



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

# Perspective



Volume 46, Number 3 May 2015



## Member profile: Shannon Lienhart

Mathematician, teacher, and social justice unionist  
Shannon Lienhart helps transform the political landscape  
at Palomar College and in North County San Diego.

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## Make it fair: the campaign for commercial property tax reform

As the expiration of Proposition 30 approaches, a movement to push for new revenue to fund California's future educational needs is emerging.

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## A union-community partnership gets children to read

When the San Jose/Evergreen Faculty Association joins hands with the community, children's literacy wins.

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# Adjunct Action Day

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## EDITORIAL



## President's Column

Jim Mahler, CFT Community College Council President

# It's time to build on the legacy of Proposition 30 with smart tax reform

## The urgent need for Prop. 13 reform

**S**adly, despite the historic victory that Proposition 30 represented in California, the statewide and national trend toward more income inequality has continued unabated and now the end of the austerity hiatus is in sight unless we act to address it. Indeed while many of our state leaders seem happy to declare victory and do little else to address the need for more revenue to fund our state's educational infrastructure as well as social services to help soften the hard edges of California's shamefully high poverty rate, dire problems await us if we fail to act now to invest in the future.

**The simple truth is that as hard as it is to do politically, the fight for progressive tax reform is at the heart of the central struggle of our time: the effort to address income inequality by more fairly taxing the rich and corporations in order to reallocate those resources for the greater public good.**

But rather than addressing that need, many continue to prefer attacking educational institutions from K-12 to college for not being efficient enough or for perhaps not even being necessary as currently constituted. Why invest more in education, they say, when we can transform the system to do less with more and reduce or simply eliminate things like costly professors and their cumbersome benefits and pensions? Thus, there is a resistance in many quarters to even acknowledge the need to restore the cuts that we have suffered over the last several decades before Proposition 30.

Indeed the historic trend toward disinvestment in the public sector and public education in general continues, and it is driven by groups like the Club for Growth, the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), the State Policy Network, and the Franklin Institute. This interlocking web of business interests,

corporate-funded think tanks, lobbying arms, and public relations outfits is not just virulently anti-union but deeply anti-public investment as well. The goal of this movement on the right and in a growing segment of the Democratic Party is to bust unions, avoid increasing taxes on the rich and corporations, and help push for the privatization of public services and education.

The bottom line is that this movement wants to externalize the cost of doing business onto the public while using publicly funded institutions like schools and colleges to help facilitate private gain. Hence we are living, like it or not, in what AFT national president Randi Weingarten called at a recent higher education conference, "a new gilded age" where the rich and corporate interests are seeking to eliminate unions and starve the beast that is big government in order to preserve the economic and political power they have gained during the last

decade of economic crises and austerity.

Therefore we need to embrace Weingarten's call for seeking community alliances with those who value public education and see the need not to privatize the commons but to reinvest in the future of our country. The coalition that drove Proposition 30 is a good example of the kind of alliances we require, as is the emerging movement to take on the harmful legacy of Proposition 13.

The simple truth is that as hard as it is to do politically, the fight for progressive tax reform is at the heart of the central struggle of our time: the effort to address income inequality by more fairly taxing the rich and corporations in order to reallocate those resources for the greater public good. As much as the anti-tax zealots don't like to hear it, taxes are the price we pay for a civilized state and society.

Thus just as we did with the push for the Millionaire's Tax, CFT must lead the way in calling for an even bolder measure,

the reform of Proposition 13. As CFT President Joshua Pechthalt pointed out in his State of the Union address, "Big commercial interests have figured out how to avoid changing legal ownership and thereby not paying property taxes based on fair market value. What used to be a 50-50 split between residential and commercial property tax revenues has shifted to residential property owners shouldering 70% of all property taxes. Even smaller, newer businesses suffer while companies like Disneyland are essentially paying property taxes based on mid 1970s property values."

And addressing this inequity would bring in \$9 billion of ongoing revenue which would allow us not just to stop new cuts from happening but to begin to restore what we have lost over the last several decades in educational institutions across the state.

That is something worth fighting for.

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

June 22-26	<b>Union Summer School, Kellogg West Conference Center, Pomona</b>
July 1	<b>Deadline for continuing college students to apply for Raoul Teilhet Scholarships</b>
July 12-14	<b>AFT TEACH Conference, Marriott Wardman Park, Washington, D.C.</b>
September 25	<b>Division Councils, Sheraton Grand, Sacramento</b>
September 26	<b>Committees and State Council, Sheraton Grand, Sacramento</b>

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*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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## MEMBER PROFILE

### Shannon Lienhart

# A mathematician, a teacher and a social justice unionist

**S**hannon Lienhart became a mathematician because she was looking for truth. "I was raised an atheist, so I always wanted to find an absolute truth," she laughs. "I thought I could find that in mathematics. But I didn't, and I'm still dealing with that."

Instead of absolute truth, she found teaching. "I did find my passion after all, and it still is. In fact, when I discovered how much I loved it, I became addicted to it."

And then, after teaching, she found social justice and the union.

That was not such a far cry from the values of her family. In fact, it was very much aligned with what she saw in her parents. They both came from South Dakota, her father from a farming family with Amish roots. "We'd get these weird things for Christmas in the mail, made of corn leaves woven together," she recalls. But despite the Amish tradition of pacifism her father went into the Air Force, which led to Lienhart growing up in San Diego.

A life career as a pilot in the service didn't make him pro-war, though. Both her father and mother opposed the war in Vietnam and her mother and grandmother marched against it. "After they saw the news on television of the beginning of the first Gulf War, I later saw them weeping."

#### Daughter of a social worker

Lienhart's mother was a social worker. Working in the San Diego County welfare department, she would grow angry at media stereotypes about "welfare fraud." "She knew that wasn't the reality for people who depended on aid to families," Lienhart says. "She had big problems with the way then-Governor Ronald Reagan talked about families that needed this money. I think today I'm actually carrying on their passion for social justice issues, especially hers."

Lienhart went to San Diego State University for both her bachelor's and master's degrees, which is where she also discovered teaching. And then, right out of graduate school, she got a permanent faculty job at Palomar College, where she's taught for the past 25 years. "People today have to put in so many years before they can find a permanent position that I almost feel ashamed of how fast and easy it was for me," she explains. "But it was a different world in 1991.



**Shannon Lienhart**

Eighty percent of our classes were taught by full-time faculty, and most people I knew were able to get a permanent teaching job right away at a community college."

Today at Palomar only 45% of classes are taught by full-timers. "In large part, it was when I realized this that I began to get interested in change at the college. I was so angry about this," she remembers. That was when the union organizing effort at Palomar began, in 2000. That effort took four years before it resulted in a union contract, in part because the district hired Cheryl Amador as the college president.

Amador later achieved notoriety as the right hand of Barbara Beno, president of the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC). She hired a union-busting lawyer, Richard Currier.

"They began coming after us, and I was in the middle of the storm," Lienhart charges. "We were very new to all this, and we didn't have a single veteran union activist among us. Within a week I had three letters from Human Relations, saying letters of reprimand would be put in my file. These days I'd just laugh at the obvious intimidation, but then it was very frightening, not just to me, but to other faculty as well. I remember one faculty lunch out on the lawn when no one would speak to me, and I went off to eat by myself. They convinced lots of people that I was an awful person because I was trying to organize."

Lienhart then read "Confessions of a Union Buster" by Marty Levitt, which helped her understand the union-buster's strategy. "I believed in what I was doing, and somehow came out on the other side and weathered the storm. I learned you have to stand up for what you believe. And now I've been reelected union president by my fellow faculty members several times."

Another tactic was to try to divide the faculty, and the district insisted that full-time and part-time instructors belong to the same bargaining unit, thinking that different interests would tear the fledgling union apart. Instead, the union organized both, based on a commitment to turning part-time into full-time jobs, and make part-time positions better ones. While the number of part-time positions is still very high, the union did win health care and some office hours for part-timers. Nevertheless, "I'm really unhappy that we haven't made more progress," Lienhart says.

Perhaps the biggest change, however, is that the union is now an accepted part of the college community, supported by the vast majority of the faculty. The union's influence is due to its political program.

#### Transforming North County

"After we got our contract in 2004 we started supporting Democratic candidates for our board," Lienhart explains. "But we found that good Democrats, who said they'd support us when they were running, would turn around and listen more to the administrators than to us once they were elected. In 2012 we changed strategy, and looked for union members who could run. We won a majority that year, and everything changed."

Today the board president is the secretary of the local chapter of the California Faculty Association, the union at the state university system. The union developed its own training for incoming board members after Lienhart and her co-president Christina Moore infiltrated a training put on by the Community College League of California. There they heard Beno and others tell trustees not to talk with the people who elected them. "Our administrators would call us children in private meetings with trustees,



**"Being a teacher, I'm very athletic. I'm a political football, a punching bag, and I jump hurdles."**

and we discovered one reason why. Now our lawyer explains the law to our trustees, and makes sure they can tell the difference between what the CEO says and the truth."

Now Lienhart, Moore, and the local are carrying this approach to elections into other areas of northern San Diego County, which has a reputation

Taskforce meets in the union office. Forty percent of Palomar College's students are Latino, and the union has recruited student interns to work on political campaigns from the college chapter of MEChA, the Chicano student organization.

In the meantime, the union is developing a campaign against corporate influence over higher

**"We get it," Lienhart says. "We've been talking inside a bubble of people like ourselves. But lots of Democrats aren't on our side on education, and we have to get our message outside that bubble."**

as a bastion of conservatism. They've organized the North County Labor Alliance, in cooperation with the San Diego Central Labor Council, where Lienhart sits on the board. The Alliance has drawn in teachers, communications workers, supermarket unions and the building trades, and has developed partnerships with other community organizations, which have agreed to support each other in local electoral battles.

One of the first is likely to be Oceanside, the county's second largest city. "Our labor council is looking at a minimum wage ordinance for Oceanside, and the council election comes next year. We need to win one city to begin to change things here, and that's where we have the best chance," she explains.

The union has also become a resource for the immigrant rights movement, which is especially under fire in the county. The North County Immigration

education. Teachers involved in it are planning to interview educator Diane Ravich at a conference in Chicago, for a movie they're making called *Think Inc - Public Education: Democracy's Last Stand*.

Teachers have also set up a speakers bureau. "We get it," Lienhart says. "We've been talking inside a bubble of people like ourselves. But lots of Democrats aren't on our side on education, and we have to get our message outside that bubble." They're speaking at the local Political Economy Days, an education project started by the union, and at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship. "We can't win when the Democratic Party and labor are fighting with each other. We have to find a way to get everyone into the same room and have a conversation. If we can band together, we can win."

By David Bacon

## Assemblyman Phil Ting's AB 1397 tackles the problems with ACCJC

# Next steps in holding ACCJC accountable

**D**espite the recent ruling that the ACCJC acted illegally in its 2013 decision to disaccredit City College of San Francisco, the fight for fair accreditation in California community colleges is not over. Now is the time for others to hold the ACCJC accountable. Several state legislators have stepped up with three bills to enhance oversight of the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC). Described as an agency "gone wild" by former CFT president Marty Hittelman, the ACCJC has sanctioned community colleges at an alarmingly higher rate than its counterparts in all other regions. When it decided to terminate City College of SF's accreditation without adequate justification and due process, this opened the door to further scrutiny around its conflicts of interest and the illegal and unfair actions committed by the ACCJC.

### Fair Accreditation Act

CFT and AFT 2121 first documented the travesties of this commission in an April 2013 complaint to the U.S. Department of Education. Since then, the groundswell of evidence has paved the way for reform efforts.

CFT has been working closely with Assemblymember Phil Ting on AB 1397, the 2015 Fair Accreditation Act, a broad accreditation reform bill. It stipulates that at least a reasonable proportion of visiting teams must be academics, and that "relatives" cannot be involved

planning processes to SLO documentation, after the ACCJC declared Show Cause in July 2012. Lastly, under Ting's legislation, the ACCJC will no longer be able to stack the appeals panel with its past commissioners and affiliates, as it did in City College's case.

Assemblymember Ting has also sponsored AB 1385 which would safeguard community colleges by giving them the authority to prevent the ACCJC from collecting special assessments to pay for its legal fees.

Assemblymember David Chiu introduced AB 404 in

**CFT has been working closely with Assembly member Phil Ting on AB 1397, the 2015 Fair Accreditation Act, a broad accreditation reform bill. It stipulates that at least a reasonable proportion of visiting teams must be academics, and that 'relatives' cannot be involved in accrediting decisions to avoid conflicts of interest. It requires greater transparency in the ACCJC's meetings, decision-making processes, and records.**

in accrediting decisions to avoid conflicts of interest. It requires greater transparency in the ACCJC's meetings, decision-making processes, and records. The bill ensures due process for colleges being evaluated and adequate time to come into compliance. The State Auditor noted in its June 2014 report that "colleges are treated inconsistently" by the ACCJC. The commission had given fifteen colleges two years to come into compliance, and another six colleges up to five years. City College had less than nine months to make dramatic changes, from governance and

February to coordinate the roles of the federal and state agencies in oversight of this regional accreditor. ACCJC is a private entity which until recently enjoyed monopoly status in accrediting two-year and community colleges in California. Colleges under sanction are not afforded an opportunity to question the validity of the ACCJC's decisions. The ACCJC has created a climate of fear in the California community colleges. AB 404 would let colleges report confidentially on the impacts and behavior of the accreditor to the CCC's Board of Governors, who would

report these findings to the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI). This bill recently passed out of the Assembly Higher Education Committee.

In an op-ed published by the *San Francisco Examiner*, Chiu described the role of the colleges in this process: "College administrators, trustees, faculty, staff, students, and others would be able to communicate how they perceive a federally-recognized accreditor is complying with federal law in the performance of its duties."

AFT 2121 President Tim Killikelly is optimistic that these bills will pave the way to reforming accreditation of our community colleges: "The time has come for the ACCJC to be held accountable for its actions. These pieces of legislation will go a long way towards reforming our accreditation system in California."

### Calls for more reform

On the legal front, Judge Curtis Karnow ruled in January that when the commission decided to yank City College's accreditation in 2013 and added ten areas of noncompliance that were never mentioned before, that they had engaged in "significant unlawful practices." Judge Karnow ordered a final injunction to remedy the ACCJC's violation of due process rights. The commission had to produce a detailed report in reconsidering its decision to terminate CCSF, which it sent to the college in early April. The commission's stance has been staunch denial of any wrongdoing, despite a host of improper and illegal actions documented by Judge Karnow, the U.S. Department of Education, the California State Auditor, the CFT and AFT 2121.

On other fronts, AFT 2121 has engaged in battles with an administration installed after the onset of the accreditation crisis. In January, credit classes at City College's campus serving a low-income Tenderloin community in San Francisco were abruptly relocated and the start of noncredit classes were delayed, ostensibly for reasons of seismic safety. Yet the college community was not consulted in the months



Assemblyman Phil Ting with CCSF faculty.

leading up to this decision. City College faculty have engaged city officials and the college community in efforts to respect the voices and needs of the most vulnerable students. The union ensured that faculty rights around workload were respected amidst the shuffle of moved classes. AFT 2121 has also played a key role, along with the Academic Senate, in forestalling, for the time being, a misguided reorganization of departments.

Community College faculty have remained committed to

meeting students' educational needs. While ACCJC pays lip service to educational quality, it has sanctioned colleges for primarily non-academic reasons. Now a rising tide of supporters are clamoring for accreditation reform system for the state's community colleges, in continuing the primary work of educating and supporting students. **ccc**

By Li Miao Lovett, AFT 2121



## TAX REFORM

**Closing corporate tax loopholes can fund the future**

# The fight for progressive tax reform continues: it's time to make it fair

**A**s we continue to push for equity for our part-time faculty and fair pay and good benefits for everyone we represent, we are faced with the fact that after what is likely to be a decent year for the budget this time around, dark clouds loom. Indeed, just as the money from Proposition 30 has begun to right California's financial ship, we know that the sales taxes from that measure are set to expire and, right behind them, the tax increases on top earners.

The fact is, the Governor insisted that the tax increases in Proposition 30 be temporary hoping that the economy would pick up enough to make continuing this revenue stream unnecessary. Unfortunately, his hope has not come to pass and the expiration of Proposition 30, if allowed to happen, will hit education in California hard.

Thus, if we don't want to go back to the bad old days of budget cuts, hiring freezes, and general austerity from K-12 to the UC and CSU systems, we need to find a way to fill the hole in the budget that the expiration of Proposition 30 will create. Of course, the most logical course of action would be to extend or make permanent Proposition 30's taxes on the rich and stop budgetary bleeding before it starts. But, truth be told, even this is not enough.

### CFT leads the way

If we ever want to get to a place where we are not just preventing cuts but actually restoring California's education system to what it was when it

was the envy of the country, something bolder is needed. And that means taking a look at the harmful legacy of Proposition 13. As CFT President Josh Pechthalt noted in this year's State of the Union address, "Prop. 13 was part of a national anti-tax effort led by groups like the Howard Jarvis Tax reform group . . . Since 1979, California has lost tens of billions of dollars in uncollected property tax dollars that should have gone to public schools and vital social services."

Indeed, when Proposition 13 was first approved by voters in 1978 it was sold as a protection for single-family homeowners. But what voters were not told is that Prop. 13 contained giant loopholes that allow big corporations and wealthy commercial property owners to avoid paying their fair share of local property taxes. This gives tax avoiders an unfair advantage over smaller, competing businesses that are paying their share and deprives our communities of much-needed revenue. As a result, California has made deep cuts to public safety, fallen behind in student

funding, and been forced to close parks and libraries.

It's time to close the loopholes that allow some commercial property owners to avoid paying their fair share and to reinvest these lost funds in California's future. This would

makers. It deepens bonds with our students, parents and community members . . . Taking on Prop. 13 is an issue of economic justice as well as generating revenue to fund the kind of public education and services all Californians

\$803 million to San Diego County in 2019...this is a game-changer. Imagine a future when people won't have to choose between feeding their families and a college education for their children. This is the time...this is the fight! Alliance San Diego is excited to work with the coalition of faith groups, labor, and community organizations across the state, as well as our local partners, on reform that will provide revenue improve the quality of life for all residents for generations to come!

**Taking on Prop. 13 is an issue of economic justice as well as generating revenue to fund the kind of public education and services all Californians deserve.**

result in \$9 billion of additional revenue each year that could be invested in schools, colleges, roads, health care, public safety, small business relief, and more. This solution adds tough accountability provisions to ensure funds are spent appropriately, and it does not touch residential properties covered by Prop. 13. In fact, it protects them.

If we close the loopholes and make it fair, it will bring in real long-term sustainable revenue to help make California and its schools great again. As Pechthalt put it:

*Fighting for progressive tax reform is exactly the kind of struggle we need to be a part of. Not only do we have a real need for additional funding, but it allows us to raise issues of income distribution and inequality, the vital role of government and the obligations that we have to support our children and the next generation of decision*

*deserve . . . [W]e have formed an impressive labor-community coalition and the CFT sits on the executive committee with California Calls, SEIU, CTA, ACCE and the Advancement Project.*

### Community-labor alliances get the goods

Chris Wilson, the Associate Director of Alliance San Diego, a local affiliate of California Calls, echoes Pechthalt's enthusiasm for the cause of progressive tax reform and the widespread benefits it could bring both at the statewide and local levels:

*Reforming Prop. 13 to close corporate loopholes will provide billions in revenue for our state. This will help us provide long-term stability in funding for education, public safety, and services vital to improving the living conditions for all Californians. With this reform we can bring an estimated*



Certainly there will be powerful forces against us but the early polling shows that this is a fight we can win and one that could bring together a dynamic new labor-community alliance aimed at transforming the future of California for the better. 

*By Jim Miller, AFT 1931*

# LEGISLATION



## Legislative Update

Jim Mahler, CFT Legislative Committee Chair

# Report from Sacramento

**A**pril is the month when the initial round of Capitol hearings kick into full swing as all bills get vetted through their first policy committee. I am pleased to report that, as of this writing, all CFT sponsored bills are still alive!

### **AB 1010 (Medina)**

The first of our bills, **AB 1010 (Medina)**, mandates a robust part-time job security system that would apply to all districts that currently do not have these protections in their collective bargaining agreements. It creates minimum standards for part-time faculty job security at California's Community Colleges.

AB 1010 provides modest guidelines that form a basis for part-time faculty to establish job security with consistency for both students and instructors and accountability ensuring that part-time faculty retained under this measure are giving the highest level of instruction and have a demonstrated commitment to student success.

*AB 1010 was heard in the Assembly Higher Education Committee on April 21<sup>st</sup>.*

### **AB 1066 (Gonzalez)**

**AB 1066 (Gonzalez)** prevents schools from misusing the ability to hire temporary classified employees indefinitely rather than utilizing permanent classified employees for the same positions.

Over 30 years ago, the legislature decreed that the non-academic employees of K-12 and community college districts must be included in the classified service. However, many workers in the state

have been misclassified as "temporary" employees, preventing them from earning permanent status, due process rights, fixed and delineated work duties, vacation days, sick time, holidays and other benefits. AB 1066 prevents such wrongful exclusions.

*AB 1066 was heard on April 8<sup>th</sup> in the Public Employees, Retirement, and Social Security (PERSS) Committee where it passed 6-0. It now moves on to be heard in the Assembly Higher Education Committee on April 28<sup>th</sup>.*

### **AB 1385 (Ting)**

**AB 1385 (Ting)** requires the accreditor to seek approval of its member institutions prior to assessing its member institutions for the agency's legal costs. The bill stipulates that the ACCJC's legal costs cannot be reimbursed



**AFT 1931's Zulema Diaz protests for part-time equity.**

community colleges, is forced to pay ACCJC's legal bills. Without checks and balances in place, the state will continue to be forced to pay legal expenses incurred as colleges defend

current accreditor (ACCJC) has employed a deeply flawed process and has violated state law and federal regulations.

In response to these findings, AB 1397 proposes reasonable reforms to the community college accreditation process by ensuring that fairness, objectivity, and transparency guide the process of accreditation.

*AB 1397 was heard on April 28<sup>th</sup> where it passed 7-2.*

### **SB 373 (Pan)**

**SB 373 (Pan)** attempts to successfully address the more than quarter of a century goal of the legislature to assure that at a minimum, 75% of community college classes are taught by full-time faculty.

One of the goals of AB 1725 (Vasconcellos), which was signed

the percentage of instruction delivered by full-time faculty has actually decreased. This is largely due to the lack of an effective mechanism within AB 1725 to mandate an increase in the percentage of courses taught by full-time faculty. The purpose of SB 373 is to correct this shortcoming in the original legislation by providing a method by which the stated goal of AB 1725 can be attained.

The bill limits the absolute number of part-time faculty a community college district may hire to no more than the total equivalent number of part-time faculty currently employed during the 2014-15 fiscal year. This proposal also contains a prohibition against newly hired tenure-track faculty from performing any type of overload assignments during their four-

### **AB 1010 (Medina), mandates a robust part-time job security system that would apply to all districts that currently do not have these protections in their collective bargaining agreements**

unless the colleges have approved the assessments by a majority vote of its institutions.

Despite the ACCJC violating state and federal law and regulations, the state, through its

themselves against sanctions derived through an unfair accreditation review process that will continue to redirect crucial education funding away from the classroom and into the courtroom.

*AB 1385 was heard on April 28<sup>th</sup> where it passed 6-2 in the Assembly Higher Education Committee.*

### **AB 1397 (Ting)**

**AB 1397 (Ting)** promotes fairness, objectivity, and transparency in the community college accreditation process.

Accreditation for California's community colleges currently lacks safeguards to meet basic legal standards. Governmental agencies, including the United States Department of Education, the California Bureau of State Audits, and a California Superior Court have found that the

into law in September, 1988, was to increase the number of full-time community college faculty with the ultimate goal of ensuring 75% of all instruction be delivered by full-time faculty.

Sadly, over the past twenty-seven years during which this legislation has been in effect,

year probationary period until they become tenured regular employees.

*SB 373 was heard on April 8<sup>th</sup> in the Senate Education Committee where it passed 5-2 over the objections of the committee chair. It now moves on to be heard in the Senate Appropriations Committee.*



**AFT 2121 President Tim Killikelly spreading the word about accreditation reform.**

## PART-TIME EQUITY

**Rolling rallies raise awareness of adjunct issues**

# National Adjunct Action Day: what we did and where we are going

With an anonymous Facebook post on October 1, 2014 calling for a national strike on February 25, 2015 the seeds of the National Adjunct Walkout Day were planted. In earlier articles I have discussed in more detail the rationale behind this event, but the need for such an event was clear and pressing.

While there were a number of actions across the state, we at CFT need to do a better job of coordinating these types of events with other locals and other higher education unions. Along with some big actions sponsored by my local in San Diego, there were several other events across the state. At UC Santa Cruz, adjuncts held a rally and march behind a puppet of "Saint Precaria." In San Francisco, adjuncts at the San Francisco Art Institute held a walkout and rally at noon. At UC San Diego, there was a march, rally, and teach-in and there were also events at Berkeley.

At our local here in San Diego, we decided that a strike was the wrong way to go. There were many reasons for this decision, but ultimately many adjuncts felt that a strike would be less effective than a day of action, and that a day of action would better serve our goal of trying to educate the larger community about the difficulties confronting part-timers.

Independently of this, the Community College Council,

at the end of the summer in 2014 and was a major focus for our Campus Equity Week events during the last week of October. Since we were in the middle of this campaign we decided to use the National Adjunct Walkout Day (since rebranded as National Adjunct Action Day) to increase our pressure on the Governor.

Because we are a large multi-school, multi-district union that is fairly spread out across the greater San Diego area, we decided to do a series of "rolling rallies." This way the participants could speak at multiple sites and reach out to a variety of different constituencies. So, we held rallies at three of our campuses. The rallies featured full-timers, part-timers, students, labor activists, and administrators speaking out about adjunct issues. We also invited Joe Berry to speak. Berry is a long-time adjunct activist and author of *Reclaiming the Ivory Tower: Organizing Adjuncts to Change Higher Education*. Each rally then ended with a call to action urging people in attendance to send a letter to the Governor



KELLY MAYHEW PHOTO

AFT interns Orlando Garcia and Mazyar Alamdari collect letters to Governor Brown at San Diego City College.

Palomar College (AFT 6161) and Southwestern College (Represented by the CTA) to craft a coordinated campaign to send a message to the public at large and the governor specifically. As a result we were collectively able to generate over 1500 letters to Governor Brown from faculty, staff, administrators, students, and members of the community.

We also worked closely with Fred Glass, CFT Communications Director, to craft a message to the media and to try and get media to turn out for our rallies. In this effort we were also successful, generating positive reports in the *San Diego Union-Tribune* (our local daily fish wrap), the *San Diego Reader*, and other local and campus media.

One of the more surprising and inspiring aspects of the day from my perspective was seeing how other campus groups responded to our actions on that day. We only planned rallies at three of the six campuses we represent. This was mainly because our planners only had so much

time and energy so we focused on our three largest campuses. Seeing what was going on, other campus groups came together to also honor adjuncts. The Academic Senate at Miramar College chose to put on an "Adjunct Appreciation Day" pizza party in the late afternoon/early evening. At our continuing education location in Mid-City the adjuncts and full-timers came together to plan their own rally with songs and banners. As this illustrates, our planning had a kind of "multiplier effect" incentivizing other groups who didn't want to be left out.

Another surprising and inspiring aspect of the event was seeing the level of student engagement. Many of my colleagues and I spoke directly to our students about these issues, and they were almost uniformly enthusiastic about them, and could easily grasp the injustices involved. Taking note of this, our local has reached out to student leaders on campus in order to create a multi-district student centered group to work on issues of

educational justice.

This work is still in its early stages, but the initial responses from students and student groups have been overwhelmingly positive with students thanking us directly for putting together such a group. Needless to say, we are quite excited about the possibilities this group holds for future actions. Perhaps we will even be working with and cultivating some of the future leaders of the labor movement!

Looking further into the future, we would like to make the last Wednesday in February an annual event to acknowledge the hard work of adjuncts and to remind the campus community and the public about the many ways our labor is taken advantage of, and the ways that we are exploited by the current systems in place in higher education. We hope to craft an even more coordinated, statewide message when we do this event next year. **ccc**

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under the leadership of Jim Mahler and in consultation with the Part-Time Faculty Committee, had already initiated a lobbying campaign to urge the Governor to allocate \$30 million for adjunct office hours, \$50 million for adjunct pay equity and \$100 million for the conversion of part-time to full-time positions. This lobbying campaign began

asking for more resources for adjunct issues.

Furthermore, because we are adjuncts and many of us teach on multiple campuses in multiple districts, we were also able to reach out to other union brothers and sisters so as to send a coordinated message across the San Diego region. We worked closely with representatives from

By Ian Duckles, AFT 1931

# Local Action

## San Luis Obispo

### Non-credit ESL teachers come into the union at Cuesta College

Non-credit teachers of English as a Second Language (ESL) at Cuesta College are in for a big raise. The twelve instructors teach non-credit ESL courses in the college's division of community programs and continuing education.

"Historically, they have been separated from the rest of Cuesta College faculty," says Debra Stakes, president of the Cuesta College Federation of Teachers, AFT Local 4909. The non-credit ESL teachers have been paid at a much lower pay scale. Instead of a system of peer evaluation, they've been evaluated by the director of community programs, who has no disciplinary expertise. And they've had no protection, since they haven't been covered by Local 4909's union contract.

The non-credit teachers have a 5-step salary schedule, and they all start at step one, regardless of experience. While the steps go up from there, they top out well below the rate for faculty teaching for-credit courses with equivalent knowledge and seniority. Several of the teachers have been teaching for over 10 years.

**"This is our community," he emphasizes. "By being active in it, we're going beyond wages and working conditions. We're taking responsibility for helping to organize so that our children don't fall and become statistics."**

"Our solution," explains Stakes, "is to take these instructors into the union and under the bargaining agreement." She credits a conversation held at a meeting of the Community College Council with coming up with the idea, and then worked closely with Madeleine Madeiros, the Division Chair for Student Support and for ESL.

Two months ago the union held discussions with two thirds of the non-credit teachers, and with district administrators. As a result a memorandum of understanding has been signed, and will go into effect when the Public Employees Relations Board agrees with the unit change.

In the future there will still be two programs - credit and

non-credit - but all ESL teachers will work in one division, and all will be covered by the contract. Non-credit teachers will keep their initial hire date and accumulated sick days. Their salary will increase, in some cases as much as 40%. And they will now be evaluated by two peer evaluators.

"These are quality instructors," Stakes emphasizes. "The non-credit program will be strengthened and aligned with the course loading goal of AB 86, and its curriculum will be updated with student learning outcomes.

"We are bringing these teachers out of the shadows, into the bargaining unit." **KK**

by David Bacon

## San Jose

### A union-community partnership gets children to read

A couple of years ago, the leaders of the union at Evergreen Community College, the San Jose/Evergreen Faculty Association, AFT Local 6157, heard California Attorney General Kamala Harris speak at a CFT convention. "What she said about the school to prison

pipeline resonated with us," says local vice-president Frank Espinoza. "If kids aren't reading at grade level by the third grade, she told us, many will have issues with the criminal justice system later on."

Local leaders were even more aghast to learn that the corporations operating for-profit prisons were even making projections of future prison populations by looking at the percentage of kids with trouble reading at that early age.

When the teachers returned to San Jose they took a look at their own community, determined to do something about this. "Our college is in a community in East San Jose with many poor and immigrant families," Espinoza says, "where we know many don't have

books at home. If children don't have them as part of their home life, they'll be less likely to learn to read early in their lives."

The union then reached out to one of the most active organizations in East San Jose, Somos Mayfair. Mayfair is the name of one of the oldest neighborhoods in the city - the name of the group means, "We are Mayfair." Within this neighborhood is the Sal Si Puedes barrio, where farm worker union founder Cesar Chavez lived in his youth.

Somos Mayfair already had a literacy program, designed to get kids and parents reading. Its mission is "cultivating the dreams and power of the people of Mayfair through cultural activism, social services and community organizing. We are generations of immigrants, rooted in a vibrant community who nurture healthy families and successful students, and who speak out for justice in Silicon Valley."

According to Somos Mayfair, every year 200 children in the neighborhood enter kindergarten. But in 2011 over 85% were unprepared, and four years later, by the third grade, only 27% at Cesar Chavez School were reading proficiently.

To push back, the organization recruited "promotoras" - volunteers who work with the 400 local families with children under 8. They in turn try to get families to adopt daily practices that encourage reading, including reading to the children for 20 minutes a day, as well as having a healthy diet, exercise, and time for reflection.

What Somos Mayfair didn't have was money and resources, and especially books. "We went



**AFT Local 6157 delivers the gift of reading.**

to them, and explained that the AFT has a partnership with First Book, a project that provides books for children at no cost. We could get them books for the kids to take home. But the books would still have to be shipped, and that cost money that Somos Mayfair didn't have. So our local made our first donation to this cooperative effort -- \$500 to pay for getting children's books to San Jose."

As a result, Somos Mayfair was able to get 3200 books into the hands of children, who could take them home. The organization has requirements for families who want to participate. Kids have to attend a literacy fair, and take part in a certain number of activities to qualify. Getting the books is part of a larger program that involves visits by the promotoras at home and literacy events in parks and other public places. Some families even participate in documenting their own history, and that of their community.



**This is our community.**

BARBARA HANFLING PHOTO

Literacy activities are closely aligned with academic schoolwork, Espinoza says, in order to ensure pre-school and young school-age students are progressing in their academic requirements.

"We didn't begin this out of the blue," he explains. "Some of us on faculty have had a relationship with Somos Mayfair for many years. Arturo Villareal, for instance, wrote about the historic organizing efforts of Cesar Chavez and the Community Service Organization in this community. Organizing is deeply rooted here, with a rich history that goes way back."

A number of Evergreen students themselves come from the neighborhood, and at the college teachers began to recruit students to volunteer with the literacy drive. "The Mayfair is often stereotyped as a poor and immigrant community in a kind of denigrating way," he charges. "This effort enabled young people here to validate their rich culture as a source of strength."

Espinoza believes the effort has been good for the union too. "This is our community," he emphasizes. "By being active in it, we're going beyond wages and working conditions. We're taking responsibility for helping to organize so that our children don't fall and become statistics. Somos Mayfair gets it. They're doing phenomenal work with very little resources, and as a union, we can make a difference by working with them. We're very fortunate to have this partnership." **KK**

by David Bacon