

Presidential POV

IN MY LAST POV, I celebrated the hard work that faculty did to get Cindi Napoli-Abella Reiss elected to the Peralta Community College District Board of Trustees. We let out a collective sigh of relief as the busy election came to end, but the months since have proved just as busy.

Since Cindi's swearing in last fall, board meetings have been longer and more informative, Chancellor Jewel C. Laguerre has stepped down, and an acting replacement, Fran White, has come on board. Other changes include the removal of Sadiq Ikharo from his long-held post as VC of General Services, and an uptick in nervous scrambling around the district caused by a tough letter from the colleges' accreditor. PFT remains hopeful and committed to positive change but concerned by calls for increased reserves, cuts to part-time faculty, and the district-centered approach to managing Peralta.

With district enrollment down and austerity an administrative battle cry, negotiations for our next Collective Bargaining Agreement have been slow. Still, we've secured agreements to include state parity money on the PFT salary schedules, a change in fall pay schedules, and automation of office hours.

And we've held off district moves to bar part-timers from department chair work and to limit the number of co-chairs per department. PFT remains committed to increasing parity for PT faculty and ensuring that COLA dollars go toward the workers they're meant for. Faculty are encouraged to join their college Contract Action Team (CAT) to help support a fair contract. Contact your campus representatives for information.

Contracts (fair and otherwise) have been keeping much of the Bay Area



President Jennifer Shanoski (fifth from left) joined Ya'Mese Johnson (GAP sweatshirt), President of the Associated Students of Merritt College; Aisha K.L. Jordan, PCCD Student Trustee (on Shanoski's left); and Assemblyman Rob Bonta, District 18 (tie), to promote AB2. The bill would make the second year of community college tuition-free.

busy lately as the Red for Ed movement has swept us all up. Oakland's historic strike in February lasted six days and resulted in a contract with a moratorium on charter expansion, across-the-board raises, reduced class sizes, and more. PFT members were honored to stand shoulder to shoulder with their brothers and sisters from the Oakland Education Association; the connections formed during the strike will yield more, and broader, change moving forward. PFT looks forward to continuing the struggle by taking part in a statewide action, May 22 in Sacramento, to demand that California fully fund public education.

Beyond keeping an eye on the board, negotiating a new contract, and building connections with other area locals, PFT has continued its membership work with drives at each of the four colleges, engaged with our parent union (the California Federation of Teachers) at its biannual convention, sponsored Labor Notes' annual Troublemaker School, and supported the Alameda Labor Council on a host of progressive initiatives. We encourage all members to be active and engaged—our strength lies in our work together, and our union is only as strong as that togetherness.

Jennifer Shanoski
President, PFT, AFT Local 1603

Diversity Chair Stands Up

By Kimberly King
Chair, Diversity Committee

FOR BLACK HISTORY Month, the PFT Diversity Committee hosted a forum, "The Schools Oakland Deserves," at Laney College.

Held just days before Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) teachers went on strike, the event featured a slate of

local education activists: Keith Brown, president of the Oakland Education Association (OEA); Clarissa Douthard, Executive Director of Parent Voices Oakland and an OEA-endorsed candidate in last year's OUSD school board race; and Silvia Ornelas, parent from Roots International Academy, the first of 24 public schools closed in Oakland.

(continues on next page)



Peralta Federation of Teachers

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

www.pft1603.org



OFFICERS:

Jennifer Shanoski, *President*
Tae-Soon Park, *Vice President*
Matthew M. Goldstein, *Secretary*
Rick Greenspan, *Treasurer*

CAMPUS REPRESENTATIVES

Joshua Boatright, *Berkeley City College*
Scott Hoshida, *Berkeley City College*
Maurice Jones, *College of Alameda*
Mary Shaughnessy, *College of Alameda*
Miriam Zamora-Kantor, *Laney College*
Ann McMurdo, *Laney College*
Hilary Altman, *Merritt College*
Sheila Metcalf-Tobin, *Merritt College*

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Jeff Sanceri, *COPE*
Matthew Silverberg, *CTE*
Kimberly R. King, *Diversity*
Francis Howard, *Part-time*

PAST PRESIDENT

Ed Jaramillo (RIP)

STAFF

Anna Roy, *Labor Representative*
Kayla Lewis, *Database Coordinator/
Communications Specialist*

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.

© Peralta Federation of Teachers 2019



Diversity Chair Stands Up

(continued from first page)

I had the privilege of introducing the February 12 panel, and I wanted to pass along some of my remarks:

Public schools in Oakland and around the country are under attack by a movement of billionaires intent on getting the trillions of dollars in public education budgets across the nation, carried out largely through the growth of charter schools. Charter schools are privately run but publicly funded, taking students and funding from regular public schools. State laws have been created, mostly by Democrats in this blue state of California, allowing charter schools to take over public schools that are “underperforming,” as measured by standardized tests. They are mostly non-union.

Oakland’s regular public schools lose \$57 million a year to charter schools! If this money were kept in the district, it could be used to reduce class size and end the current threat of bankruptcy. Despite the privatizers’ hype, research finds that the majority of charter schools perform the same or worse than regular public schools.

Oakland school board members, whose campaigns were largely funded by the charter school industry and wealthy billionaires, have stated they may close 24 schools in response to the district’s financial crisis. Closing schools disrupts children’s lives and drives students out of the district, resulting in lower enrollment and further budget problems.


The school board says it’s closing schools to save money, but an extensive study by the National Education Policy Center found that closing schools in urban communities does not save money, sometimes costs more money, and causes greatest harm to the lowest income

students. The board says they want to close these schools for low test scores. But standardized tests are notoriously biased—their biggest predictor is the wealth of a child’s family.

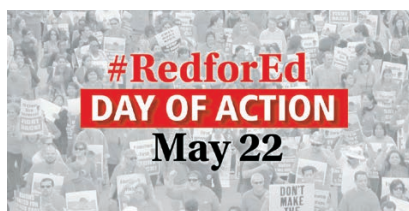
The closing of 24 schools is not about what the kids and families in the flatlands of Oakland need. This is a real estate deal that will benefit developers who want to restructure Oakland’s schools to make their new condos more desirable and profitable for the new wealthier Oaklanders who are moving in. Oakland currently has about 16,000 housing units under construction or in the pipeline. Most are market rate, with a tiny fraction so-called affordable. All this housing is being built in the flatlands, where the schools are being closed.

Average rent in Oakland is now \$2950. The median sale price for a single-family home in the Bay Area is \$860,000. In recent years, Oakland has experienced a steady out-migration of low-income workers, who are being replaced by high-income professionals. We’ve lost nearly 25% of our Black population since 2000.

Peralta faculty, staff, and students also suffer from the destruction of public education and the encroachment of big real estate. We too are outraged by a bloated district office that mismanages and an already inadequate state budget. Like the Oakland teachers, we lack the resources to provide the best quality education for our students. PCCD is also at risk of a state takeover. And like Oakland, our district administration tried to sell public land in a real estate deal with the Oakland A’s corporation. But just like we united with students and the surrounding community to Laney and Peralta, we stand by our OEA sisters and brothers and the parents and children of Oakland in their fight—in all of our fight—for the schools Oakland deserves!

Note: After a seven-day strike, with 95% member participation, the OEA ratified its contract, winning an 11% raise and increased student support services. 

Statewide Day of Action



Tuesday, May 22, 2019
Capitol Building, Sacramento

Join PFT and activists from around the state to demand full funding for public education and racial and social justice. Email union@pft1603.org to reserve a spot on a PFT bus!

Stay Engaged, PFT!

By Hilary Altman

Chair, Membership Engagement Committee

THE MEMBERSHIP Engagement Committee was an experiment I undertook to discover ways to engage faculty in community service and other gratifying activities. Over the past 18 months, the committee has been impressed with our faculty's dedication to the surrounding community and their generosity in giving time, energy, and donations.

Our large service project in 2017 involved collecting items and creating overnight supply bags for caretakers staying with children at the Intensive Care Unit in Oakland's UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital. This past December, we partnered with St. Vincent de Paul to collect gently used winter clothes and blankets on each of the four campuses, PFT HQ, and the district office, and we served meals at the St. Vincent community center, too.

All six Peralta locations turned in impressive collections of winter clothes and blankets. Alejandria Tomas, Director of Campus Life and Student Activities at Berkeley City College, sent us an email a week before the drive was over to request

an early pickup—BCC already had six overflowing containers of winter items before the deadline!

The faculty who volunteered to serve food at St. Vincent de Paul were moved by the experience and also expressed gratitude to an organization that does so much good for the community. Steve Pantell, Academic Counselor and Articulation Officer at Merritt College, volunteered to serve food at four different shifts!

"I was so impressed with how well organized the staff at St. Vincent's was," Steve said. "There are good people doing good things every day that most folks don't see. Thank you for letting me be part of that."


The staff at St. Vincent de Paul expressed much appreciation to PFT. Said Katie Troy, Volunteer Program Coordinator: "All the volunteers worked out perfectly, and we are so appreciative of the support and help." Katie also emphasized how useful the winter items were for the homeless community her organization serves. "The warm clothing is wonderful and it is helping a lot of our guests stay well and warm this winter. Thank you for all that you do and all of your support!"

I'm stepping down from the PFT Executive Council after this semester



Merritt College counselor Steve Pantell (above) and folks from PFT's Membership Engagement Committee lent a hand at St. Vincent de Paul last holiday season, part of the union's energetic community-outreach program led by outgoing MEC chair Hilary Altman.

and hope that someone else will take the lead in organizing more community service opportunities for our faculty. As community college instructors, most of us love the work we do because of the interactions we have with community members. We also understand that there is so much more work to be done beyond the classroom.

So stay engaged in the community—I hope to see you at a future volunteer event! 

Grievance UPDATE

By Jeff Sanceri

Grievance Officer

PFT is tackling several issues right now on behalf of faculty. I'm gratified to see faculty asserting themselves as professionals, and as workers, when management tramples on their rights.

In most workplaces, it's rare to find management of a unionized workforce commit egregious and obvious violations of the contract. This being Peralta, however, we can safely say the audacious is routine.

The very notion of faculty not getting paid on time—or at all!—ought to seem farfetched. Unfortunately, it's happening.

Faculty due grant monies, reimbursements for expenses, or even modest stipends are sometimes waiting more than six months to receive their earnings, often for work that has long since been completed. Our investigation into such flagrant contract violations revealed a systemic problem: no oversight of offices tasked with ensuring that college bills, including those for goods or services rendered, get paid on time.

After a Step 3 grievance decision in our favor, PFT is currently in talks with the administration to ensure that faculty have access to timelines and flowcharts for all transactions in the business administration office that directly affect faculty. With this in hand, our hope is that faculty may be able to more easily track the progress of the money they have earned, and the resources they need to conduct their courses. PFT believes that under normal circumstances such monitoring wouldn't be necessary; we know, though, that

(continues on next page)

Negotiations NOTES

By Rick Greenspan
Chief Negotiator/Treasurer

NEGOTIATIONS continued to plod along this semester, and the district continued to offer nothing—nada, zilch, zippo—in wage increases for faculty.

With the district squirming under the critical eyes of the state Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) and an expensive group of consultants called, you couldn't make this up, the "Brain Trust," the administration says its coffers are empty of any funds which could be used for faculty raises.

Also, faculty hiring is currently frozen, while administrators who leave Peralta continue to get replaced—even in positions the big office claims are unthawed. Go figure.

Parity Pay

We have settled one significant item regarding pay. Beginning next fall, parity pay will, for the most part, be folded into part-time salary schedules. This is a non-cost item to the district, since it just redirects state funding.

In the past, people received parity pay in a lump sum in June. Starting next fall, this state money will bring part-time hourly rates a little closer to parity with contract faculty rates.

Other Non-money Items

We've settled (or almost settled) most of the other items on the bargaining table that don't involve money:

- ▶ part-time office hours will be paid automatically, so part-timers won't have to wait months while their timesheets get lost in deans' offices, etc.;
- ▶ part-timers will now get a fifth paycheck each fall (in August); currently part-timers don't get their first fall check until the end of September;
- ▶ payments of all faculty stipends over \$1000 will become much more transparent and fair;
- ▶ any medical benefit-eligibility audits of faculty dependents will be subject to new rules that ensure that no one is unjustly removed from medical benefits; and
- ▶ minor changes will be made to the evaluation handbook and


administrative evaluation form regarding turning in census rosters in a timely fashion.

What about Some Money?

PFT is calling for full parity for part-timers, getting back the 1.5% we lost in fall 2018, all the state COLAs that haven't been passed through to faculty, and an additional 2%. That total comes to around a 10% increase.

But, again, the district has offered zero.

Our current contract expires June 30. Frankly, there's nothing that PFT can say at the bargaining table to get the district to make us a reasonable offer. Pay increases are invariably determined by the actions taken by the faculty.

Each college is starting its own Contract Action Team this month, to help get faculty involved in the fight for salary increases. We expect that there will be actions at both the college and district level designed to get the district to make faculty salary increases its top priority. We need to get all faculty involved in the bargaining process—and that means you! Stay in touch with your college's Contract Action Team to find out how you can help. 


Grievance UPDATE


(continued from previous page)

in many ways the administration left normal behind long ago.

We're also working on a grievance regarding faculty healthcare coverage. As laws around healthcare change, those changes must be reflected in the language of what is called the Summary Plan Description (SPD). However, meticulous research from our PFT archivist, Patricia Dudley, reveals that there were also a number of negotiable issues that were simply changed unilaterally by the administration, with no faculty input whatsoever. In addition, such unilateral changes to our agreed-upon SPD have been happening for some time, which is disappointing and alarming. PFT takes this violation very seriously, and will be

seeking a remedy that fits what appears to be the immense scope of the problem.

We'd all prefer that the position of grievance officer was unnecessary, and that all levels of administration, from top to bottom, respected faculty and our contract enough to simply let them do their jobs right. Indeed, as well as I may know our contract, my dream is to one day have an administrator know the contract even better than I do. Heck, I would settle for an administrator who is cognizant of the fact that she/he/they should look at our collective bargaining agreement before taking unilateral action. Indeed, the lack of care that many administrators have for the professional and contractual relationship between themselves and faculty is startling. The consistency of administrative actions toward the faculty makes it painfully obvious that many managers hold both us and what we do in low esteem. As we jump even further into negotiations this spring, summer, and fall, I think we'd all do well to remember this. 



General Membership Meeting

Thursday, May 16, 2019
12 noon – 1:30 p.m.
Merritt College

CAT update, negotiations news, 5/22 Day of Action, and more.

RSVP for lunch:
union@pft1603.org