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Anza faced a projected 2004-05 deficit similar to that of Contra Costa, but all of the parties worked together on a package of adjustments that included a non-STRS golden handshake for faculty, furlough days for classified staff and administrators, professional development leave deferrals and benefit cost-reduction measures for all employee groups. Even the trustees weighed in with a reduction in compensation. As it turned out, all of the one-time reductions were restored when the 2004-05 state budget delivered sufficient funding. There was even enough money to fund a pass-through of the 2.41 percent COLA to all employee groups.

However, the enrollment decline in 2004-05 may lead to an unexpected deficit for the coming year, so once again Foothill-De Anza faculty negotiators are looking to the May revision of the state budget to see where the district stands in terms of revenue. Faculty negotiators at Chabot-Las Positas are also eagerly awaiting the May Revise because their district is projecting a structural deficit ranging from \$1 million to as high as \$6 million. Chabot-Las Positas faculty have had recent success in working cooperatively with the district to solve problems and anticipate that this relationship will continue.

Santa Monica and West Valley-Mission

In contrast, Santa Monica and West Valley-Mission are districts that have not worked cooperatively with faculty to get through these stressful times. Both districts met the challenge of the mid-year cuts with the same slash and burn approach taken by Contra Costa. Both were threatened with a loss of base student enrollment that ultimately results in a loss of base funding.

Santa Monica faculty launched an all out campaign in opposition to President Piedad Robertson's plan to gut the district's vocational programs. She later gained statewide influence as a member of Governor Schwarzenegger's transition team, and many feared that her ill-conceived policies might infect the entire system. Her unexpected resignation to take an out-of-state consulting job may, in the end, turn out to ensure the district's salvation as it scrambles to regain lost enrollment. Although it looks like the district will come up short of full enrollment restoration, there is a greater sense of optimism at Santa Monica thanks to both the change of administration and the Faculty Association's success in helping to elect two new trustees.

Unlike Contra Costa and Santa Monica where the district cut classes to the point of jeopardizing the enrollment base, West Valley-Mission seemed to play a game of brinkmanship in an effort to intimidate faculty. Either that, or the administration simply came to its senses early enough to avoid disaster. Regardless, the actions of the district at the time of the mid-year cuts still color the atmosphere at West Valley-Mission today where the faculty feel like they are under siege and have ramped up their advocacy as a result. The Association of College Educators

is investigating the district's 50 percent law reports, questioning whether it meets the requirement that half of expenditures be dedicated to classroom instruction. Meanwhile, negotiations on salary and benefits remain contentious.

Grossmont-Cuyamaca

Perhaps the most perplexing situation can be found at Grossmont-Cuyamaca where, unlike Contra Costa, the assault on faculty has no basis in financial need. Here, the administration appears motivated only by a jealous resentment of faculty leadership. Holding the line at a salary adjustment below COLA, it has tied the issue to claims of difficulty in meeting normal step and column advances. Despite an ending balance that is well above a 5 percent reserve, the negotiation process has stalled and a mediation session was set for late April. The Trustees joined in with an open attack on faculty at a recent board meeting.

Santa Rosa and Allan Hancock

In contrast, a sound financial basis has allowed for resolution of stressful situations at Santa Rosa and Allan Hancock. Both faculty unions saw enough district funding available to fund salary increases in 2004-05. In the case of Allan Hancock, the end result was disappointing with the net package coming in at a level below the 2.41 percent COLA. At Santa Rosa, protracted negotiations brought better results with the COLA applied retroactively for 2004-05 and an additional 0.61 percent added in July for a total increase of 3.02 percent in place for 2005-06.

Rancho Santiago, Redwoods, and Santa Barbara

Independent districts reporting a less stressful situation included Rancho Santiago, Redwoods, and Santa Barbara. Rancho Santiago has a 4 percent increase kicking in this summer, while faculty are coping with the loss of several high level administrators at Santa Ana College. Redwoods faculty were able to negotiate COLA plus 1.0 percent but are apprehensive that they may be experiencing a 'calm before the storm' with budgetary challenges on the horizon.

The Santa Barbara union continues to make progress on an ambitious campaign launched last year to address a wide range of issues now that there is new administrative leadership in the district. The big news from Santa Barbara comes from within the faculty in that the Independent union successfully resisted a decertification effort launched by the American Federation of Teachers (AFT/CFT). With the reaffirmation of its independent status, the Instructors Association wrote that the thorough self-examination from this experience must now "translate into a stronger union in the future."

These stressful times have, without exception, strengthened all of the Independent unions.

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California
Community
College
Independents

President's Message

Funding, Accountability, Benefits Challenge Faculty

by Zoe Close, CCCI President

On a Tuesday in March a student came to my office to declare his decision to become a community college teacher. "Can you tell me what it's really like?" he pleaded. I proceeded to expound on the lofty delights of the academic life, the rewards of witnessing students bloom and the weighty responsibility to humanity at large. He stopped me and said, "I already understand all of that. I want to know how much money you make. Is it a good job? What do they make you do? What happens when you retire?" I told him he would have to come back another day since I had to rush off to a meeting of the faculty union.



Close

What will be the working conditions for faculty in our system when this student is ready to give back to the community colleges? Can we in good faith mentor our students to take our places? The ongoing problems stemming from the constant under-funding of the CCC system, coupled with new waves of attack on our retirement and accountability, manifest troubled times. Our Independent unions, however, have withstood assault after assault and are uniquely equipped to move into the combat required to keep faculty whole and our profession strong.

Although the governor's January budget shows an overall increase of dollars to the system for 2005-06, compared to the state's other higher education systems and the nation's community colleges, we are a bare-bones operation. The system's funding requests are not part of the governor's January budget which is limited to COLA and growth. The second \$80 million equalization installment the governor promised was not budgeted and may not be anywhere in sight.

The newest efforts on the part of the CCC system to address under-funding and the specific problem of equity for 2006-07 is a model billed as "Providing a Stable, Reliable and Equitable Funding Allocation." This is a recommendation to replace program-based funding distribution of funds with a

method that starts with a base allocation to each district dependent upon the number of colleges and centers and then equalizes rates for a district's FTES (full-time equivalent students). As usual, some districts temporarily get more funds and some less. Several of our independent districts - Chabot-Las Positas, Foothill-De Anza, Grossmont-Cuyamaca, Santa Barbara and Santa Monica - are cautiously supportive at best. What do we think the prospects are for having such a proposal funded when nearly an additional \$100 million beyond the no-show equalization dollars would be required?

The element of instability in funding added to lean funding results in a "peanut scramble" mentality on the part of our districts. The "never enough money" tune is sung constantly to faculty and makes the negotiating we all do for salary, health packages and other benefits approach the concept of miracle.

Community college faculty have been shocked by recent political ads that show K-12 teachers speaking in favor of the governor's merit pay notions. Much work lies ahead for us as the accountability monster lumbers further into community college territory. At its March 7-8 meeting, the Board of Governors reviewed and approved "AB 1417 Accountability Project: Reporting Framework Proposal," a document that was due to the governor and legislature on March 25. AB 1417 (Pacheco) legislatively demands that the BoG "...provide recommendations, based on information to be developed in a study to be conducted by the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges regarding the design of a workable structure for the annual evaluation of district level performance in meeting statewide educational outcome priorities..." \$31.4 million of funding is being held back from the system until we pass the accountability test. Such accountability measures always end up with faculty as the ones who must account. Legislative accountability requirements, combined with the already dangerous accountability demands of the student learn-

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Leaders Reaffirm Value of Local “Independence”

Our CCCI faculty know the meaning of hard and frustrating work in collective bargaining and in advocating for faculty concerns in our system. These are difficult times, and the Independents heard a great deal about threats to the community college system at their Spring Conference in Sacramento, April 15-16. But the group also took time to reflect on the strengths of independence during a visit from Cy Gulassa, former CCCI president, now retired from Foothill-De Anza.

Our independent status gives us advantages which are many: 1) Our Independent unions keep the unique culture of each of our institutions intact. Faculty at institutions who owe allegiance to larger groups like CFT or CTA must relinquish that individuality to the interests and goals of the parent organization. 2) We create our own dues structures and make sure that our dues go directly to benefit our local faculty. Bargaining units who belong to the two big unions have dues that are double, triple, or even quadruple the amount of our own. A common question from faculty at those institutions is “What are we getting for it?” 3) We

possess the flexibility to handle issues in a way that meets the needs of our faculty alone. Consulting and retaining our own legal counsel to whom we have immediate access gives us an edge. 4) Independence gives us complete control over our own elections and union representation. 5) We never have to consult a parent organization before we act, and we never have to sit and wait for help that may not come. 6) We never do all of the difficult work and then let a statewide organization take credit for the accomplishment. 7) CCCI deals with only community college faculty interests. CFT and CTA



Cy Gulassa discusses Independent unions with Contra Costa United Faculty President Sue Shattuck at the Conference.

members often find themselves in the position of having their own interests second to the interests of K-12. 8) CCCI has equal statewide representation in the form of a seat on the Consultation Council, the body that is advisory to the Board of Governors.

Santa Barbara’s union recently affirmed the advantages of being independent by prevailing valiantly over an aggressive challenge by AFT/CFT organizers. Local leaders, Tom Garey and Peter Naylor, did an outstanding job defending their organization against the attack. Executive Secretary Dennis Frisch of Santa Monica, Treasurer John Smith of Rancho Santiago, and Newsletter Editor Richard Hansen of Foothill-De Anza joined CCCI President Zoe Close in a visit to Santa Barbara as a team to assist in successfully thwarting the assault.

While uninvited affiliation or deaffiliation activities are always questionable, with all of the issues threatening our profession today, such attacks are clearly detrimental to faculty. Respect for local autonomy while working together is always the best means of defending faculty interests.

mental part of our professional lives put on the negotiations table. While the latest indications are that the governor is pulling back on this issue, the assault is merely postponed. This proposal “will be back,” and it has deadly potential for precluding quality human beings from entering the ranks of community college faculty.

“Insult added to injury” is not too strong an expression to describe the current threats to community college faculty working conditions. Maintaining viable salary and health benefits in an environment of shifting and unreliable funding, warding off accountability measures that have a deleterious effect on the fundamental values of our profession, and uncertainty about the quality of life after retirement are all serious challenges to our working lives. The best battle armor is the autonomy of our Independent unions with their capacity to identify our specific needs and interests and to hold strong.

What shall I tell my student when he returns to hear the rest of the story? I will have to think long and hard.

Negotiators Cope with District Responses to Stress

While it is always difficult to generalize about what’s happening across the state among community college districts, all would agree that the last three or four years have been, to say the least, stressful. The collapse of California’s dot-com economy meant that the community colleges got a tight budget for 2002-03, and the situation escalated from serious to critical in January when the soon-to-be-recalled Governor Davis hit the system with mid-year cuts. Although the severity of Davis’s original plan for these cuts was muted by the legislature, and despite the fact that the reductions were erased in 2003-04 and the system fared rather well under Schwarzenegger for 2004-05, the psychological damage to the community colleges remains.

Many districts continue to act as if they were suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. Every budgetary ripple in Sacramento amplifies into a shock wave by the time it rolls through the system and reaches the districts. Business officers see financial disaster lurking around every local budgetary decision. This paranoia, combined with the very real impact of rapidly increasing benefit costs, creates an extremely difficult situation for faculty negotiators. They face district responses that range from benign to lethal – no one is negotiating in a truly healthy environment.

Among the Independents, negotiators face districts that appear able to maintain a nearly business-as-usual mode while others display various levels of stress ranging from a reluctance to admit that their situation is not as bad as their paranoia suggests to those that are coping with real deficits. Response to faculty in the deficit districts ranges from cooperative problem solving to all out war. There are also a couple of districts that are rebounding from overreactions to the budgetary challenge of the mid-year cuts back in Spring 2003. Unfortunately, the budget problems districts face have been compounded this year (2004-05) by a statewide decline in enrollment – perhaps the state’s precipitous increase in student fees is beginning to choke off access to the community colleges.

Contra Costa

At Contra Costa, the Board of Trustees cannot lay the blame for the district’s enrollment problems on the increase in fees. Contra Costa administrators were among those who overreacted to the mid-year cuts by adopting a slash and burn policy, eliminating class sections and laying off part-time faculty to such an extent that the district’s student base eroded. At the same time, the district was moving ahead with plans, over faculty objections, to increase its already top-heavy administrative overhead by shifting faculty department coordinator roles into managerial dean positions.

These decisions only made a tight budgetary situation worse, and the district soon faced a growing deficit. The Board’s response was to declare war on a faculty it believed “had too much” – too much power, too much money, and too many benefits. Negotiations went nowhere despite

faculty willingness to cooperate in meeting district needs. The Board appeared to be bent on imposing a draconian set of take-backs, including a 7 percent pay cut and a 15 percent contribution toward benefits.

The drama played itself out last month when a fact-finders report proved to provide the basis for reopening negotiations. At the end of a 4:00 am session, the union was able to blunt the Board’s attack but not beat it back completely. The ongoing salary settlement amounts to a 5.25 percent reduction beginning July 2005. The Board also exacted a take-back for 2004-05 to the tune of 3.38 percent that will be paid over the next 15 months. Faculty will now pay 6 percent of their health premiums, and retiree benefits will be reduced for incoming faculty. The union sought to soften the impact on part-time faculty earnings by shifting parity funds away from full-timers teaching overloads. It also got a guarantee that re-hire rights for faculty will be in place by Fall 2006. There were also some gains in faculty scheduling and use of flex days as well as a guaranteed funding of approved sabbaticals beginning 2006-07 in return for a release of sabbatical funds for the coming year.

In a, no doubt, painful exercise, Contra Costa faculty supported the efforts of their union with an overwhelming ratification vote. However, the damage done by the Board of Trustees will be long lasting. It has demoralized a proud faculty who, over the years, built a high-quality institution on the basis of shared governance and Independent union leadership. As the United Faculty wrote in a letter following the ratification vote, “the faculty chose to accept burdensome reductions in salary and benefits in order to ensure their students an orderly completion of this semester and to avoid the possibility of irreversible damage to this district.”

So, the faculty prove yet again that they are the bedrock upon which a district’s success is founded, stepping up to answer needs the fact-finder concluded clearly flow from other sources at Contra Costa, writing that “it is growth in management and supervisory positions and salaries, not faculty salaries, that is consuming an increasing share of the budget.” Comparing statewide data, the union finds that the district has 25 percent more managers and spends almost 50 percent more on management salaries than other districts. The Board has subscribed to a formula for failure, but the Contra Costa United Faculty have embarked on a major effort to “re-vision” itself before year’s end. This proud faculty will recoup and regroup for what will be a continuing struggle to secure the district’s future and restore its prominent position among its peers.

Foothill-De Anza and Chabot-Las Positas

Unfortunately, Contra Costa is not alone among community college districts facing deficits, but other Independent unions have been able to work cooperatively with trustees and administrators to find solutions. Foothill-De

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ing outcomes dimension of the new accreditation standards, threaten basic working conditions of our faculty.

Anyone who sets wealth as a first priority does not choose the academic life. Those of us who choose a life dedicated to education do so out of strong conviction of principle regarding the value of teaching and out of moral responsibility to our fellow human beings. We have believed, however, that a stable retirement pension was part of that life. Now, yet another unspeakable challenge is upon us. The governor has proposed elimination of the CalSTRS retirement program.

The legislative mechanism for such a killer of our profession is through ACA 5 (Richman) and ACA 1X1 (Richman); the proposal is also moving on a parallel path as a ballot initiative, “The Fair and Fiscally Responsible Public Employee Retirement Act.” The changes as proposed would result in our, once stable, retirement benefit becoming a subject of collective bargaining, another funda-