



Common Ground: Fighting Together for Public Higher Education

On October 25 at Berkeley City College, a group of union activists from various higher education institutions across the Bay Area — UC-AFT Berkeley, Local 1474, California Faculty Association San Francisco State, Peralta Federation of Teachers, Local 1603 (PFT) and San Mateo Community College Federation of Teachers, Local 1493 (SMCCFT) — organized a conference to have a conversation about the future of public higher education in California. We decided to organize this conference because we have been inspired by the teachers' movements across this country and believe that educators, as workers, have a vital role in shaping a just vision for



Paul Bissember

Faculty and activists gathered for the Common Ground Conference at Berkeley City College.

students, faculty and staff. Additionally, in our organizing we have learned that we often share similar, if not the same, issues across our institutions of higher education.

In planning for this conference, we decided to come together to ad-

dress issues of academic freedom, contingent labor and oppression within the workplace. The goal was to build a strong network of Bay Area activists across the different higher education systems to support each other, brainstorm priorities and develop

plans of action to address our local and common struggles. Throughout the day, we had rich panel discussions, breakout groups and a closing plenary to synthesize the discussions throughout the day.

Leading up to the conference we received a lot of support, including endorsements and financial contributions from all of the unions from the organizing committee, as well as San Francisco Community College District Federation of Teachers, Local 2121 and State Center Federation of Teachers, Local 1533 (SCFT). These resources allowed us to provide food, reserve space for the conference, provide child care and print materials.

See **Common Ground**, page 4

Local 1521A Prepares for Negotiations



Charlotte Bowman

West Los Angeles College leaders and activists came together to learn how to support negotiations.

The organizing department has been working with AFT College Staff Guild-Los Angeles, Local 1521A leadership to develop and implement a successful contract campaign. The collective bargaining agreement expires in June 2020, and the local intends to increase member participation by being transparent throughout negotiations and inviting members to take an active role in their union.

The local has begun identifying leaders and activists to help support negotiations at each of the ten worksites. Members have participated in trainings on how to have an effective organizing conversation to move coworkers to action. At these trainings, we have also begun developing a member to member action/communication network. The first task at each worksite has been to get coworkers to complete a negotiations survey. The survey asks bargaining unit members to prioritize important issues, provide feedback on the personnel commission and indicate what they are willing to do to get a good contract. Within just a few of weeks, over 800 members have completed the survey and the goal is to get at least 85% participation. Once the surveys are completed, the negotiations team will analyze the results in order to develop proposals that represent the interests of members.

-CFT Project Organizer Charlotte Bowman

Faculty at Local 1493 Take Over Board of Trustees' Meeting

Members of the San Mateo Community College Federation of Teachers, Local 1493 (SMCCFT) turned out in droves to their district's board of trustees' meetings on November 2. The first public action of the contract campaign saw around 75 faculty, over 10% of the membership, descend on the Wednesday night meeting to support nine of their colleagues who spoke movingly around negotiations priorities, such as pay parity for part time faculty.

The action was energetic, positive and the board room was packed with many faculty that board members had to enter through a back door rather than weave their way through the crowd.



SMCC faculty amass at their district office for trustees' meeting.

Members were there to demand a fair contract, after 9 months of negotiations it's time for the administration to stop dragging their feet.

The highly successful turnout was the result of membership outreach drives on each campus during the week of Octo-

ber 7 at Skyline College and November 4 at Cañada College and College of San Mateo. During these drives, 28 member leaders and 4 CFT organizers worked together to reach 137 faculty and got 105 to signed commitment cards in support of the contract campaign. As we get ready

for board of trustees' races in November 2020, we also asked members to contribute to COPE, so we now have 21 new COPE contributors.

This rush of union activity over October and November has served another purpose as well; providing ample opportunity to engage with members about the Schools & Communities First ballot initiative. In a county like San Mateo home to the three of the six largest corporations in the world, the need for big companies to pay their fair share is all the more apparent. So far SMCCFT has collected about 100 signatures on the petition with more coming in every week.

-CFT Project Organizer
Lachlan Batchelor

Victor Valley Adjuncts Increase Solidarity During Membership Drive

An unusual November heatwave didn't stop leaders of AFT Part-Time Faculty United, Local 6286 from building union power through member-to-member outreach. Local leaders have been recruiting new members to their union all semester, and came together during the first week of November for a three-day membership drive.

Ten member volunteers worked with organizers to visit faculty members after class and shared important bargaining updates. Recent contract wins include office hour stipends, a priority list for class assignments and a five percent raise. Non-members were excited to hear about all the great progress, and 12 faculty members joined their union during the drive. Volunteers made plans to follow up with non-members who did not join during the membership drive. The local will also set up department meetings for faculty in difficult to reach areas like nursing and athletics.

Additionally, volunteers asked their colleagues, staff and students to sign petitions for the Schools and Communities First ballot initiative. The potential ballot initiative is important to the local because the beleaguered community college district needs more funding to sustain its mission of educating students across the Victor Valley region. Volunteers collected more than 100 signatures on the petitions.

-CFT Organizer Erin Conley

Negotiations Continue at Local 6262

Part-Time Faculty United at College of the Canyons, Local 6262 is currently negotiating for a 10% salary increase. So far, the district has not been bargaining in good faith. They have stalled negotia-

tions by canceling sessions countless times. On top of that, they are only willing to increase salary by a mere three percent. In an effort to push negotiations in the right direction, CFT organizers joined forces

with the local leadership to put on a three-day membership drive. During these three days, we visited faculty after class to have organizing conversations and explain the importance of joining

their union. We also had a tabling event for students to write appreciation messages to their part time faculty as well as empowering messages support-

See **Negotiations**, page 4

Adjunct Equity Week

CFT locals across the state participated in Adjunct Equity Week from October 21 through October 24. The purpose of Adjunct Equity Week is to raise awareness around issues adjunct professors face. For instance, adjunct professors teach the majority of classes at most colleges and universities and they are paid a fraction of what full-time faculty are paid and typically do not have access to benefits. Here we have highlighted a few of our locals to show the actions our members took during this time:



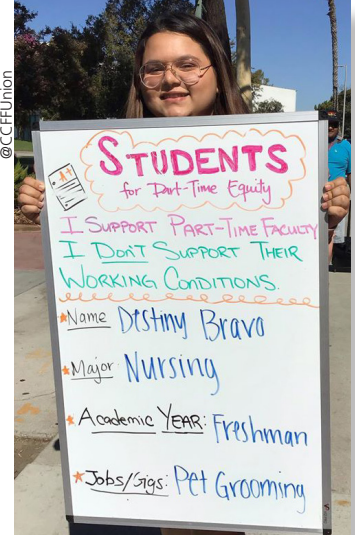
Charlotte Bowman

Juliann Wolfgram from El Camino Federation of Teachers, Local 1388 takes a picture with a VW Bus cut out that stated, “my car is my office.”



Audrie Francis

During Adjunct Equity Week, CFT project organizers and staff joined member leaders from State Center Federation of Teachers, Local 1533 to conduct membership outreach and recruitment.



@CCFFUnion

Students showing support for Cerritos College Faculty Federation, Local 6215 Adjunct Equity Week through an interactive white board activity.

Novato Teachers Speak Up

As the Red for Ed movement spreads through the United States, union members in California have continued to organize and advocate for professional working conditions necessary to provide students with a quality education. The situation in Novato is no different. Currently, Novato teachers are in contract negotiations, and as the lowest paid educators in Marin County they hope to bargain for higher wages in order to attract and retain quality staff. In response to weak initial proposals from management, Novato Federation of Teachers, Local 1986

(NFT) held a rally at the district office on October 2. During this action, 97 union members joined parents, students and other community members to call on the district to meet their demands.

The rally began at the district office just outside downtown Novato, with passing drivers issuing honks of support and teachers posing for pictures with their colleagues and students. Next, NFT President Mariah Fisher gathered the crowd together, and introduced a few speakers, including Novato educators and CFT President Jeff



Andrew Pagan

Novato teachers and staff stand united!

Freitas. These individuals spoke with passion about the difficulty of living in one of the most expensive counties in the country on a teacher’s salary, and the injustice suffered by students when they experienced high levels of teacher turnover in their

district. At the conclusion of the rally, the crowd of school staff, parents and community supporters marched into the district office in order to speak directly to their school board and superintendent

See **Novato Teachers**, page 4

CCFT Leaders Begin Recommitment Campaign

In October, leaders from the Cabrillo College Federation of Teachers, Local 4400 (CCFT) worked with CFT to organize a membership outreach drive to educate members about gains made during bargaining. They asked all members to recommit to the union by signing new membership forms and asked non-members to sign up. In order to prepare for the board of trustees' races in 2020, members were also asked to contribute to COPE. With support from the northern California organizing team, leaders talked to 10% of the bargaining unit over the course of three days. Out



CFT organizers along with CCFT members and staff spent a week talking to Cabrillo College faculty about re-committing to their union and becoming COPE contributors.

of those conversations, 35 members recommitted, 25 contributed to COPE and 10 new members signed up. Leaders are excited to keep the momentum going. They will be meeting with the CFT Organizing

Department in December to make plans to continue to do member outreach in spring 2020 and prepare for board of trustees' races in the fall of 2020.

-CFT Organizer Valarie Bachelor

Novato Teachers continued from page 3

during the public comment section of the Novato district board meeting. With this successful action complete, NFT members

have kept on organizing, and have developed a contract campaign plan so they can continue their fight for the schools their

student deserves.

-CFT Project Organizer Andrew Pagan

Negotiations continued from page 2

ing negotiations. We had a total of four executive board volunteers and two rank and file members doing visits and tabling for

all three days. From the 17 conversations we managed to have with faculty, we were able to welcome four new members! Over-

all, there was a lot of local involvement and visibility for Local 6262.

-CFT Project Organizer Laila Molina

Common Ground continued from page 1

Throughout the day, we had over 50 faculty members and union activists from West Valley Mission Community College, San Jose City College, De Anza Community College, UC Berkeley, San Francisco State University, City College of San Francisco,

San Jose State University, Berkeley City College, College of Marin, University of San Francisco, Clovis Community College, Merritt College, Laney College, Skyline College, Cañada College and Cabrillo College.

On December 17 from 5

to 7pm, we will be meeting at the PFT union hall to debrief and discuss next steps for the spring 2020.

-SMCCFT Executive Secretary Paul Bissember



The California Federation of Teachers is an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO. The CFT represents faculty and classified workers in public and private schools and colleges, from early childhood through higher education. The CFT is committed to raising the standards of the profession and to securing the conditions essential to provide the best service to California's students.

PRESIDENT

Jeff Freitas

SECRETARY TREASURER

Luukia Smith

ORGANIZING DIRECTOR

Sandra Weese

ORGANIZING TEAM

Valarie Bachelor
Lachlan Batchelor
Charlotte Bowman
Erin Conley
Audrie Francis
Lyndsey Lefebvre
Laila Molina
Andrew Pagan

LAYOUT

Leslye Osegueda

EDITORIAL OFFICE

Get Organized!
2001 Center Street, Suite 600
Berkeley, CA 94704
510-523-5238
510-523-5262 fax
www.cft.org

Get Organized! is produced by union workers in the CFT Field Representatives Union and the Office and Professional Employees International Union.

All story ideas and submissions should be emailed to Sandra Weese at sweese@cft.org.

