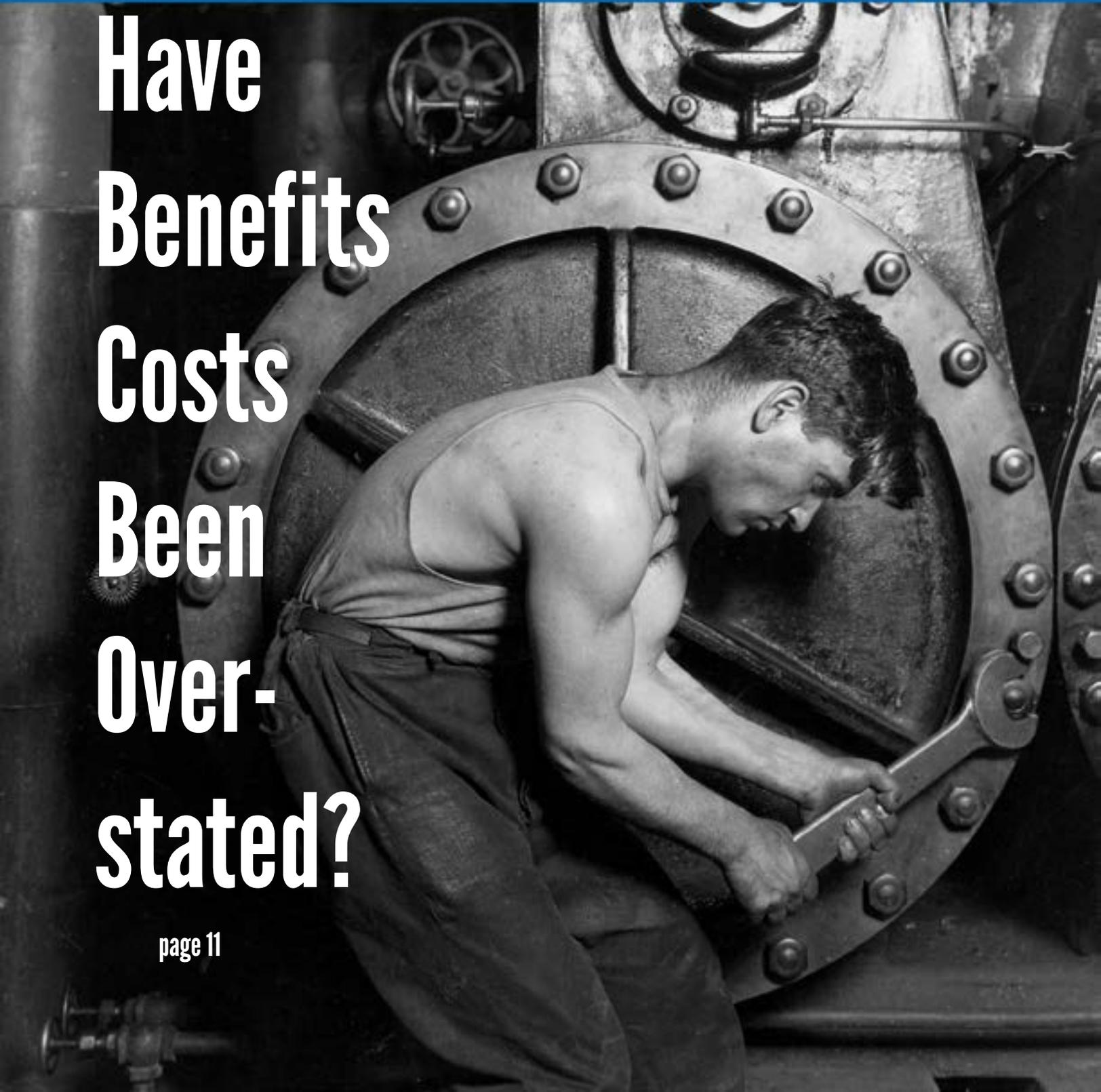


AFT 1828

January - February 2019

Have Benefits Costs Been Over- stated?

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By Doug Thiel

What if I was asked, “what is it like to be President of the VCCCD faculty union?” We have 3 campuses with approximately 1200 full and part-time faculty. We provide services for approximately 30,000 students. The vast majority of our faculty are union members. Well, I suppose the word “demanding” would first come to my mind in terms of answering such a question. Union business is 24/7. While many might think we are just involved in contract negotiations and the grievances that can result, your union is involved in many other activities. There is fiscal oversight of union funds, networking and cooperation with other unions including at the state and national level. We are involved in supporting legislation to benefit our students and faculty and we will be working to increase our local efforts in this sphere. There is a union office to maintain, record keeping, audits, website and social media outreach along with many other activities necessary to maintain a professional organization. And, of course, attending and reporting on the Board of Trustee meeting and other District committees is on our plate. We have a Committee on Political Education (COPE) that was actively involved in endorsing 2 recent Board of Trustee candidates who were both elected and are now serving. And, of course, one of the most important things for me is to respond

From the President's Desk

quickly to all types of questions and concerns that reach me. I receive daily emails and messages that are left at the office. I teach online courses and firmly believe that a DE instructor must respond to students in a timely matter. My personal goal is to always respond within 24 hours. I bring this same passion for answering questions and concerns that I receive from faculty.

Frankly, all of the above would be overwhelming without the support of a highly motivated Executive Council. We have 14 voting positions in our by-laws and all of these positions are currently filled. The Executive Council hired a new full-time Executive Director last fall, Michael Sheetz. Michael literally hit the ground running and brings a wide range of necessary skills sets to make us a “union of professionals”. And as you all know, any office needs conscientious clerical and administrative help. We have amazing part-time help in this area in the persons of Joe Carroll and Julieanne Flores.

So, what is it like to be President? With all of the above working together, the position is still challenging, but I am confident we are moving forward in a positive way. And, in that respect, there is a sense of accomplishment.

Last newsletter I published the names of all members who are working on the Negotiating Team and on the union Health Benefits committee. I am confident that the coordinated efforts of these teams will result in achieving both quality health benefits and a salary increase in line with other college districts. Below I have an overview of some of these efforts (for more complete details read Steve Hall's newsletter article).

Contract Negotiations. Our first faculty survey indicated the top two priorities were salary increases and preserving the current level of

health benefits. For those of you that attended the Oct 26 “meet and greet” for our endorsed Board of Trustee Candidates, you saw a salary survey presentation by Michael Sheetz. It was very clear at that presentation that our salary was lagging far below other college districts. This was followed up on Feb 8, as our Chief Negotiator, Steve Hall, arranged for our statewide CFT budget analyst to provide our negotiating team with an update on the projected increased revenues for the VCCCD and the latest statewide salary survey information for both full-time and part-time faculty. On Feb 7, our union Health Benefits committee was given a presentation on a CalPERS alternative to our current health plan. This information is still being analyzed and further work needs to be done to clarify issues that would result if a plan change is to be considered.

Regarding the above, it is very clear that our faculty salary needs to be in line with other comparative college districts to ensure our ability to recruit and retain the best faculty for our students. This will require a substantial boost in our existing compensation rates. Additionally, AFT Local 1828 is questioning the validity of the cost of current FT faculty health benefits since it was reported by our health broker, Burnham, that Anthem has given the VCCCD a pooled rate increase for this year and last year while the utilization rates for faculty have been lower than the ASCC group for these same years. In past years the rate increases were calculated separately. The significance of this information is that the HB calculations used for 18/19 in the last negotiations by management was inflated for AFT faculty. Since our claim history was less than the ASCC group, we subsidized the ASCC rate increase which caused our union a weaker negotiating position on salary increases. I have asked the Chancellor to consult with

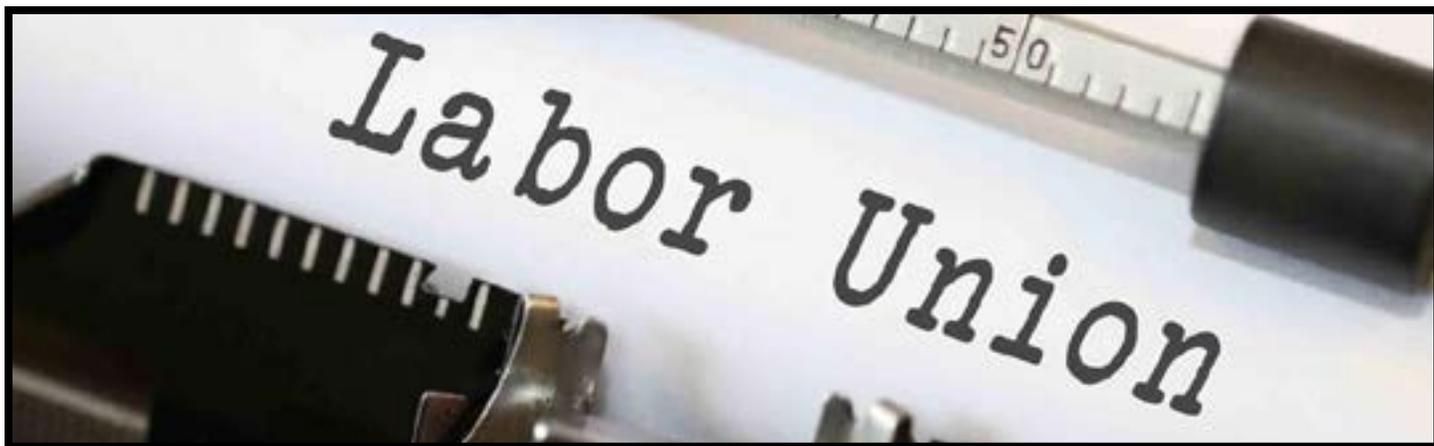
his staff on how this happened and what remedy for this inaccurate costing could be offered. Below is a different item that needs to be addressed.

Pending lawsuit: Many of you saw where the “National Right to Work Foundation (NRTWF)” used one of our faculty to initiate a lawsuit against AFT 1828 and the College District. This happens to be one area where I have not received email questions or concerns directly from faculty. However, members of the Executive Council have indicated that they have been asked about this lawsuit by faculty. We are being provided free legal representation by the CFT and the AFT. This type of lawsuit is happening nationwide. The NRTWF is an agenda driven, billionaire funded group that seeks to weaken unions. And in terms of further comment, I can only report that our attorneys advise against any specific responses to pending litigation.

However, I can report that our union has gained memberships since the Janus decision. The ratio of members who have resigned (which is roughly a baker’s dozen) is 9 to 1 in favor of the union. In other words, for everyone who has resigned, 9 new members have been added. We are a strong union thanks to your continued support. Your continued support will be necessary as we move through the upcoming negotiations process and work to achieve a contract that will meet the needs of our faculty who are in the front lines of servicing our large student populations.

In Solidarity,

Doug Thiel
President, AFT 1828
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CFT legislative efforts yield parental leave for part-timers

CFT Staff Writer

If there were perhaps one way to describe the legislative campaign waged by CFT this year as it regards both part-timers and the community college system, one could say it was “spirited.” Despite the sea changes proposed for the entire system, the union still won improvements for part-timers.

First, the CFT won a significant change to parental leave for part-timers when the governor signed CFT-sponsored Assembly Bill 2012.

“We closed a loophole in the parental leave statute that prevented part-time faculty in differential pay districts from receiving paid leave,” explained Community College Council President Jim Mahler. “Now, all part-time faculty will be guaranteed at least one-half salary pay while on parental leave if they don’t have enough accrued sick leave available to them.”

As for categorical funding, the CFT scored some significant successes that address the challenges of adjuntification.

\$100 million was set aside specifically for the purpose of increasing both the number and percentage of full-time community college instructors.

\$50 million in one-time funding was allocated for paid, part-time office hours. This is

on top of an increase of 70 percent in ongoing funding from the year before.

\$24 million was allocated for part-time pay equity. This is significant in that since 2014, the CFT has lobbied specifically for categorical funding for part-timer pay equity, and has now seen movement.

While these are clear gains, it is not fully clear how the categorical funding will be dispersed. And unfortunately, the governor vetoed CFT-sponsored Assembly Bill 310, a bill which would have required districts to publish how much they pay out in office hours for part-time faculty.

“Now, all part-time faculty will be guaranteed at least one-half salary pay while on parental leave if they don’t have enough accrued sick leave available to them.”

New system-wide funding formula and online college

A host of educational advocacy groups – including the CFT – raised serious concerns about Gov. Brown’s call for a new funding for-

mula and his demand for a separate, fully online college.

The governor's initial funding formula proposal called for each community college to be separately funded on a 50-25-25 model, with 50 percent of funding based on the number of students enrolled, 25 percent on the number of students receiving some form of educational assistance, and 25 percent based on student success, as defined by the number of students successfully completing 30 units within a two-year period.

CFT maintained that while directing more money to economically challenged students is a move toward equity, the formula, as constructed, would have significantly reduced funding to districts with higher success rates, effectively penalizing them for doing a good job.

The far greater concern, however, was the performance-based funding component. As educators know, the challenges to student success are often driven by external factors – socioeconomic, cultural, and familial – that are beyond the control of the colleges.

Further, the potential loss of funding due to less than stellar completion rates would mean a cut in funding that would hurt future students, and, with regard to part-time faculty, would mean the loss of work and possibly the opportunity to obtain full-time positions. These full-time positions are sorely needed at all community colleges, none of which are in compliance with the 75:25 ratio for full- to part-time faculty.

While CFT and other groups lobbied hard to retain the existing attendance-based student funding formula, the considerable, and yes, spirited efforts ultimately convinced the governor to compromise to a 70-20-10 model and delay full implementation for three years.

CFT flat out opposed the governor's desire to direct \$120 million to a new fully online community college designed to provide classes

for vocational-oriented, working, nontraditional students.

There were many problems with the proposal, ranging from issues of governance to a lack of high-speed internet access in rural communities and whether the target students would be a good fit for online learning. But the union's main concern was the duplication of existing online education programs already in place throughout California's 115 community colleges.

The feared end result would lead to a reduction of students at existing colleges, which in turn would lead to reduced funding and a loss of class sections, and most immediately, the loss of jobs for part-time faculty.

Ultimately, the governor prevailed in securing the \$120 million for the new online college, but CFT and other groups made it clear to the Chancellor's Office that they will be revisiting the issue with the Legislature and scrutinizing next steps.

Flex Explained

By
Renee Fraser

For faculty new to teaching in the community college, there is a whole new language to master. There are acronyms (FTES, SLOS, CLOS) there are college specific terms (admin) and there is FLEX. So what is Flex, and how does it affect you?

The Flexible Calendar Program (Flex) was instituted by the California State Legislature, and consists of staff development activities in-lieu-of regular instruction.

It's found in Title 5, the section of law that governs community colleges (CCR, title 5, division 6, chapter 6, subchapter 8, article 2, section 55724, item a-4). Flex activities can be, but are not limited to, training programs, group retreats, field experiences, and workshops in activities such as course and program development and revision, staff development activities, development of new instructional materials, and other instruction-related activities.

Before the law was passed, community college professors had no paid time for professional development. Since our class loads are so much greater than university professors, and our other responsibilities are so time-consuming, there just wasn't enough time for professional development.

According to the City College of San Francisco (CCSF, ha!) "The flexible calendar program was initiated by six California community colleges in 1976 as a pilot project authorized by



Assembly Bill 2232 (1975). The six pilot colleges were Cabrillo, Grossmont, Cosumnes, Saddleback, San Jose City, and Evergreen Valley. These six pilot colleges were allowed to reduce the number of required instructional days from 175 to a minimum of 160. The bill provisions allowed the colleges the opportunity to replace up to 15 days of regular instruction with alternative activities such as course and program development and revision, staff development activities, development of new instructional materials, and other instruction-related activities."

"Implementation of the flexible calendar program at the pilot colleges involved reforming the instructional calendar to accommodate instruction free days for faculty development activities. The use of flexible calendar days was accomplished through a shifting of the traditional calendar. With the success of the pilot programs, legislation (Assembly Bill 1149) was drafted in 1981 that allowed all colleges the option of adopting a flexible calendar program."

So each year, AFT Local 1828 bargains with the District to create an Instructional Calendar, which includes any number of Flex days.

How does this affect part-timers? Because many part-time faculty members are teaching at other campuses or working at other jobs, they are not required to go to the organized professional development events the campus holds during specified flex days. Instead, part-timers can use any professional development activity as their flextime, as long as they complete the number of hours they would normally have taught that day. We are always welcome and encouraged to go to the organized flex activities, but we are not required to attend. So if a Flex day falls on a Thursday and you would normally be teaching on Thursdays, but it has been set aside for Flex, you have to spend the number of hours you would have taught in a professional development activity of some sort. If your class meets on Wednesday, you would not be responsible for any hours, since the Flex day fell on Thursday.

For the same reason, part-timers don't have to go to the full-time "Mandatory Flex Day" (aka "Convocation" at Moorpark). It should actually be called "Full-time Faculty Mandatory Flex Day" since only full-time faculty must go. Part-time faculty MAY attend "mandatory" Flex Day if they wish, but they are not required to attend.

To recap, part-time faculty members can fulfill their flex hours any time they wish during the semester. They are not required to attend any formal professional development activities on campus. They are also free to attend any of the formal flex events at the campus during flex days, or to fulfill their hours by attending other workshops at the campus that are offered throughout the year. As long as you fulfill your hourly requirement, and fill out the Flex Form by the end of each semester, you are done. (The Flex Form is in the AFT VCCCD Agreement, Appendix H, form B1.) Please contact the Union if you are told that you must attend a particular flex activity.

You may contact Renee Fraser at rfraseraft1828@gmail.com

The Chief's Corner

By

Steve Hall

AFT Local 1828 and management have exchanged sunshine proposals, which list the articles each side would like to open during negotiations. Nine articles were not opened by either side, which means they will remain the same and will not be discussed in negotiations. A complete list is given below.

Summary of Sunshine Proposals February 10, 2019

AFT Opened

Article 1 (Effective Date...)
 Article 3 (Salary)
 Article 4.4B (Part time faculty plan)
 Article 5 (Assignment)
 Article 6 (Class Size)
 Article 7 (Safety)
 Article 8 (Leaves)
 Article 11 (Tenure)
 Article 12 (Evaluation)
 Article 13 (Department Chairs/Facilitators)
 Article 14 (Transfers)
 Article 15 (Resignations)
 Article 17 (Federation Rights)
 Article 18 (Federation Security Provisions)
 Article 21 (Term)
 Article 23 (Distance Education)
 Appendix F (Science Classes for Load of 0.75)

District Opened

Article 3 (non-credit,CCAP, incorporate MOU)
 Article 4 (seek unified plan)
 Article 5 (non-credit ,CCAP, incorporate MOU)

 Article 8 (Sabbaticals)
 Article 11 (Update Eval forms)
 Article 12 (Update Eval forms)
 Article 13 (Dept Chair Eval)

 Article 18 (Revise in light of Janus)
 Article 21 (Update Language)

 Appendix F
 Appendix A (Negotiations Procedures)

Articles Mutually Agreed to:

Article 2 Recognition
 Article 9 Calendar (AFT willing to discuss Compressed Calendar)
 Article 10 Personnel Files
 Article 16 Grievance Procedures
 Article 19 Effect of Agreement
 Article 20 District Rights
 Article 22 Faculty Professional Development
 Article 24 Academic Freedom

When do Negotiations Begin?

The district proposed that we commence negotiations on Monday, February 18, which is President's Day. We have rejected that date and proposed that our first negotiations meeting be on Friday, March 1. At the time of this newsletter, AFT Local 1828 have not received a response from the district even though we requested this day a month ago.

What about the Compressed Calendar?

AFT Local 1828 received management's proposal for the Fall 2020 – Spring 2021 calendar. Management is proposing a VCCCD traditional 17.5-week calendar and has not indicated an interest in negotiating a compressed calendar. We have not responded to this proposal yet to allow time for the compressed calendar workgroup to finish its work. AFT Local 1828 maintains its position that we are willing to discuss moving to a compressed calendar, however, until we need to know the proposed structure and the impact it will have on faculty before we can begin the discussion with management.

HEALTH BENEFITS UPDATE

By Steve Hall

We have learned that the District's claims of increases in faculty benefits costs have been overstated? It was reported by our Insurance Benefits Consultant (Burnham) at the Thursday, February 7 Health Benefits Committee that lower claims rates from faculty were pooled with higher rates from ASCC group for at least this year and last year. AFT Local 1828 is now questioning the validity of the cost of FT faculty health benefits that has been reported by district management. If true, this shocking revelation is of extreme importance to every faculty member as increased insurance costs was used by management during the last negotiations cycle to justify no raises for 3 years for FT faculty and minimal raises for part-



time faculty. This has the potential to be a major issue in our upcoming negotiations.

Health Benefits Committee Restarts Study of Joining CALPERS

After claiming it was not feasible for our district to join a school-based insurance pool due to major data errors and issues with retiree eligibility, Burnham informed the Health Benefits group (AFT, SEIU, Management, and retiree

reps) on February 7, 2019 that it is now feasible to join CALPERS but not SISQ or CVT or others. When comparing the health benefit coverage between our existing Anthem PPO and CALPERS Anthem PPO, there are major reductions in coverage. Higher out of pocket costs for faculty could be offset by district funded Health Reimbursement Accounts but that would need to be negotiated. Preliminary estimates indicated

that faculty might save a considerable amount of money and AFT Local 1828 is advocating that all costs savings should be given to faculty in the form of salary increases or other compensation.

The Health Benefits committee is currently in a “fact finding” stage and there have been no negotiations to join CALPERS.



Our voices must be heard!

By Emily Wilson, CFT Reporter



Jeannie Wallace had considered running for office before. As a union rep for the Morgan Hill Federation of Teachers and the chair of the local Democratic Party Central Committee, she knew how hard it could be to find candidates for the school board. But she thought she was too busy, and planned to do it when she retired.

Then she picked up her local paper and read that all the governing boards in her area — elementary, high school and community college — needed candidates. Feeling a sense of obligation to public education and democracy, Wallace went down to the local registrar. She saw there was a candidate for high school board — but still no one had filed to run for the Gavilan College Board of Trustees, also in Morgan Hill, at the southern tip of Silicon Valley.

Wallace told the registrar she would go home to think about it.

“She probably thought she’d never see me again,” Wallace said. “But I came back the next day and said, ‘All right, I’ll do it.’”

I’m aware of the importance of teachers, and I see them as professionals. I value their contribu-

tions, and those of staff, and I understand that’s what helps students.

Wallace has taught high school social studies, primarily civics and U.S. history, for 34 years. Since many of her former students attend Gavilan, Wallace thought that, with her experience in education, she as a community college board member, could help promote their success.

“I’ve seen movements and trends in education, so I’m sort of skeptical of grand proposals that claim to turn everything around when they’re just trying to make a bunch of money and pitch something that’s not really helpful,” she said. “I’m aware of the importance of teachers, and I see them as professionals. I value their contributions, and those of staff, and I understand that’s what helps students.”

With the endorsement of the South Bay Labor Council and the Democratic Party Central Committee, Wallace won the college board election. She plans to learn as much as she can about the college where she and her students have gone. She wants to promote student activism and, aware of how much she relied on it as a student, she’d like to work on getting a health center on campus.

Wallace is one of nearly 850 educators nationwide who ran for office in 2018, the majority of them women. As massive teacher strikes swept red states around the country earlier this year, many of those walking out of their classrooms in protest said they needed to change government from the



inside. The majority ran as Democrats; some ran on the Republican ticket.

Like Wallace, Craig Milgrim, a biology instructor at Grossmont College in El Cajon, comes to his new position on the board of the neighboring San Diego Community College District with decades of experience in education and labor activism. He has co-chaired his department for more than 10 years, served on the Academic Senate, and helped bring AFT representation to his campus. Being a trustee is a good way to continue to serve community college students, Milgrim says.

“Many of our students have economic challenges, he said. “They’re food insecure, housing insecure. Also I’m openly gay, so I have a special interest in bringing more information about the LGBTQ community to campus.”

Many of our students have economic challenges. They’re food insecure, housing insecure.

Milgrim, a proud member of the AFT Guild, Local 1931, says he’s glad that his district has already implemented an initiative to make community colleges free for the first year, which is now a statewide law. Like Wallace, he thinks his years



of experience in the classroom and working with the school staff will help.

“We know how important teamwork with the staff is,” he said. “Who’s there every single day to help students? The classified staff.”

With the Supreme Court’s *Janus v. AFSCME* decision, which struck down agency fees, Milgrim believes union solidarity is more important than ever, and he’s proud every person in his department kept union membership in AFT Local 1931, after the decision.

Josh Chancer, a high school teacher with the Oxnard Federation of Teachers and School Employees, AFT Local 1273, also thinks the *Janus* decision motivated educators to run for office. Chancer ran a successful campaign and was elected to serve on the Ventura County Community College District Board of Trustees.

Teachers should be stakeholders in the political process, Chancer says, and having them in public office can help balance attacks on educators and their ability to organize.

When he was campaigning, Chancer says he spoke with people who think unions fighting for better wages and conditions improve things for everyone.

“People appreciate who we serve,” he said. “We’re a voice for equity.”

Chancer is excited to bring his leadership skills to the community college board. Teachers make good leaders, he says, since they solve problems in the classroom every day.

Bea Herrera, a member of the Ventura College Federation of College Teachers, AFT Local 1828, was just re-elected to lead the Oxnard Union High School Board — she is now board president. She first ran for the board because she thought her experience as a counselor at Ventura College would be valuable on a high school board.

“I saw the need for an educator voice on the board,” she said. “I’m a college counselor, and I was seeing students coming to my college who

needed help to be successful — whether that’s help with writing or managing their time.”

With a strong desire to continue advocating for the most vulnerable students, Herrera decided to run again.

“I’m not done,” she said. “Our motto is ‘Powerful futures for all students,’ and it’s important to consider all students in that — including special ed students and ESL students and foster kids. They need equity.”

More members elected:

Andres Quintero, a member of the San Jose/Evergreen Federation of Teachers, was elected to the governing board of the Alum Rock Union Elementary School District.

Christina Gagnier, a member of UC-AFT Irvine ran successfully for a seat on the Chino Valley Unified School Board

Gabriela Lopez, a member of United Educators of San Francisco was elected to the board in her own district, San Francisco Unified. The law requires she resign her teaching position.

Upcoming Events

VCCCD Board of Trustees Meeting	February 19
Understanding Load-Banking (training)	March 8
Executive Council Meeting	March 8
VCCCD Board of Trustees Meeting	March 12
Retirement Seminar (training)	April 5
Unemployment Benefits for Part-time faculty (training)	May 5

