institutions representing the rights of working people in America. The history of the union movement is the history of working Americans getting together to establish some basic economic and political rights and to have a voice in American society. We forget that at our peril." **CCC**

By Jim Miller



AFT Local 1931 at Working People's Day of Action

Local Action

Location

Glendale Gets Ready for Janus

Two and a half years ago, when the *Friedrichs* case was still before the Supreme Court, Zohara Kaye, the president of the Glendale Faculty Federation, went to a California Federation of Teachers convention. There

explains. “Our new category, called ‘M and Mers,’ were faculty members who volunteered to take around membership forms. And we created a new form, making it harder for people to ‘opt out.’”

That led to the creation of division liaisons -- union members who could provide a friendly face for the union

“The CFT training helped us to see that the way to recruit members was face to face, and it’s the absolute truth,” Bowerman says. “So the first year we went from 65% to 85%. The second year we went from 85% to 95%.”

she heard discussion of the Building Power movement.

Josh Pechthalt, CFT President, summed up its purpose at that year’s CFT convention: “When *Friedrichs* was viewed alongside anti-union legislation nationwide, a clear picture emerged,” he told teachers. “Fifteen states have passed laws limiting collective bargaining and 25 states have introduced right-to-work legislation, or as the labor movement calls it, ‘right-to-work-for-less.’ When Indiana passed right-to-work legislation in 2012, within less than a year, union membership fell by 56,000. In states where union fair share has been eliminated, union members have been bargained by well-financed, right-wing campaigns ... urging them to withdraw from their unions. With this in mind, the CFT developed a campaign called Building Power. . . . focused on engaging and convincing agency fee payers to become full members.”

Kaye returned to Glendale and looked at her union. “We only had 65% of faculty signed up,” remembers the local’s current president, Roger Bowerman. “While most faculty was on board, we only had half the adjuncts.” About 875 faculty members teach at Glendale Community College’s main campus, and its non-credit secondary Garfield location. Of them, about 220 teach full time, while the rest are adjuncts.

Having signed on to the Building Power campaign, the local created a new structure to broaden its base of active members. “Before we just had the executive board, and then rank-and-file teachers,” Bowerman

towards other faculty, who didn’t necessarily know the contract backwards and forwards, but could direct people with problems to the right place to get help. Currently the union has 23 liaisons.

“The CFT training helped us to see that the way to recruit members was face to face, and it’s the absolute truth,” Bowerman says. “So the first year we went from 65% to 85%. The second year we went from 85% to 95%. Last year of the 80 new people, only three didn’t join. Plus we got all our old members to re-up on the new blue membership forms, which now list information that helps us track everyone.

“Now that our membership base is much better, we decided we needed to take the next step in getting stronger - being more present in our community. We know that even though the Supreme Court tied on *Friedrichs*, we now have the *Janus* case coming at us. So we’re getting ready for the Koch offensive. And we understand that half our union members came to the union not just for better wages and conditions, but from their sense of social justice.”

In one of their first projects, the local is contacting area schools in Glendale and Burbank and implementing a “first book” program to provide books to children that reflect the characters and themes of their communities. The two cities have very diverse populations, including Armenians, Latinos, Koreans and Filipinos. “In each book we’re going to include a notice saying, ‘brought to you by the Glendale Faculty Union’ and we’re going to have our members who do community work wear t-shirts

saying the same thing in all four languages on one side, and in English on the other,” Bowerman says. “Our members are already doing things all over the community, and we want people to know that they belong to our union.”

“The CFT leadership is gearing up for this new political landscape,” Pechthalt told CFT members. “It won’t be easy. The loss of agency fee will have serious consequences for all public-sector unions. Declining revenue will require soul searching and making very difficult decisions if we want to come out of this crisis able to represent our members and advocate for public education. . . . If we are going to be successful in building something that has the power to change the direction of this country, we can’t continue to be siloed narrowly into our areas of concern.”

That defines the direction in which the Glendale union is headed. ☐

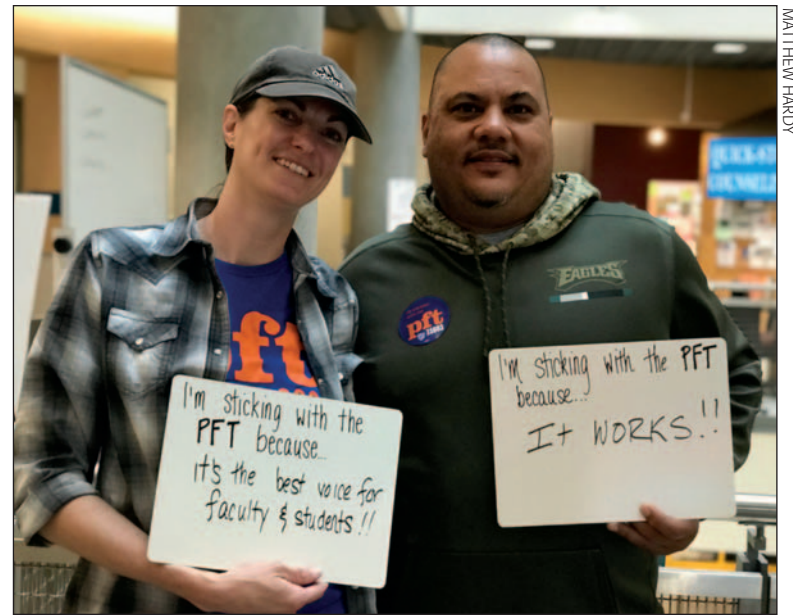
By David Bacon

Location

Peralta Union Helps Defeat Oakland Stadium Boondoggle

In December, the proposal to build a new stadium for the Oakland A’s was dealt a crushing blow when the Board of Trustees of the Peralta Community College District told Chancellor Jewel Laguerre to break off talks about selling district land to the team. The A’s took it hard, saying, “We are shocked by Peralta’s decision to not move forward. All we wanted to do was enter into a conversation about how to make this work for all of Oakland, Laney, and the Peralta Community College District.”

For the teachers at Laney College, however, and for residents of the Chinatown community that borders that land, the decision was a victory. “Our primary concern was that this new stadium would be directly across the street from Laney College, and that this use of the land was not in line with the mission of the college,” explains Jennifer Shanoski, president of the Peralta Federation of Teachers. “There were clear drawbacks in terms of problems with noise, light, drunken behavior, and others. There was no clear answer about how these problems would be ameliorated,



MATTHEW HARDY

Peralta Federation of Teachers members Jennifer Shanoski and Vince Bordonon

or about how the money generated would translate into direct benefits for the faculty and students.”

The stadium proposal, first made several years ago, would have acquired a 15-acre parcel of district land, and transform it into a ballpark village, complete with housing, retail and entertainment. The A’s have been unhappy with the aging Oakland Coliseum two miles south, where they’ve played since it was built in 1968. The two other teams that have used it, the Oakland Raiders football team, and the Golden State Warriors basketball team, are moving to Las Vegas and San Francisco respectively.

Opposition to the proposal was organized by Stay the Right Way, a coalition of community groups that has advocated for the improvement of the Coliseum site instead of construction of a new venue. One of the leading organizations in that coalition was the Asian Pacific Environmental Network, which warned that a new stadium would lead to land speculation and higher rents, driving low-income Asian American residents and businesses out of the community surrounding the site.

“We were very concerned about the impact on our neighbors in Chinatown,” Shanoski says, “and the very likely possibility that this would accelerate gentrification, which is already a huge problem in Oakland. Our first step was to gather information from everyone, including the A’s. Then an ad hoc group of faculty developed a program to educate our members about what we found.”

The union encouraged people to write position papers outlining what they felt and held discussions on each of the Peralta district’s four campuses that included faculty, students, community members and team representatives. Afterwards it conducted a survey and found that a consensus opposed the project.

“Once it was clear what our members felt, we developed a strategy to convince our Board of Trustees to turn it down,” Shanoski says. “We worked with the Service Employees local that represents classified employees in the district, and with the Alameda Labor Council. We went to interminable and painful board meetings, lobbied board members, and spoke with the media. It was very clear that all the constituency groups were opposed, and in the end the board stopped it.”

“I believe this fight has really strengthened our relationships with many community organizations, and with progressive members of our own union,” Shanoski says. “People can see where the PFT stands. Our role in the actions around the stadium have made the union more integrated into the lives of our faculty, along with our work on equity for part timers, and opposition to administration spending and other internal budget issues. Our union is the primary opposition to district management and is the main challenge to the district’s narrative.” ☐

By David Bacon