



West Valley Mission Faculty Union Continues to Organize

Ever since their affiliation with the CFT/AFT, faculty with the Association of College Educators (ACE), AFT Local 6554 at West Valley Mission Community Colleges (WVM) have been keeping busy. Last semester, a new constitution was finalized, which stipulated, among many other things, the creation of a steward council structure. The new governing document was then put to a vote by the membership. Faculty leaders held a week-long membership outreach drive to engage with members, with an emphasis on reaching out to adjunct faculty to educate them on the new constitution and on the union officer elections. More than 200 conversations were had, and ultimately, members voted overwhelmingly in favor of the constitution



Mission College Faculty celebrate a successful Flex Day membership outreach drive with a union social hour.

Paul Bissember

(240 voted to approve and only seven voted not to approve). Following the adoption of their new constitution, faculty participated in their first union officer elections as an affiliate of the CFT electing Ann Marie Waserbauer, an ESL professor at West Valley College, as their president along with several new leaders to the executive board.

As the summer began, so too began the work of the newly elected union leadership. In order to develop skills and meet other members of the CFT community, four of the new ACE 6554 officers attended the CFT Union Summer School in June at Cal Poly Pomona. There, the leaders took courses in collective bargaining and contract campaigns,

activating a leadership network and a treasurer training. In preparation for the Steward Council elections in September, leaders at WVM worked to establish 12 steward groups per campus, taking into consideration departments, geography and size. In addition, the leaders used the summer to plan for a fall membership and outreach drive to sign up members, ask them to support the Committee on Political Education (COPE) and encourage them to get involved in the union through the Steward Council or by serving on union committees.

On August 28, ACE leaders and member activists kicked off their membership drive on Flex Day with several union activities at both West Valley and Mission campuses. There were union tables staffed

See WVM, page 4

Local 1273 - Building Power in Oxnard



Kassi Hawkins

JOSH PECHTHALT, PRESIDENT OF CFT (right), joined Oxnard Federation of Teachers and School Employees, Local 1273 at their Welcome Back Kickoff. Josh spoke about how to build a stronger union. As educators, we know the needs in the classroom and how to provide services to students. Josh spoke about the fights that CFT is waging around the state. He reminded us that it is important to strengthen our forces on all levels because our power comes from a strong, active membership. Josh reminded our members that there is always a need to adequately fund public education. He talked about the latest progressive tax policies that CFT has in the works, and how we need to get involved and start the conversation with our members. **Laurena Guizar (left)**, high school history teacher, signed a commitment card to "Count [her] in!" to talk to her coworkers.

- By Kassi Hawkins, SCI Organizer, Oxnard Federation of Teachers and School Employees, Local 1273

Les Enseignants en Actions



Laura Watson

Over half the teachers at Ecole Bilingue gather to prepare for their first delegation to the board in the school's history.

Ecole Bilingue Federation of Teachers (EBFT) ended the school year with an organizing bang this past June!

EBFT formed a new union with CFT and it's been a fight to get their first contract and to change EB administration's unfair treatment and lack of respect towards faculty. Members spent months cultivating support from parents by having one-on-one conversations with parents and hosting parent-teacher house meetings to educate EB parents on faculty issues

and EB's mismanagement. The members of EBFT opened up a line of communication with parents that had never existed before, and parents were finally able to express their own concerns with administration's poor leadership.

Because of alliances that teachers formed with parents, EB parents created a petition on behalf of teachers in support of their first contract, gathered over 75 parent signatures and delivered it to their board of trustees. After parents delivered their petition,

over half of EBFT teachers gathered and marched into the last board meeting of the year and delivered a similar petition and message to the board:

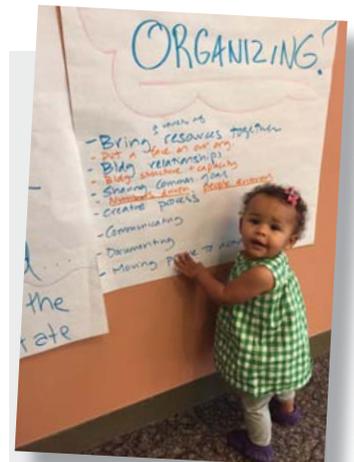
"We devote our working lives to caring for and educating our kids--we firmly believe that our proposals [collaborative decision making process, binding arbitration and just cause]--will only improve the school, improve the quality of education at Ecole Bilingue, and benefit both teachers and students."

As a result of escalating actions including sticker-ups, meetings with local and French legislators for support, building alliances with parents, forming a tri-local with two other Bay Area French schools and delegations to the board, the year ended with three new "pro-union" board of trustees members winning seats on Ecole Bilingue's board of trustees and ousting anti-union trustees. This outcome of new board support presents a hopeful

beginning for the new year and EBFT's fight for a fair contract!

In the first week back to school, EBFT's Organizing Committee is launching a member survey to assess member commitment and participation for upcoming and escalating actions during their rigorous contract campaign. Stay tuned for more action updates from the French schools!

- By Laura Watson, Project Organizer



Kassi Hawkins

The next generation of organizers hard at work at the biannual SCI Organizer training. Mira came along to support her mom, SCI Organizer Kassi Hawkins.

Local 2121 Ramping up Membership Efforts



Jessica Buchsbaum

Local 2121 members Andy Quintana and Jessica Buchsbaum, holding up their house visit map.

In recent years, City College of San Francisco (CCSF) faculty has faced wage cuts, and an accreditation battle with the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC), and an ongoing struggle to preserve quality, affordable public education in San Francisco. In order to confront these challenges, and prepare for ongoing contract negotiations, member leaders and volunteers from AFT 2121 San Francisco City College District Federation of Teachers ramped up their organizing efforts this summer. Some of the contract goals that the union is fighting for are to restore the wage cuts; reduce class size minimums; and reinstate a role for students, faculty and community members to have a say in major district decisions.

Through house visits and phone banking, volunteers made over a thousand attempts

Membership Drive continued on page 3

Students and Faculty Fight ACCJC in Sacramento

Paul Bissember



Students and community college faculty prepare before their next lobby visit inside the Capitol. AB 1397 passed before the Senate Education Committee on July 15.

SACRAMENTO, CA--CFT continued the fight for fair community college accreditation by lobbying to pass two bills out of the Senate Education Committee. CCSF faculty from AFT 2121 and other community college local members from across the state were joined by students from UC Davis, UC Berkeley and American River College to convince state senators to pass AB 1397 and AB 1385 out of committee.

These bills, authored by Assemblymember Phil Ting, require community college accreditation

agencies like the ACCJC to follow basic guidelines for fairness, objectivity and transparency, and prohibit these agencies from burdening community college districts with the legal costs of their own malfeasance. The Assembly had passed these bills, but the Senate Education Committee was our toughest fight yet. We could not languidly hope that Democratic senators would support us; we organized a state-wide coalition of faculty, students and organizers to put pressure on these senators to get the bipartisan support we needed.

On July 13, we lobbied senators and their legislative staffs throughout the day. Several of the transfer students who joined us spoke passionately about how community college was the reason they can now succeed at the University of California. On July 15, we returned to the Capitol to make the final push at the committee hearing. Our supporters lined up to voice their demand that community college accreditors be held accountable. The committee finally voted 6-3 to pass the legislation, with three Democrats voting

against increased accountability. This legislation did not pass because we called in favors from our trusted elected officials, or because we were faithful that these senators would admire the virtue of this cause. This legislation passed because we showed up to make our case, and this is why we need even more members working to strengthen Committees on Political Education throughout California (COPE).

- By Harley Litzelman, UC Davis student & CFT Intern, Labor Summer Internship Program



Jessica Ulstad

Strategic Campaign Initiative Organizers gather in Oakland for their biannual training on Sept. 11 & 12. Back left: Tarone Bittner, Tiffany Page, Michael Hartshorn, Dennis Falcon, Paul Hagen, Ruben Topete, Craig Flannery, Katherine Reedy, Lori Shoemaker, Lauren Humphrey, Suleman Ishaque and Ronessa Norwood-Coleman. Front left: Michelle Kern, Debbie Forward, Michael McCown, Carlos Arce, Kati Bassler, Sarah Burkhart and Kassi Hawkins.

Membership Drive continued from page 2

to engage with members, identify new leaders and get commitments from members to vote in favor of creating the Strike Hardship Fund. AFT 2121's website outlines the decision to hold a referendum on the Strike Hardship Fund, "We need to show the administration that we are united and prepared to take the necessary action to win an excellent contract. We are voting on a referendum September 1-3 to establish the Strike Hardship Fund for our local, and we urge all members to vote YES. This fund will support our most economically vulnerable faculty members if administration leaves us with no choice but to call for a strike." Now the results are in; members voted 93% to establish the fund, sending a powerful message to college administrators that members are serious about doing whatever it takes to settle a fair contract. AFT 2121's organizing efforts demonstrate that meaningful engagement with members with a clear plan to win can energize members to stand up against cuts to public education and fight back. The union's goal is to win a fair contract by Thanksgiving.

- By Paul Bissember, Project Organizer

Faculty Guild Rising Indeed

AFT Local 1521, the Los Angeles College Faculty Guild, kicked off the academic year on August 24 with a week of outreach events to new adjunct faculty and fee payers. The events were part of Faculty Guild Rising, a year-long organizing project to increase membership throughout the local. Last spring the Guild set a goal of bringing in 400 new members by September 2015, and they have already surpassed that number!

One event for the week included a Guild-sponsored campus orientation at Pierce College attended by more than 70 members and fee payers. Pierce College Chapter President Fernando Oleas and Grievance Officer Brian Walsh presented remarks highlighting the Guild's accomplishments, including how the Guild's members won a 4.22% pay increase and improved working conditions for faculty at their nine campuses. Other



Local 1521 member leaders successfully sign up fee payers as members at Harbor College Flex Day. From Left: AFT Rep on Harbor College Planning Council Juan Baez, Harbor College Chapter President Mona Dallas-Reddick, and Chair of Math and Technology Farah Saddigh.

speakers included representatives from the library, student services and registrar. Several fee payers became members at the event which also provided an exciting opportunity for faculty to learn more about their campus community.

Each campus chapter also hosted a table at college-wide flex days. With Local 1521's members at the helm, they signed up more than 200 fee payers and passed out Guild information, t-shirts, keychains and water bottles to hundreds more.

These hugely successful events have added to the local's organizing

accomplishments over the last few months. Since last spring, members and chapter leaders have participated in numerous campus membership drives with CFT organizers and field representatives. With help from OPEIU staff to create good lists, we have been able to visit dozens of fee payers after their classes on each campus in order to discuss the union and ask them to join. At publication, these efforts have brought a combined 450 new members into our union. Faculty Guild Rising is off to a great start!

- By Erin Conley, Project Organizer

WVM continued from page 1

by volunteers throughout the day signing up members and COPE contributors. There was a union workshop during lunch, a union social hour reception at the end of the day, member leaders spoke at division meetings and the opening session, over 60 faculty participated in a union sponsored work-

shop called "How to Be a Good Faculty Organizer/Advocate" and several candidates were identified and recruited to run for steward. The Flex Day drive was a complete success as ACE member activists went above and beyond their initial goals of signing up 150 faculty and 30 COPE contribu-

tors. At the conclusion of the day, 221 faculty signed membership forms and 77 chose to contribute to COPE! The ACE leaders plan on continuing their organizing efforts by having a week long membership drive in September.

- By Paul Bissember, Project Organizer

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
Josh Pechthalt

SECRETARY TREASURER
Jeff Freitas

ORGANIZING DIRECTOR
Sandra Weese

PROJECT STAFF
Paul Bissember
Erin Conley
Laura Watson

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

LAYOUT
Taylor Mohel

EDITORIAL OFFICE
Get Organized!
1330 Broadway, Suite 1601
Oakland, CA 94612
510-523-5238
510-523-5262 fax
www.cft.org

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

