



Siezing the moment for growth, strength and solidarity

Locals demonstrate exemplary organizing and political work

Our public sector unions are under attack. Rising to the challenge the CFT member unions are fighting back working to combine local, state and national resources to protect union membership and help lead a real reform effort that focuses on public education and students.

Last year with guidance from our locals, the Strategic Campaign Initiative (SCI) was launched. Aimed at recruiting, training, organizing and mobilizing a foundation of diverse leaders and activists, the SCI meshes the union's political, organizing, and legislative work, thereby aiding us in our efforts to expand the organizing capacity of the union.

The CFT's effort to increase efficiency and focus more resources on organizing is underway and already showing significant results. The Berkeley Council of Classified Employees has organized a new unit of 170 Operations and Support Services workers that consists of bus drivers, custodians, security, maintenance and food service. In addition, the Lawndale Federation

of Classified Employees has organized a new unit of 85 after school program staff.

There are many more examples of successful organizing, and during the annual convention locals that have demonstrated exemplary organizing

active in political work. The foundation of the unions' political work starts and ends with member involvement. We must make efforts to continually engage our members in issues they care about, develop compelling strategies, while committing the

where local unions ran COPE campaigns and coordinated their efforts with local and statewide elections we were able to increase members participation by 20%.

At this year's convention we will recognize the local unions who have done the tough work of going out and talking to members about why politics is important and asking members to contribute money to COPE. We are making good progress with a number of local unions adding hundreds of new COPE members last year and many locals increasing their COPE members by 5%, 10% or more.

Education is political and to be successful in our efforts requires being engaged in politics at all levels of government: from local school board and board of trustee races to statewide candidate and initiative campaigns and also national campaigns as well.

Through the AFT Partners in Political Education (PIPE) program local unions help the national AFT raise voluntary dollars to use for congressional, senate and presidential



SANDRA WEESE

PLUCC organizers Ken Tray, United Educators of San Francisco; Galina Gerasimova, San Francisco Community College District; John Becker, Berkeley Federation of Teachers; and Rob Schneiderman, Coast Federation of Educators, spent the day increasing their political organizing skills and developing strategies to win locally at a one day PLUCC training.

efforts over the past year will be acknowledged. Importantly, this will be the first time that new organizing will be recognized.

While we are organizing new members into our union we are also asking our existing members to contribute and get more

necessary resources to win.

The best way to engage members around politics is through a local union's COPE program. In 2010, the CFT worked hard to pass proposition 25, and through that work we found that in places

Member Organizing Committee (MOC) grants program launched!

Second round of Political Leaders United to Create Change (PLUCC) Grants also available

In a letter to local leaders, CFT President Josh Pechthalt announced the availability of grants to help build the organizing and political capacity of the union.

Under the Strategic Campaign Initiative additional funds will be made available for the Political Leaders United to Create Change (PLUCC) grant program, and a new Member Organizing Committee (MOC) grant program has been launched.

The new CFT-wide

Member Organizing Committee will help to identify locals interested in organizing new members and strengthening existing locals in strategic sectors. Grant funds will be used to hire MOC organizers who will help locals build their capacity to carry out internal membership campaigns and new worker organizing campaigns, while developing future organizing leaders. These MOC organizers will be provided training and are

expected to assist and lead the local in meeting MOC program and SCI goals.

The success of the PLUCC and MOC efforts will hinge on the leadership and work of our locals. President Pechthalt said: "I see these two grant programs as a crucial component to the long-term strategic development of the CFT and CFT local unions."

All Locals have the option to apply for MOC, PLUCC or both grant programs. The

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–Josh Pechthalt,
CFT President

application(s) are due by April 20, 2012 and the SCI committee will determine the awards.

If you have any questions related to the SCI program and the grants please contact your CFT field representative. For questions relating to the MOC grant program, contact Sandra Weese at sweese@cft.org or by phone at (510) 523-5238. For questions specific to the PLUCC grant program please contact Jim Araby at jaraby@cft.org or by phone at (510) 523-5238.

>TO LEARN MORE

about the Strategic Campaign Initiative and grant programs contact Sandra Weese at sweese@cft.org or Jim Araby at jaraby@cft.org.



SANDRA WEESE

CFT Field Representative Frank Oppedisano and Coast Federation of Classified Employees Executive Board member Tamara Barylski role play during a training to support their union's membership drive, which has already resulted in successfully recruiting 40 new members.

UC-AFT adopting new strategic approach

Special thanks to Mike Rotkin, Vice President for Organizing, UC-AFT for this submission

The University Council of the American Federation of Teachers (UC-AFT) represents the lecturers and librarians in the University of California state-wide. The organization has been extremely successful in bargaining contracts for our members, particularly the lecturers, who now have one of the best contracts for contingent higher education faculty in the country. Up until this year, the organization has spent most of its energy in bargaining these contracts and enforcing their provisions on the ten UC campuses.

Increasingly, however, the issues confronted by our members and the constituencies that lecturers and librarians serve – students, staff, faculty, and the general California public – are not ones that can be resolved at the bargaining table or through a labor contract. Our issues these days are more directly related to California State budget problems and the mistaken priorities of the UC Administration. Reduced State funding for higher education is seriously compounded by the increasingly corporate values expressed in UC administrative decisions that depend on outrageous increases in student fees and that direct the resources that do exist not



ALLISON GUEVARA

UC-AFT Banana Slug Collective celebrates successful recruitment campaign at the Santa Cruz campus. Left to right, front row: Candace Calsoyas, Convener; and Ken Lyons, Unit 17 Rep; second row: Giulia Centineo, Stephen Petersen, Annapurna Pandey and Maria Morris, Membership Chair; third row: David Keenan, Grievance Chair; Stephen Sweat; and Mike Rotkin, President. Not pictured: Byron Barahona.

to undergraduate instruction, research, or public service, but to obscene compensation packages for top administrators, new buildings, and overfunding profit centers such as hospitals and patent-producing divisions of bio-tech and engineering departments.

In response, the UC-AFT has been developing a more strategic approach to our work that will seek to mobilize and activate our members in political and policy struggles in the electoral, legislative, and UC policy arenas. The

organization hopes to engage the many talents of our highly educated members to help us wage these struggles along with our allies in the CFT, in the labor movement in general, and within the progressive movements in California. The organization is working closely with the CFT training and organizing departments and restructuring our work to make sure that all UC-AFT field staff can benefit from the best practices of their colleagues in developing this new work.

SCI continued from page 1 candidate contributions. The CFT is the 4th largest affiliate of the AFT and over the past two years we have increased local participation in the PIPE program by 300%. There are now twelve locals contributing a combined amount of over \$300,000 a year.

Because of locals organizing and political work, the CFT is helping working people hold and gain the benefits of union membership and revitalize our union movement.

Restoring California Coalition advances new tax initiative for 2012 ballot

Merged CFT and Brown efforts would raise additional \$2 billion

At the end of last month the Millionaires Tax Coalition negotiated an agreement with Governor Brown, Legislative leaders and their allies to join forces on a new initiative to raise needed revenue for California public education and social services. This solidly progressive measure is a great improvement on the governor's prior proposal and a major victory for the thousands of Californians who have demanded that the wealthiest Californians start paying their fair share of taxes.

With this new measure we are able to raise roughly \$2 billion more overall and of the \$9 billion raised in the first year, \$8 billion will be achieved through a progressive income tax increase. The wealthiest 2% of Californians will pay more for a longer period of time than the governor's initial proposal stipulated and millionaires will still pay 3% more on their income. Low and middle-income families still reeling from the Great Recession will be spared undue burdens.

Uniting around this new proposal significantly increases the chance for passage of a ballot measure that would raise revenue and help prevent draconian cuts from occurring to important programs while



Gwendolyn Holmes, president of the Compton Council of Classified Employees, and Isabelle Saber, president of Glendale College Guild, participate in the well attended first meeting of the Los Angeles Area Council.

sending a signal that the people of California want to fund education and vital services.

The credit for this compromise goes to our tireless volunteers and coalition members whose donations and hard work staging press conferences, securing local endorsements and gathering signatures for the Millionaires Tax created our ability to work with the governor on a unified effort. Because of them, Governor Brown recognized the policy and political improvements necessary to craft a fairer and more progressive initiative that would more successfully address our state's problems and more likely secure the confidence of California's voters.

Now we must ensure the new measure passes. With-

out it the state would suffer billions of dollars more in cuts, leading to schools and hospitals closing, thousands of people losing their jobs, and millions losing opportunities and services.

The California Federation of Teachers, California Calls, ACCE and the Courage Campaign were joined by more than 80 grassroots and labor organizations across our state in supporting the Millionaire Tax. Speaking on behalf of the coalition, CFT President Josh Pechthalt said: "We are very proud of what our coalition has achieved. Together we have engaged a movement to raise more revenue in our state. We have focused attention on the need to re-fund education in this state. And we won't stop until we finish the job."



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.

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