

## Presidential POV

LAST YEAR, voters from the East Bay and around the state showed how greatly they value public education when they passed Measure B and Proposition 30. And thanks to the support of informed citizens, Peralta starts the new academic year healthier than it's been since the onset of the Great Recession.

Combined, the two tax initiatives will net Peralta some \$15 million a year through most of the next decade. Peralta faculty and their brothers and sisters in the labor movement campaigned hard to secure these victories, major wins for our students and our colleges. So after years of sacrifice—benefits concessions, inflation-eroded wages, part-time reductions, and unfilled full-time vacancies—faculty deserve some consideration.

PFT spent the summer negotiating faculty's share of the new revenues. With a 1.57% COLA on its way from the state, PFT has been pushing the district to invest still more in faculty. And while PFT applauds Peralta's move to make 41 new full-time hires, the union will continue to advocate for more. We're also fighting for the first-ever 25-step part-time salary schedule, the preservation of benefits, and the return of sabbaticals and professional-development monies. What's more, we expect greater financial stability to make it easier to reach agreements on no-cost items, including deals on release-time job descriptions and fee-based classes.

(continues inside)



## Introducing Laura Watson

*PFT welcomes staffer with long résumé in labor, organizing, and politics*

**L**AURA WATSON (above left, with CoA Academic Senate President Trulie Thompson) joined the PFT staff this summer, bringing a deep background in labor and politics to her role as Database Coordinator/Communications Specialist. A North Carolina native, Laura comes to PFT most recently from Abel Guillén's assembly campaign, where as deputy field director she worked closely with PFT members. Before the 2012 election, she worked as an internal

and external organizer with AFSCME 3299 at UC Berkeley and UCSF. Her background also includes extensive work in internal/external organizing, communications, and membership coordination with the Writers Guild of America, West, including her role as a lead staffer in the highly successful 2008-9 strike. Outside the office, Laura enjoys running, travelling, dining, and long strolls on the campuses of the Peralta Community College District, searching for enthusiast PFT members to get involved in their union!

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## Peralta Federation of Teachers

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Communications Specialist*

Peralta Federation of Teachers, AFT Local 1603 represents nearly 1,000 teachers, counselors, librarians, and nurses at the College of Alameda, Berkeley City College, Laney College, and Merritt College. PFT is an affiliate of the California Federation of Teachers and the American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO. AFT represents more than 1.5 million members nationwide.

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## Presidential POV

(continued from page one)

The brighter fiscal picture isn't the only good news at our colleges. After four years of queasy uncertainty—not to mention hundreds of thousands of dollars in consulting contracts, money that might now be spent in the classroom—Peralta has managed to free all four of its schools from the sanctions imposed by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC). While the ACCJC demands nonstop attention to its shifting standards, and although new self-studies are just around the corner, it's impossible not to breathe a small sigh of relief at our colleges' reprieve from accreditation limbo.

To maintain perspective, we should note that limbo looks like heaven to the folks at City College of San Francisco, whose accreditation ACCJC voted to terminate effective July 31, 2014. And if the story ended here, CCSF's situation would be nothing more than a grim warning about the dangers of falling out of favor with ACCJC.

However, working with the California Federation of Teachers, parent union to both PFT and CCSF's AFT Local 2121, faculty at City College have been asking tough questions about the expanding role of accreditation ever since ACCJC put CCSF on "show cause," the toughest sanction shy of outright disaccreditation, during the summer of 2012. Last spring, the inquiries led CFT and 2121 to file a 260-page complaint against ACCJC with the U.S. Department of Education, arguing that the Novato-based nonprofit failed to follow its own rules, flouted federal law, and flagrantly ignored conflicts of interest in its operations.

ACCJC has been publicly dismissive of the allegations against it. But in an Aug. 13 letter, the DOE, which effectively accredits the regional accrediting agency, formally acknowledged some of CFT's most serious grievances and ordered ACCJC to clean up its act. How Washington's ruling will affect ACCJC's handling of CCSF's



appeal of the disaccreditation decision remains to be seen, but the need for reform at the commission is clear.

Again, Peralta faculty members have plenty of reasons to be cautiously optimistic as they head into the new semester. To keep up with the latest on negotiations, accreditation, and PFT's activities on campus and beyond, follow the union's quarterly hardcopy newsletter, *The Peralta Teacher*, and its twice-monthly email bulletins, the *e-Communiqué* and *PCCD Board Watch*. Also, find us online at [pft1603.org](http://pft1603.org), follow us on Twitter at *PFT1603*, and like us on Facebook.

Four annual general membership meetings (one at each college) and regular campus chapter meetings also offer chances for updates and discussion. And think about checking out an Executive Council meeting, first and third Thursdays, 3-5 p.m., at the PFT offices—first one's set for September 5.

Faculty need to stay informed and get involved to meet upbeat projections for the year ahead. Check your pay stub to make sure you're a PFT member. If you're unclear whether you're a dues-payer (member) or a fees-payer (nonmember), call PFT staffer Laura Watson at (510) 763-8820. Only dues-paying members have a say in all union decision-making, remember, so pay your dues and say your piece!

In solidarity,

**Matthew M. Goldstein**

*President, PFT, AFT Local 1603*



# Negotiations UPDATE

## *Summer talks set the table for fall agreement*

**By Rick Greenspan**

*PFT Treasurer / Chief Negotiator*

### Salary and benefits

While nothing has been settled, we've been making progress over the summer and are hopeful that we'll reach a settlement on economic issues (salary, benefits, sabbaticals, etc.) within a month or so. The settlement will be retroactive to the beginning of the fiscal year.

We are currently discussing both "on schedule" and "one-time" money for contract and part-time faculty. The negotiations also need to recognize that during 2012-13, we "bought back" our full Delta Dental coverage by giving up sabbaticals, staff development funds, and a few other things.

Adding to the complexity is our proposal that we want a 25-step schedule for part-time faculty. On this new schedule, the current 7 steps will remain the same (in terms of the percentage jump between steps), while the next 18 steps will have a smaller percentage jump between steps. We expect that a substantial portion of the

salary increase funds marked for part-timers will go to fund these new steps.

### SPD issues

Our medical "summary plan document" (SPD) is what defines our medical benefits. The district is allowed to update the SPD to reflect new medical technologies and realities, as long as our overall benefits are not diminished. But our contract is clear that the district cannot take anything away from us without negotiation.

We started meeting with the district this summer to go over changes from the 2006 SPD to the current SPD, in order to make sure none of them amounted to a "takeaway" (without negotiation).

### Fee-based classes

We are working toward a solution that will stipulate that fee-based instructors will continue to use the existing (individual) contracts for their fee-based classes but will be represented by PFT for the purposes of enforcing that contract. PFT will also be kept

informed as to the number of fee-based classes taught each semester, so that we can reopen this issue if the number of classes were to increase dramatically.

### Summer and intersession sick leave

A temporary one-year agreement was reached for summer 2013, allowing two sick days for summer session and another two sick days for intersession. We are hoping to resolve this issue permanently by integrating summer and intersession sick leave into regular faculty sick-leave, using the same formulas and ratios that we currently use for the regular semesters.

### Stipends and non-instructional assignments

We have continued to discuss this issue over the summer, urging the district to negotiate a general agreement for all non-instructional assignments that continue for more than a year, so that everyone is clear on how faculty get these specialized jobs, what the term of the assignment is, how they're evaluated (and by whom), etc.



## PFT ♥ CCSF

English instructor Mick Scherer and retired faculty member Susan Schacher, both of Laney College, joined hundreds of protesters in a July 9 march to the San Francisco offices of the U.S. Department of Education. The marchers rallied to urge the DOE to overturn the decision by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges to disaccredit City College of San Francisco, the state's largest public institution of higher learning. On August 13, the DOE formally notified ACCJC that it was out of compliance with several key federal regulations.

Meet PFT Diversity Chair

# Tamika Brown

**T**AMIKA BROWN, African American Studies prof and new PFT Diversity Chair, first came to Peralta in 2008. As chair of the Laney College Ethnic Studies Department, Tamika is a strong advocate for her program and her faculty. Her nonpareil communication skills and her strong commitment to faculty and students promise to make her an exceptionally valuable member of the union’s Executive Council and a crucial part of the Laney and wider Peralta communities for years to come.

**What attracts you to union work?**

Union work represents the “real change we want to see.” Active participation from all stakeholders is essential in defining and negotiating a healthy work environment. Union membership is the best place to build community and encourage dialogue around workplace issues.

**How do your roles as a faculty member and a PFT leader complement each other?**

I entered the field of education because, like me, a disproportionate number of students of color, first-generation, and/or poor students exit high school and enter college with inadequate academic preparation. For me, access to a quality education with supportive resources validated my worth, cultural identity, and rights as a member of a democratic society. It radically changed the trajectory of my life and interrupted the legacy of enslavement and oppression of women in my family lineage. My work in Ethnic Studies has strengthened my commitment to creating emancipated spaces in higher education for marginalized populations. As both a faculty member and PFT leader, I have the opportunity to be a stronger advocate for faculty, as we work to improve our instruction and services

for all students. As the chair of Ethnic Studies at Laney College, my work on issues related to strengthening our understanding and commitment to diversity complements my role with PFT as Diversity Chair. I will continue to support, organize, and educate our community on the issues and needs of marginalized groups within Peralta Colleges, so that all students of various diverse backgrounds can successfully navigate their way to the path of economic security and justice.

**What do you like best about working at Laney and in the district?**

Our students!

**If you could change one thing about Peralta, what would it be?**

If I could change one thing about Peralta, we would have more faculty/ staff participation in shared governance. We have brilliant minds, with great ideas, that are never heard because these individuals are not at the table. Real change craves diverse thoughts/ voices. We need to move beyond the usual suspects—all stakeholders in the community need to be invested in the shared-governance process.

**What goals do you have for the upcoming year?**

I want to increase Peralta’s commitment to diversity with measurable goals/results. I want to teach great classes and work with PFT on various initiatives, including greater general membership involvement/ attendance.

**As someone who recently went through the tenure process, what advice would you offer to new contract faculty? Part-time faculty?**

Attend a new faculty orientation workshop! Learn as much as you can about student support services, student engagement, and the importance of shared governance. Find a mentor,



*Tamika Brown joins BCC’s Matt Freeman and Laney’s Sonja Franeta, both freshly elected college reps, on the new-look 2013-15 PFT Executive Council.*

.....

someone you can trust, to help improve your teaching, sharpen your conflict resolution skills, and construct long-term career goals. Finally, make time to attend PFT meetings, to learn about faculty rights, professional development, and professional growth opportunities within the district.

**When you’re not teaching, heading up your department, serving on committees, and doing union work, how do you like to spend your time?**

The remaining four hours of my day is split between Maddie (two years old) and massage envy!



# Grievance UPDATE

## *PFT puts kibosh on admin grade-changes, rehire pool miscues*

**By Patricia Dudley**  
*Secretary/Grievance Officer*

**T**HE GRIEVANCE BEAT didn't see much of a summer slowdown, with PFT responding to contractual lapses around the district throughout the warm-weather months. Some notable issues:

### **Part-time faculty and the preferred rehire pool**

Since 2006, the PFT contract has had wording regarding a preferential rehiring pool for part-time faculty. The purpose of the pool is to provide a list of part-timers who would be chosen first for assignments.

The contract carefully spells out a procedure for admittance to the pool. Superior evaluations and six semesters of PCCD employment over the previous 10 semesters are required. However, it is apparent that our part-timers are not being evaluated in a timely fashion (although some colleges have done a better job than others). Lack of evaluation means you are not considered for the pool and may lose a future assignment. According to documents received from Vice Chancellor Michael Orkin, there are quite a few part-timers who are eligible for evaluation into the preferred pool.

Please help yourselves in this situation. Even though it's the college administration's responsibility to make sure evaluations are completed, you can have a role. Work closely with your department chair to make sure you are evaluated, get copies of all evaluations, and stay on top of making sure the forms get completed. There are five types of paperwork that must be completed: a classroom evaluation done by a faculty member, student evaluations, an administrative evaluation, a self-evaluation, and a summary evaluation. If you meet the requirements and are successfully

admitted to the pool, get a letter from your dean saying so.

PFT is currently working with the district to make sure that this process proceeds as it should, and that evaluations are occurring in a timely manner. If you have questions about the process, you can consult the contract at [pft1603.org](http://pft1603.org) or call the PFT office at (510) 763-8820.

### **Who can change grades given by faculty?**

No one but the faculty member. Your grades cannot be changed by an administrator, an A&R clerk, an

associate vice chancellor, or even the Chancellor himself. California Education Code Section 76224 states:

(a) When grades are given for any course of instruction taught in a community college district, the grade given to each student shall be the grade determined by the instructor of the course and the determination of the student's grade by the instructor, in the absence of mistake, fraud, bad faith, or incompetency, shall be final.

PFT enforces adherence to the contract, board policies, and the Ed Code.

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# Community Partnerships

*President Weingarten says it's time to get local*

**By Janell Hampton**  
*PFT COPE Chair/SCI Organizer*

**I**N JULY, in preparation for this fall's AFL-CIO convention, AFT President Randi Weingarten convened a committee, Community Partnerships and Grassroots Power. The committee's goal was clear: to get unions to join forces with community organizations. Labor organizers from across the country, including myself, were invited to Washington, D.C., to help forward the committee's agenda.

Merging forces with community groups will provide a splendid opportunity for organized labor to become more relevant and familiar to many people who would not normally have reasons to interact with unions. Labor organizers could also draw connections between union work and the problems people face in other aspects of their lives, such as foreclosures or inadequate and expensive healthcare. I am excited by my fellow organizers' interest in focusing on this recent initiative by the AFL-CIO and AFT.

PFT has already started working with local community groups such as ACCE and Refund CA. I would love to see us broaden our work in



*What I did on my summer vacation: Laney part-timer Janell Hampton mugs with AFT President Randi Weingarten during a July meeting in Washington, D.C.*

this arena. PFT does not have to wait for the AFL-CIO Convention or the AFT nod to continue creating community allies and benefiting from a pro-labor community. We should ask ourselves who the communities and organizations are that Peralta educators share mutual interests with now. For example, our students do better if all over Alameda County they and their families aren't losing their homes to predatory banking

practices that our local community organization, East Bay Housing Organization, regularly fights against. A healthy future for all unions rests in connecting with community activists. Individual faculty members have an important role to play. If you can think of potential community allies, please forward them to me at [janell@pft1603.org](mailto:janell@pft1603.org) and Peter Brown at [peterbuilt1959@hotmail.com](mailto:peterbuilt1959@hotmail.com).

**pft**

*Events  
Calendar*

- ▶ **Labor Day Picnic**  
Monday, September 2, 11:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.  
Alameda Point Park (2700 Saratoga Street, Alameda)  
Join faculty brothers and sisters at the PFT booth!
- ▶ **PFT Executive Council Meeting**  
Thursday, September 5, 3:00 - 5:00 p.m.  
PFT offices (500 E. Eighth Street, Suite B, Oakland)
- ▶ **General Membership Meeting**  
Thursday, September 26, 3:00 - 5:00 p.m.  
Laney College (room TBA)