Rallies, teach-ins and protests mark Campus Equity Day in California
Thousands join in national events

ADJUNCT FACULTY ON California’s community college campuses joined thousands of their colleagues across the state and nation in late February to call attention to the working conditions of contingent faculty. Teach-ins, rallies, and protests were the order of the day as adjunct faculty flexed their political muscle. Posts in social media originally called for a walk-out but many faculty, concerned about legal repercussions, instead chose alternate activities, which were widely considered successful.

In Gilroy, the Gavilan College Faculty Association made use of CCA materials in its “Campus Equity Day,” while Long Beach City College part timers held office hours outdoors to demonstrate the lack of paid office hours for adjunct faculty. The Solano College Adjunct Alliance distributed buttons for supporters on campus to wear in solidarity. Adjunct faculty on CSU and UC campuses as well as at private colleges in California also participated in the day.

“The day definitely raised awareness on campus,” said Collette McLaughlin, a part-time computer graphics instructor at Gavilan, who noted that administrators, full-time instructors and students joined in activities ranging from a faculty-sponsored campus lunch, informal picketing and outdoor classes for some students.

“Part-time faculty often works for minimum wages trying to help their students who are paying more and more for less and less,” she said.

In addition to supporting the activity generated by faculty on campuses, CCA will sponsor legislation in this legislative cycle to help close the equity gap.

“Campus equity is more than a slogan. For the sake of faculty and students, it is time to elevate more part-time faculty to full-time positions, and to provide adjunct faculty with equal pay and paid office hours,” said CCA President Lynette Nyaggah.

Best budget in years for community colleges
CCA will continue to work for more improvements

Faster forward to the 2015-16 budget year. Thanks to a booming economy and promised dollars from Proposition 30, community college funding should be back to its 2007-2008 levels – the last year before California’s schools and colleges were hit by drastic budget cuts.

Much more stable
“The budget picture going forward is much more stable. Things are leveling out,” Plew said. “It’s been a long time since we’ve been this hopeful.”

Gov. Brown’s 2015-16 proposed budget recognizes the significant role community colleges play in preparing students to transfer to four-year higher education institutions as well as to prepare California’s workforce. While community colleges awarded 62,318 certificates and 107,472 degrees and transferred 105,346 students to four-year institutions, the governor prioritizes the need to improve student completion rates, which were significantly reduced during California’s economic downturn and past budget reductions.

While Gov. Brown’s proposed budget won’t be finalized until this summer, the news, of course, means that both full-time and part-time faculty should be seeing more money in their paychecks in the new fiscal year. In fact, Plew urges local bargaining teams to be preparing to negotiate from an offensive position, rather than the defensive position they were in during the past few years.

Adjuncts to benefit
The Governor’s proposal is the best budget for part-time faculty in over a year as it allocates funding to increase the numbers of full-time faculty. In addition, it is likely that part-time categoricals (for targeted programs) will be increased as well.

“We know that faculty are the driving force behind student success, so we will be working to make those changes with the legislature and the Governor’s Office,” said CCA Vice-President Brad Reynolds, who works with CTA Advocate Jennifer Baker to track the budget and legislation.

Among the budget highlights are:
• Student Success - $200 million increase in Prop. 98 General Fund dollars for improving and expanding student success programs, particularly to assist underrepresented students.
• Operating Expenses - $125 million in Prop. 98 General Fund increase in base allocation funding for increased operating expenses in facilities, CalSTRS benefits, professional development, increasing full-time faculty as well as other general expenses.
A new year brings good news but there’s still work to do

Keep an eye out on your campus

By Lynette Nyaggah, CCA President

THE POWER BEHIND CCA and CTA lies in the strength of their local chapters and their members. When our chapters are strong we are a stronger organization. That’s why CCA and CTA have each embarked on the development of a Strategic Plan that will be a roadmap for our future. There are a great many changes that are occurring in higher education and in K-12 and we must be able not just to respond to them, but to create our own vision for our public schools and colleges and our profession.

First, the good news. This year’s state budget should provide for more faculty hiring, (a good thing for our part-time faculty) salary increases and expanded programs at our colleges. I wish we could stop there. Unfortunately, other challenges exist that have the potential to change higher education. Let me share a few with you.

Baccalaureate Degrees

Earlier this year, the Board of Governors approved baccalaureate programs at 15 community colleges. However, the devil is in the details. One condition of the legislation is that these new programs not duplicate degrees already offered at the CSU and UC. The problem is that neither CSU nor UC has yet been given the course information they need to evaluate whether there is duplication of their degrees. Everyone who has worked in curriculum knows that to evaluate programs and courses, we have to have course descriptions. The Academic Senates of the CSU and UC still need to certify that these degrees do not duplicate existing degrees before the Board of Governors can legally grant approval. The final chapter has not been written.

Adult Education Consortia

This year the governor has approved $500 million to allow an adult education consortia to help consolidate and turn over adult education to our community colleges. It may be a good idea, but we have an ongoing problem with the makeup of the state and local bodies making decisions on adult education – most do not have faculty and bargaining unit representation. In mid-February, the faculty groups sent a letter to the Chancellor and the Superintendent of Public Instruction asking for 50 percent faculty representation on any adult education decision making bodies. We have been emphasizing that if educators are not involved, the new programs will not work.

Instructional Service Agreements

The Chancellor’s Office allows colleges to provide specialized programs for selected populations of students under what are called Instructional Service Agreements. Examples of these are in-service workshops for police officers on four Saturdays on a particular topic they need for continuing education. When these are done right, faculty who teach them go through the normal hiring process and become members of the union, even for short-term classes. At some institutions, however, districts sign contracts with outside agencies without ever consulting the faculty in charge of hiring, either Academic Senate or union. Contracts are kept secret, the information on the agencies is hidden, and faculty who don’t meet minimum qualifications are hired to teach students who may or may not be qualified to attend community college. These faculty may be paid very low hourly wages – sometimes only $20 per hour. Often the union doesn’t even know this is happening unless they accidentally see a reference to these contracts in the Board of Trustee agendas.

Dual Enrollment Programs

Another challenge for faculty is the pervasive presence of dual or concurrent enrollment programs on our campuses. The Chancellor’s Office is a great advocate for expanding these programs on the basis that they lead to increased enrollment by high school students in their local community colleges. But, there are problems. In one model, high school teachers who meet minimum qualifications are hired to teach our community college classes on the high school campus. Often, these classes are not offered at all to our community college faculty and hiring bypasses the normal process. The second model is to hire community college instructors to teach at the high schools. Yet, if these classes are offered as credit recovery for failing high school students, they are essentially K-12 classes, and for most of our high schools in California, they have to be taught by credentialed teachers who are “Highly Qualified.” Having community college faculty in those classrooms is a violation of the law.

Dual enrollment programs take away funding and access from our targeted populations of students. While we realize that things are much better now with improved funding, why would we devote part of our funding to educating high school students when our own students have trouble getting those same GE classes taught at the high schools?

What to do?

What can you do? Stay vigilant, keep up with those Board of Trustee agendas, monitor these programs if they come to your campus, and discuss them with your colleagues and with CCA/CTA staff. CCA is one of the most powerful voices for community college in the state. Our voices will be heard.
CCA IN ACTION

Professional trainings highlight CCA’s Winter Conference in San Diego

Were you there?

CCA’S ANNUAL WINTER CONFERENCE at the Hyatt Regency in San Diego brought together almost 200 faculty activists to share information and learn new strategies and techniques for better serving their colleagues.

A new intensive three-day Bargaining Academy was well-received by participants while other trainings included “Building Part-time Faculty Membership,” “CalSTRS and Your Retirement,” and “Social Media to Support Bargaining,” among others. A Friday night showing of the film, “Miss Representation” regarding women’s portrayal in the media also generated a lively discussion among faculty during a Saturday morning session. In addition, conference-goers received updates on the state budget, accreditation, and other topics of concern.

As it has over the past several years, CCA’s Building Strong Locals Academy graduated 10 more faculty destined to become union leaders during a luncheon ceremony. The group received exclusive training over three CCA conferences that focused on strengthening local chapters. Many academy graduates over the years have since become leaders in their local associations.

The conference also featured a Western-style hoedown reception for participants to get to know their CCA Board of Directors.

RECENTLY ELECTED PRESIDENT, Frank Post has served in a variety of positions within the Southwestern College Education Association in Chula Vista since 2003. He is an Adapted Computer Technology specialist who finds great joy in union activism. Here’s what he has to say about that union work.

Tell us about your path to becoming president of the Southwestern College Education Association? I became involved in the union leadership in 2003 and have held various positions – I’ve been treasurer, served on the negotiations team and grievance chair. I was lead negotiator and was vice president two or three times. Last year, I felt it was time to step up.

“We’ve really made inroads on behalf of our part-time faculty this year.”

Your chapter has joined the local Labor Council? We’re part of the San Diego and Imperial Counties Labor Council. They are focused on politics and advocacy, volunteer events and helping to support union actions. The best way to put it is it’s a synergy. We are not duplicating efforts and we are putting our resources into one larger pot to achieve overall greater things. It’s been very beneficial to our union. Through the Labor Council, we’ve gotten involved in the Center on Policy Initiatives and I now serve on the Students for Economic Justice Steering Committee. The program provides a paid summer internship where up to a dozen students train on how to become organizers. I’ve recommended a student from our college and if she’s accepted it will be the first one ever from our college. This program is a way we can identify and train labor organizers while they are young.

What’s been your greatest challenge as president? I’d say learning to deal more effectively with the administration has been a challenge. I’ve had to put a lot of time and energy and taking a look at myself and how I communicate with people across the table, whether it’s at the negotiating table or sitting at the campus leadership meetings. But so far, it’s been successful.

What’s been some of the chapter’s achievements? We’ve really made inroads on behalf of our part-time faculty this year, such as getting paid office hours, eight hours a year of paid flex time, improving our vesting language, making sure people get the same number of classes they’ve had in the past. I think moving things forward for our part-time faculty in such a short span has been tremendous. It’s been a team effort so I’m happy about that. We’ve also expanded our union leadership and have more people serving on committees and in leadership roles than we ever have had in the past.

Southwestern faculty president continues to strengthen labor ties in community

Joining Labor Council reaps benefits

San Joaquin Delta College instructor Ricardo Aguilar and Sierra College instructor Susie Le O’Brien take a tour of Twitter. Bruce Smith was among a hearty group from Southwestern College. CCA Board member Nicole Faudree helps host the CCA Western-style social event.

San Joaquin Delta College instructor Ricardo Aguilar and Sierra College instructor Susie Le O’Brien take a tour of Twitter. Bruce Smith was among a hearty group from Southwestern College. CCA Board member Nicole Faudree helps host the CCA Western-style social event.

San Joaquin Delta College instructor Ricardo Aguilar and Sierra College instructor Susie Le O’Brien take a tour of Twitter. Bruce Smith was among a hearty group from Southwestern College. CCA Board member Nicole Faudree helps host the CCA Western-style social event.
Counselors can help ease difficulties for college students with Asperger’s

Board of Governors considering new regulations

STUDENT NEEDS

AS A COUNSELOR at Saddleback College, Zina Boratynec noticed such a significant increase in students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) on campus that she spent a year’s sabbatical focused on how faculty can prepare for the challenges they bring to the classroom.

Wave of students

By now, many faculty are acquainted with Asperger’s Syndrome, a condition characterized by significant difficulties in social interaction and nonverbal communication and an intense development of special interests. Only in recent years has Asperger’s been considered “on the autism spectrum” and the wave of students receiving special services in K-12 are now making their way to higher education.

“No two students on the spectrum are alike,” Boratynec said. “They have the intellectual capacity to succeed but struggle with social and self-regulatory skills like group work, meeting timelines, self-advocacy skills, and monitoring behavior.”

Language skills can also be problematic. Literal interpretation of words makes understanding a syllabus or lecture a challenge, according to Boratynec. Further, many students may struggle with articulating themselves in writing. They can be good at the technical aspects of grammar and punctuation but have problems generating ideas, organizing their thoughts and expressing themselves.

“Many are highly intelligent and very bright,” Boratynec said. “It’s a matter of helping them flourish in this environment.”

In addition to support and social groups for students with ASD, she would like to see a student mentor program developed since research shows that students on the spectrum benefit when typical behavior is modeled. And, because this student population often comes with strong parental advocates, Boratynec says it is also important to establish a trusting and cooperative relationship with parents as students with ASD transition to higher education.

“Many are highly intelligent and very bright,” Boratynec said. “It’s a matter of helping them flourish in this environment.”

FOR YEARS Lynn Shaw has advocated for stronger ties between Career and Technical Education and academics in the community colleges. Throughout her own career, Shaw has lived and breathed both. A one-time miner, steelworker, electrician and longshore worker, Shaw later earned a doctorate in educational and longshore worker, Shaw later earned a doctorate in educational technology program at Long Beach City College.

That’s why Shaw was such a strong appointee to co-chair the Board of Governors Taskforce on Workforce, Job Creation and a Strong Economy.

Focus on CTE

“All of a sudden, CTE is getting a lot of attention and a lot of money,” Shaw said. “It used to be there was Career and Technical Education and there was academics. I’m trying to shift the conversation that CTE is academic. It’s not an either/or dichotomy.”

The taskforce launched in November and will spend the next few months gathering information through “Regional College Conversations” with community college practitioners and through five Strong Workforce Town Hall meetings with business, education, labor and elected leaders. Shaw is one of four faculty on the task force, which also includes representatives from business, labor and public agencies involved in workforce planning, education policy and community-based organizations.

The goal of the task force is “to increase individual and regional economic competitiveness by providing California’s workforce with relevant skills and quality credentials that match employer needs and fuel a strong economy,” according to the Chancellor’s Office.

Legislation likely

Therein lies the rub; the task force will undoubtedly be delving into what community colleges need to do to prepare students for the jobs of the future, and, with the world work changing so fast, the task is more difficult. The findings of the task force is likely to generate legislation that will turn into policy and programs.

“It’s perfect timing. CTE is finally getting its due,” Shaw said. “We’ve come a long way from vocational education, I’ll tell you that.”

In addition, as president of her local faculty union, Shaw brings the union voice to the task force. She is hoping to find common ground with employers who will be creating the jobs of the future.

“I think we can agree we all want a well-trained and a well-paid workforce and employers can’t thrive unless their workers thrive. You have to invest, you have to educate, you have to do something to make it happen. It’s not a blank check.”

Find more information, resources and a schedule of upcoming regional meetings and town halls at http://doingwhatmatters.cccco.edu/Home.aspx.
ACCREDITATION

One college regains accreditation temporarily but faculty unions are rightfully wary

Accrediting commission may still be overstepping its authority

NEWS OF NOTE

COMMUNITY COLLEGE FACULTY were cheered by news that that one of the largest community colleges in the state will not lose its accreditation and be forced to close its doors in the coming months.

But that doesn’t mean that faculty unions are ready to forgive and forget the upheaval caused by the Accrediting Commission of Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) when it sanctioned the college back in 2013.

City College of San Francisco (CCSF) will retain its accreditation for at least two years following a turnaround by the Accrediting Commission and a December court decision in the college’s favor. Campus protests are continuing, however, against the appointment of a new “special trustee” to oversee the college until power is returned to the elected board of trustees later this year.

Although CCA does not represent instructors at CCSF, it has stood in solidarity with the faculty union there.

More to come

“There is obviously more to come in this, but both developments prevent the college from losing its accreditation immediately and will allow students and faculty to continue to work for student success,” said CCA President Lynette Nyaggah.

Nevertheless, Nyaggah reiterated that storm clouds remain.

“CCA is very concerned that the ACCJC is still overstepping its authority by recommending that Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) be included in faculty evaluations,” Nyaggah said.

Rio Hondo College in Whitter is a case in point. Although the college just received full accreditation by the ACCJC in February, faculty union leaders are concerned by the Commission’s mandate relating to the level of participation in the SLO process.

Just last year, the faculty association and college reached a bargaining agreement in which the faculty agreed to engage in the SLO process. The district bargaining team included a proposal that specifically excluded part-time faculty from the same requirement. The ACCJC in its review, however, indicated that this is a deficiency that needs correcting.

Threat to academic freedom

“Rio Hondo faculty are afraid that this could serve as a basis for interfering with academic freedom and for not rehiring part-time faculty,” said Nyaggah, who is herself a tenured professor of the college.

Currently, only two colleges represented by CCA are on warning from the Accreditation Commission. But that doesn’t mean that accreditation status for any of the colleges can’t change. CCA is warning faculty to be vigilant about the antics of the ACCJC.

Toward that effort, CCA has joined with the California Federation of Teachers, to combat the direct and collateral damage left in the wake of a negative ACCJC review. The two faculty unions formed a speakers’ bureau that has already made presentations to faculty on a number of campuses.

For a presentation on your campus regarding ACCJC, please contact your chapter president or CCA/CTA staff person.
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Take it from a former chapter president: This union stuff really works!

Stronger local chapter means a stronger faculty

PERSPECTIVE

By Keith Law
CCA Director
District B

BACK IN 2008, Merced College’s faculty was hit by a perfect storm comprised of the encroaching recession and an administrative reorganization that was intended to seize power from faculty division chairs and place it in the hands of administrative area deans. It became clear that we needed to build a stronger union to defend faculty interests, so a group of us decided to do just that. Prior to this effort, the Merced College Faculty Association was primarily called into service during negotiations, as we counted on our collective bargaining agreement. We threatened a landslide of grievances, which was all it took to change the tone and get the district to work with us on this matter. This also sent a clear message that we intended to defend our contract, which set a stage for a more respectful relationship, even if reluctantly, on the part of the administration.

CCA provided help
My predecessor took advantage of a grant program that was initiated by CCA to assist locals to fund 40 percent release time for officers. When I became chapter president, one of my first struggles with the administration occurred when I applied for the release time and discovered that the district was billing CCA for 40 percent of our president’s salary and benefits, rather than the part-time replacement cost as the grant agreement stated. We won that battle, and later negotiated the 40 percent release time into our contract at the district’s expense. As the power struggle ensued, I filed over a dozen grievances on behalf of our members by the end of my first full term as president. Another battle occurred when the district cut more than 60 courses due to budget cuts. This caused them to reschedule fall courses for full-time faculty members over summer break, which they intended to do without seeking the mutual consent of faculty members as stated in our collective bargaining agreement. We threatened a landslide of grievances, which was all it took to change the tone and get the district to work with us on this matter. This also sent a clear message that we intended to defend our contract, which set a stage for a more respectful relationship, even if reluctantly, on the part of the administration.

Raised part-time visibility
Another symptom of the cuts was that our part-time faculty lost those 60 classes, which was not recognized by our district as the loss of jobs that it clearly was. We realized then that our part-time faculty members were an invisible labor pool, so MCFA embarked on a mission to reverse that trend. First, we worked with then-CCA Vice President Lynette Nyagag to include our part-time faculty as dues-paying members through the fair share process, which caused another fight with the district. After winning this battle, we created a part-time committee and established two part-time faculty positions on our Representative Council. We committed our negotiating team to place one part-time concern on the table each round of negotiations. These efforts have met with progress on behalf of our part-time faculty colleagues: We negotiated a similar pay scale for part-time as full time regarding credit for education and years of experience, part-time faculty now receive pay checks on the tenth of the month for each month worked, enjoy expanded sick leave, and we established a new employee discipline clause that means they cannot lose their jobs arbitrarily due to retaliation or unwarranted discipline.

One of our greatest contributions was to establish the month of April as Part-Time Faculty Appreciation Month, wherein we recognize part-time faculty members for their contributions, including presentations to the Board and community about the contributions and challenges of part-time faculty members. Part-Time Faculty Appreciation Month got its start at Merced College, but now is established CCA-wide, with a special grant fund to assist locals to produce events.

Leadership training
MCFA has sent six faculty members to CCA’s Building Strong Locals Academy, which means that many more of our officers and rank-and-file members are educated about union matters. With the assistance of our CCA leadership and CTA staff, MCFA was awarded a grant that was used to fund a retreat wherein over a dozen faculty members met over two days to form a model contract that we then used to guide future negotiations. We owe many of our victories to this guide, including the maintenance of salaries and benefits through the “great recession,” and the inclusion of binding arbitration into our grievance process.

With the assistance of CCA leadership and CTA staff and resources, we ran two successful trustee elections, unseating two incumbents. The tide of power changed dramatically in the unions favor. We have stopped the accrediting commission’s attempt to slip Student Learning Outcome evaluations into our evaluation process without being negotiated, we have exposed shenanigans in our district’s budgeting, and currently we are undertaking a CCA funded independent audit of the 50 percent law. The battles along the way were often fierce and dirty, however, currently at Merced College we have a powerful union presence that actively participates in all major committees, board elections and actions, and administrative hiring.

My advice to local leaders everywhere is that they nurture strong relationships with their CCA leaders and CTA staff. With the assistance of CCA leadership and CTA staff and resources, we ran two successful trustee elections, unseating two incumbents. The tide of power changed dramatically in the unions favor. We have stopped the accrediting commission’s attempt to slip Student Learning Outcome evaluations into our evaluation process without being negotiated, we have exposed shenanigans in our district’s budgeting, and currently we are undertaking a CCA funded independent audit of the 50 percent law. The battles along the way were often fierce and dirty, however, currently at Merced College we have a powerful union presence that actively participates in all major committees, board elections and actions, and administrative hiring.

My advice to local leaders everywhere is that they nurture strong relationships with their CCA leaders and CTA staff. This stuff really does work! ■

Keith Law is CCA Director, District B and past president of the Merced College Faculty Association.

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