

## Presidential POV

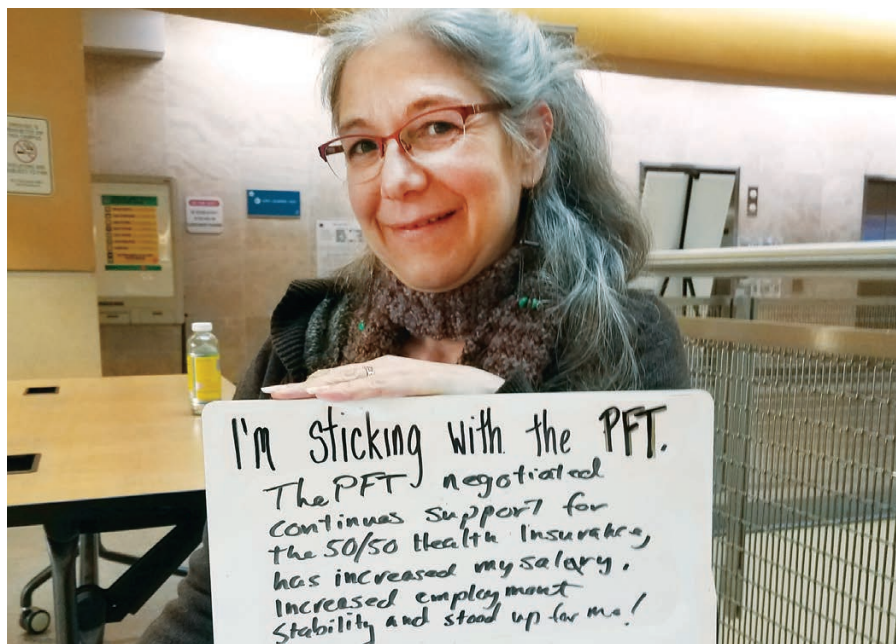
AM ASTONISHED that it's already May and that the academic year is coming to a close—astonished and exhausted, as it's been a very busy time within both PFT and the district!

To reach as many members as possible this year, PFT ran four membership drives, a week at each college. In just four months, we managed to recruit over 50 volunteers, talk to more than 700 members, and increase our membership to over 80%! PFT is grateful to all of the faculty who took time out of their busy schedules to build our union. The conversations we had during the drives will guide the work we do together moving forward.

And now that we have a supermajority membership, we'll walk into next year's negotiations knowing that we have the power we need. We've been working hard on a negotiations survey that will help to support that work—look for it in your inbox when we return in the fall. This survey and the goals that come out of it will serve as the basis for our positions when we sit down with PCCD administration in August.

Our current contract isn't up until 2019, and official negotiations haven't started. Still, we've reached a number of new agreements with the district in recent months. The automation of step increases has been an ongoing challenge for the district, one that finally seems to have been resolved; the district office agreed to an external audit—to be conducted by a faculty member—and we're relieved that we may finally be paying part-time faculty according to the negotiated salary schedule.

Another important agreement we've made with the district concerns split faculty assignments. We discovered that administrators were assigning classes to multiple faculty without their consent.



Poet and BCC English Department part-timer Sharon Coleman shows some union pride during PFT's spring membership drive. Over 80% of Peralta faculty are now PFT members.

Team-teaching can provide excellent opportunities for faculty and students when done correctly and willingly; it can be a disaster when it's done without the full buy-in of everyone involved. A new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by the district limits course-splitting to instances in which faculty explicitly agree to the arrangement.

And as we transition from Moodle to Canvas this year, PFT worked to ensure that part-time faculty would be paid a stipend for the extra prep time this will involve. All three of these agreements are wins that PFT is proud to celebrate.

And it's important to celebrate as much as possible now because anti-union forces continue to gather. The US Supreme Court will rule on *Janus v. AFSCME* any day, and the expected 5-4 decision will strip unions like ours of their fair-share fees. That loss will cost PFT, and all public-sector unions, dearly. But a setback in *Janus* will give us another chance to reach out and make sure that we're united in our fights.

Spring term also brought the PFT-sponsored Mayday for May Day

Conference to Berkeley City College, where we engaged in a series of workshops and dialogues about the history of attacks on public education. More than 40 faculty, students, and community members participated, with representatives from the Berkeley Federation of Teachers, Oakland Education Association, City College of San Francisco, California Teachers Association, UC-AFT, the Women's Economic Agenda Project, and more. This was the first time PFT had ever held such a conference and we look forward to improving upon it in 2019.

Next year is sure to bring more challenges: rumors of hiring freezes swirl, even as the district office continues to expand, the parcel tax keeps getting misspent, and the administrative revolving door spins on and on. Faculty involvement has never been more crucial—in the labor movement in general, and in PFT in particular. So if you're involved, stay involved; if you're not, join us, and help PFT move ahead confidently.

**Jennifer Shanoski**  
President, PFT, AFT Local 1603

# The Best Defense Is a Good Offense

By Kimberly R. King  
Diversity Committee Chair

**A**T A TIME when U.S. workers face a barrage of challenges to their security and rights, unions are more important than ever. Public-employee unions bring workers together to get decent salaries, benefits, and working conditions, and to defend public institutions like the Peralta colleges for the public good.

The PFT Diversity Committee hosts events to bring members together—to get to know each other, learn from one another, and build a united faculty that can best advocate for ourselves, our students, and our colleges. In March, we celebrated Women’s History Month by partnering with faculty of the Women’s History Month Committee at Laney. We hosted a film screening of *Hidden Figures*, followed by a discussion with women-of-color mathematicians, one faculty member and one student from the Umoja Community.

The event was heavily attended by students, many of whom were invited to attend by their instructors. This

fits with one of the PFT Diversity Committee’s goals, to promote unity with students based on the understanding that faculty working conditions are student learning conditions.


PFT also co-sponsored a dialogue to support women faculty. We called it Dancing Backwards in High Heels after a recent research article of the same name published in *Sex Roles*. We had real talk among women faculty, the Laney College president, female students, and one male faculty member. It was a supportive discussion that included brainstorming about professional development activities that could eliminate sexist expectations and micro-aggressions from our campus climates.

One of the threats working people face today is the Supreme Court case *Janus v. AFSCME*, which could make the whole country “right to work.” My Executive Council brother Peter Brown and I gave a presentation at PFT’s Mayday for May Day Conference. Here are a few main points:


▶ To respond to *Janus*, we must understand what we are fighting against and what we are fighting for. *Janus* represents a corporate attack on public workers and the public services

we defend. We are fighting to hold government responsible at all levels to guarantee that every school has fully adequate resources and that students and workers have their basic needs met so they can work and learn.

- ▶ In the past, the union movement essentially was the labor movement, but today unionized labor makes up less than 10% of working people, and the population of those who must work to survive is broader than just unions.
- ▶ Labor cannot remain on the defensive; we must go on the offensive. Examples of going on the offensive include the Parkland, Florida, students demanding that government prioritize children’s lives over the gun lobby and the red state teacher strikes, in which teachers in right-to-work states united with other public workers and demanded adequate public funding and decent wages and benefits.

Unions and other working people can win—if we unite across our seeming differences to hold government accountable for people’s basic needs, including public education, in the wealthiest country in the world. 

## PFT Parties with PAAAA at Gala

**M**ERRITT COLLEGE counselor Marty Zielke (left) joins PFT Vice President Tae-Soon Park (Math, Merritt), Diversity Chair Kimberly R. King (Psychology, Laney), and Laney Representative Miriam Zamora-Kantor (Counseling) at the Peralta Association of African American Affairs’ Annual Scholarship Gala in April. Since its start in 1998, PAAAA has awarded deserving Peralta students over \$80,000 in scholarships. PFT is proud to support PAAAA’s efforts on behalf of our hardworking students. 





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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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# PFT Cares

By Hilary Altman

Membership Committee Chair

ONE OF THE BEST parts of teaching at a community college is knowing that we are truly serving our community. Many of us live in the same communities that our students live in, and some of us have similar family and healthcare issues.

That shared experience may help explain the strong, positive response we had to a recent service project: collecting donations for, assembling, and providing comfort kits to caretakers staying overnight at the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit at Benioff Children's Hospital of Oakland.

"Without hesitation, I volunteered to participate in the PFT project for Children's Hospital because I enjoy giving back to our community," said CoA Kinesiology instructor Linda Thompson. "It was a worthwhile activity to support the families and make a difference."

Organized by the PFT Membership Committee, the project started in November 2017 by asking faculty to donate items to be put into these comfort kits. Over 30 faculty donated items, ranging from toothbrushes and toothpaste to earplugs, hand lotion, wipes, mints, and eye masks. Each of these items was recommended by the Family Resource Center at Children's Hospital.


Eileen Stephens, a Patient Engagement Associate and Family Advisory Council Co-chair at the hospital, explained that "caretakers often sleep in a chair next

to their child's hospital bed with no privacy. An eye mask and earplugs can provide caretakers with the means to get a much-needed few hours of sleep, and toothpaste and a toothbrush allow them to feel fresh and ready to support their child the next morning."

Once we had all of the 3,200 items we needed for the comfort kits, it was time to put everything together. At Peralta's March professional day, some 15 faculty members (and one student volunteer) gathered at the PFT offices to help assemble 400 comfort kits. Volunteers were incredibly focused and dedicated to their tasks. We had an awesome production line, from labelling the bags to carefully adding items. And we even ran a quality-assurance check before we finished up!

Two faculty members volunteered to drop off the comfort kits at the Family Resource Center. Merritt's Kimberly Murphy was one of the volunteers who personally delivered the kits to the hospital.

"It was incredibly gratifying to know these care kits would be used to help parents with children staying in the hospital in Oakland," said Murphy. She also spoke to the sense of camaraderie and fun of completing this project: "It was fun meeting with fellow PFT members from the different colleges. I don't know if I would have met these same colleagues if it had not been for the service project."

Please get in touch with me if you are interested in joining the Membership Committee to plan for future service projects, contract workshops, and other ways to engage PFT members! 



PFT's Comfort Kit Team: (standing, from left) Jayne Smithson, Betty Jelks, Debbie Green, Naia Hooker, and August Flowers; (seated) Linda Thompson and Mary Shaughnessy.

# Grievance Corner

By Jeff Sanceri  
Grievance Officer

**W**ELCOME BACK to the Grievance Corner—we have a few exciting things to report this time around. First, PFT is happy to report that we have reached a resolution regarding the automation of step increases, an issue that we have been pushing the district to complete for some time now.

After a few stops and starts—and some extra pushing from PFT—we can now definitively say that not only are your step increases fully automated, but because of the work of President Jennifer Shanoski (and maybe a little work from yours truly) the district has agreed to hire a part-time faculty member to oversee and audit the transition!


In other good news, the district conceded that their practice of cutting courses for part-time faculty within two weeks of

the beginning of the semester without compensation was indeed a violation of California Education Code, and has agreed to pay those part-time faculty what they were owed for preparing a course before having it cut suddenly.

Recently, PFT filed a Step 3 grievance against the chancellor, in which we alleged that the manner in which he made and maintained his interim appointments to district and campus administrative positions was a violation of both the Board Policy of the Peralta Community College District as well as Title 5, essentially the set of statutes that governs the operation of all educational institutions in the state of California. We'll keep you posted.

A good news/bad news situation: the bad news: the mold situation at COA continues. After we rid a faculty office suite of prodigious amounts of mold and mildew late last semester, we now know that at Peralta, MOLD. IS. EVERYWHERE. Well, not everywhere,

but in certain classrooms and areas where students gather indoors on campus. The good news is that after some pestering from both PFT and the campus administration, the district facilities department has begun to address this issue in most of the places where it has been found. While PFT is still unsatisfied with the speed with which this issue is being resolved, I am given to understand that finishing any project within a semester or two is cause for celebration.

Lastly, there have been rumblings about FTEF “cuts” around the district. Indeed, while the exact truth underlying these rumblings is murky—the district can have a loose interpretation of participatory governance at times—we are concerned about what many faculty, part-timers especially, interpret as course cuts. PFT and especially the grievance officer will be keeping an eye on this, and we'll be ready to act when our contract has been violated. 

## CFT PFT



CFT Secretary Treasurer Jeff Freitas (center) joined the PFT spring membership drive at Merritt College. Flanked by art prof Sheila Metcalf-Tobin and historian John Holmes, Freitas helped Local 1603 push its overall membership rate to over 80%, one the highest among California community colleges.



The daughter of two proud PFT members, Charlotte Chan was named a 2018 winner of a \$3000 Raoul Teilhet Scholarship from the California Federation of Teachers. The child of Lilian Chow, a Laney counselor, and Simon Chan, a Business and CIS instructor at Merritt. Charlotte, a senior at Encinal High School in Alameda, is currently enrolled in the Genomics program at Merritt through a high school dual-enrollment program. She will receive two AA degrees, one from Laney and one from Merritt, this spring. In the fall, Charlotte plans to major in Biology at either UCLA or UC Berkeley.



# Peter Brown Shuts It Down

By Brad Balukjian  
Part-time Representative

PETER BROWN’S hands look like they’re ready to retire. Swollen and scraped, with dirt caked under the fingernails, they are the hands of a man who wears his own labor, the badge of time.

But the rest of Peter Brown belies the twilight. He’s all vim and vigor, 67 years young. Sitting at PFT headquarters, his hands clasped and chin up, he talks about his lifelong involvement with teaching, politics, and the labor movement.

“A union of teachers that openly states that one of its goals is to defend public education is one of the highest callings I can think of,” he says.

Before he was the Career and Technical Education rep of the PFT’s Executive Council, and before he was tenured faculty in Machine Technology at Laney College, Peter’s profession represented both ying and yang, a ballet dancer and a machinist for the construction equipment company Caterpillar. His flexibility, both literal and metaphorical, allowed him to thrive in vastly different work environments: he could train workers on how to use a lathe, and later that night, perform with his wife Vicki in their community theater. It was the perfect fit until it wasn’t—in 2006, within the span of two weeks, Peter lost his father and his business, and his health, as he was diagnosed with cancer.

But as anyone who has worked with Peter knows, the man does not stay down. He took 14 units in one summer at Laney to earn his associate’s degree, where one of his teachers, former Executive Council rep Janell Hampton, suggested he check out PFT. Around the same time, now-colleague Louis Quindlen hired him as a part-timer after noticing Peter’s knack for fixing broken machines around the classroom.



For eight years, Peter taught scores of students as a part-timer while diligently contributing to PFT, earning full-time status in 2014 and just this year, tenure. He may be the first faculty member to ever celebrate tenure by retiring, but for

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.....

Peter, it’s never been about the title or the money or the status. It’s about giving back, about elevating those around him. And it is that selfless quality that PFT and Peralta will miss the most.

A deep commitment to political change is also embedded in Peter’s DNA—it wouldn’t be surprising if the nucleotide motif ACT repeats over and over in his genome (Adenine, Cytosine, Thymine,

as we learned in high school bio). Asked to describe his political philosophy, he replies with a 14-bullet-point manifesto. Item No. 9 sums up his views best: “We will have to organize a new type of government which guarantees that all social resources—food, energy, housing, education, healthcare—are equally and fully available to all without exception.”

On a personal note, I’d add that Peter is not just a colleague, he is a close friend. In my year on the Executive Council, he has been my Executive Counsel, always willing to drop everything (which as a machinist is pretty dangerous) to talk to me when I am stressed out, to offer comfort and support. But it is not those times that define the man. Rather, I have seen him at his very best when we have argued and disagreed. In those moments, he has always remained compassionate and classy, the epitome of a gentleman.

And so I want to say thank you to my colleague and friend, whom I will miss dearly. Peter Brown has (almost) left the building, and we’re all a little diminished because of it. 

Slow, steady progress on minor issues

# Negotiations Notes

By Rick Greenspan  
Chief Negotiator/Treasurer

**N**EGOTIATIONS this spring moved slow and steady, but on pretty minor issues. We haven't finalized any of these issues, but we're close:

- ▶ adding a section to the contract on department chair elections
- ▶ clarifying the potential effects of the *Janus* decision on our contract
- ▶ specifying the rights of faculty hired under special one-year contracts

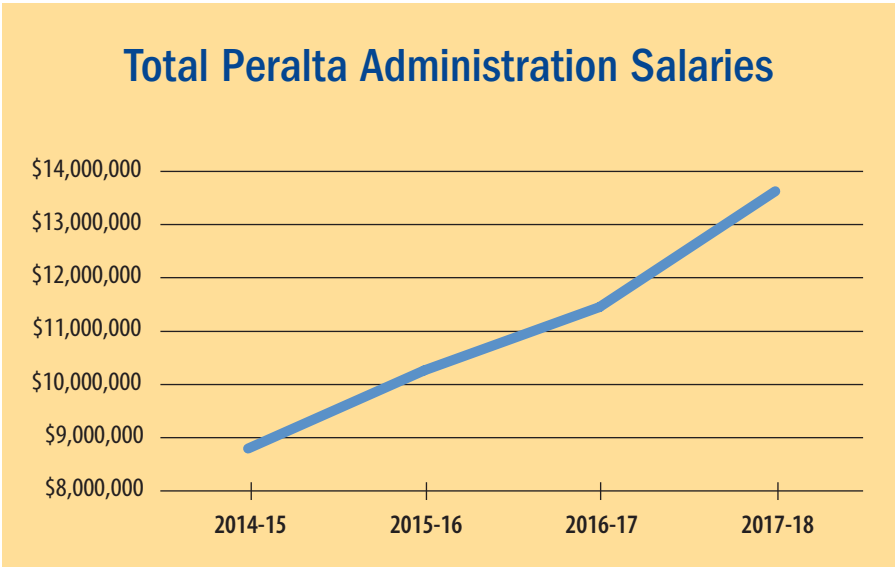
## What about faculty salaries?

For 2017-18, Peralta gave all employee groups (faculty, administrators, and classified) 1.5% increases in total salary. PFT distributed our funds as faculty wished, with about a quarter of the money going to the 25-step schedule for part-timers without a full-time job outside of Peralta, and the rest going across the board. But our F17 raise came with a catch, a "sunset clause" that has all salary schedules rolling back 1.5% in 2018-19 unless Peralta exceeds 19,500 FTES this year.

It's no secret that enrollment hasn't been growing at any college in Northern California; however disappointing, we shouldn't be surprised that the administration is expecting to implement that 1.5% rollback at the end of the 2017-18 fiscal year. PFT will continue to argue for increasing all faculty salaries as negotiations go forward.

## What's going on in Sacramento?

The governor's proposed budget is still in flux as this is written. Jerry Brown has proposed an entirely new formula for funding community colleges. Instead of our current model, with funding based 100% on FTES (fulltime-equivalent students), the governor and state



chancellor have proposed that FTES account for only 50% of community college budgets, and that the balance of our state funds be allocated according to "performance."

No one is quite sure what "performance" means. It could consider the number of students getting student aid; it might consider the number of students transferring to Cal State or UC; it might factor in the number of students getting certificates/degrees. In any case, as we go to press, no one is sure exactly how Peralta's state apportionment funding will be calculated for 2018-19. The uncertainty has made the district very reluctant to negotiate on salary over the last six months or so.

On the other hand, the governor's budget does include a COLA of about 2.5%. So the COLA would cover the 1.5% takeaway and give us another 1% boost—at least that's the way PFT sees it.

## Where has all of Peralta's money gone over the last four years?

California has prospered over the last few years. Prop 98 has forced the legislature to spend lots of money on education, including on community colleges. Peralta's budget has grown.

But, according to the district's own figures, Peralta hasn't added faculty, and it hasn't added new class sections. Rather, it's spent the vast majority of the new funds hiring new administrators.

This chart comes from the district's own figures, provided by the last three Vice Chancellors of Finance in response to numerous PFT requests for information during negotiations.

In the last four years, salaries for Peralta's administrators (both college- and district-level) have increased by a whopping 55%, or \$4,832,323, from \$8,793,125 to \$13,625,449. You've seen it each month in PFT's e-Communique and Board Watch emails, tracking, among other things, numerous new administrative hires. For each one, the district dutifully explains that the new hire doesn't really cost hundreds of thousands of dollars, because some other position has been eliminated, or because the new administrators are funded in a certain way. But overall these numbers don't lie.

Hiring new administrators has been the highest priority of this administration. Faculty salaries have been at the bottom of the list. It's going to take concerted political action this spring and next fall to change those priorities. 