



Fifth CFT Union Leadership Institute helps local unions develop strategic plans

The fifth annual CFT Union Leadership Institute held on the UCLA campus in June was by all accounts a resounding success. Attended by more than 65 members and staff from 13 locals, the two-day event was anchored in three main sessions: Building Power Through Democratic Principles, Effective Union Communication, and Bargaining From Strength.

Institute participants learned how to conduct a power survey for their local, use the “Local Styles Inventory” tool to delve into how their local functions, and various techniques for building community coalitions. Members said



SANDRA WEESE

AFT Part-Time Faculty Federation President Benn Johnston, left, and Vice President-at-Large J.K. Crawley work on a strategic plan for their local in the workshop Building Power Through Democratic Principles.

they enjoyed role playing, thinking about long-term goals, and sharing best

practices with sister locals. They emphasized that actually developing plans in the

session to organize members was valuable.

“Having time to work with our local to brainstorm ways to improve participation was important,” said Anne Gamboni, from the Jefferson AFT Federation of Teachers, Local 1481.

Organized and facilitated by CFT Training Director Julian Minard, State Affiliate Political Organizer Jim Araby, Communications Director Fred Glass, Research Specialist Patty Cox, Field Representatives Greg Eddy and Zev Kvitky, and Organizing Director Sandra Weese, the interactive nature of the institute got high marks and attendees commented that

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Adjunct Faculty United gets ready to bargain...

AS PART OF CFT’s emerging Strategic Campaign Initiative, discussions have been held with CFT field staff and the leaders of Adjunct Faculty United, Local 6106, geared toward building a foundation to support the local in the coming year.

Representing nearly 2,300 adjunct faculty members employed by the Northern Orange County Community College District, the immediate priorities of Local 6106 are to prepare for bargaining, win greater support on the college board of trustees, engage more members in work of the union, and increase membership.

The local has developed a bargaining survey and a member community survey that will be circulated to members. Once member surveys have been returned, the executive board will use the information to help with its COPE membership drive and in preparation for 2012 district board of trustee elections.

South of Market Childcare Center pushes for 100 percent membership and gets ready for contract negotiations

It has been a busy summer at the South of Market Childcare Center as Local 6361 officers continued their push for 100 percent membership and the executive board began initial preparations for contract negotiations. To establish the parameters for bargaining, the union held early meetings with management and circulated a bargaining survey to determine member priorities.

Local 6361 is also central to the new campaign approach being launched by the Early Childhood Education Organizing Project in San Francisco. Guided by a four-part steering committee comprising the AFT,

NEA, CFT, and United Educators of San Francisco, this effort is designed to create a multi-employer local by incorporating providers at other early childhood education centers into Local 6361. Ideally, this will allow for the local's bargaining to model respectful and productive relationships between workers and management that workers at other centers in the city can then replicate.

Preliminary steps are already underway, including the circulation of a survey on healthcare needs and insurance status, as well as outreach to centers where concerns regarding inadequate funding, the need for



AARON BRICKMAN

Members gear up for bargaining as President Vangie Nocon swears in Khalida Anwar as a new officer of Local 6361.

a temp or sick pool, or lack of respect have previously been expressed.

“With this plan in place,” said Augustus Tagaro, secretary treasurer of Local 6361, “we now have a good

chance to generate a multi-employer organization that will provide a real voice for early childhood education professionals in San Francisco.”

AFT TEACH summer conference a hit with CFT participants

“Making a Difference Every Day” was the theme of the 2011 AFT TEACH conference held July 11-13 in Washington, D.C. The TEACH conference was renamed by AFT this year and stands for “Together Educating America’s Children.”

Attended by more than 2,000 educators from across the nation, TEACH showcased the groundbreaking work taking place throughout the AFT. Two dozen mini-plenary sessions focused on a wide range of issues, including the Common Core Standards,



teacher development and evaluation systems, and labor-management collaboration. AFT President Randi Weingarten highlighted successful education reforms and programs that have helped many school districts and countries improve academic achievement.

Dozens of CFT members were in attendance to hear Nobel Prize-winning economist Paul Krugman

speaking about the importance of unions as the backbone of the middle class. Krugman said unions are not only fighting the decline in average wealth for their members, but also working to preserve and expand a strong safety net for ordinary citizens and lifting wages and working conditions across the board.

The conference also provided an opportunity for some of our new CFT

leaders to have discussions with many of their AFT counterparts. President Josh Pechthalt, along with Secretary Treasurer Jeff Freitas, Executive Director Dan Martin, and Organizing Director Sandra Weese, had constructive meetings with AFT President Weingarten, Ann Mitchell, Director for Affiliate Services; Jon Ost, Political Director; Phil Kugler, Director for Organizing; Jessica Smith, Deputy Director for Organizing; Sol Smith, Western Regional Director; national field representatives and others.

CFT leadership-staff retreat moves the Federation forward

On June 13 and 14, about 65 people gathered for a Staff and Executive Council Retreat at Cal Poly Pomona. The retreat was attended by a number of Executive Council members, staff members of the Field Representatives Union and the Office and Professional Employees International Union, and management.

The retreat opened with CFT President Josh Pechthalt and Secretary Treasurer Jeff Freitas presenting on the Future of CFT: Resources, Roles and Responsibilities of CFT Staff and Executive Council. Participants then divided into groups and discussed how to strengthen CFT's statewide and local political program. An examination of the attack on public education and public sector unions followed.

In a letter to participants after the retreat, CFT President Josh Pechthalt and Secretary Treasurer Jeff Freitas said they believed much had been accomplished and that "there seemed to be a real energy



SANDRA WEESE

CFT Executive Council members and staff work together to develop ideas to strengthen the CFT and its locals by identifying opportunities and challenges for public education and unions.

and commitment to move the organization forward in a more coordinated and strategic way."

Discussion in the retreat paralleled previous action by the CFT Executive Council to create a new 11-member Strategic Campaign Committee. Co-chaired by Kimberly Claytor, president of the Newport-Mesa Federation of Teachers, Local 1794, and

Alisa Messer, president of the San Francisco Community College Federation of Teachers, Local 2121, this new SCI Executive Council committee was created to advance CFT's recently designed Strategic Campaign Initiative, blending and coordinating our organizing and political work.

The SCI is up and running, implementing a grant program called Political

Leaders Unified to Create Change (PLUCC), which is designed to build political organizing experience and power in CFT locals. Matching funds in the range of \$500 to \$3500 per month will be granted to support a dedicated political leader in qualifying locals. These positions will assist with organizing COPE drives and building community coalition efforts.

COAST WORKERS STEP UP...

Coast workers raise dues by \$5 to help sustain fight back

This past spring, after two years of negotiations, the Coast Federation of Classified Employees, Local 4794, was able to reach an agreement with the district that achieved the goals of equitable treatment, a quality health benefits plan, and no layoffs. Ann Nicholson, president of Local 4794, asked the CFT Organizing Department to help develop a plan to alert members that the local was implementing a dues pass through to meet per capita cost increases. Ultimately, in addition to these and other specific positive contract adjustments, Local 4794 members took the progressive step of increasing their dues by \$5 this summer to bolster their ability to respond to attacks and advance a positive agenda.

Early Childhood Federation holds first annual leadership-management retreat

Last month AFT Local 1475, the Los Angeles-based Early Childhood Federation held its first leadership retreat focused on development and training of union leaders and building collaboration between local leaders and managers of the five agencies that employ the educators. Working together for a couple of days provided members the opportunity to not only articulate but better establish their goals for the local union and the individual agencies.

At the retreat it became clear that a shared effort between the members of Local 1475 and the managers of their agencies has begun to take hold. Retreat attendees hope that this positive working relationship will continue to flourish and lead to identifying strategies that will allow members to have healthy and well-functioning work environments.



SANDRA WEESE

Daphne Brooks, at podium, Ruth Molina, center, and Latoya Moore, left, explore the qualities and responsibilities of good leaders and share their own experiences.

Not only was the retreat successful in conducting joint work with management, but it also allowed for meaningful collaboration between the agencies. One board member in attendance was former Congressman Mervyn Dymally.

“This was the first time that I have felt a shift in the right direction for our agency and to have a board

member of the agency attend our retreat is really inspiring,” said Toni Bob, chair of Kedren-Head Start board of Local 1475.

Over the next year, leaders of Local 1475 plan to continue strengthening the organization so it can play a major role in preserving the rights of workers, fighting for equality, and improving the lives of members.

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they appreciated the use of well-structured, clear materials incorporated into the presentations.

Evaluating the Leadership Institute, Pete Virgadamo, from Part-Time Faculty United at College of the Canyons, wrote: “All the speakers were dynamic and there was great focus

on the impact of building membership so crucial to community colleges.”

Kristin Fredriksson from the Newport-Mesa Federation wrote: “I got a greater sense of my role in the union and within a power structure, as well as how to utilize my resources, energy and effort more efficiently

and effectively.”

“It was important to have time to share ideas, engage in critical discussions with team members, and translate the content of the workshops into a plan for the local,” said Ann Holliday of the Coast Federation of Educators.

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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