



New law takes effect July 1

CFT wins improved CalSTRS service credit reporting

IN A VICTORY FOR part-time community college faculty enrolled in the CalSTRS retirement program, Gov. Brown signed into law CFT-sponsored SB 114 to correct the misreporting of retirement service credit.

According to CFT Part-Time Faculty Committee Chair Phyllis Eckler, widespread misreporting by districts has resulted in many part-time faculty receiving less CalSTRS retirement credit than they should have. According to Eckler and others, working on a case-



Phyllis Eckler

by-case basis with CalSTRS benefits counselors to correct reporting errors is an extremely time-consuming and often frustrating process. This new law should help districts understand exactly how to compute and to report service credit for

part-time instructors so as to avoid this labor-intensive process of excavating past reporting and correcting errors.

SB 114, carried by Leland Yee, D-San Francisco, states that by July 1, 2013, community college districts must submit “a copy of the collective bargaining agreements or employment agreements ... to CalSTRS in accordance with specified criteria.” Most importantly, it also “requires those agreements to specify the number of hours of creditable service that equal



Cliff Liehe

‘full-time’ for each class of employee.” Cliff Liehe, part-time instructor and author of the *Retirement Primer for California Community College Part-Time Faculty*, hopes the new law will “encourage more districts to report correctly, bringing the

matter more fully to districts’ attention.” He says the requirement that all districts furnish CalSTRS with their collective

bargaining or employment agreements “will help CalSTRS determine whether districts are using correct calculations.”



Both Eckler and Liehe applaud Gov. Brown for signing the bill but are particularly appreciative that CFT and Senator Yee committed fully to the process of arriving at successful legislation. “We part-timers are a majority of the instruc-

tors within the community colleges,” Eckler says, “but we aren’t a majority of CFT membership. Yet CFT leaders and lobbyist Judith Michaels did everything possible to make this idea to help part-timers become law.”

Liehe, too, commends CFT for its willingness to put necessary resources into legislative campaigns like this one that will improve the lives of part-time faculty throughout the state.

In addition to the more obvious benefits of accurate reporting, Eckler sees another benefit to this new law. She believes it will provide a clearer picture of retirement options for part-time faculty.

“Given the changes on the horizon for CalSTRS and for other retirement options,” Eckler says, “part-time faculty need all the accurate information they can get in order to make wise decisions for themselves.”

Prop. 30 victory helps save part-time teaching jobs



Faculty from the Cabrillo College Federation got out the vote in Santa Cruz County.

INSTRUCTORS, STUDENTS, and others committed to quality public education in California breathed a sigh of relief with the passage of Proposition 30, the ballot measure that will bring increased revenue to public education and other services through temporary progressive taxation.

While no one mistakes Prop. 30 for a panacea to the funding problems facing California’s public sector, its passage does permit many part-

time faculty to expect to be offered classes in coming years that they would not have been offered without the measure.

Carl Friedlander, president of the CFT Community College Council, says that Prop. 30 has already led to the restoration of winter intersession at many colleges and should mean larger spring instructional programs and the revival of summer sessions at community colleges across

(Continued on next page)

CFT grants help faculty organizers reach freeway flyers

One-on-one conversations galvanize part-timer participation

“So many people feel practically self-employed. They feel disconnected from the larger community in which they teach.”

— Sharon Kerr, State Center Federation of Teachers



Sharon Kerr, left, and fellow organizers said talking one-on-one with faculty resulted in an overwhelmingly positive response.

HOW CAN WE convince more part-time faculty that union membership and participation are the single best way to improve working conditions, pay rate, and job security within California’s community colleges? One-on-one conversations, say part-time faculty Natasha Bauman and Sharon Kerr, whose local unions are both recipients of a new grant from CFT. The Member Organizing Committee, or MOC, grant helps locals conduct member outreach and sign up new members.

“In our local, we’ve tried everything to reach out to non-members,” says Bauman, a member of Adjunct Faculty United in the North Orange Community College District. “We’ve used mailers, flyers, presentations before and during the semester, and various social events. But nothing has engaged our part-time colleagues like individual, personal conversations about the benefits of union membership.”

According to Kerr, a member of the Fresno-area State Center Federation of Teachers,

talking with people personally resulted in an overwhelmingly positive response. Most faculty she spoke with did not fully understand either the benefits of union membership or the fact that they would not see any out-of-pocket expense in becoming a member. According to both Bauman and Kerr, quite a few instructors thought they were members but weren’t.

Both faculty organizers have learned that a significant amount of work is required to simply be able to speak directly with fellow part-timers. Finding people proved challenging because district-provided lists of current instructors and teaching locations were not always accurate.

Further, because not all part-time instructors are afforded space in which to hold office hours or are not compensated

for office hours, immediately before and after class was usually the only window of opportunity to reach colleagues. And because classroom location changes are not always captured on college schedules, additional data gathering was necessary to figure out exactly where their colleagues spend limited time on the campuses where they teach.

In spite of all the challenges in making personal contact with potential union members, Bauman and Kerr feel encouraged by their successes and inspired to do more organizing work. Kerr explained, “So many people feel practically self-employed. They feel disconnected from the larger community in which they teach.”



Nastasha Bauman prepares outreach.

Such people expressed genuine appreciation that she had spent the time and energy to find and to speak with them individually. Those who feel they are treated by their employers as easily replaced, “expendable” workers, according to Kerr, were especially cheered by her efforts.

Prop. 30 win

(Continued from page 1)

California. According to Friedlander, the benefits of Prop. 30 for students and adjunct faculty should continue and compound over the coming years as California emerges from the era of budget deficits and as modest annual increases in community college funding begin to kick in.

“The extent to which these benefits materialize will, however, depend on how successful we are

in convincing Gov. Brown and the Legislature that a significant portion of the new Prop. 30 funds should be spent on restoring lost access and student services,” he says. The governor wants to see a large portion of the new funds used to buy down “the wall of debt,” which, in the community college system, means \$800 million in inter-year deferrals.

CFT will be advocating for a balanced approach to restoring classes and services on the one hand and buying down deferrals on the other.

Are you a union member?

Want to talk to someone about the benefits of union membership? Need more information? Contact your union site representative or the officers of your AFT local union.



City College of San Francisco defends part-timers during accreditation crisis

AFT LOCAL 2121 continues the fight to save City College of San Francisco after the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges labeled the college with its most severe accreditation sanction, “show cause.”

Faculty members have spent thousands of hours educating the community about the challenges City College faces. They also worked to pass Prop. 30 and a local parcel tax, Measure A, to restore some of the money slashed in waves of recent budget cuts. Even after the successful passage of both measures in November, Local 2121 must work to convince college administrators and the Board of Trustees that funds must be restored to maintain robust class offerings and employee compensation.

Alisa Messer, president of AFT Local 2121, expresses frustration that so much outreach by faculty appears to have brought the college no closer to agreeing on how best to move forward.

“Yes, it’s true that the college had some problems,” says Messer, “but we’ve shown such good faith in trying to solve the problems faced by the college. We have been at the table and been essential in the process of bringing in new revenue.” Still, says Messer, not only students but part-time faculty continue to bear the brunt of the financial troubles.

Whether the financial struggles and accreditation problems are directly related to the



SHARON BEALS

historically strong support of part-time faculty at City College has been a topic of much discussion. Some have alleged that the significant progress in increasing the number of full-time positions at City College, closing the gap between numbers of part-time and full-time faculty, and offering attractive pro rata pay, office hour compensation, and health benefits to its part-time faculty put the college on the radar screen of those who want to see community colleges downsized and even “corporatized.” They oppose any weakening of the collective bargaining agreement, especially as it supports part-timers.

Still, faculty, students and community members are committed to defending their beloved college. Says part-time business instructor Hugo Aparicio: “We at the local union are working to implement what was promised to San Franciscans, and that was to restore the classes that were closed in recent semesters.”

Be a delegate to CFT Convention

PLAN NOW if you want to be a delegate to the CFT Convention to be held March 15-17 at the Sheraton Grand Sacramento. The theme of Convention 2013 is “Building Education that Works: Educators, Students, Community.”

The Convention is open to all CFT members, but only elected delegates can vote. It is the Federation’s highest body, where delegates shape positions on issues affecting all

members and elect CFT officers.



The Community College Council will meet Friday night, March 15. There will be workshops on a wide range of topics, including part-timer and higher education issues. Plus there’s time for fun, with receptions and networking.

Delegates must be elected following union legal requirements and federal law. Contact your local union soon if you want to run as a delegate.

GetConnected



AFT Faculty and College Excellence (FACE)

A national campaign to reverse the crisis in instructional staffing at our nation’s colleges and universities by achieving full equity in compensation for contingent faculty members and ensuring that qualified contingent faculty have the opportunity to move into full-time positions as they become available. aftface.org

Coalition on the Academic Workplace (CAW)

A group of higher education associations, disciplinary associations, and faculty organizations committed to addressing issues associated with deteriorating faculty working conditions and their effect on students in the United States. academicworkforce.org

Campaign for the Future of Higher Education (CFHE) A new grassroots national campaign to support quality higher education launched in January 2011 by leaders of faculty organizations from 21 states. futureofhigher.org

Coalition of Contingent Academic Labor - California (COCAL-CA)

A coalition of activists from faculty organizations and unions representing contingent, non-tenured faculty members in all segments of higher education in California with the goals of coordinating activities to educate the public about the inequities of contingent faculty, promoting legislation, and improving bargaining rights, working conditions and education standards. cocal-ca.org

Faculty Association for California Community Colleges (FACCC)

Information about retirement, unemployment insurance and filing, and, for members, health insurance options. facc.org

COCAL INTERNATIONAL

Worldwide group of contingent faculty strategize Faculty face same issues in United States, Canada, South Korea and Mexico

PART-TIME FACULTY members of CFT attended the 10th conference of COCAL International, the Coalition of Contingent Academic Labor, in Mexico City, where California, despite its problems, was held up as a standard for part-time equity.

In mid-August, contingent and part-time faculty traveled from Canada, the United States, South Korea, and within Mexico to share information and ideas about how best to defend the world's public institutions of higher education.

Bill James, a Spanish instructor at Cosumnes River College in Sacramento, said one of the most powerful ideas proposed at the conference was that part-time faculty "form alliances with full-time faculty and unions who represent other campus workers, as well as with student groups." James, a member of Los Rios Federation, was inspired by this shared approach to staving off further austerity measures.



VINNIE TIRELLI

"California seems generally to be seen as the 'gold standard' for part-time instructors," James said. "But if that's true, we can still increase the karats. We must publicly insist that it is hypocritical to say that we value education, yet hire a clear majority of part-time faculty with limited job security as opposed to full-time, tenure-

track professors."

Linda Chan, from the Adjunct Faculty Federation at Citrus College in Glendora, was struck by the shared situation of attendees. "No matter where you are in the world,



DAVID MILROY

full-time tenure-track positions are under assault."

Chan remembers the moment a presenter invited attendees to notice the average age of people

"No matter where you are in the world, full-time tenure-track positions are under assault."

— Linda Chan, Adjunct Faculty Federation, Citrus College

sitting around them, observing: "Colleges and universities aren't hiring younger teachers. Who would want to start teaching now, when working conditions and pay are getting worse, as are prospects for a full-time job?" Chan left the conference feeling more committed than ever to defending the right to decent pay and working conditions for contingent faculty.

Hugo Aparicio, a part-time business instructor at City

College of San Francisco, called the conference "eye-opening." Some higher education instructors work for as little as \$5 per hour, he reports. "We Americans and Canadians, learning about conditions in Mexico,

now have a better appreciation for what we have. Thinking about our brothers and sisters in Mexico made me feel a bit guilty because their conditions

are, by comparison, so poor." But he doesn't feel complacent; he intends to become even more active in his union.

James, Chan, and Aparicio agree that it was extremely valuable to attend the international conference to see that, as Aparicio puts it, "the education problems in Mexico are the same problems here, at different levels, and in Canada and Korea, too." He says that we all share the same structural



DAVID MILROY

San Francisco's Hugo Aparicio at COCAL.

problem: "Teachers aren't recognized for the work we do." For Aparicio, the conference provided a tremendous opportunity to exchange ideas and set the tone for "where we're going in the next 10 years."

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AFT, AFL-CIO
A Union of Professionals

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