

Presidential POV

FANS OF PUBLIC education and unions—two of PFT’s favorite things, *natch*—had a good night Nov. 6, as Californians passed Proposition 30 and rejected Proposition 32.

Prop 30, the revenue-raising initiative brought by Gov. Jerry Brown (with a big assist from the California Federation of Teachers, PFT’s parent union) stops \$6 billion in automatic cuts to K-UC education, \$5.5 million to Peralta alone. About 90% of the money raised by Prop 30 comes from income-tax hikes on the state’s highest earners, those making more than \$250K a year, establishing the Schools and Local Public Safety Act as the most progressive popularly elected tax in state history.

Voters’ takedown of 32 stopped a Wisconsin-style effort to revoke the right of unions to participate in politics. Backed by Orange County business interests and shadowy Super PACs from beyond the Golden State, Prop 32—dubbed “the fraud to end all frauds” by the *LA Times*—would have silenced organized labor and amplified corporate voices in public debate. The failure of 32 marked the third time in the last decade that virulently anti-worker forces have tried to leverage California’s initiative system to attack unions—and it’s pretty likely that the three-time losers will cook up another scheme soon.

But 30’s decisive win and 32’s resounding failure weren’t the only good news for supporters of public education and labor: President Barack Obama’s reelection (by what to



She flies with her own wings

Sara Connors (right), labor champion and longtime PFT labor representative, will take her estimable organizing and analytical talents to Oregon next year. Sara will join the country’s fifth-largest AFT local—20,000 members!—as a budget analyst. Sara has been a fierce advocate for Peralta faculty since she joined the PFT staff in 2006. Pictured here with (from Sara’s right) Peralta 1021 political director Mike Donaldson (ret.), PFT rep Mustafa Popal, and former PCCD student trustee Jurena Storm, Sara will be sorely missed. PFT thanks Sara for all she’s done for Peralta faculty and wishes her all the best in her new position. The Oregon state motto—see the headline, above—suits Sara nicely.

some was a surprisingly comfortable margin) and the rise of a Democratic supermajority in both houses of the state legislature suggest the emergence of a more progressive electorate, one perhaps more attuned to the challenges faced by the 99%—and one that may even be willing to look seriously at revising Prop 13.

It wasn’t all sunshine and light on election night, though. PFT saw two of its candidates lose close races, candidates whose inspirational campaigns faculty worked hard on. Abel Guillén made a passionate,

people-powered run for the 18th State Assembly District seat, and fought his opponent to within less than a percentage point in the final tally. The eighteenth’s loss is Peralta’s gain, though, in that we get to keep Abel on the board of trustees—for a little while longer, anyway.

Also turning in a gracious and gutsy campaign was former Peralta student trustee Jurena Storm, who fell just a few hundred votes shy in her quest for the Area 2 seat on the PCCD Board of Trustees. PFT congratulates Jurena

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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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on running an excellent campaign, and wishes her well in all her future endeavors. Meanwhile, PFT looks forward to working with the newly elected Area 2 trustee, Meredith Brown, who ran a first-rate campaign and who, by all accounts, will make a thoughtful, energetic addition to the board.

PFT would like to thank the scores of faculty members who volunteered thousands of hours to walk precincts, work phone banks, and talk to families, friends, and colleagues about the crucial issues that came up during the fall campaign. PFT Diversity Chair/PLUCC organizer Janell Hampton, Laney English part-timer, and PFT rep Mustafa Popal, CoA history part-timer, rate a special mention for their herculean efforts throughout election season.

While the elections got most of the press over the past several months, there's been plenty of action around the PFT offices, too. The big news at PFT HQ is that longtime PFT labor representative Sara Connors will be moving on to a new job with the AFT in Oregon. Sara, who's been an invaluable part of the PFT staff since 2006, will work for the fifth-largest AFT local in the country, where she'll do high-level budget analysis and offer support to some 20,000 members.

Sara has been a fearless advocate for faculty throughout her tenure at PFT, handling grievances, enforcing the contract, and defending the rights of teachers, counselors, librarians, and

nurses with unmatched energy and enthusiasm. She starts the new gig in January, but before she heads off into the sunset, she'll be mentoring Anna Roy, PFT database coordinator, who will serve as interim labor rep until PFT fills the position permanently in spring.

Fall also marked PFT's return to the negotiating table, taking up unfinished business from last year's comprehensive contract talks. Fee-based classes, the part-time salary schedule, counseling contracts, and benefits costs are among the issues PFT and the district are discussing. See the Negotiations Update by PFT Chief Negotiator Rick Greenspan, also in this issue.

And, of course, PFT has been keeping the pressure on the district administration and the board to use the Measure B money and the unbudgeted windfall from Prop 30 to begin rebuilding the ranks of contract faculty. So far, the district has committed to hiring 20 new fulltime faculty members—a healthy start, but to get Peralta back in shape, the colleges need three times that many. As we've said before, you simply can't run four comprehensive colleges with so few full-time contract faculty members.

Look for email announcements about upcoming general membership meetings, chapter meetings, and presidential office hours on campus. As you'd expect, things are going to heat up in the spring, and PFT needs faculty to stay informed and get active!

In solidarity,

Matthew M. Goldstein

President, PFT, AFT Local 1603



As in 2008, faculty unions played an important role in electing Barack Obama in 2012.

Buying Time

Is CalSTRS airtime worth the money?

By Patricia Dudley
Secretary/Grievance Officer

What is *airtime*?

YOUR MONTHLY income once you retire is based on the number of years you worked, among other factors (age, salary). Now, only through Dec. 31, 2012, you can purchase more “work” years (or fractions of years) from CalSTRS. The time you buy is called airtime. Purchasing airtime will result in a higher monthly check once you retire. This program is being discontinued—thanks to the recently passed pension reform bill—so you only have until the end of the year to sign up.

Is it worth it?

That’s for you to decide. As a ballpark estimate, if you retire at the top of the current pay scale, every additional year that you work gets you about \$200 more a month for life. Every year of

airtime that you purchase adds to your work (service) years. For example, if you live 20 years after you retire, and you have purchased one year of airtime, that airtime gives you \$48,000 in income over 20 years. So as long the cost of the airtime is less than this amount, and you plan on living those 20 years, and then it might be worth considering. The younger you are when you buy it, the less it costs.

N.B.: There may be other investments that might provide this income, with a variability of risk and security.

How can I pay for this?

There are several ways:

1. Pay a lump sum
2. Pay monthly installments over 10 years (must be completed prior to retirement)
3. Roll over funds from an existing 401(k)/402(b) or IRA (pre-tax funds)
4. Sign up for payroll deductions

What else should I know?

1. You must first submit an application; it is only a query. Once it is received, STRS will send a postcard saying it received it. Within 30 days of receiving your query, STRS will send you a bill with the confirmed cost, which you can pay or not pay.
2. All applications have to be received by Dec. 31, 2012. The program is discontinued after that.

Should you purchase airtime?

I have no idea, but the opportunity to consider it is running out. The disclaimer: I am neither a tax professional nor a financial adviser. Consult your own financial advisor to see if this will benefit you. Go to the STRS website at www.calstrs.com, where you will find a calculator to help you get the hard numbers.

CALSTRS

Glossary of Terms

A recent faculty survey reminded PFT just how much technical jargon gets tossed around at the district. To help make sure we’re all on the same page, the *Peralta Teacher* will, from time to time, gloss some of the key words and phrases that crop up regularly in our professional lives.

Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA)— The formal contract between the PFT and the Peralta Community College District.

Contract faculty— Sometimes called regular or full-time faculty, contract faculty are tenured and tenure-track faculty whose annual obligation to the district is 30 equated hours.

Equated hours— The standard unit for faculty assignments, an equated hour is equivalent to an hour of classroom lecture time. Lab assignments are equated at .80 of a lecture hour, while counseling, library, and other non-instructional assignments are equated at .50 of a lecture hour.

Extra-service— Assignments that full-time contract faculty work beyond the 30 equated hours that they contractually owe the district each year are called extra-service. Frequently confused with overload, extra-service assignment are paid at 60% of the individual faculty member’s hourly rate.

Grievance— 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 the Collective Bargaining Agreement (as defined in Article 19 of the CBA). Grievances can only be lodged against the administration; disputes between or among faculty members aren’t subject to the union’s grievance procedure.

Parity pay— Money sent to districts from the state to help offset the difference in pay rates between full-time assignments and part-time/extra-service assignments. Calculated as a

small percentage of the total dollars earned by a faculty member from part-time/extra-service assignments, and generally disbursed in June.

Part-time faculty— Faculty who are engaged to work up to 67% of a full-time load (10 equated hours) and whose positions are contingent upon the number of sections being offered. Some part-timers prefer the expression “part-time faculty” to “adjunct faculty.”

Professional service— Committee and department responsibilities that faculty carry beyond their formal assignments. Professional service is expressly required for all contract faculty under Article 18 of the CBA. Part-time faculty do not have a professional service obligation. Frequently confused with extra-service.

Pro rata— The percentage of a full-time pay rate paid for different categories of faculty assignment. Part-time faculty members earn 75% of the full-time rate if they don’t hold full-time jobs elsewhere; part-timers holding full-time jobs elsewhere and contract faculty members working extra-service earn 60% of the full-time rate.

Fee-based Classes

PFT fights for ALL faculty

By Rick Greenspan

PFT Treasurer / Chief Negotiator

AS THE DISTRICT continues to expand its roster of fee-based education classes, PFT has been fielding lots of questions about the role of faculty who teach them. Here's a quick PFT breakdown of some of the issues raised by the rise of fee-based ed.

What is a fee-based class?

By Education Code, there are three classifications for community college classes: credit, non-credit, and community service classes.

Credit classes are classes for which students get credit towards a degree. All faculty teaching credit classes must have minimum qualifications to teach the class, are either members of or fee-payers to the PFT, are paid on the PFT salary schedule, and enjoy the protection of the PFT contract. The state pays community colleges based on the number of students in credit classes as part of the college state apportionment funding.

Noncredit classes are sometimes called "adult education" classes, and fall into one of nine categories: Parenting, Elementary and Secondary Basic Skills, English as a Second Language, Citizenship for Immigrants, Substantial Disabilities, Short Term Vocational, Older Adults, Home Economics, and Health and Safety. Noncredit courses provide remedial, developmental, occupational, and other general educational opportunities critical for survival in today's society. These classes don't give students credit towards a community college degree. All faculty teaching credit classes must have minimum qualifications to teach the class, are either members of or fee-payers to PFT, are paid on the PFT salary schedule, and enjoy the protection of the PFT contract. The state pays community colleges based on the number of students in noncredit classes as part

of the college's state apportionment funding (noncredit classes are paid at a lower rate than credit apportionment).

Community service classes are classes for which faculty do not need any specified minimum qualifications and for which no community college credit is granted. The Ed Code specifies that community service classes cannot be a "profit center" for community colleges, but should pay for themselves. These classes may be funded through a contract with an outside entity (a company, club, etc.) or they may be funded by student fees (called a "fee-based" class).

The idea that each fee-based faculty member will negotiate his or her own wages, sick leave, or holidays is completely unfair to the faculty.

If a faculty member teaches a fee-based class funded by a contract with an outside agency, the faculty member is either a member of or fee-payer to PFT, is paid on the PFT salary schedule, and enjoys the protection of the PFT contract.

What rights do fee-based faculty have?

If a faculty member teaches a fee-based class funded by student fees, the faculty member is considered an "independent contractor" with the district. Current policy for fee-based faculty is:

- Each faculty member teaching a fee-based community service class negotiates his or her own wages with the district.
- If a faculty member teaching the fee-based class is already represented by PFT because he/she is a current

contract or part-time faculty member, he/she enjoys certain privileges from the PFT contract, but is denied others. For example, he/she does not earn sick leave teaching fee-based classes; on the other hand, if there is a dispute over pay, the district is willing to consider PFT as the faculty member's representative to resolve the dispute.

- If a faculty member teaching the fee-based class is not already represented by PFT (that is, he/she is not currently a contract or part-time faculty member), he/she is not represented by PFT in any way and not covered by the PFT contract at all.

What is PFT's position on fee-based faculty?

PFT contends it represents all faculty, including fee-based instructors, and all faculty should be paid on the same salary schedule, deserve the right to accrue sick leave based on a single, simple formula, and deserve the full protection of the PFT contract.

The idea that each fee-based faculty member will negotiate his or her own wages, sick leave, holidays, etc., as an independent contractor is completely unfair to the faculty. It puts fee-based faculty in a "race to the bottom," giving the administration the ability to pit fee-based faculty against one another to find the person who will work for the lowest wages and will tolerate the worst working conditions.

PFT has been more concerned about this issue over the last few years, as the number of fee-based classes has increased. A number of canceled credit classes are now being offered as fee-based classes, and—as apportionment funding from Sacramento has been cut—the number of fee-based classes offered at Peralta keeps growing. These faculty deserve the same pay, the same rights, and the same protections as the rest of Peralta faculty.

PFT is currently setting up meetings with fee-based instructors to discuss these issues.

Victory March

November 6 was just the beginning

By Janell Hampton

Diversity Chair/PLUCC Coordinator

FOR PUBLIC educators, the holidays came early. Hailed by the likes Rachel Maddow as the outcome of intense labor activism, the passage of Prop 30 and the crushing defeat of Prop 32 are triumphs by and for the public—public-sector unions, in particular.

Maddow's right: you did this; you secured the passage of Prop 30; you delivered the crushing blows to Prop 32. Whether you supported the union by reading the award-winning *Peralta Teacher*, bringing questions and comments to flex day and campus membership meetings, contributing to PFT's Committee on Political Education (COPE), phone banking, or precinct walking, you're part of what helped moved the respective propositions in the best direction for public education. Congratulations!

But passing Prop 30 and crushing Prop 32 were not our only wins. Prop 30 gives public education some budgetary wiggle room, and defeating Prop 32 secures, for the moment, our political voice. But our true wins are more enduring and complex, and they require clarification and fortification.

To clarify the first win: the dedication of a committed volunteer corps took the form of more than 25 faculty members working over 60 hours to re-elect Obama, pass 30, defeat 32, and support local candidates. To fortify this win, we need to connect

more volunteers to more actions, and create a more mobile group of unit members ready to address faculty needs as they arise. As we ask for whatever level of volunteering you can give, consider the power of saying yes.

To clarify the second win: we verified PFT 1603's political power to affect state and federal issues. PFT's political efforts have been lauded by CFT, local candidates, and the Alameda Central Labor Council. We need to grow our power and solidarity and connection by increasing our COPE membership and increasing the number of monthly contributors. Support for political action as of now comes chiefly from 58 regular COPE-contributing members—a good number, to be sure, but one that needs to rise if PFT is going to continue to be a player.

If you felt comforted and reassured when Prop 30 passed and Prop 32 went down, you felt the protective arm of the PFT COPE around your shoulders. Fortify that strong arm of the COPE by joining as a monthly contributor. Ten bucks a month from a 10-month paycheck cycle is just \$100. I know in this economy every penny counts, but those COPE pennies are why you saw me and many others running around getting the word out.

An easily mobilized volunteer corps is critical for PFT. Now more than ever, it's crucial to raise our political voice and flex our power through COPE membership.



Pictured left to right: PFT Vice President Tae-Soon Park and representatives Christine Olsen and Jennifer Shanoski—all of Merritt College. They led the charge on the hilltop campus to pass Prop 30 and defeat Prop 32.

Negotiations UPDATE

By Rick Greenspan

The big news is that with the passage of both the parcel tax (last June) and Prop 30 this month, Peralta is no longer on the ropes financially. Our three-year contract provided for “status quo” this year for the salary schedule and benefits, and everyone who was not at the top of the salary schedule moved up as per the contract. For 2013-14 and 2014-15, the agreement says that we will look at Peralta's overall finances and at the increased cost of benefits, and then reach agreement on benefits, salaries, etc., for the following year. PFT is looking forward to those negotiations in the spring, and we'll keep everyone informed as they proceed.

This semester, we've been at the negotiating table discussing a number of other issues. We finalized agreements on management retreat rights, faculty rights when there is a district “investigation” involving faculty, and updating our load banking article to conform to IRS regulations. We are currently discussing fee-based instruction, making rules around the surveillance cameras that are being installed in the smart classrooms, and creating job descriptions, hiring procedures, and evaluation systems for positions such as Distance Ed Coordinator and Assessment Coordinator.

In addition, we've added a representative group of counselors to the negotiation team in order to talk about the issues of the counselors' annual work calendar and their weekly work load.

On top of all that, PFT is also “discussing” (but not “negotiating”) with the district a number of board policies. Virtually all of Peralta's board policies are being rewritten as part of accreditation, and a number of them affect faculty rights and working conditions. So far, discussions have included board policies on program discontinuation, computer use (e.g., *Can you use a district computer to check your non-Peralta email?*), and the use of college space for free speech and assembly, to name just a few.

Part-time Faculty Report

News from the PT ranks

By **Cynthia Mahabir**

PFT Part-time Faculty Representative

FIRST OFF, my thanks to Jane, Petra, Julia, Sheila, Enayat, Amir, Arturo (Laney) and Debbie (CoA) for your generous help on the Yes on Prop 30/No on Prop 32 campaign. Jamaican dancehall artist Sean Paul's "Hold on to the Dream" (clean) lyric from his "Tomahawk Technique" is still ringing in my head although Nov. 6 has come and gone.

Among the items of interest for you at this time are the following:

- SLO assessment stipends are available for PT faculty members at all four colleges. For compensation details, check with the vice president of instruction on your campus.
- The issue of fee-based classes is currently under discussion between PFT and the district. I recently sent out a letter with a description of these classes in relation to PFT representation and solicited PT faculty input through a mini-survey about your thoughts on this type of class. If you need this letter and the survey questionnaire, please let me know right away at cmlaney2003@yahoo.com. I am currently compiling the data.
- As PT faculty members, most of you may be eligible for unemployment compensation over the holiday break—because, as a part-time



Laney PT engineering prof Sam Abboud gets informed at Cynthia Mahabir's fall flex-day seminar.

temporary faculty member, you have no contractual guarantee of continuing employment; your rehire is contingent on sufficient enrollment and adequate funding. The maximum weekly benefit is \$450. However, unemployment benefits are not automatic. You must file a claim, usually by a telephone call to the Employment Development Department, (800) 300-5616, or on the web at www.edd.ca.gov.

- Current PFT PT faculty members with at least six of the previous ten semesters of work in their departments who experience a loss of 50% or more of their base load assignments and meet a few other criteria may apply for emergency relief (\$500 for a semester) through

the PFT's Member Emergency Relief Program (MERF). For details, check www.pft1603.org or call the PFT office at (510) 763-8820.

- Under a new state law, a series of STRS (retirement) changes has been introduced. They will take effect Jan. 1, 2013. I sent out a summary of the changes last week. If you have questions about the STRS changes, please contact STRS (not PFT); the details of STRS policies are quite complex. If you'd like to have the summary, let me know at cmlaney2003@yahoo.com.

Finally, look for a comprehensive online PT Faculty Survey which I expect to send out soon. We need to see where we are!

pft
Annual
Holiday
Party!

All faculty, staff, and friends are cordially invited to join the fun at PFT's annual Holiday Party! There will be gifts for the kids, raffle prizes, as well as delectable food, treats, sweets, and beverages!

Thursday, December 13
4:30 to 6:30 p.m.

PFT Union Office
500 E. 8TH Street, Suite B, Oakland
(blue and white building on corner of 5TH Avenue and E. 8TH Street)

RSVP by Monday, December 10. Email: union@pft1603.org