Getting to know you project builds community with Solano College faculty and staff

Member profiles are a hit

You Might Catch

Karen Cook humming a few bars of “Getting to Know You” from The King and I as she walks the campus of Solano College these days. And with good reason. As vice president and organizer for the Solano College Faculty Association, Cook has been putting up posters profiling Solano faculty and staff for a union-led member engagement project.

“It’s really picked up momentum. People are liking it,” Cook said.

Faculty and staff profiles

Each of the 12×18-inch posters profiles a faculty or staff member and features a quote about what drives them to do the work they do.

One of those profiled is photography instructor Ron Zak. Under his color photograph, Zak’s quote reads: “When I returned from the war in Vietnam, I went back to college. I was a little lost without direction, but two of my professors took extra time with me, saw I had potential, and went the extra mile to set me on the right path. I want to give back to other students in the same way, to help them, and to honor the professors who helped.”

Cook said Zak’s message is typical and reflective of other profiles that have been gathered.

“We’re finding that what drives them is always the students. Working with students energizes us,” she said. “Many of us could be making more money in another profession. But this is where we want to be.”

Campus unions unite

Working with Cook on the project are SCFA exec board members, faculty and student volunteers, and two other campus unions, California State Employees Association (CSEA) Chapter 211 and International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE) Local 39. The unions formed a coalition during previous troubling times on campus, and have continued their alliance. The poster project has only added to the teamwork that has developed.

Begun initially as part of a membership drive, the project is beginning to instill a new sense of pride at the campus. With a new college president in place, Cook is hoping the posters send a positive message to all about the commitment of faculty and staff.

“We’ve had so much animosity in the past,” Cook said. “The feedback I’m getting is that this is a positive thing.”

The faculty association was aided by CTA staff, while the project was funded through a CTA grant. When completed, the project will have posters of each member of the faculty and staff unions.

CTA builds massive organizing effort to counter attacks in Friedrichs case

Supreme Court decision expected in the spring

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The Official Newspaper of The Community College Association/CTA-NEA Volume 51, Number 3 • April 2016

Please see Friedrichs, page 5
Real student success goes beyond ‘metrics’

Current accountability doesn’t fit with our mission

The California Community College system is the largest public higher education system in the world. The community colleges were founded to give a chance to young adults who might never have had a chance to go to college. Look at the rest of the world, where students who make poor choices at age 15 have minimal chances for higher education. That’s what we do in the community colleges — we give chances to those who would never have had a chance otherwise.

When we listen to their stories, we hear miracles.

Students change majors

Three times? I certainly did.

Students change majors, should they go on strike on April 15-17?

What if a student who thought that being a major? Shouldn’t he have the freedom to make a decision that he really loves to repair electric class and falls in love with it, even after taking the course? We lock students into a major or program, they have no chance to explore. Community colleges. If we lock students into a major or program, they have no chance to explore.

The recent emphasis on accountability, however, is in opposition to the goal of community colleges. If we lock students into a major or program, they have no chance to explore. What if a student who thought that being a major? Shouldn’t he have the freedom to make a decision that he really loves to repair electric class and falls in love with it, even after taking the course? We lock students into a major or program, they have no chance to explore. Community colleges. If we lock students into a major or program, they have no chance to explore.

The CCA Advocate is also available online at the CCA website: www.cca4me.org

CCC in action

CCA pledges solidarity with CSU faculty as five-day statewide strike nears

Faculty seek first salary increase since 2008

Community college faculty, many of whom also teach in the University of California campuses, are prepared to support their CSU colleagues if the faculty of the California Faculty Association, which represents some 26,000 faculty, librarians and other instructional personnel in the CSU system, has been at loggerheads with the administration over the past two-year quest for a 5 percent General Salary Increase (GSI) for all faculty and an additional 2.65 percent Service Salary Increase (SSI) for eligible faculty. As a result, CFA leaders announced plans for a statewide strike April 15-17, 18 and 19.

We stand in solidarity with our CFA colleagues and will do whatever we can do to support them. Should they go on strike on April 15? This means our members will join them as individuals on the picket line. The question: What must invest in faculty salaries if the quality of education is going to be preserved?

The CFA President Lynette Nyaggah.

We have a right to defend ourselves and our families from economic disaster. One of our faculty members told the chancellor that she doesn’t have enough money to sustain her own life, even while giving her heart to her students.

Check out other CCA/CTA trainings

In addition to a CCC’s, California’s campus-wide trainings are held periodically by the California Teachers Association. The trainings are free and typically held on campus during the academic year. Typically, the trainings are held on campus, and the dates and times for each training are subject to change. Participants are encouraged to register in advance for each training.

About us

The California Community Colleges is the largest public higher education system in the world, comprised of 112 community colleges that serve over 2.1 million students and 8 million unique users annually. The CCCs are a vital part of California’s economy, providing educational opportunities to prepare students for careers and personal growth. The CCCs also provide lifelong learning opportunities to Californians of all ages through community college continuing education programs. The CCCs are an affiliate of the California Lutheran University, and they work together to promote student success, affordability, and access to higher education.

Contact us

For more information about the California Community Colleges, please visit www.ccc.ca.gov or call 866-CCC-4CA (866-222-4222).
Community colleges continue to gain additional funding under Prop. 30
Student success, workforce training targeted in budget

STATE BUDGET NEWS

M A R T I N C H E S E N

Proposition 30, the California budget passed in 2011, committed $9 billion to community colleges over five years. The state budget for the 2016-17 fiscal year includes a 4.4 percent increase for the California Community Colleges, which translates to more than $393 million in additional funding. That includes a 4.4 percent increase for community colleges over last year. The funding increase is aimed at creating financial stability, allowing community colleges to contort their financial plan to culminate student success, helping students transition from basic skills classes, and increasing enrollment of those with unmet needs. All of these things are going to be achieved by Prop. 30, which is the product of the Full-Time Faculty Writers and Prop. 30 Alliances have been working on for the past year. This funding increase is critical to the success of community colleges. It is time to stand together and fight for what is right for our students and colleges for that to continue.

COMMUNITY COLLEGES WILL con- continue to rise in the budget. The governor’s proposed $30 billion in total funding for higher education includes a 4.4 percent increase for community colleges over last year. The funding increase is aimed at creating financial stability, allowing community colleges to contort their financial plan to culminate student success, helping students transition from basic skills classes, and increasing enrollment of those with unmet needs. All of these things are going to be achieved by Prop. 30, which is the product of the Full-Time Faculty Writers and Prop. 30 Alliances have been working on for the past year. This funding increase is critical to the success of community colleges. It is time to stand together and fight for what is right for our students and colleges for that to continue.

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IF YOU KNEW you were going to work 15 hours a day in temperatures that were 100 degrees, could you do it?” Lyzeth Rios asked the room full of Latino students at Golden Valley High School in Santa Clarita.

Her provocative question was part of a talk on labor leader Cesar Chavez, who — many will be shocked to learn — is not well known to a new generation of Latino students. Rios hopes to remedy that by preparing her students to enter CTAs Cesar E. Chavez Memorial Education Awards Program, a competition that recognizes students for their understanding of Chavez’s vision and guiding principles.

‘IT Takes a Barrio’

These students might not have considered higher education as part of their future if they had not enrolled in “IT Takes a Barrio” (ITAB), a union-led program to inspire more Latino students to go to college and, hopefully, into teaching.

Spearheaded by the College of the Canyons Faculty Association (COCFA) and funded through a $450,000 National Education Association grant, the program brings together faculty from the community college, Hart Union High School District, and California State University, Northridge, in a collaborative and focused effort. “Since the program was started, I’ve noticed the students are more motivated because they realize that college is attainable. I saw the change when we visited CSU Northridge,” Rios said. “That’s when they were able to picture themselves in college.”

An English teacher and Hart District Teachers Association member, Rios runs the weekly program with Vincent Devlahovich, COCFA member, who directs the three-year grant.

Work is paying off

Early indications are that their work is paying off. In the program’s first year, the percentage of ITAB students graduating high school and going on to college skyrocketed from 20 to 90 percent, a major accomplishment in a district that has undergone a sea change in demographics. “ITAB makes you think of life after high school, and walking through a college campus gives me the confidence to say I can do this,” said Henry Cortez, who will graduate from Golden Valley this year.

Of the first-year cohort, all graduated, and 18 out of 21 students went on to four-year colleges or the College of the Canyons, while one student is postponing college for a year to help her family.

“We’re giving these students hope because their families never experienced higher education. We are totally invested in this.”

Operating as a nonotime student club, ITAB provides guest speakers, special presentations by visiting faculty, skill building, and, of course, pizza.

Field trips are organized, including one to the National Chavez Center at La Paz in Keene, as well as to surrounding colleges. Some students have attended CTAs State Council of Education and Student CTA conferences to expose them to union values and the role they play in education. “But the main thing is that we are exposing them to the right people,” Devlahovich said. “It’s one thing for a counselor to tell students they can go to college, but here they can actually visit and hear stories from successful adults — that’s why this is so successful.”

Change in demographics

While getting the students to college is important, the hope is that they will become teachers. That was Devlahovich’s motive in applying for the three-year NEA grant to fund the program. During his years in teaching, the geology professor has observed a profound change in student demographics at College of the Canyons. Like the community around it, the college has changed from an almost entirely Caucasian student body to one that is 40 percent Latino.

Yet, as on many college campuses, the faculty doesn’t begin to reflect the college demographics. All that could change in the next few years with the massive retirement of full-time faculty. “We have to think about where the new faculty will come from,” Devlahovich said.

Meanwhile, at nearby CSU Northridge, Maria Elena Cruz, a Chicano studies professor and member of the California Faculty Association, mentors ITAB graduates and other Latino students in a separate “teacher pipeline program” partially funded through CTA’s Institute for Teaching, which provides grants for teacher-eduaction reform. She currently has five students applying to enter teaching programs, while two are already in graduate school.

Teacher pipeline

Students in the teacher pipeline program gain experience in public speaking, lesson planning and interviewing strategies. Even if they don’t go into traditional education fields, Cruz said, “I tell my students that in everything they do, whether they are a lawyer, a nurse, or in business, they all have an opportunity to teach.”

The union-led program has fostered extensive collaboration among colleagues within the high school, the community college district, and nearby CSU Northridge campus. “There has never been a lot of dialogue between the districts, but we have been able to build on that,” Devlahovich said. “There must be a lot more collaboration, since we are serving the same students.”

Because of that collaboration, Devlahovich’s colleague, Juan Burriel, the faculty advisor to the Association of Latino American Students at the College of the Canyons, was able to send two of his students to a national conference to train to become mentors to the high school students. In mentoring, they too are exposed to the skills needed to become educators.

Funding always needed

The colleagues have learned along the way that it not only takes a barrio, it takes funding to produce successful college-bound students — and funding is what will be needed when the grant runs out in 2017.

Still, Devlahovich and his colleagues are confident of the program’s success and are eager to share it with their colleagues statewide. “We’re giving these students hope because their families never experienced higher education,” he said. “We are totally invested in this.”