

COMMUNITY COLLEGE ASSOCIATION ADVOCATE

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Healthcare Equity for CCA Faculty and Staff

How and why CCA chapters are putting the pressure on districts to ensure healthcare is accessible to all of our members

By: CCA Advocate Staff

Amidst an environment of looming threats to public services and rising healthcare costs, CCA chapters have been working hard towards healthcare equity for all CCA faculty and staff. Fighting against increases to premiums or out of pocket expenses can be part of every bargain, and protecting our members against these concessions is crucial.

But many of our part-time members don't have access to affordable healthcare. Since 2023, the state of California has implemented a program that reimburses community college districts for part-time faculty healthcare coverage. This is a lifeline for our colleagues, many of whom go without health insurance entirely or who are paying up to \$20,000 a year in health care premiums on the open market.

Local chapters who move their districts to participate in the reimbursement program are working to unite their part-time and full time faculty in the larger fight for healthcare, as a system that allows for some to go without affordable healthcare opens the door to the erosion of affordable healthcare for all.

AB 190 Funds Part-Time Healthcare—and Provides Opportunities for Local Chapters to Bargain Real Healthcare Equity.



In 2023, the state of California put AB 190 into action, setting aside funds that would be solely used to reimburse community colleges for up to 100% of the costs of part-time health care. Districts who provide part-time faculty without access to healthcare elsewhere and who teach a minimum of 40% of a full time load across one or many districts are eligible.

Full time STEM faculty and union president, Rushia Turner, says hearing about a part-time colleague who was spending over \$20,000 a year for his family's healthcare was all she needed to spring into action.

"Why wouldn't we make it part of our bargaining demands that they participate in this program," Turner said, "if I know just anecdotally that it will help just one person, that means it will definitely change many other people's lives. This win means our colleague can save for retirement—a massive change for him and his family."

Turner is president of the faculty association at Monterey Peninsula Community College, and her leadership team took advantage of the district's desire to make big changes to their healthcare.

"They were desperate to get out of their self-funded plan," she said. We definitely used that moment to make our demand not only for healthcare for part-timers, but also for a three year moratorium on premium increases for all of our faculty." Monterey Peninsula College TA strengthened their union during the process, increasing membership and transparency during the bargaining process. They also won 15% raises over the span of the 3 year contract.

EDUCATE. AGITATE. ORGANIZE!

Nancy Shur-Beymer is a full-time nursing faculty member and the president of Hartnell College Faculty Association. Her union team saw the importance of their district's participation in the program and worked to educate their full-time faculty about the needs of part time faculty. Over 7 months, her organizing team had one-on-one conversations with all faculty, in person and on phone banks, to educate them about how the program would meet the needs of their part-time faculty without health insurance. The results paid off, as 80% of their full time faculty indicated on a survey that they would not ratify a contract that did not contain part-time healthcare.

When the District and HCFA were not able to come to agreement and started the impasse process, the survey data was crucial, as well as informational pickets and continued solidarity among the faculty. The parties came to agreement in mediation—with part-time healthcare coverage in the contract, as well as salary increases that moved their district rating for average faculty salary from 62nd to 36th in the state.

"Don't be afraid of the hard conversations," Shur-Beymer says, "staying united takes work—but it's what gets our members the win in the end."



Don't Believe the Hype

Geoff Johnson, CCA Part-Time At-Large Director for Southern California advises locals to not buy district excuses for not participating in a program that would reimburse them for healthcare costs for part-timers. "The money came from a 200 million-dollar statewide fund of which only 65 million was paid out in 2024-2025. Presently over 50% of adjuncts who teach a 40% load and over are eligible for the plan—there's enough money to cover eligible adjuncts statewide, and the money's not going away."



TEACHER WELLNESS IS STUDENT WELLNESS

River Navaille is part-time Theater Arts faculty at Hartnell, where their experience and expertise as a professional actor enhances their students' experiences in the classroom.

Many part-time instructors are working in their field and benefitting students by also teaching classes at our community colleges. District participation in the part-time healthcare reimbursement program is an important way to attract and retain these crucial members.

Not all part-timers have professional jobs outside their jobs as part time faculty. As Navaille reminds us, "there is this assumption that part-time professors just want to be part-time when the reality is that the supply of tenure track jobs is so low—most part-timers would like to be full time, and are working full time or more across colleges. So in a way we are working full time for the California Community Colleges so it is a labor rights win for us to be provided health care."

At Hartnell, Navaille says moving the district to participate in the reimbursement program took unity between the part-time and full time faculty. This unity was built with trust that was fostered by transparency and education.

"Being part-time doesn't mean we are short term employees, and all institutions benefit from longevity—so this program benefits everyone. Full time faculty need to recognize that us getting a piece of the pie, doesn't reduce their slice. We should be taking advantage of the funding to the fullest."

Renewed and Rejuvenated for the Challenges Ahead of Us



WELCOME TO A NEW ACADEMIC YEAR,

and a new redesigned CCA Advocate! We paused our summer issue in order to re-think this publication and how it can be a more useful tool for our members, especially as we are meeting this current moment. We're thrilled to have more writing and input from our At-Large Board members in this issue. We're also introducing a new section dedicated to part-time faculty that will feature their voices and concerns. In addition, you'll find regular sections with helpful reminders and resources, pointing you to the many online tools available on our website and more.

We want this publication to inspire, educate, and support all the good work our chapters are doing out there. This month, I am so pleased to see contributions from Jacqueline Penhos, Tiff Gause, and Geoff Johnson, representing our Women's Rights, LGBTQ+ and Part-Time At Large Board positions, respectively.

As President of our statewide union, I feel a deep responsibility to acknowledge and speak up during these very real and difficult challenges we are facing. As educators, as LGBTQ+ people, as immigrants, as community allies, as family members—the threats coming from the Federal administration feel overwhelming. I am horrified and angry, but also resolute in doing what I can to push back—as well as inviting all of you to do the same. I know this doesn't always look the same for everybody, but I am committed to ensuring that each of our communications to you showcase some ways our members are resisting—and providing you with ways you can too.



Our union has been busy since our last Advocate issue, refining our Mission to more clearly reflect our members' needs, focusing our goals on stronger communications and advocacy, and enhancing our skills by participating in the NEA RA, CTA Summer Institute and Presidents' Conference, planning retreat, and more. We have a vision for how to keep our members informed and activated, and we are excited to continue our efforts to build union with all of you.

We know that we are stronger together, and now, more than ever, it's time to act with unity and purpose. I look forward to working alongside you in the days ahead.

Resources and Reminders



CONFERENCES: SAVE THE DATE!

Fall Conference:

October 10-12 at the Westin Burlingame, this conference focuses on strategies for organizing and bargaining for our upcoming contract negotiations. The conference also includes Fall Council, the CCA business meeting where chapter delegates meet and vote on important items that help shape the direction of our union.

Winter Conference:

February 27-March 1, Hilton Orange

Spring Conference:

April 24-26, Irvine Marriott



PART-TIME WAGE AND HOURS TIPS

Due to the ruling in the Long Beach minimum wage case—which mandates that colleges compensate part-time faculty for all hours worked—be aware that some districts may attempt to negotiate contract language that would make your part-time members ineligible for this pay. For example, be wary of any proposed language that states that part-time compensation is inclusive or has been historically inclusive of all work performed by part-time faculty.

When looking to negotiate language that betters your part-timers' working conditions and pay, consider a model that aims for higher parity in compensation. Look at your salary schedules to see what disparities exist between what your full time and part-time faculty make per course. Look to decrease that disparity as you negotiate.

As always, your CTA staff person can be helpful in navigating the organizing and bargaining strategies that will have the best outcomes for your local chapter.

ADVOCATE

The Community College Association, with CTA and NEA as our partners, advocates and organizes with California's public community college faculty, staff, and students; empowers locals; builds strong and effective coalitions; promotes equity, inclusion, anti-racism, social justice, and part-time faculty equality, and strives to preserve universal access to quality public education.

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Looking to build your local union power? Check out the CCA website to apply for one of our many grants:

CCA Part-time Membership Tracking Grant

Need help reconciling your part-time membership? This grant assists chapters with this essential work. Any chapter that represents part-time faculty can apply.

CCA Membership Development Grant

Build your union with a CCA Membership Development grant. Up to \$5,000 for membership specific activities that bring your members together to build a stronger union. See examples on our CCA website.

CCA Local Chapter Reassigned Time Grant

Local Chapter Reassigned Time grants reimburse districts for hourly release time for members of the local to perform essential work for the local (e.g., training for negotiators, bargaining prep and/or at-the-table time; serving as communications officer for the local; leading or serving on a local organizing or membership committee, serving as a local grievance officer).

CCA Innovative Grant

CCA offers Innovative Grants up to \$5,000 for projects that support local chapter operations. Applications for CCA Innovative Grants must be submitted prior to the events for which the chapter seeks reimbursement. Chapters can apply at anytime during the year. Grant Proposals received for the following budget year will be considered pending Council approval at the CCA Spring Council.

★Has your local received and utilized one of these grants? We'd love to hear your story of how you built your union! Please reach out to jbeard@cta.org to share your story!



Part-Time News

Hello Everyone, and welcome to our permanent section in this publication, the Part-Time News. Each issue we will have updates and content for part time faculty right here, curated by our part-time directors and other members.

In an effort to provide a larger forum for part-time faculty to discuss part-time issues including local and state bargaining campaigns dealing with everything from PT healthcare to pay parity, rehire rights, including legislation and advocacy

campaigns, CCA invites you to be a part of our **Part-time Faculty Visioning Sessions** held on the third Tuesday of every month (9/16, 10/21, 11/18, 12/16, 1/20, 2/17, 3/17, 4/21, and 5/19) via zoom.

To attend, simply go to the CCA website at cc4us.org and go to the [CCA Calendar](#). Click on the link provided at the day of the session and sign up. These are not just chat sessions. At each session information from bargaining tips, to model contract language, links to other Community College CBA's, and advice for

communicating with board members and others on union issues is provided. The session will also provide guests from key locals or other organizations engaged in part-time advocacy.

And of course, full-time faculty are always welcome and their input appreciated.



Looking forward to seeing you there!

– Geoff Johnson,
At-Large Part-Time Director, South

Part-Time Voices

The Stakes: Higher Education Faculty Without Access to Healthcare



Frankie Martinez, a kinesiology instructor and assistant coach at Hartnell, a central coast community college, went without health insurance as a part-time faculty member. He endured pneumonia for two months.

“I had to decide how I was going to survive,” he told CCA Advocate recently, “I did what I could with over the counter.”

With cost of living skyrocketing in his central coast communities of Hollister, Watsonville, and Salinas, Martinez says part-time faculty have had a difficult time staying at Hartnell. Frankie was driving 45 minutes to teach, the commute becoming more of a challenge when he was ill with pneumonia.

But Martinez is committed to his role in the community, supporting students and athletes the way he was cared for in community college. “I see a lot of students that remind me of myself,” he says. “I want to make an impact and give back to the community I came from. My family has been here for 40 years.”

Before his union won part time healthcare coverage in their contract, Martinez suffered a knee injury which created huge challenges in his role as a kinesiology instructor and assistant coach. Frankie had to endure months of pain and difficulty walking before the union won. The victory at the bargaining table made the district contractually obligated to participate in the reimbursement program offered by the state, and finally he could seek treatment.

“After part timers got health insurance, and I finally had my knee surgery, I will never forget the time that I went up a first step without pain. It made me cry—and even now doing some things without pain is huge. It also means I can keep doing my job, which I love and I need to survive.”



More Voices:

How has your union winning healthcare equity affected you?

I am a mother of two: 15 mos & 3 y.o. After my youngest was born, working full-time became very difficult. It took a toll on my mental health. This of course this was hard on my family, because when mothers aren't well, their families are impacted too.

I was offered a position at SWC and my only hope was that I would be offered medical coverage. If not, I would not be able to accept it because my husband's insurance deduction would've quadrupled to a little over \$1,300.00 a month which would not make sense financially for our family.

I was beyond elated to learn that I would not have to sacrifice the opportunity to work part-time due to not being able to afford my husband's deductible. Offering health insurance to part-time employees, in my experience, increases self-worth, motivation as an employee and increased commitment towards my employer. I do not plan on leaving my job any time soon because of this. My quality of life has elevated in a way I could not have dreamed of as a mother two who has a job and career outside of the home.

– Alicia Arambula, Southwestern College

I can honestly say that this new healthcare benefit changed my life. Between my husband and I, I think we were paying \$1000 a month in healthcare premiums. Having healthcare through the Grossmont Cuyamaca district not only meant peace of mind; it also meant that we felt financially secure enough to buy our first home and begin paying a mortgage. We are in our 40s. Being on district healthcare also reduced our co-pays which is important due to recent health issues. I can't express how important this healthcare benefit is. I don't know what we would do without it - possibly lose our home.

– Anonymous PT member, Southwestern College

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Building a Welcoming Space for our Members and Students



Supporting LGBTQ+ Students and Colleagues

By: Tiff Gause, Santiago Canyon College, CCA LGBTQ+ South Director At-large

As colleges return for the fall semester, supporting our vulnerable students and colleagues is imperative to protecting the teaching and learning environment. Understanding the unique challenges LGBTQ+ students face, in particular, enables educators to be better positioned to move forward with empathy, compassion, and support. **For example, it is important to keep in mind that:**



1 in three (33%)

One in three (33%) LGBTQ college students seriously considered suicide in the past year, and 7% reported a suicide attempt in the past year.

Up to 40%

Up to 40% of homeless youth identify as LGBTQ+.

One third

One third of LGBTQ+ people report that their mental health was not good all or most of the time they were in college.

Intersecting identities

Intersecting identities can compound issues faced by students. For example, students who are undocumented and identify as LGBTQ+ face persisting oppressive social states from their identities.



Providing support for students shouldn't be difficult. Each California Community College has an LGBTQ+ liaison that CCA members can reach out to. From checking on what services colleges offer, to making a more visibly welcoming campus, inclusion doesn't have to be difficult. But it can be life changing.

Also, our national and state unions, [NEA](#) and CTA have great resources for supporting our LGBTQ+ and immigrant students on campus. Look to our CTA website for tips on creating inclusive classrooms for [LGBTQ+ students](#), as well as the [Home is Here](#) campaign for supporting immigrant students. Both resources contain tips for supporting students amidst the current escalating threats, as well as legal rights you have as an educator and an employee.

As your CCA LGBTQ+ South Director At-Large, I am here to help with the work of supporting our LGBTQ+ students and colleagues. Realizing the deep impact we have on our students' and colleagues' lives, let's work to make this academic year one of inclusion and support.



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Focus on Our Mental Health

By: Jacqueline Penhos

Women's Rights & Empowerment Director South and Professor of Psychology, Mindfulness and Mental Health, Southwestern College, SD, CA

Let me start by saying that I love teaching. If I had to choose my profession over and over again, I would do it every time. In fact, many friends often ask me, "Why are you still teaching? And are you still part-time?" My answer is "yes and yes." The more I grow in my profession and in my powerful union, the more I am driven by my "why."

There's a saying that if you love what you do, you'll never work a day in your life. I used to believe that until I became a part-time professor without a clear path. For many years, I worried if I would have a contract the next semester and I hoped I wouldn't get sick because I didn't have health insurance. Seven years later, thanks to our amazing advocates and union, I am now vested and have insurance for both my mental and physical health.

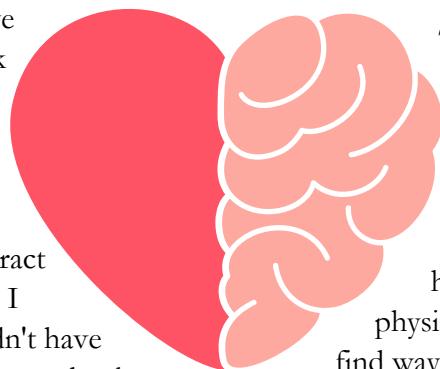
Being active in my local union, as the Representative for Education, Humanities, Behavioral and Social Sciences department and co-leading a Women's Caucus, I have an opportunity to advocate, listen and share ideas on how we can improve our mental health. One of the challenges we share with many

local unions is increasing membership and engagement. Being a PT Faculty member can be overwhelming, and it is our job as engaged members to help reach out to our colleagues to increase

awareness about the powerful benefits our Union provides, and how we can continue to advocate for more.

I want to talk about mental health, specifically for us—part-time women faculty. How do we maintain our social-emotional health while

balancing the many roles we play? Many of us are in the "sandwich generation," caring for our own families and our aging parents. We are also teachers, partners, and friends, trying to find time to take care of our bodies and have a social life. The pressures of being a part-time faculty member—from the uncertainty of contracts to the lack of benefits—adds another layer of stress to this already demanding juggling act.



This constant pressure can take a significant toll on our well-being. It can lead to burnout, anxiety, and a feeling of being overwhelmed. We must acknowledge that our mental health is just as important as our physical health, and it's essential to find ways to support ourselves and each other.

The goal isn't just to "survive" but to thrive. This means finding practices that allow us to recharge and find balance. As the Women's Director South, I am committed to creating spaces and providing resources that help us navigate these challenges. We need to build a community where we can openly discuss these issues, share strategies, and support one another.



Our union has fought for the benefits and protections we now have, and it's up to us to continue that advocacy. By raising our voices and sharing our stories, we can ensure that the needs of part-time women faculty—especially our mental health needs—are at the forefront of the conversation. I am including a few helpful tips to continue your mental health journey.



Helpful Tips for Prioritizing Your Mental Health

As women who work as part-time faculty, our time and energy are often stretched thin. Taking intentional steps to support your mental health is not a luxury; it's a necessity. Here are some actionable tips to help you find balance and well-being:



Practice Mindfulness and Meditation

Even five to ten minutes a day can make a significant difference. Mindfulness helps you stay present and manage stress. Apps like Headspace or Calm offer guided meditations that are easy to fit into a busy schedule.



Set Clear Boundaries

It's easy to feel like you always have to be "on." Learn to say no to requests that will overextend you. Establish specific times for checking emails and dedicate other times to family, self-care, and rest.



Prioritize Physical Health

Your physical and mental health are deeply connected. Make time for exercise, even if it's just a short walk. Prioritize sleep and try to maintain a consistent sleep schedule. A balanced diet can also have a profound effect on your mood and energy levels.



Build Your Support System

You are not alone. Connect with other part-time faculty women in your union and college. Share your experiences and offer support. Having a network of people who understand your challenges can make a world of difference.



Schedule "Me" Time

Deliberately set aside time each week for an activity you enjoy, whether it's reading a book, gardening, or listening to music. This is non-negotiable time for yourself that helps you recharge and prevent burnout.



Utilize Your Resources

Now that many of us have access to health insurance, make use of it. Don't hesitate to seek professional help from a therapist or counselor if you're feeling overwhelmed. Your college or union may also offer mental health resources and Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) that you can access.

I look forward to hearing your feedback, I welcome questions and ideas. I can be reached via email at jpenhos@cca.org or jacquelinepenhos@cca4us.org.

In Unity and Health,

Jacqueline Penhos, SELP, MS, MA

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The CCA Board is here to help you and your union chapter!



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09/2025



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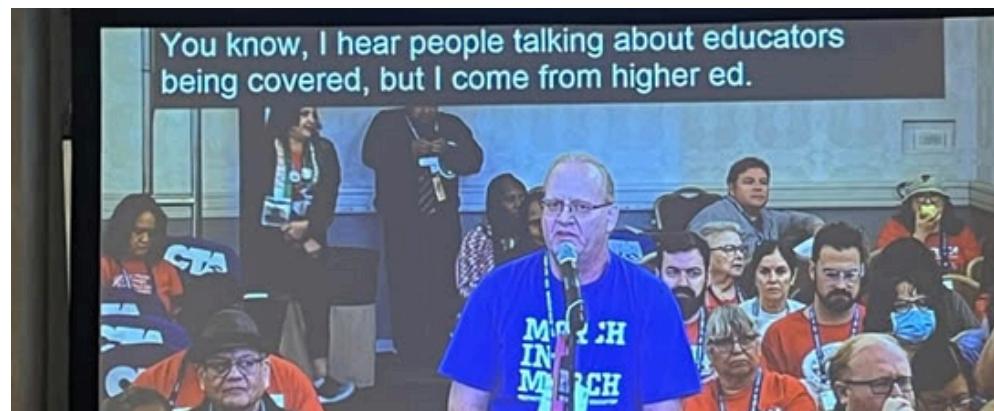
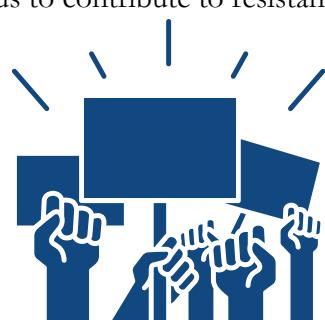
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CCA Members marched in the CTA statewide Fight for Schools action on May 17th. Marches drew over 15,000 members in San Francisco, Sacramento, Hanford, Los Angeles, and San Diego and called for the federal government to continue its investments in public education.

CCA members have been hitting the streets, attending rallies and actions across the state to fight for our students and public education. As union educators, we hold a special place in our movement, and the opportunities for us to contribute to resistance are ample. Whether gathering our colleagues to create inclusive college learning environments, fighting for the access to healthcare that all people deserve, or fighting for the working conditions that ensure our crucial work as educators can continue—all of this is union work. How are you and your members fighting back? Send us photos and blurbs to be featured in future CCA publications to jbeard@cta.org.



CCA delegates doing union democracy at the National Education Association Representative Assembly this summer!