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September 2018 Newsletter



Notes from President Doug Thiel

I thought about doing a video instead of this article but wanted to be sure that what I am about to say is clear and not misunderstood. I am focused on the upcoming start of negotiations. I will continue to be transparent and will provide the total cost and distribution data from the last contract when it becomes available and I will work with our Health Benefits committee to insure potential cost saving alternatives are well articulated and disseminated. Bear with me as I express my candid thoughts in this area.

Inside This Issue

President's Message

AFT 1828 Fall Training Activities

Our New Executive Director, Michael Sheetz

CFT Salary Survey

Chief Negotiator Message

Department Meetings & Part-Timers Pay

Union Dues

In the May AFT elections, I ran for President based on providing relevant information to the membership when it became available to union leadership. I have received many emails thanking me for pursuing this policy of transparency. We now have a Chief Negotiator, Steve Hall, who sent out a call for faculty negotiating members last week. Frankly, I have some reservations regarding this process. What I am concerned with is not personal. It is about achieving the best result for 1200 faculty members in this district. Yes, post Janus, this Federation is still responsible for negotiating for all faculty whether they are union members or not. Steve is also the Chair of the Health Benefits committee. One of my concerns is that the HB committee is a fact-finding committee, not a negotiating team. I want to make sure there is no conflict of interests. Their job is not to push anything off the table but to forward alternatives for further evaluation. I believe there may not be a clear understanding of “no cap” vs “no change” with respect to F/T Health Benefits membership-wide. No cap means that the dollar amount of health benefits cannot be capped; the District could not pass on the rising annual costs of the health plan to the employee. No change would mean no change from the current plan; no alterations or the adoption of other plans which could cost less and still have a no cap provision. The current cost of the F/T plan now in effect is approximately \$24,000 annually per F/T faculty. The Health Benefits committee is meeting with a new insurance broker. Their job is to explore all potential cost saving options to the current plan as well as exploring other plans that would also contain a no cap provision. Then, they present findings to the Executive Council which will be forwarded to the negotiating team.

I believe this HB committee should function in a similar manner as our recently appointed AFT Lab Task Force that will work with a management team to present facts and coherent alternatives to achieve equity. This committee is required by the CBA to complete their findings prior to the start of negotiations. If the HB fact-finding committee continues without providing all needed information from the new

HR broker this will impact the progress of negotiations. Hopefully we can work through these issues to ensure comprehensive research is completed, thereby increasing our effectiveness when active negotiations start in several months.

Another concern I have is associated with our last negotiations process. Based on a survey completed at the start of negotiations (which continued for 20 months) the number one priority that was announced was “no cap” for current F/T Health Benefits. Survey or no, it defies common sense to say that the number one priority of the 1200 plus faculty in this college District was, in fact, “no cap” and no change for the F/T health benefit plan. I say that because approximately 800 of those 1200 are P/T faculty who receive no benefit whatsoever from this priority. For the sake of argument, suppose we just dismiss that group out of hand. Suppose it was the case that for F/T faculty “no cap” and “no change” to HB was the number one priority.

Well, this priority quickly became “no cap” “no change” “no raise.” When it was clear there was no movement by the District on the range of contract demands being sought last year, faculty began showing up in large numbers at the Board of Trustees meetings last fall. This had some impact. The “no cap” and no change was offered in October of 2017, but no F/T salary increase was forthcoming. Both the District and the BOT were adamant on this issue. The next steps would be impasse and beyond. I have been an active union member for the past 53 years in 3 major unions. I started as a steelworker in 1965 and except for 3 years in the USMC, I was a member of the United Steelworkers of America, Local 6828 in Louisville, Ky until 1979. I moved to CA and became a member of the CPOA (California Peace Officer Association) from 1979-2001 and served on numerous negotiating teams in Santa Barbara. I have been a member of AFT 1828 since 1996 when I began teaching P/T at MC prior to retirement from SBPD. I have seen serious job actions during those many years including disappointing mediation results, “work

to rule” slow-downs, and a host of other tactics. I participated in 4 strikes as a steelworker. In one of those strikes a member of the Teamsters Union was shot trying to cross a union picket line in his semi-tractor trailer. Many of our union pickets carried guns in their pockets but the assailant was never identified. I was involved in the disastrous SBPD strike in 1980.

For a **public employee union** strike to be effective requires a 100% commitment from all members and an extremely strong commitment by the local community to back such an effort. In our case, this would involve a county wide commitment to forego the education of nearly 30,000 students in our three community colleges to meet our multiple contract demands. While it is always possible to build this type of commitment, none of that was in place when our current contract was settled in the early spring of 2018. The solution to the above problem is to go into contract negotiations with **completed research and facts to support our bargaining position**. All negotiations start at opposite ends of the spectrum, the trick is to present the better arguments and facts to support the objectives of the union. And clearly, a labor friendly Board of Trustees goes a long way as well.

Going over the past negotiating experience is rear view mirror stuff. Moving forward, the AFT EC approved the hiring of Michael Sheetz as our Executive Director this summer. His eclectic resume included his prestigious law degree awards with an emphasis on labor law (and service with the 4th District Court of Appeals). His complete profile is elsewhere in this newsletter. The EC also approved Budget Analyst, Michael Frohnauer who is an active CPA and adjunct instructor at VC. Steve Hall has expressed his desire to use the expertise of these persons in his role as Chief Negotiator. I have asked both of them to lend their full cooperation and support to achieve our mutual goals.

Here is what I know. **Our F/T faculty cannot have another contract with zero salary increases**. Last week the CFT released their salary survey for all community colleges in CA. A

short article on this is contained in this newsletter. We are not being compensated appropriately.

It is highly undesirable to have situations where newer F/T faculty have few options but to work overload assignments and summer sessions to support their families and attempt to purchase homes in Ventura County. All the while dealing with class sizes that often reach 55 students. P/T faculty in our District only received a meager 1.75% salary increase for duration of the 3 year contract. The increase in COLA during those 3 years was 4%. This salary increase was offered by **management** because they realized that their P/T faculty would not receive any benefit associated with the F/T HB plan. The limited amount of Kaiser health plans available for P/T employees have risen dramatically this past year in terms of employee contributions (approx. 78%). Currently for a HB plan a P/T single person pays \$387 monthly, a single person with spouse pays \$1,239 and a family \$1,807 . This is not about doctor visits and other co-pays. This is **about an employee contribution deducted from their paychecks each month**. Many P/T faculty live on the margin...and depend on their previous assignments not being cancelled to pay the rent. The turn-over of this group continues to escalate as many seek other higher paying assignments in nearby college districts.

In terms of other membership groups, senior faculty face lower retirement allowances. **Retirement calculations are based on salary earnings and not on benefits**.

The above is what is on my mind. I do not want to see a repeat of the protracted negotiations we just went through last time that did not produce across the board benefits for all. I firmly believe any number “one” priority of this Federation of faculty must achieve the greatest good for the greatest number. And in our case that would be salary increases. I will keep you updated on data I will receive from the last contract to show where the money went. You are all an intelligent group of people and you deserve to be informed of the all the facts before you fill out a survey that rates your next

contract priorities. For my part I will work to ensure these surveys are well crafted.

Doug Thiel
AFT 1828 President

AFT 1828 Fall Training Activities

Your union leadership is dedicated to providing useful training on topics that are not normally addressed during professional development week. This semester the following workshops will be held.

By the way, lunch is provided! Please RSVP Julieanne at julianneflores7@gmail.com



Evaluation Tips for Part-timers: Friday, September 28 from 11am to 1pm

PT instructors can have their reassignment rights affected by their evaluation rating, which makes this process critical to understand. Renee Fraser, VP for PT at Moorpark, will host this informative session that will highlight the best practices for achieving the highest evaluation.

**Livingston College / JC's of NTPC's
SV Instructor**

Tenure and the Contract: Friday, September 28 from 11:30am to 1pm

Going through the tenure process? This workshop will review your contractual rights as a candidate for tenure. Your rights will be explained by Bea Herrera, AFT Local 1828's Grievance Chair, former Union President, and former Chief Negotiator. No one knows the contract as well as Bea!

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Workload and Assignment for Full-Timers: Friday, November 2 from 11am to 1pm

Questions about Article 5, Workload and Assignment? What is the difference between incidental overload and extra-hourly assignments? What are the load limits each semester for FT faculty? Hugo Hernandez, Moorpark College FT VP, will lead a discussion on the way Article 5 works to protect your rights.

Unemployment Workshop for PT Faculty: Friday, November 30 from 11am to 1pm

Our PT faculty have access to a hard-won benefit regarding unemployment compensation during gaps in employment. This is an under-utilized benefit that is not clearly understood by many of the 800 PT faculty in this District. David Carey, VP for PT instructors at Ventura College, is our expert on Unemployment Benefits and how to work through the system. When you RSVP you will

receive a worksheet outlining basic eligibility requirements.

Lunch is provided at all workshops!

All members are invited to stay for the Executive Council Meeting at 1pm.

Please RSVP Julieanne at julianneflores7@gmail.com.

All workshops held at AFT, 816 Camarillo Springs Road, Suite B, Camarillo, right at the Camarillo Springs offramp of the 101 in the UFCW building (aka the Orchid Building).

If you have questions about the training itself contact the presenters directly:

Renee Fraser rfraseraft1828@gmail.com

Bea Herrera beaft1828@gmail.com

Hugo Hernandez hugoaft1828@gmail.com

David Carey dcareyAFT1828@gmail.com

Our New Executive Director, Michael Sheetz

A Letter from the Executive Director

My name is Michael Sheetz and it is an honor and a privilege to introduce myself to you as the new Executive Director of the Ventura County Federation of College Teachers. I'm humbled and excited to have the opportunity to work with the Executive Council to lead this important organization into its next chapter.

As many of you are aware, we have a busy year ahead of us, especially with our upcoming contract negotiations right around the corner. That said, I am confident that together we can

rise to the challenges ahead of us and make 2019 our strongest year yet.

I know that many of you have recently heard a great deal of discussion about the Supreme Court's decision in **Mhus v CHEPG**. While I certainly won't bore you with the details of this unconscionable departure from settled precedent, I can assure you that, despite the potential it has to negatively impact all unions, I am confident in the future of not only our local, but the CFT, AFT and, in fact, unions at large. While **Mhus** may be a blow to labor, it only threatens us if we let it. The strongest counter assault we have is what makes us so powerful to begin with—our unity.



Mhus has neither limited our ability to advocate for our members nor has it reduced the power that collective bargaining has to bring about substantial change in wages and working conditions, or protect our membership from overreaching abuse by management. While I am hesitant to call it a tempest in a teapot, I am fully confident that when all the dust settles we will emerge both stronger and more resolute in our mission. The reason for my confidence is my continued faith in you my colleagues, and our Executive Council.

Over the coming weeks I hope to work closely with each of the campus vice presidents to personally meet with as many faculty as we can

to ensure that we are responsive to your needs and we are providing the highest level of representation possible to all faculty. Regardless of whether I have the good fortune of getting to meet with you face to face or not, I sincerely urge you to feel free to reach out to me any time. I am more than happy to answer questions where I can, or put you in touch with someone who is better suited to respond if I could not. Even if you want nothing more than to introduce yourself and chat, I am eager to get to know those of you I have not yet met personally.

When Doug Thiel asked me to write a letter of introduction for the newsletter, I have no doubt he was expecting a self-promotional laundry list of my qualifications and the experience I bring to this job. I'm not very good at that sort of thing, but to keep my president happy I'll briefly share a few highlights.

I have been teaching at the college level since 2003, with both part-time and full-time experience at public, non-profit, and private for-profit schools. Since 2012, I have been an adjunct faculty member in the district, teaching at Ventura, Moorpark and Oxnard colleges in business and film and television. Prior to moving to California in 2012, I lived in south Florida where I served as interim Program Chair for Media Production at American InterContinental University.

In a former life, I served for nearly two decades as a criminal investigator in south Florida, prosecuting white-collar and computer crimes cases. I hold a Bachelor of Business Administration with a dual major in Accounting and Management, as well as a Law degree from the University of Miami. In addition, I bring a decade of union experience to the table, having served as a police union representative, grievance officer, and chief negotiator during my tenure as a police officer, but enough about me.

In closing, I am honored to serve with President Thiel and the members of the Executive Council during this pivotal time in our history, and look forward to the hard work ahead. I hope that you will continue to stay engaged now more than ever, and stand next to us in these important fights. On that note, we are hosting a very important event this Friday for all members where I will be giving a brief presentation on the results of a recent statewide salary survey commissioned by the CFT. I have done a preliminary analysis, and think all members will be quite startled by the result. For details of the location and time of the meeting, please contact the office.

Sincerely,

Michael Sheetz, Executive Director
msheetz.aft1828@gmail.com
(805) 987-1188

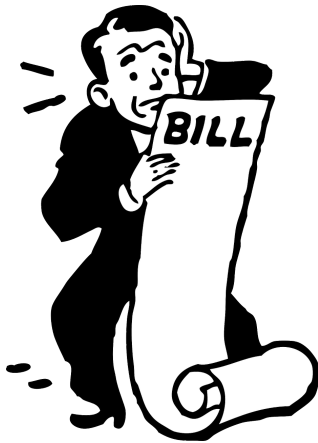
“Wage growth up 2.9 percent in August. . . .”¹ – Fake News?

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msheetz@diiz.fmikaom

While this recent headline is not fake news, if you are a Ventura College District faculty member, it might as well be. The most recent jobs report is certainly a good sign for the economy as a whole but it certainly doesn't tell the whole story when it comes to the real economic conditions of individual citizens.

Partisan politics aside, year-over-year growth in real wages for workers is a key indicator of the strength of an economic recovery. However, if you are a Ventura County Community College District faculty member, these numbers are little comfort. Our reality is that year-over-year wage growth for the past three years has been

nothing. We cannot even come close to keeping up with the annual cost of inflation.



According to the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, from 2015 to 2016 the cost of living rose 1.4 percent.² From 2016 to 2017 the cost of living rose another 2.5 percent, and in our most recent year, the cost of living has risen 2.1 percent above that.³ By contrast, district faculty salaries have been flat, with full-time faculty, receiving zero percent increases over the entire period, and part-time faculty gaining some ground, but progress that is hardly worth celebrating.⁴

To say this is insulting is to grossly understate the obvious. But, until I examined some comparative data, I had no idea just how badly our faculty have been undervalued. Recently, the CFT research department completed a salary survey of all 72 California Community College Districts, which they have shared with us. These results confirm something that many faculty members in the district have instinctively known for years— when compared to our peers; we are grossly underpaid for doing equivalent work under equivalent conditions.

Just how underpaid are we? I have spent the last few days analyzing where we stand and

what I have found shocked even me.

Unfortunately, summarizing these results into a bulleted list simply doesn't do them justice. At the risk of being cliché, these are results that you truly must see to believe. To that end, I am preparing a detailed slide presentation that I will be sharing with the members who attend the September 21, 2018 general membership meeting at the Marriott. As we enter negotiations with the district this spring, it is more critical than ever that we remain engaged, educated and united. Please make every effort to join us on Friday for what I expect will be a very eye-opening discussion.

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Chief Negotiator Message



Colleagues,

I am honored to return to the position of Chief Negotiator of AFT Local 1828 and look forward to representing the dedicated and incredible faculty of the Ventura County Community College District. Although negotiations ended a few months ago, we return to the bargaining table next semester because our agreement expires on June 30, 2019.

The AFT Local 1828 Executive Council has begun the recruitment process for new negotiations team members. We need faculty to serve on our negotiations team for our next round of negotiations. Faculty negotiations team meetings will begin in October and face-to-face meetings with management are scheduled to begin no later than March, 2019. Negotiations is a collaborative effort and this is an excellent opportunity for faculty to serve their colleagues and to become involved in the bargaining process. We need representation from both full-time and part-time faculty members from each campus. New team members and perspectives are needed and welcome! Release time is available to those who serve.

If you are interested in serving on the negotiations team please send a brief letter of interest to me at steveaft1828@gmail.com.

The deadline to be considered is Thursday, September 20.

Thank you for your consideration.

Steve Hall
Chief Negotiator

Department Meetings & Part-Timers Pay

Do you go to your Division or Department Meetings? Did you know that you will be paid half of your hourly rate for attending those meetings for up to five hours a semester?

In 2007, half pay for part-time faculty attendance at Division Meetings was negotiated, and in the most recent contract, half pay for Department Meetings was also negotiated (excluding meetings held during Flex). The number of hours per semester that you can be paid for attendance is now FIVE rather than three. You are not required to claim these meetings as Flex time, you can, instead, be paid for them, but you cannot double-count them for both Flex and be paid."

(2) Non-contract faculty who are not otherwise employed by the District will be compensated at one-half their hourly rate of pay, up to five (5) hours per semester, for:

- attendance at division meetings held on non-flex days
- attendance at department meetings held on non-flex days."

