

Presidential POV

THE 2017-18 academic year got off to a fast start. Action began over the summer and hasn't let up—and now the holidays are already upon us.

Among other developments, my first semester as president has seen reactivation of PFT's subcommittees (updates on which appear in this issue of the *Teacher*); formation of a budget oversight group that's taking a critical look at PCCD spending; establishment of relationships with our local California Federation of Teachers (CFT) organizers; and identification of strengths and weaknesses within PFT.

Fall has also found PFT setting and vetting new goals, organizing attendance at the Bay Area Rally Against Hate, running an effective membership drive at Laney, and holding a series of events to educate members about the proposed A's stadium.

In August, the PFT Executive Council—which features seven new members—met to set goals for the upcoming year and contract cycle. The CFT-led strategy

session helped us shape four main goals: increasing PFT membership, achieving equity for part-time faculty, conducting educational workshops for members, and developing a position on the proposed Oakland A's stadium.

Our first membership drive of the year just wrapped up at Laney. Twenty-five faculty volunteers and nine CFT/PFT staff spread out over the campus Nov. 1-9. During the campaign, PFT collected 224 membership cards and signed up 23 former fee-payers. And importantly, we talked with members about their own priorities, concerns, and ideas. With a decision looming in the antiunion U.S. Supreme Court case *Janus vs. AFSCME*, membership drives like this one are central to the wellbeing of our union, and we're thrilled to have shattered our goal of 120 cards. Look for our blue-and-orange t-shirts at BCC, COA, and Merritt next semester as we continue this work; as always, we invite and welcome your participation.

Part-time equity made great strides last year with the ratification of our new contract. We increased office-hour compensation dramatically, from 1 compensated hour per 6 or more units taught, to 1 compensated hour per 3-6 units taught and 2 compensated hours per 6 or more units taught. We also got office hours to be paid monthly as



Jennifer Shanoski, PFT President

part of part-timers' regular paychecks so that this compensation would be included in retirement calculations. And in a great show of solidarity, full-time faculty supported a distribution of salary increases that helped to close the salary schedule parity gap.


While these strides should be celebrated, we have much more to do. Since salaries are not currently under negotiations, we are laying the groundwork to fight for full equity. Part-time representative Brad Balukjian is leading that fight and has more to say on the issue in his *Part-time Update* column inside.

(POV continues on back page)



Ed Jaramillo (1955-2017)

THE UNION LOST an exceptional friend, colleague, and leader in September, when its immediate past president, Ed Jaramillo, passed away peacefully at home in the company of close friends and his beloved wife, Jackie Mucha. Ed assumed the PFT's top job in 2015, the culmination of two decades of service on the union's Executive Council. A mainstay of College of Alameda's Automotive Technology Department since 1989, Ed worked hard throughout his career on behalf of his students and his faculty sisters and

brothers. Kind and steady, generous and easygoing, Ed strived to bring people together and to solve problems pragmatically. He loved the outdoors—he was a devoted camper, hiker, and sailor—and a natural athlete, a high school track star who went on to capture a state racquetball title. He battled multiple myeloma bravely through the last years of his life, and he left much of his estate to the fight against the fatal blood disease. Folks wishing to honor Ed's memory are encouraged to donate in his name to Habitat for Humanity or the Alameda County Community Food Bank. 

CTE Committee Outlook

By Peter Brown

CTE Chair

CAREER and Technical Education (“CTE”) refers to courses leading directly to employment. But I’ve always maintained that all subjects are vocational in the long run. Study Astrophysics, and you’ll be employed in a lab or observatory somewhere. You know, Neil deGrasse Tyson, working stiff.

As the CTE Chair, I’ve mostly focused on health and safety issues related directly to CTE subjects and faculty. Often, though, the problems I’ve taken on have affected folks across the entire college community. Two prime examples from Laney: devastating water leaks into lower classrooms and labs, and chronic neglect of the student center cafeteria kitchens. In both cases, PFT forced the administration to address longstanding hazards that threatened students, faculty, and staff. I worked with courageous teachers,

students, staff, and administrators to tackle these problems after years, even decades, of intransigence from Peralta management.


New news: CTE faculty aren’t usually the loudest voices on campus; we tend to be buried in our labs, maintaining equipment and planning classes, a more-than-full-time job. But for several years, CTE colleagues have been bringing up the issue of reduced pay for lab courses, 80% of lecture rate. “When are you going to do something about that?” I’m asked routinely.

Now we have our chance. PFT has activated its subcommittees as part of its strategy to organize and energize faculty in these challenging times. The CTE Chair is charged with organizing a CTE subcommittee of the PFT Executive Council, with the following mission:

It shall be the responsibility of this committee to recommend union policy concerning the special needs of vocational [CTE] faculty and to represent their interests on the Executive Council.

Committee members so far are unanimously in favor of a campaign to raise lab course pay to a full 100% of lecture pay levels. This issue affects faculty far beyond the CTE divisions, including many academic and scientific subjects. And it especially hits part-time faculty, who already labor under inherently difficult conditions. It’s time for this to change.

While this committee is still in formation, I’ve recruited members from three campuses (BCC, Laney, COA) and will be looking next to recruit Merritt faculty. We’re about to hold our first meeting, and I’ll report to you on progress.

Finally, over the next few months I’ll be recruiting my replacement as CTE Chair, since I’ll retire at the end of the spring 2018 semester. I’ve been proud to be able to contribute something here, and we need to ensure that the new spirit among faculty and in the PFT continues to grow. 

Negotiations Notes

By Rick Greenspan

Chief Negotiator

IN THEORY, PFT and the district aren’t supposed to be in negotiations year-round. But with multiple issues on the negotiating table that were not resolved last spring, PFT-PCCD negotiations have been continuous, through the summer and deep into the fall. Here are just some of the topics left unfinished when we approved the contract last spring:

- ▶ Article 6 rules/regulations regarding dues payments, new-member orientation, and getting accurate faculty contact information to PFT
- ▶ Working out the implementation details for the new part-time seniority system (goes into effect in Fall 2018)
- ▶ Setting up an Evaluation Coordinator at each college to facilitate evaluations of contract and part-time faculty
- ▶ Codifying the rules for department chair elections

- ▶ Making medical benefit dependent audits fair and less stressful for faculty
- ▶ Creating policies around faculty office privacy, discrimination investigations (and training), use of email, and a special category of full-time faculty who are hired on grants, year-by-year


While some progress has been made on most of the above issues, we’ve signed off on just two. We’ve finalized the contract language for the new part-time seniority system; during the spring, PFT will be setting up information and training sessions on the part-time seniority system at all the colleges. And we now have someone at each college whose job it is to facilitate the evaluations of part-timers and contract faculty.

Everything else remains to be negotiated. And we expect that wages and benefits will take center stage during the spring, once state budget information for 2018-19 becomes available.

The good news is that the three-year contract (2016-19) we approved last spring

included a number of accomplishments. We held onto our medical benefits for 2016-17 and 2017-18 without any increases in copays or premiums—and that is the exception among Bay Area community college districts. We got small across-the-board salary increases in both 2016-17 and 2017-18, while a number of Bay Area districts settled for less. We kept our existing pay system for counselors who work outside the regular calendar.

Plus, for our part-timers, we got a real seniority system for assignments and a 25-step salary schedule—two things that most Bay Area districts do not have. Those successes were due in a large part to faculty who attended PFT actions at board meetings and (for part-timers and counselors) sent representatives to PFT-PCCD negotiation sessions to push back against administration.

We expect that we’ll need more of that activism in the spring, when we deal with topics like wages and benefits and other issues that affect everyone. Stay tuned! 



Peralta Federation of Teachers

500 E. Eighth Street, Suite B
Oakland, CA 94606
(510) 763-8820
union@pft1603.org

www.pft1603.org



OFFICERS:

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Peralta Federation of Teachers, AFT Local 1603 represents over 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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Diversity Committee Today

By **Kimberly R. King**

PFT Diversity Chair

BUILDING a PFT Diversity Committee is a way to engage members around issues of concern to them. This committee is growing and is open to all PFT members who want to contribute to our charge. According to the PFT Constitution, the PFT Diversity Committee has the responsibility to recommend union policy concerning the needs of diverse faculty and to represent their interests on the PFT Executive Council.

Our Diversity Committee has members from all four Peralta campuses. At our first meeting, those in attendance emphasized the goal of social justice in our work, the principle that everyone's entitled to basic human rights and necessities, and that an equitable compassionate world is possible. In so doing, we stand with CFT and AFT leaders who have recently highlighted the importance of social justice for unions of public educators.

In his April 2017 state of the union address, CFT President Joshua Pechthalt expressed the need for unions to be part of building a "progressive movement that advocates for limits on the cost of higher education while tackling student debt; that makes climate, racial, and criminal justice reforms top priorities, and a movement that reduces the U.S.'s military budget and reshapes a foreign policy in the Middle East and elsewhere based on economic and social justice."

Speaking in October, AFT Executive Vice President Mary Cathryn Ricker said, "The forces behind [Janus V. AFSME, an antiunion case set to go before the U.S. Supreme Court this term] are the same forces that have pushed for limiting voting rights, attacked immigrants and undermined civil rights protections." She also insisted that unions "must

be focused on all the conditions that improve people's lives. It is up to us to live that bedrock union value that an injury to one is an injury to all."

In our meetings thus far, the PFT Diversity Committee discussed the need for increased public funding for high-quality public colleges; just and equitable hiring practices that lead to bringing in more underrepresented faculty; the importance of protecting and advocating for undocumented students in the context of the elimination of DACA; and concerns about law enforcement's presence and treatment of students on our campuses. The committee also talked about plans to host educational events for faculty and students about discrimination faced by, and success strategies for, women and LGBTQ folks in STEM fields.

The DC has also raised concerns that the Peralta District will make a deal with the Oakland A's to build a new stadium on Peralta land, land that our committee believes should remain in public hands and be used for the public good, not private profit. The committee presented its formal resolution against the A's stadium to the PFT Executive Council. The resolution decried the detrimental effects the construction of a sports stadium on district land would have on the educational environment for Laney students, faculty, and staff, and warned against accelerated real estate development and gentrification in the surrounding neighborhoods, including Oakland Chinatown.

We invite you to join the Diversity Committee to share your ideas, help build PFT, and promote the role of social, economic, and racial justice in our union and in the Peralta Community College District! 

COPE Corner

By Jeff Sanceri

Grievance Officer/COPE Chair

THE COMMITTEE on Political Education, or COPE, is technically the political side of the union—working to support candidates and initiatives that support Peralta faculty. And backing faculty interests necessarily means supporting the students we serve. After all, as we're all keenly aware, faculty working conditions are student learning conditions!

As community college faculty, we are in a unique position: we can actually elect our own bosses—specifically, the Board of Trustees. Three members of the Peralta Community College District Board of Trustees are up for reelection in fall 2018. With that in mind, I would like to make two calls out to our membership:

1) **We need more members!** COPE is more than simply “playing politics,” and it is more than throwing money at candidates. It's about coming together and thinking deeply about the direction of our workplaces and jobs, and how we can take part in electing the people who, among other important duties, will be approving budgets, management hires, and the possible sale or lease of lands owned by the district. We can have a say in who makes these decisions!

2) **As a body, we would also like to think more creatively about the ways in which we allocate money.** Many, including myself, have expressed interest in finding ways we might work with local nonprofit and activist organizations to raise the profile of issues affecting our community. We are a community college district after

all, which means that our aims should reflect the communities we serve.

The confusion and dissatisfaction across our current political landscape, at the local and national levels, offer a unique opportunity to consider how COPE might work to effect change. Identifying true progressive representatives and working with organizations that speak to our needs as faculty are a couple of ways we might help transform the political environment—and thereby further address the needs of our students and communities.

Our meetings are held at the PFT offices, 500 E. Eighth Street in Oakland, and we meet from 2 to 3 p.m. before the PFT Executive Council meetings on first and third Thursdays of the month. If you are not yet a member of COPE, please visit pft1603.org to sign up.

Hope to see and work with you soon! 

Membership Roundup

By Hilary Altman

Membership Committee Chair

THE PFT Membership Engagement Committee seeks to help faculty connect with fellow faculty members, become more educated about the contract, and to engage with the surrounding community through service opportunities.

Engaging with Fellow Faculty

Many of us work at one or more campuses and have few chances to interact with our peers who teach on different campuses or who work different hours. Our committee offers opportunities to get together with fellow faculty to socialize, while we also share stories from the classroom and inevitably build stronger connections with each other.

Union Pride and Knowing Our Contract

There is a long history of unions in the United States dating back to the

late 1800s. The American Federation of Teachers formed in 1916. The Peralta Federation of Teachers (AFT Local 1603) was chartered in 1965. We are a strong voice that advocates for decent working conditions, fair treatment and pay of employees, and healthcare, among other rights. This year, PFT is focused on part-time parity—equal pay for equal work by our excellent and dedicated part-time faculty. We are looking for members who are willing to become experts on small portions of our collective bargaining agreement (the contract) and share this knowledge with other instructors.

Community Connections and Service Projects

Many of us became teachers to give back to our community. As community college instructors, we have the privilege of working with incredible students, many of whom come from underrepresented groups and under-resourced communities. We put a great deal of effort into ensuring our students

have high-quality teaching so that they leave our classrooms with the skills they need to succeed.

In order to build strong students, we need to consider supporting the larger community. Our first service project is coming up soon. You will receive a communication asking for donations of items that will be part of comfort kits, provided to parents who stay overnight in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit with their children at Oakland Benioff Children's Hospital. PFT will have collection bins at the union offices—consider dropping off your donation at the PFT holiday party, Dec. 14, 5-7 p.m. During the March 22 Flex Day, we'll invite faculty to volunteer to assemble these comfort kits. Another small group will drop off the comfort kits at Children's Hospital, once they are assembled.

PFT's Membership Committee would love for you to join the action! Email me at hilaryaltmanphd@gmail.com with any questions. 

Part-time Update

By Brad Balukjian

Part-time Representative

AT THE END of every semester, each of our 727 part-time (aka contingent) faculty gets fired. When that last final exam is given, the last paper turned in, we are no longer officially employed by the district, regardless of our job performance. While we may get an assignment letter before the start of the next semester, those letters are always contingent on enrollment and full-timers filling their classes (since a full-timer can bump a part-timer if the full-timer's class doesn't fill), and so our job security is nil.

The purpose of the adjunct has been subverted by college administrations across the country over the past 60 years in order to save money. A position that comprised only 12-15% of the faculty ranks in the 1950s and '60s has grown to the majority of faculty positions in America today; what was once intended as supplemental work for working professionals with specific expertise has become a factory of marginalized, underpaid workers struggling to make ends meet.

Our paid benefits, if any, are meager. For example, rather than pay over \$300 a month under our "50-50" benefits plan, I am on Obamacare. Furthermore, at every step and column of our pay schedule, we are paid less than a full-timer with the same qualifications to do the exact same instructional work (even when you take into account that full-timers are required to do college service).




Brad Balukjian, PFT's part-time representative, fields questions from activist "contingent" faculty members at a recent meeting held in the Laney College Forum. Balukjian teaches biology at Merritt College.

We aren't in this business for the money—the idea of anyone going into education for money is laughable. We're here because delivering quality education and helping students succeed is a deep-seated calling that is so strong it feels involuntary. We care too much sometimes, but caring is not a switch to be turned off. We will continue to work hard for our students. But we also recognize it is time we are compensated fairly for what we do.

This semester, we have activated the long-dormant part-time faculty committee, a branch of the Executive Council that solely focuses on improving the working conditions of our 727 part-timers. We're 25 members strong and growing. We've already met to establish our infrastructure, and we've already held an Equal Pay for Equal Work Summit, the kickoff to an 18-month plan to earn full pay equity in our next contract.

Given the long list of issues to address, we divided the committee into five working "pods," which each pod tackling one of the following issues: pay inequity; reforming the evaluation process; improving the district's calculation of sick time and application of sick time to retirement; pay inequity for librarians and counselors relative to the other 13 Bay Area community college districts; and correcting IT glitches in the enrollment and registration process.

If you are a part-timer who is tired of the Peralta Way, both new and old, or a full-timer who understands what it is like to be part-time and wants to help, please get in touch and join the groundswell of activism. Although we are contingent faculty, Peralta is contingent on us for its success, and it's high time we are treated accordingly. 



Local 1603 says NO to Hate!

PFT sent two dozen orange-and-blue-clad members to the Bay Area Rally against Hate, held in downtown Berkeley on Aug. 27. The PFT contingent joined thousands of peaceful protestors from across the region to raise the alarm over a recent resurgence in white supremacist activities and the support they receive from the highest levels of government.

Grievance Sheet

By Jeff Sanceri

Grievance Officer/COPE Chair

THIS SEMESTER, your Grievance Officer (me) has been working on several issues on behalf of (and with!) Peralta faculty. As our former Grievance Officer put it, “our union strives to resolve conflicts prior to filing grievances. When efforts to head off a problem come up short, Article 19 outlines the grievance procedures. The first step in the process is to work with the college/district administration to reach an informal resolution. A formal, written grievance is filed when such a resolution cannot be found.”

If you don't know what Article 19 of our contract says, or what a grievance is, I'll tell you what my mother told me when I was a kid:

A grievance is a formal allegation by a faculty member that he or she has been adversely affected by a misinterpretation, a misapplication, or a violation of this Agreement, or of Board Policy, which affects or relates to the employment of the grievant.

Got me through some hard times.

Our grievances this semester have varied from personnel issues involving


workload, calculations of part-time faculty base loads, and district errors in compensation. On a larger scale, we are working toward the automation of step increases for part-timers, an issue that was thought to have been resolved months ago. Unfortunately, due to either apathy or lack of proficiency on the part of the district, the work's still undone, and PFT is forced to use all the tools at its disposal to put things right.

PFT has also successfully pushed for the removal of mold from faculty offices at College of Alameda, unhealthy working conditions that clearly violated Article 12. And we're happy to report that, as you read this, faculty have returned to their offices and have no fear of spores. Frustratingly, though, other classrooms and offices remain where reported mold has yet to be removed.

Currently, the Grievance Office (by which I mean the small cubicle in which I work at PFT HQ) is writing a grievance that seeks pay for part-time faculty whose classes are canceled within two weeks of the start of a semester. According to Education Code 87482.8, Section (b), “Whenever possible, part-time faculty should be paid for the first week of an assignment when class is canceled less than two weeks before the beginning of a semester.”

I am new to this position, but it didn't take me long to recognize that most potential and actual grievances relate to the administration not recognizing the rights of workers like you and me. In other words, we negotiate a contract with the administration, we outline our rights and expectations to the administration, and we agree upon processes by which we cannot only solve problems in the workplace, but prevent them.

Yet even in the short time that I have been in this position, it seems clear that the administration has little interest in problem-prevention; in fact, it seems to address problems only after a faculty member has lodged a complaint or reported an issue to PFT. If our Collective Bargaining Agreement (the contract) is, in fact, a partnership between the faculty and the administration, then it seems that our partners are either ignoring us or aren't prepared to abide by our existing contract without someone to read it to them after they've violated it.

In the next issue of *The Peralta Teacher*, I will offer details of my plan to visit various administrators at the district offices and read the contract to them—and I'll be inviting you to come along and read it with me. 

POV

(continued from front page)



Scott Hoshida (left) holds up a completed membership card during PFT's fall membership drive. Joining Hoshida at the flagship were Jeff Sanceri, Jennifer Shanoski, and Linda Thompson. The union will launch a follow-up drive at CoA in January. If you'd like to get involved, email: union@pft1603.org

Rumors about the Oakland Athletics interest in procuring PCCD land for a new stadium turned out to be well founded when the ball club sent a Sept. 12 letter of intent to the chancellor. While the chancellor and trustees insist that no decision has been made, resources that should be directed toward students are now being diverted toward the issue.

PFT has been actively soliciting member feedback on the issue through the work of an A's Working Group made up of PFT members. To gauge member feeling, the group conducted two surveys, held educational forums at each of the campuses, and put together position papers. Members overwhelmingly expressed opposition to building a stadium on PCCD land, and the working group recommended that the Executive Council take that position. A vote to oppose the stadium was taken and passed unanimously. Look for

more information about opportunities to participate in actions and have your voice heard on this important issue.

Finally, and sadly, this fall we mourned the loss of our past president and friend Ed Jaramillo. We miss Ed's kindness, steadfastness, and handiness around the office. A private memorial was held in October by Ed's widow, Jackie Mucha, and a public day of service will be announced for all PFT members in the coming months.

As the fall 2017 semester comes to a close, I am optimistic about the future of our union. The enthusiasm, strength, and good sense of our members is a constant source of pride and energy. While our struggles are many and intense, together I am sure that we will continue to be the best and strongest voice of the Peralta faculty.

Jennifer Shanoski
President, PFT, AFT Local 1603