

Building Power at Victor Valley College

After thinking about getting more involved in my union for over a year, I started attending e-board meetings this spring and was delighted by the community there. Soon after, I joined the membership committee and began working on non-member outreach and planning professional development events. Although I was still new to volunteering with the e-board and nervous about taking on more responsibility, in March I decided to take a vice president at large position.

At that same time, the membership committee was developing an organizing plan to in-



Membership Committee Josh Briggs, Lauren Golder and Ian Chainey (not pictured due to lack of camera).

crease membership by 10 percent by the end of the semester. Because of the pandemic, we focused on phone-banking to reach potential new members. So far, we have attempted 226 phone calls, have had 43 conversations and

have recruited 23 new members. Our membership went from 55 percent to 70 percent in a matter of four months! Our next step is to continue reaching out to potential members and to strengthen our relationship with ex-

isting members of our local. It has been wonderful to get more involved with my union as it grows. It's encouraging to see that under the difficult conditions of the pandemic, we are able to connect with our colleagues and build power.

Working as part-time faculty can be very isolating, and my union has become an important community even as we're all in front of separate Zoom screens. I look forward to continuing to grow as a leader in our local union and help others do the same.

-By AFT Part-Time Faculty United, Local 6286 Vice-President at Large Lauren Golder

96% of UC-AFT Lecturers Vote to Authorize Strike



UC-AFT Member Organizer Cassie Hemstrom on why she is ready to strike.

UC-AFT members sing "Solidarity Forever" at their May Day Virtual Power Rally on International Workers' Day.



Last week, 96% of UC-AFT lecturers voted to authorize a strike after over two years of contract negotiations. The monumental vote is a result of long-term organizing and campaign building focused on member participation. Each day after the vote was called, member leaders and activists made hundreds of calls across the state, urging others to join in and cast their vote. The result: a supermajority of members voted "yes" on strike authorization.

-By CFT Organizer Jessica Conte

AFT 2121 Accepts Salary Cuts to Prevent Mass Layoffs in One-Year Contract

On March 15, 163 of our full-time faculty received pink slip notices from our administrators warning them of official layoffs for May 15, 2021. This proposal would have impacted over 600 faculty (including part-timers), more than 60% of our total union, and 60,000 students per academic year. Galvanized by the callous threat to layoff faculty and dismantle departments such as Nursing, ESL, Women & Gender Studies and Philippine Studies, our faculty organized to build power in a break-neck timeline.

1. 1,300 faculty members were invited to **complete a contract survey**.

2. Faculty engaged in **lobbying efforts to identify emergency funding**.

3. Faculty, students, alumni and allies created **video shorts** describing how these layoffs would impact the SF community as a whole.

4. Virtual **Zoom and in-person press conferences** were organized weekly.

5. We provided our members with **legal support** as they attended layoff hearings.

6. We coordinated **weekly phonebanks** to faculty to field questions and share updates about how to plug into weekly actions.

7. Members were engaged in **monthly member and leader meetings**.

8. The bargaining team was expanded to include 21 elected faculty members to negotiate our contract and we conducted open bargaining sessions.

9. After eight weeks, the bargaining team negotiated a tentative agreement (TA) with administration, accepting salary cuts to avoid layoffs. After presenting the TA at an emergency member meeting, faculty had three days to vote to approve it before the upcoming board of trustees meeting. Not only did 80% of members vote but **82% of our faculty voted in favor of the TA**, which was then approved by the board of trustees.

10. As a result of our political pressure, a majority of supervisors now agree on the importance of the **city funding the college** over the short and long term.

-By AFT 2121 E-Board Member Beatriz Herrera

TESTIMONIALS FROM SUPPORTIVE CFT LOCALS

Not only did the lay-off crisis at City College mobilize CCSF faculty and students but faculty from all over the region stepped up to help. Here are the testimonials of three

against full-time faculty layoffs? Our District is geographically close to CCSF and many adjuncts teach in both colleges so these layoffs are impacting our own adjunct members. Our fates are connected. We see cuts to CCSF as an attack on affordable higher education for working-class, communities of color and we have to fight back.

What did you do to support AFT 2121? I recruited members of our local's organizing committee to join me in attending ral-



SMCC faculty show their support by attending and speaking at city college rallies.

faculty members who educated, organized and mobilized their members to support AFT 2121:

San Mateo Community College Federation of Teachers, Local 1493 Skyline Campus Union Co-Chair Rika Yonemura-Fabian

What motivated you to support AFT 2121 in their fight

lies and phone banking organized by AFT 2121. We also featured a couple of articles in our union's newsletters on the situations at City College. The three unions, PFT, AFT 2121 and Local 1493, also walked together on May Day.

Why is solidarity so important now more than ever? Higher Education unions are so siloed by our system boundaries-

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AFT 2121 faculty, students and allies turn out to San Francisco City Hall to call on electeds to fund City College!

OFT Engages Membership to Win Meaningful Pay Increase

Oakwood Federation of Teachers, Local 4128 (OFT) represents teachers at Oakwood School, an independent school in Los Angeles. Like other K-12 schools, they were in negotiations since the start of the pandemic over the impact of school closures and eventual reopening to in person instruction.

While their CBA was set to expire in June 2021, OFT extended it for a year but chose to negotiate four articles. Beginning with salary, OFT put forth a very reasonable proposal which included an extension of the normal raise that teachers have received over the last five years of the current CBA, giving teachers a 3.5% to 4.5% pay increase for the 2021-2022 school year. Recognizing that

there were quite a few teachers at the top of the pay scale, and had been stuck there for a number of years, OFT included three additional steps to acknowledge longer term employees.

To counter OFT's proposal, the school proposed a 1.9% pay increase and one additional step. The negotiating team asked many questions and the school claimed they didn't have the funds to give a larger pay increase. OFT President Matt Gainsley said, "We were very disappointed to receive the administration's proposal and we knew we had some work ahead of us to inform our members and ask them to support us on campus."

OFT leadership held multiple membership

meetings to update members and ask them to participate in various actions to put pressure on administration to come closer to OFT's proposal. These actions included using a unique OFT zoom background while in meetings with management, wearing CFT masks around campus and having 1-1 conversations with each other about negotiations.

At the following negotiation session, OFT gave a counter proposal which included the same percentage increase but modified the additional rows. Administration reviewed our proposal and very quickly returned to give us exactly what we wanted - the same pay increase and one additional step for 2021-22. In

return, the school asked for a two-year salary scale agreement, and they offered another pay scale step in the second year. This means that Oakwood teachers will receive between 3.5%-4.5% in the '21-'22 and the same percentage increase the following year. "We were shocked and incredibly pleased that the administration responded so quickly and agreed to our terms. This was the first time our membership actively engaged in the negotiations process, and we really saw the impact of their participation," said Gainsley. OFT continues to negotiate over the three other articles and will have full successor negotiations next year.

-By CFT Organizer Charlotte Bowman

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-but we share so many issues in common. The precariousness of adjunct faculty's employment, the commodification of education happening through the advancement

of educational technology, disinvestment in instruction and classroom and now, the whole in-person return to campus is something many of us are struggling through, to

make the return conditions safe for everyone. It makes sense to take up these common fights together, and we need more intentional solidarity building!

Peralta Federation of Teachers, Local 1603 (PFT)
Jennifer Shanoski

What motivated you to support AFT 2121 in their fight against full-time faculty layoffs? AFT 2121 has been a leader in organizing and fighting for community college faculty. The attacks on their college are attacks on all of our colleges.

What did you do to get

members of your local mobilized to support AFT 2121? We've worked closely with AFT 2121 in the past and their issues are like a "canary in the coalmine." We shared their struggle and reminded folks that standing together is the only way to ensure that we stay strong and can fight back on the downsizing of our system and the shift of dollars away from public education.

Why is solidarity so important now more than ever? The administrations

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PFT faculty phone banking AFT 2121 members to update them on impact bargaining.

Part-Time Faculty Membership Grows with Updated EDD Workshops

CFT locals are turning to support from the Organizing Department to increase membership while educating part-timers on their Employment Development Department (EDD) benefits.

El Camino Federation of Teachers, Local 1388 (ECFT), Palomar Faculty Federation, Local 6161 (PFF), Part-Time Faculty Association of Allan Hancock College, Local 6185 and UC-AFT were among the first to host our newly updated EDD workshop in May.

The EDD workshops are an effective tool for recruiting nonmembers. Local 6185 President Mark Miller shares that, "The EDD workshop hosted on

May 4 was a great success. We have seven new members as a direct result of this virtual meeting." PFF Co-President Barbara Baer agrees: "The CFT workshops are extremely popular with our part-time faculty. We actually add a few people onto our union membership whenever we offer it."

The COVID-19 pandemic forced several changes to the UI application process that have proved difficult to navigate. Miller urges, "It is so important to let your bargaining unit know they are eligible for unemployment and how they can apply." Applicants are now required to verify their identity using the Id.me website, a third-

party company contracted by the California EDD to weed out fraudulent claims. Applicants also need to be aware that the waiting period for receiving benefits has expanded from the standard one week to up to three weeks.

The pandemic impacted all government agencies, but EDD was hit hard due to the large volume of claims filed in the last year. Nevertheless, following through with an EDD claim is worth it, according to Baer. "We get feedback all the time that these benefits have made their economic situation much more stable," she explains.

-By CFT Organizer Erin Conley

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of our colleges work together and operate under one board, the board of governors. If we stay separate and look at our issues as unique to ourselves then we have no chance of fighting back because individually we are easy to ignore. By standing together and demonstrating that our concerns are general and numerous, we can demand that they pay attention and shift their policies.

Los Rios College Federation of Teachers, Local 2279 ARC Campus Union President Oranit Limmaneeprasert

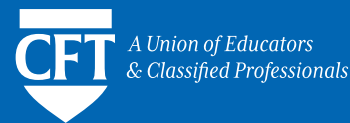
What motivated you to support AFT 2121 in their

fight against full-time faculty layoffs? I strongly believe in grassroots efforts and the power of solidarity, what we can do when we are united. Further, as the faculty union president for my campus, I saw participation as my responsibility and as the right action to take.

What did you do to get members of your local educated and mobilized to support? I emailed over 200 colleagues and called some of them to urge them to join me in taking action. Many took action by signing online petitions and sent emails of support through Action Network. Several faculty members

from my campus also attended the virtual press conferences to show support for AFT 2121.

Why is solidarity so important now more than ever? The top-down approach from the state chancellor for California community colleges and from the management on many campuses has been unthinkable. Faculty input has not been truly incorporated into major decisions that management made. I believe faculty need to be united to claim our right in participatory and shared governance in CA community colleges.



California affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO, representing education 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.

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

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